

Genesis 19:1-38

by John Calvin

The sermon explores the events surrounding Lot's encounter with angels in Sodom, highlighting themes of hospitality, sin, and divine judgment.

Scripture: Genesis 19:24-36

Topics: "Divine Judgment", "Faithfulness"

Description

John Calvin preaches about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, highlighting the divine judgment upon the wicked cities and the miraculous deliverance of Lot and his family. He emphasizes the importance of obedience to God's commands and the consequences of straying from His will. The narrative showcases the dangers of indulging in sinful desires and the need for faithfulness and trust in God's providence, even in the face of temptation and worldly allurements.

Transcript

1. And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

1. Et venerunt duo angeli in Sedom vesperi, Lot autem sedebat in porta Sedom: et vidit Lot et surrexit in occursum eorum, et incurvavit se facie super terram.

2. And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

2. Et dixit, Ecce, nunc domini mei, declinate obsecro ad domum servi vestri, et pernoctate, et lavate pedes vestros: et mane surgetis, et pergetis in viam vestram. Et dixerunt, Nequaquam, sed in platea pernoctabimus.

3. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

3. Et vehementer compulit eos, et declinaverunt ad eum, veneruntque ad domum ejus: et fecit eis convivium, et infermentata coxit, et comederunt.

4. But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:

4. Antequam dormirent, viri civitatis, viri Sedom gyro cinxerunt domum a puero usque ad senem, omnis populus ab extremo.

5. And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

5. Et vocaverunt Lot, et dixerunt ei, Ubi sunt viri qui venerunt ad te nocte? educ eos ad nos, et cognoscemus eos.

6. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,

6. Et egressus est ad eos Lot ad ostium, et ostium clausit post se.

7. And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.

7. Et dixit, Ne quaeso, fratres mei, malefaciatis.

8. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

8. Ecce, nunc mihi sunt duae filiae, quae non cognoverunt virum, educam nunc eas ad vos, et facite eis sicut bonum erit oculis vestris: tantum viris istis ne faciatis quicquam, eo quod venerunt in umbram tigni mei.

9. And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door.

9. Verum dixerunt, Accede huc. Dixerunt praeterea, Unus venit ad perigrinandum, et iudicabit iudicando? nunc magis malefaciemus tibi quam ipsis. Et vim fecerunt in virum ipsum Lot valde: et appropinquaverunt ut frangerent ostium.

10. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.

10. At miserunt viri manum suam, et introduxerunt Lot ad se in domum, et ostium clauserunt.

11. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

11. Viros autem, qui erant ad ostium domus, percusserunt caecitate, a minimo usque ad maximum, et laboraverunt ut invenirent ostium.

12. And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place:

12. Et dixerunt viri ad Lot, Adhuc est aliquis tibi hic? generum, et filios tuos, et filias tuas, et omnia, quae sunt tibi in civitate, educ de loco:

13. For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

13. Quia disperdimus nos locum hunc, eo quod crevit clamor eorum coram Jehova: et misit nos Jehova ad perdendum eum.

14. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

14. Et egressus est Lot, et loquutus est ad generos suos, qui acceperant filias ejus, et dixit, Surgite, egredimini de loco isto, quia disperdit Jehova civitatem: et fuit sicut ludens in oculis generorum suorum.

15. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

15. Quum vero aurora ascendisset, instabant angeli ipsi Lot, dicendo, Surge, cape uxorem tuam, et duas filias tuas, quae adsunt, ne forte pereas in punitione civitatis.

16. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

16. Et tardabat: et apprehenderunt viri manum ejus, et manum uxoris ejus, et manum duarum filiarum ejus, eo quod parceret Jehova ei: et eduxerunt eum, et posuerunt eum extra urbem.

17. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

17. Et fuit, quum eduxissent ipsi eos foras, dixit, Evade pro anima tua, ne respicias post te, nec stes in tota planitie: in monte serva te, ne forte pereas.

18. And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord:

18. Et dixit Lot ad eos, Ne quaeso domini mei:

19. Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die:

19. Ecce, nunc invenit servus tuus gratiam in oculis tuis, et magnificasti misericordiam tuam, quam fecisti mecum, ut vivificares animam meam: et ego non potero servare me in monte, ne forte haereat mihi malum, et moriar:

20. Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.

20. Ecce, nunc civitas ista propinqua, ut fugiam illuc, et est parva: evadam nunc illuc: numquid non parva est, et vivet anima mea?

21. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.

21. Et dixit ad eum, Ecce, suscepi faciem tuam etiam in hoc, ut non subvertam civitatem, ut loquutus es.

22. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

22. Festina, serva te illuc: quia non potero facere quicquam, donec ingrediaris illuc: idcirco vocavit nomen civitatis Sohar.

23. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

23. Sol egressus est super terram, et Lot ingressus est Sohar.

24. Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

24. Et Jehova pluit super Sedom et super Hamorah sulphur et ignem a Jehova e coelis.

25. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

25. Et subvertit civitates istas, et omnem planitiem, et omnes habitatores urbium, et germen terrae.

26. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

26. Et respexit uxor ejus post eum, et effecta est statua salis.

27. And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD:

27. Et surrexit Abraham mane ad locum, ubi steterat coram Jehova.

28. And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

28. Et respexit super faciem Sedom et Hamorah, et super omnem faciem terrae planitiei: et videt, et ecce, ascendebat fumus terrae sicut fumus fornacis.

29. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

29. Et fuit, quum disperderet Deus urbes planitiei, recordatus est Deus Abraham, et emisit Lot e medio subversionis, quando subvertit civitates, in quarum una habitabat Lot.

30. And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.

30. Et ascendit Lot de Sohar, et habitavit in monte, et duae filiae ejus cum eo: quia timuit habitare in Sohar, et habitavit in spelunca, ipse et duae filiae ejus.

31. And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth:

31. Et dixit primogenita ad minorem, Pater noster senex est, et vir non est in terra, ut ingrediatur ad nos secundum morem universae terrae.

32. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

32. Veni, potum demus patri nostro vinum, et dormiamus cum eo, et vivificemus de patre nostro semen.

33. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

33. Et potum dederunt patri suo vinum, nocte ipsa: et ingressa est primogenita, et dormivit cum patre suo, qui non cognovit, quando dormivit ipsa, nec quando surrexit ipsa.

34. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

34. Et fuit postridie, dixit primogenita ad minorem, Ecce, dormivi heri sero cum patre meo: potum demus ei vinum etiam hac nocte, et ingredere, dormi cum eo, et vivificemus de patre nostro semen.

35. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

35. Et potum dederunt etiam nocte ipsa patri suo vinum: et surrexit minor, et dormivit cum eo: nec cognovit quando dormivit ipsa, nec quando surrexit ipsa.

36. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.

36. Et conceperunt duae filiae Lot de patre suo.

37. And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day.

37. Et peperit primogenita filium, et vocavit nomen ejus Moab: ipse est pater Moab usque ad diem hanc.

38. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

38. Et minor etiam ipsa peperit filium, et vocavit nomen ejus Ben -- Hammi: ipse est pater filiorum Hammon usque ad diem hanc.

1. And there came two angels to Sodom . The question occurs, why one of the three angels has suddenly disappeared, and two only are come to Sodom? The Jews (with their wonted audacity in introducing fables) pretend that one came to destroy Sodom, the other to preserve Lot. But from the discourse of Moses, this appears to be frivolous: because we shall see that they both assisted in the liberation of Lot. What I have before adduced is more simple; namely, that it was granted to Abraham, as a peculiar favor, that God would not only send him two messengers from the angelic host, but that, in a more familiar

manner, he would manifest himself to him, in his own Son. For (as we have seen) one of the messengers held the principal place, as being superior to the others in dignity. Now, although Christ was always the Mediator, yet, because he manifested himself more obscurely to Lot than he did to Abraham, the two angels only came to Sodom. Since Moses relates, that Lot sat in the gate of the city about evening, many contend that he did so, according to daily custom, for the purpose of receiving guests into his house; yet, as Moses is silent respecting the cause, it would be rash to affirm this as certain. I grant, indeed, that he did not sit as idle persons are wont to do; but the conjecture is not less probable, that he had come forth to meet his shepherds, in order to be present when his sheep were folded. That he was hospitable, the courteous invitation which is mentioned by Moses clearly demonstrates; yet, why he then remained in the gate of the city is uncertain; unless it were, that he was unwilling to omit any opportunity of doing an act of kindness, when strangers presented themselves on whom he might bestow his services. What remains, on this point, may be found in the preceding chapter Ge 17:1

2. Nay, but we will abide in the street . The angels do not immediately assent, in order that they may the more fully investigate the disposition of the holy man. For he was about to bring them to his own house, not merely for the sake of supplying them with a supper, but for the purpose of defending them from the force and injury of the citizens. Therefore the angels act, as if it were safe to sleep on the highway; and thus conceal their knowledge of the abandoned wickedness of the whole people. For if the gates of cities are shut, to prevent the incursions of wild beasts and of enemies; how wrong and absurd it is that they who are within should be exposed to still more grievous dangers? Therefore the angels thus speak, in order to make the wickedness of the people appear the greater. And Lot, in urging the angels to come unto him, for the purpose of protecting them from the common violence of the people, the more clearly shows, how careful he was of his guests, lest they should suffer any dishonor or injury.

3. And he made them a feast . By these words, and others following, Moses shows that the angels were more sumptuously entertained than was customary: for Lot did not act thus, indiscriminately, with all. But, when he conceived, from the dignity of their mien and dress, that they were not common men, he baked cakes, and prepared a plentiful feast. Again, Moses says that the angels did eat: not that they had any need to do so; but because the time was not yet come, for the manifestation of their celestial nature.

