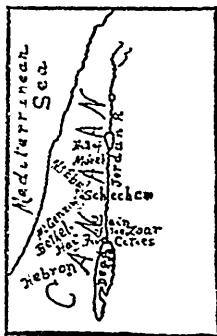


Abraham (ch. 18 : 22) has rejoined the other angels. Escape . . . look not behind . . . neither stay thou in all the plain. . . There is to be lingering neither in Sodom nor on the neighboring plain which he had claimed for his own. There is not even to be a glance behind. Escape to the mountain ; the mountains of Moab, which rise abruptly from the Dead Sea.

III. THE CITIES DESTROYED.—23-29. When Lot entered . . . Zoar. Lot was feeble and cumbered with three women, and feared he might not reach the mountain in time, or might suffer some other peril. He prays for some nearer refuge and asks that one of the doomed cities might be spared for his sake. He calls it Zoar, that is, "little." God grants this concession. The Lord rained . . . brimstone and fire. God may have used natural volcanic agency, which could well be described in these words. But his wife looked back ; in direct disobedience of a plain command. Pillar of salt. Lot's wife is the type of those, "who in whatever age, look back with regret and longing upon possessions and enjoyments that are inconsistent with the salvation offered to them." God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst. Abraham's pleading was not wholly vain ; Lot, at least, is saved.

THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON



The exact locations of Sodom and Gomorrah are not known. Biblical scholars who have explored the land, say that there is abundant evidence in the district east and south of the Dead Sea of some such great upheaval as is described in this Lesson. Somewhere here the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah probably stood. The present condition of this part is extremely unlike the other parts of Palestine, and suggests some dreadful visitation of God.

LESSON QUESTIONS

12-14 How had Lot received the angels? What message did they deliver to Lot? Was Lot to be saved alone? How did his sons-in-law receive his warning?

15-17 Was Lot himself ready to go at the warning? What steps did the visitors take to tear him away?

What orders did Lot receive outside the city? To what mountain were they to make their escape? Where was this mountain? Why did Lot fear to escape to the mountain? What place did he ask to be spared for a refuge for him? What is the meaning of the name Zoar?

23-29 How were Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed? What command did Lot's wife disobey? What penalty overtook her? Who viewed the destroyed cities from afar? What was the appearance of the plain? How did God show His remembrance of Abraham?

FOR DISCUSSION

1. Was the penalty paid by Lot's wife unduly severe?
2. Can we get accustomed to evil company without suffering morally?

A LESSON FOR LIFE

The first step in building a bridge over a certain river with steep banks and a swift current was to shoot an arrow with a fine thread attached. Then followed a thin string, a rope, a cable, and so on, till a great bridge joined the banks. This was the story of Lot's attachment to Sodom. First it was only a glance, then a choice of land near Sodom, then a pitching of his tent toward Sodom, then a dwelling in Sodom. The approach to sin is often by degrees.

Prove from Scripture—That good men seek the welfare of others.

Shorter Catechism—Ques. 49. Which is the second commandment? A. The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth : thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them : for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me ; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

The Question on Missions—10. What is Africa's greatest need? The direct teaching of Jesus Christ, and the example of sincere Christian living. Ignorance and cruelty and idolatry are very common. Missionaries tell of seeing African children cut all over their bodies to "let out the pain" they suffered.

Lesson Hymns—Book of Praise : 7 (Supplemental Lesson), 135, 258, 2 (Ps. Sel.), 412 (from PRIMARY QUARTERLY), 259.

FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS

1. Why was Sodom destroyed?.....

2. Why was Zoar spared?.....

3. Make an inventory of Lot's losses through his greedy choice.....