

the people of the land who dwelt in fortified cities. *The Perizzite*; the "hamlet dwellers," the village and country population of Canaan, who lived by laboring on the soil. These settled inhabitants are mentioned because their presence would increase the difficulty of finding water and pasture. Abram and Lot did not have the whole country to themselves.

Vs. 8, 9. *Abram said unto Lot.* It is the older man who, with the "magnanimity which springs from fellowship with God," makes the first overture for a peaceful settlement of the difficulty. Like Abram, both Isaac (ch. 26 : 12-23) and Jacob (ch. 34 : 30) were reasonable and peace-loving. *Let there be no strife.* It was unseemly, in Abram's eyes, that there should be a dispute between relatives over a matter of property. *The whole land before thee*; that is, "the unoccupied territory where they could pasture their cattle without interfering with the settled population." *Thou . . . the left hand . . . I . . . the right.* Abram's generosity stands out in this offer to Lot of the first choice of territory, although, as the older, and likely the more powerful, he might have insisted on his prior claim.

V. 10. *Lot lifted up his eyes.* Near Bethel is "one of the great viewpoints of Palestine," from which the Jordan valley and the north end of the Dead Sea are clearly visible. *All the Plain of Jordan* (Rev. Ver.); literally, "the whole Oval of Jordan," the wide oval plain into which the valley of the Jordan opens out about 25 miles north of the Dead Sea. This region was rich with vine, olive and fig. This is the first mention of the Jordan in scripture. The name means "Descender," and the river in its swift and tortuous course of 200 miles,—only 65 miles as the crow flies—falls 3,000 feet into the Dead Sea, one of the most remarkable depressions in the world. The story assumes that the Dead Sea did not, at that time, occupy its present bed. *Well watered everywhere*; offering plentiful pasturage and an abundance of drinking places,—the two essentials of a grazing district. *Sodom and Gomorrah*; two of the five cities of this plain (see ch. 19 : 24, 25), probably at the southeast of the Dead Sea. *Like the land of Egypt*; also irrigated by a river and famed for its fertility. *Unto Zoar*; a city at the extreme south of the

Oval, marking the limit in that direction of the "well watered" region. Possibly, however, Zoar in Egypt is meant, the centre of a garden tract in that country through which Abram would pass on his journeys to and from Egypt.

V. 11. *Lot chose him all the Plain* (Rev. Ver.); with a keen eye to its advantages, not only of wonderful fertility, but also of nearness to the great route of Eastern travel, which held the promise of a profitable market for his flocks and herds as well as the luxuries and refinements of life. In this choice Lot showed himself to be selfish and grasping. He sacrificed principle to greed for gain. The choice, as such choices always are, was a fatal one. He soon "began to move his tent here and there as far as Sodom," putting himself in the sphere of temptation, and finally took up his abode in that wicked city.

II. The Rescue, ch. 14 : 14-16.

While Abram was at Hebron, where he had gone after his separation from Lot, five petty kings in the Jordan valley revolted against their overlord, Chederlaomer of Elam. This brought from the East a great punitive expedition, in which four powerful monarchs took part. The rebels were defeated in a pitched battle in what is now the Dead Sea basin. Sodom was sacked and Lot was captured. News of his nephew's fate was brought to Abram.

Vs. 14-16. *His brother*; kinsman. *Armed*; Rev. Ver., "led forth." The Hebrew word means "to empty," and is used of "drawing out" a sword from its sheath. Here the meaning seems to be: "he drew out rapidly and in full numbers." *Trained men* (Rev. Ver.); literally, "dedicated men." *Born in his own house*; slaves born and brought up in his household, not purchased, and therefore specially attached and trustworthy. *Unto Dan*; in the far north of Canaan. *Divided himself*; that is, divided his men into bands who might fall on the enemy from different directions. *Hobah*; about 50 miles north of Damascus. *Left hand*; Rev. Ver. Margin, "north." So to the Hebrews, the south is "the right hand," the east is "the front," and the west, "behind." V. 16 tells of Abram's complete success and the deliverance of Lot from his captors.