4. Before they lay down . Here, in a single crime, Moses sets before our eyes a lively picture of Sodom. For it is hence obvious, how diabolical was their consent in all wickedness, since they all so readily conspired to perpetrate the most abominable crime. The greatness of their iniquity and wantonness, is apparent from the fact, that, in a collected troop, they approach, as enemies, to lay siege to the house of Lot. How blind and impetuous is their lust; since, without shame, they rush together like brute animals! how great their ferocity and cruelty; since they reproachfully threaten the holy man, and proceed to all extremities! Hence also we infer, that they were not contaminated with one vice only, but were given up to all audacity in crime, so that no sense of shame was left them. And Ezekiel (as we have above related) accurately describes from what beginnings of evil they had proceeded to this extreme turpitude, (Eze 16:49) What Paul says, also refers to the same point: that God punished the impiety of men, when he cast them into such a state of blindness, that they gave themselves up to abominable lusts, and dishonored their own bodies. (Ro 1:18.) But when the sense of shame is overcome, and the reins are given to lust, a vile and outrageous barbarism necessarily succeeds, and many kinds of sin are blended together, so that a most confused chaos is the result. But if this severe vengeance of God so fell upon the men of Sodom, that they became blind with rage, and prostituted themselves to all kinds of crime, certainly we shall scarcely be more mildly treated, whose iniquity is the less excusable, because the truth of God has been

more clearly revealed unto us.

Both old and young . Moses passes over many things in silence which may come unsought into the reader's mind: for instance, he does not mention by whom the multitude had been stirred up. Yet it is probable that there were some who fanned the flame: nevertheless, we hence perceive how freely they were disposed to commit iniquity; since, as at a given signal, they immediately assemble. It also shows how completely destitute they were of all remaining shame; for, neither did any gravity restrain the old, nor any modesty, suitable to their age, restrain the young: finally, he intimates, that all regard to honor was gone, and that the order of nature was perverted, when he says, that young and old flew together from the extreme parts of the city.

5. Where are the men ? Although it was their intention shamefully to abuse the strangers to their outrageous appetite, yet, in words, they pretend that their object is different. For, as if Lot had been guilty of a fault in admitting unknown men into the city, wherein he himself was a stranger, they command these men to be brought out before them. Some expound the word know in a carnal sense; and thus the Greek interpreters have translated it. 418 But I think the word has here a different meaning; as if the men had said, We wish to know whom thou bringest, as guests, into our city. The Scripture truly is accustomed modestly to describe an act of shame by the word know; and therefore we may infer that the men of Sodom would have spoken, in coarser language, of such an act: but, for the sake of concealing their wicked design, they here imperiously expostulate with the holy man, for having dared to receive unknown persons into his house. Here, however, a question arises; for if the men of Sodom were in the habit of vexing strangers, of all kinds, in this manner, how shall we suppose they had acted towards others? For Lot was not now for the first time beginning to be hospitable; and they, too, had always been addicted to lust. Lot was prepared to expose his own daughters to dishonor, in order to save his guests; how often, then, might it have been necessary to prostitute them before, if the fury of men of such character could not be otherwise assuaged? 419 Now truly, if Lot had known that such danger was impending; he ought rather to have exhorted his guests to withdraw in time. In my opinion, however, although Lot knew the manners of the city; he had, nevertheless, no suspicion of what really happened, that they would make an assault upon his house; this, indeed, seems to have been quite a new thing. It was, however, fitting, when the angels were sent to investigate the true state of the people, that they should all break out into this detestable crime. So the wicked, after they have long securely exulted in their iniquity, at length, by furiously rushing onward, accelerate their destruction in a moment. God therefore designed, in calling the men of Sodom to judgment, to exhibit, as it were, the extreme act of their wicked life; and he impelled them, by the spirit of deep infatuation, to a crime, the atrocity of which would not suffer the destruction of the place to be any longer deferred. For as the hospitality of the holy man, Lot, was honored with a signal reward; because he, unawares, received angels instead of men, and had them as guests in his house; so God avenged, with more severe punishment, the shameful lust of the others; who, while endeavoring to do violence to angels, were not only injurious towards men; but, to the utmost of their power, dishonored the celestial glory of God, by their sacrilegious fury.

6. And Lot went out at the door unto them . It appears from the fact that Lot went out and exposed himself to danger, how faithfully he observed the sacred right of hospitality. It was truly a rare virtue, that he preferred the safety and honor of the guests whom he had once undertaken to protect, to his own life: yet this degree of magnanimity is required from the children of God, that where duty and fidelity are concerned, they should not spare themselves. And although he was already grievously injured by the besieging of his house; he yet endeavors, by gentle words, to soothe ferocious minds, while he suppliantly

entreats them to lay aside their wickedness, and addresses them by the title of brethren. Now it appears, how savage was their cruelty, and how violent the rage of their lust, when they were in no degree moved by such extraordinary mildness. But the description of a rage so brutal, tends to teach us that punishment was not inflicted upon them, until they had proceeded to the last stage of wickedness. And let us remember, that the reprobate, when they have been blinded by the just judgment of God, rush, as with devoted minds, through every kind of crime, and leave nothing undone, until they render themselves altogether hateful and detestable to God and men.

8. I have two daughters . As the constancy of Lot, in risking his own life for the defense of his guests, deserves no common praise; so now Moses relates that a defect was mixed with this great virtue, which sprinkled it with some imperfection. For, being destitute of advice, he devises (as is usual in intricate affairs) an unlawful remedy. He does not hesitate to prostitute his own daughters, that he may restrain the indomitable fury of the people. But he should rather have endured a thousand deaths, than have resorted to such a measure. Yet such are commonly the works of holy men: since nothing proceeds from them so excellent, as not to be in some respect defective. Lot, indeed, is urged by extreme necessity; and it is no wonder that he offers his daughters to be polluted, when he sees that he has to deal with wild beasts; yet he inconsiderately seeks to remedy one evil by means of another. I can easily excuse some for extenuating his fault; yet he is not free from blame, because he would ward off evil with evil. But we are warned by this example, that when the Lord has furnished us with the spirit of invincible fortitude, we must also pray that he may govern us by the spirit of prudence; and that he will never suffer us to be deprived of a sound judgment, and a well-regulated reason. For then only shall we rightly proceed in our course of duty, when, in complicated affairs, we perceive, with a composed mind, what is necessary, what is lawful, and what is expedient to be done; then shall we be prepared promptly to meet any danger whatever. For, that our minds should be carried hither and thither by hastily catching at wicked counsels, is not less perilous than that they should be agitated by fear. But when reduced to the last straits, let us learn to pray, that the Lord would open to us some way of escape. Others would excuse Lot by a different pretext, namely, that he knew his daughters would not be desired. But I have no doubt that, being willing to avail himself of the first subterfuge which occurred to him, he turned aside from the right way. This, however, is indisputable; although the men of Sodom had not yet, in express terms, avowed the base desire with which they were inflamed, yet Lot, from their daily crimes, had formed his judgment respecting it. If any one should raise the objection that such a supposition is absurd; 420 I answer, that, since by custom they had imagined the crime to be lawful, the crowd was easily excited by a few instigators, as it commonly happens, where no distinction is maintained between right and wrong. When Lot says, Therefore came they under the shadow of my roof; his meaning is, that they had been committed to him by the Lord, and that he should be guilty of perfidy, unless he endeavored to protect them. 421

9. And they said, Stand back . That Lot, with all his entreaties, than which nothing could be adduced more likely to soothe their rage, was thus harshly repelled, shows the indomitable haughtiness of this people. And, in the first place, they threaten that, if he persists in interceding, they will deal worse with him than with those whom he defends. Then they reproach him with the fact, that he, a foreigner, assumes the province of a judge. Every word proves the pride with which they swell. They place one man in opposition to a multitude, as if they would say, 'By what right hast thou alone challenge to thyself authority over the whole city?' They next boast that, while they are natives, he is but a stranger. Such is, at the present time, the boasting of the Papists against the pious ministers of God's word: they allege against us, as a disgrace, the paucity of our numbers, in contrast with their own great multitude. 422 Then they pride themselves upon their long succession, and contend that it is intolerable for them to be reproved by new

men. 423 But however contumaciously the wicked may strive, rather than submit to reason, let us know that they are exalted only to their own ruin.

10. But the men put forth their hand . Moses again gives the name of men to those who were not so, but who had appeared as such; for although they begin to exert their celestial force, they do not yet declare that they are angels divinely sent from heaven. But here Moses teaches, that the Lord, although he may for a time seem regardless, while the faithful are engaged in conflict, yet never deserts his own, but stretches out his hand, (so to speak,) at the critical moment. Thus, in preserving Lot, he defers his aid until the last extremity. Let us, therefore, with tranquil minds, wait on his providence; and let us intrepidly follow what belongs to our calling, and what he commands; for although he may suffer us to be exposed to dangers he will still show, that he has never been unmindful of us. For we see, that as Lot had shut the door of his house for the protection of his guests, so he is repaid, when the angels not only receive him again, through the opened door, but by opposing the barriers of divine power, prevent the impious men from approaching it. For, (as I have before intimated), they afford him not merely human help, but they come to bring him assistance, armed with divine power. Whereas, Moses says, that the men were smitten with blindness, we are not so to understand it, as if they had been deprived of eyesight; but that their vision was rendered so dull, that they could distinguish nothing. This miracle was more illustrious, than if their eyes had been thrust out, or entirely blinded; because with their eyes open, they feel about, just like blind men, and seeing, yet do not see. At the same time, Moses wishes to describe their iron obstinacy: they do not find Lot's door; it follows then, that they had labored in seeking it; but, in this manner, they furiously wage war with God. This, however, has happened, not once only, and not with the men of Sodom alone; but is daily fulfilled in the reprobate, whom Satan fascinates with such madness, that when stricken by the mighty hand of God, they proceed with stupid obstinacy to advance against him. And we need not seek far, for an instance of such conduct; we see with what tremendous punishments God visits wandering lusts; and yet the world ceases not, with desperate audacity, to rush into the certain destruction which is set before their eyes.

12. Hast thou here any besides? At length the angels declare for what purpose they came, and what they were about to do. For so great was the indignity of the last act of this people, that Lot must now see how impossible it was for God to bear with them any longer. And, in the first place, they declare, that they are come to destroy the city, because the cry of it was waxen great. By which words they mean, that God was provoked, not by one act of wickedness only, but that, after he had long spared them, he was now, at last, almost compelled, by their immense mass of crimes, to come down to inflict punishment.

For we must maintain, that the more sins men heap together, the higher will their wickedness rise, and the nearer will it approach to God, to cry aloud for vengeance. Wherefore, as the angels testify, that God had been hitherto longsuffering, and of great forbearance; so they declare, on the other hand, what issue awaits all those, who, having gathered together mountains of guilt, exalt themselves with daily increasing audacity, as if, like the giants, they were about to assail heaven.

They, however, explain the cause of this destruction, not only that Lot may ascribe praise to the divine righteousness and equity, but that he, being impressed with fear, may the more quickly hasten his departure. For, such is the indolence of our flesh, that we slowly and coldly set ourselves to escape the judgment of God, unless we are deeply stirred by the dread of it: thus Noah, alarmed by the terror of the deluge, applied his industry to the framing of the ark. Meanwhile, the angels inspire the mind of the holy man with hope; lest he should tremble, or should be so possessed by fear, and so desponding respecting his deliverance, as to be too slow to depart.

For they not only promise that he shall be safe, but also grant, unasked, the life of his family. And truly, he ought not to have doubted respecting his own life, when he saw others freely given him, as by a superabundance of favor. It is however asked, 'Why was God willing to offer his kindness to ungrateful men, by whom he knew it would be rejected?' The same question may be put respecting the preaching of the gospel; for God was not ignorant that few would become partakers of that salvation, which nevertheless, he commands to be offered indiscriminately to all.

In this way, unbelievers are rendered more inexcusable, when they reject the message of salvation. The chief reason, however, why Lot is commanded to set before his own family the hope of deliverance, is, that he may embrace, with greater confidence, the offered favor of God, and may strenuously and quickly prepare himself to depart, not doubting of his own preservation. It is, with probability, inferred from this place, that he had, then, no sons in that city; for, in consequence of the exhortation of the angels he would immediately have attempted to draw them out of it.

We have before seen, that he had an ample and numerous band of servants; but no mention is made of them, since the freemen are here only reckoned. It is, nevertheless, probable, that some servants went forth with him, to carry provisions and some portion of furniture. For, whence did his daughters obtain in the desert mountain, the wine which they gave their father, unless some things, which Moses does not mention, had been conveyed by asses, or camels, or wagons? It was however possible, that, in so great a number, many chose rather to perish with the men of Sodom, than to become associates and companions of their lord, in seeking safety. But it is better to leave as we find them, those things which the Spirit of God has not revealed.

13. The Lord has sent us to destroy it . This place teaches us, that the angels are the ministers of God's wrath, as well as of his grace. Nor does it form any objection to this statement, that elsewhere the latter service is peculiarly ascribed to holy angels: as when the Apostle says, they were appointed for the salvation of those whom God had adopted as sons. (Heb 1:14.) And the Scripture, in various places, testifies, that the guardianship of the pious is committed to them, (Ps 91:11;) while, on the other hand, it declares that God executes his judgments by reprobate angels. (Ps 78:49.) For it must be maintained, that God causes his elect angels to preside over those judgments which he executes by means of the reprobate. For it would be absurd to attribute to devils, the honor of presiding over the judgments of God, since they do not yield him voluntary obedience; but rather, while raging contumaciously against him, are yet reluctantly compelled to become his executioners. Let us therefore know, that it is not foreign to the office of elect angels, to descend armed for the purpose of executing Divine vengeance and of inflicting punishment. As the angel of the Lord destroyed, in one night, the army of Sennacherib which besieged Jerusalem, (2Ki 19:35;) so also the angel of the Lord appeared to David with his drawn sword, when the pestilence was raging against the people. (2Sa 24:16.) But, as I have before said, the angels repeat what they had previously said to Abraham, concerning the cry of Sodomy that they may the more urgently impel Lot, by a detestation of the place, to take his flight, and may induce him by the fear of the wrath of God, to seek for safety.

14. And Lot went out . The faith of the holy man, Lot, appeared first in this, that he was completely awed and humbled at the threatening of God; secondly, that in the midst of destruction, he yet laid hold of the salvation promised to him. In inviting his sons-in-law to join him, he manifests such diligence as becomes the sons of God; who ought to labor, by all means, to rescue their own families from destruction. But when Moses says, 'he appeared as one who mocked;' the meaning is, that the pious old man was despised and derided and that what he said was accounted a fable; because his sons-in-law supposed him to be seized

with delirium, and to be vainly framing imaginary dangers. Lot, therefore, did not seem to them to mock purposely or to have come for the sake of trifling with them; but they deemed his language fabulous; because, where there is no religion, and no fear of God, whatever is said concerning the punishment of the wicked, vanishes as a vain and illusory thing. And hence we perceive how fatal an evil security is, which soon inebriates, yea, fascinates, the minds of the wicked, that they no longer think God sits as Judge in heaven; and thus they stupidly sleep in sin, till, while they're saying, Peace and safety, they are overwhelmed in sudden ruin. And especially, the nearer the vengeance of God approaches, the more does their obstinacy increase and become desperate. There is nothing more full of fear, and even of terror, than wicked men are, when the hand of God presses closely on them; but until, constrained by force, they perceive their destruction to be imminent, they either reject all threats with proud scorn, or contemptuously pass them by. But their indolence ought to awaken us to the fear of God, so that we may be always careful; but more especially when some token of the wrath of God presents itself before us.

15. The angels hastened Lot . Having praised the faith and piety of Lot, Moses shows that something human still adhered to him; because the angels hastened him, when he was lingering. The cause of his tardiness might be, that he thought he was going into exile: thus a multiplicity of cares and fears disturb his anxious mind. For he doubts what would happen to him, as a fugitive when, having left his house and furniture, naked and in want, he should retake himself to some desert place. In the meantime, he does not consider that he must act like persons shipwrecked, who, in order that they may come safe into port, cast into the sea their cargo, and every thing they have. He does not indeed doubt, that God is speaking the truth; nor does he refuse to remove elsewhere, as he is commanded; but, as if sinking under his own infirmity, and entangled with many cares, he, who ought to have run forth hastily, and without delay, moves with slow and halting pace. In his person, however, the Spirit of God presents to us, as in a mirror, our own tardiness; in order that we, shaking off all sloth, may learn to prepare ourselves for prompt obedience, as soon as the heavenly voice sounds in our ears; otherwise, in addition to that indolence which, by nature, dwells within us, Satan will interpose many delays. The angels, in order the more effectually to urge Lot forward, infuse the fear, lest he should be destroyed in the iniquity , or the punishment of the city. For the word אַיִן (ayon) signifies both. Not that the Lord rashly casts the innocent on the same heap with the wicked, but because the man, who will not consult for his own safety, and who, even being warned to beware, yet exposes himself, by his sloth, to ruin, deserves to perish.

16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand. The angels first urged him by words; now seizing him by the hand, and indeed with apparent violence, they compel him to depart. His tardiness is truly wonderful, since, though he was certainly persuaded that the angels did not threaten in vain, he could yet be moved, by no force of words, until he is dragged by their hands out of the city. Christ says,

'Though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak,'

(Mt 26:41)

here a worse fault is pointed out; because the flesh, by its sluggishness, so represses the alacrity of the spirit, that with slow halting, it can scarcely creep along. And, indeed, as every man's own experience bears him witness of this evil, the faithful ought to endeavor, with the greater earnestness, to prepare themselves to follow God; and to beware lest as with deaf ears, they disregard his threats. And truly, they will never so studiously and forcibly press forward as not still to be retarded more than enough, in the discharge of their duty. For what Moses says is worthy of attention, that the Lord was merciful to his servant, when, having laid hold of his hand by the angels, He hurried him out of the city. For so it is often

necessary for us to be forcibly drawn away from scenes which we do not willingly leave. If riches, or honors, or any other things of that kind, prove an obstacle to any one, to render him less free and disengaged for the service of God, when it happens that he is abridged of his fortune, or reduced to a lower rank, let him know that the Lord has laid hold of his hand; because words and exhortations had not sufficiently profited him. We ought not, therefore, to deem it hard, that those diseases, which instruction did not suffice effectually to correct, should be healed by more violent remedies. Moses even seems to point to something greater; namely, that the mercy of God strove with the sluggishness of Lot; for, if left to himself, he would, by lingering, have brought down upon his own head the destruction which was already near. Yet the Lord not only pardons him, but, being resolved to save him, seizes him by the hand, and draws him away, although making resistance.

17. Escape for thy life . This was added by Moses, to teach us that the Lord not only stretches out his hand to us for a moment, in order to begin our salvation; but that without leaving his work imperfect, he will carry it on even to the end. It certainly was no common act of grace, that the ruin of Sodom was predicted to Lot himself, lest it should crush him unawares; next, that a certain hope of salvation was given him by the angels; and, finally, that he was led by the hand out of the danger. Yet the Lord, not satisfied with having granted him so many favors, informs him of what was afterwards to be done, and thus proves himself to be the Director of his course, till he should arrive at the haven of safety. 424 Lot is forbidden to look behind him, in order that he may know, that he is leaving a pestilential habitation. This was done, first, that he might indulge no desire after it, and then, that he might the better reflect on the singular kindness of God, by which he had escaped hell. Moses had before related, how fertile and rich was that plain; Lot is now commanded to depart thence, that he may perceive himself to have been delivered, as out of the midst of a shipwreck. And although, while dwelling in Sodom, his heart was continually vexed; it was still scarcely possible that he should avoid contracting some defilement from a sink of wickedness so profound: being now, therefore, about to be purified by the Lord, he is deprived of those delights in which he had taken too much pleasure. Let us also hence learn, that God best provides for our salvation, when he cuts off those superfluities, which serve to the pampering of the flesh; and when, for the purpose of correcting excessive self-indulgence, he banishes us from a sweet and pleasant plain, to a desert mountain.

18. And Lot said unto them . Here another fault of Lot is censured, because he does not simply obey God, nor suffer himself to be preserved according to His will, but contrives some new method of his own. God assigns him a mountain as his future place of refuge, he rather chooses for himself a city. They are therefore under a mistake, who so highly extol his faith, as to deem this a perfect example of suitable prayer; for the design of Moses is rather to teach, that the faith of Lot was not entirely pure, and free from all defects. For it is to be held as an axiom, that our prayers are faulty, so far as they are not founded on the word. Lot, however, not only departs from the word, but preposterously indulges himself in opposition to the word; such importunity has, certainly, no affinity with faith. Afterwards, a sudden change of mind was the punishment of his foolish cupidity. For thus do all necessarily vacillate, who do not submit themselves to God. As soon as they attain one wish, immediately a new disquietude is produced, which compels them to change their opinion. It must then, in short, be maintained, that Lot is by no means free from blame, in wishing for a city as his residence; for he both sets himself in opposition to the command of God, which it was his duty to obey; and desires to remain among those pleasures, from which it was profitable for him to be removed. He, therefore, acts just as a sick person would do, who should decline an operation, or a bitter draught, which his physician had prescribed. Nevertheless, I do not suppose, that the prayer of Lot was altogether destitute of faith; I rather think, that though he declined from the right way, he

not only did not depart far from it, but was even fully purposed in his mind to keep it. For he always depended upon the word of God; but in one particular he fell from it, by entreating that a place should be given to him, which had been denied. Thus, with the pious desires of holy men, some defiled and turbid admixture is often found. I am not however ignorant, that sometimes they are constrained, by a remarkable impulse of the Spirit, to depart in appearance from the word, yet without really transgressing its limits. But the immoderate carnal affection of Lot betrays itself, in that he is held entangled by those very delights which he ought to have shunned. Moreover, his inconstancy is a proof of his rashness, because he is soon displeased with himself for what he has done.

19. Behold now, thy servant has found grace in thy sight . Though Lot saw two persons, he yet directs his discourse to one. Whence we infer, that he did not rely upon the angels; because he was well convinced that they had no authority of their own, and that his salvation was not placed in their hands. He uses therefore their presence in no other way than as a mirror, in which the face of God may be contemplated. Besides, Lot commemorates the kindness of God, not so much for the sake of testifying his gratitude, as of acquiring thence greater confidence in asking for more. For since the goodness of God is neither exhausted, nor wearied, by bestowing; the more ready we find him to give, the more confident does it become us to be, in hoping for what is good. And this truly is the property of faith, to take encouragement for the future, from the experience of past favor. And Lot does not err on this point; but he acts rashly in going beyond the word for the sake of self-gratification. Therefore I have said, that his prayer, though it flowed from the fountain of faith, yet drew something turbid from the mire of carnal affection. Let us then, relying upon the mercy of God, not hesitate to expect all things from him; especially those which he himself has promised, and which he permits us to choose.

I cannot escape to the mountain . He does not indeed rage against God, with determined malice as the wicked are wont to do; yet, because he rests not upon the word of God, he slides, and almost falls away. For why does he fear destruction in the mountain, where he was to be protected by the hand of God, and yet expect to find a safe abode in that place, which is both near to Sodom, and obnoxious to similar vengeance, on account of its impure and wicked inhabitants? But this verily is the nature of men, that they choose to seek their safety in hell itself, rather than in heaven, whenever they follow their own reason. We see, then, how greatly Lot errs, in seeing from, and entertaining suspicions of, a mountain infected with no contagion of iniquity and choosing a city which, overflowing with crimes, could not but be hateful to God. He pretends that it is a little one, in order that he may the more easily obtain his request. As if he had said, that he only wanted a corner where he might be safely sheltered. This would have been right, if he had not declined the asylum divinely granted to him and rashly contrived another for himself.

21. See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also . Some ignorantly argue from this expression, that Lot's prayer was pleasing to God, because he assented to his request, and gave him what he sought. For it is no new thing for the Lord sometimes to grant, as an indulgence, what he, nevertheless, does not approve. And he now indulges Lot, but in such way, that he soon afterwards corrects his folly. Meanwhile, however, since God so kindly and gently bears with the evil wishes of his own people, what will he not do for us if our prayers are regulated according to the pure direction of his Spirit, and are drawn from his word? But after the angel has granted him his wish respecting the place, he again reproves his indolence, by exhorting him to make haste.

22. I cannot do any thing . Since the angel had not only been sent as an avenger to destroy Sodom, but also had received a command for the preservation of Lot; he therefore declares, that he will not do the former act, unless this latter be joined with it; because it is not at the option of the servant to divide those

things which God has joined together. I am not, however, dissatisfied with the explanation of some, who suppose the angel to speak in the person of God. For although in appearance the language is harsh, yet there is no absurdity in saying, that God is unable to destroy the reprobate without saving his elect. Nor must we, therefore, deem his power to be limited, when he lays himself under any such necessity; 426 or that anything of his liberty and authority is diminished, when he willingly and freely binds himself. And let us especially remember, that his power is connected by a sacred bond with his grace, and with faith in his promises. Hence it may be truly and properly said, that he can do nothing but what he wills and promises. This is a true and profitable doctrine. There will, however, be less ground of scruple if we refer the passage to the angels; who had a positive commandment, from which it was not lawful for them to abate the smallest portion.

24. Then the Lord rained . Moses here succinctly relates in very unostentatious language, the destruction of Sodom and of the other cities. The atrocity of the case might well demand a much more copious narration, expressed in tragic terms; but Moses, according to his manner, simply recites the judgment of God, which no words would be sufficiently vehement to describe, and then leaves the subject to the meditation of his readers. It is therefore our duty to concentrate all our thoughts on that terrible vengeance, the bare mention of which, as it did not take place without so mighty concussion of heaven and earth, ought justly to make us tremble; and therefore it is so frequently mentioned in the Scriptures.

And it was not the will of God that those cities should be simply swallowed up by an earthquake; but in order to render the example of his judgment the more conspicuous, he hurled fire and brimstone upon them out of heaven. To this point belongs what Moses says, that the Lord rained fire from the Lord. The repetition is emphatical, because the Lord did not then cause it to rain, in the ordinary course of nature; but, as if with a stretched out hand, he openly fulminated in a manner to which he was not accustomed, for the purpose of making it sufficiently plain, that this rain of fire and brimstone was produced by no natural causes.

It is indeed true, that the air is never agitated by chance; and that God is to be acknowledged as the Author of even the least shower of rain; and it is impossible to excuse the profane subtlety of Aristotle, who, when he disputes so acutely concerning second causes, in his Book on Meteors, buries God himself in profound silence. Moses, however, here expressly commends to us the extraordinary work of God; in order that we may know that Sodom was not destroyed without a manifest miracle.

The proof which the ancients have endeavored to derive, from this testimony, for the Deity of Christ, is by no means conclusive: and they are angry, in my judgment, without cause, who severely censure the Jews, because they do not admit this kind of evidence. I confess, indeed, that God always acts by the hand of his Son, and have no doubt that the Son presided over an example of vengeance so memorable; but I say, they reason inconclusively, who hence elicit a plurality of Persons, whereas the design of Moses was to raise the minds of the readers to a more lively contemplation of the hand of God.

And as it is often asked, from this passage, 'What had infants done, to deserve to be swallowed up in the same destruction with their parents?' the solution of the question is easy; namely, that the human race is in the hand of God, so that he may devote whom he will to destruction, and may follow whom he will with his mercy. Again, whatever we are not able to comprehend by the limited measure of our understanding, ought to be submitted to his secret judgment. Lastly, the whole of that seed was accursed and execrable so that God could not justly have spared, even the least.

26. But his wife looked back . Moses here records the wonderful judgment of God, by which the wife of Lot was transformed into a statue of salt. But under the pretext of this narrative, captious and perverse men ridicule Moses; for since this metamorphosis has no more appearance of truth, than those which Ovid has feigned, they boast that it is undeserving of credit. But I rather suppose it to have happened through the artifice of Satan, that Ovid, by fabulously trifling, has indirectly thrown discredit on this most signal proof of Divine vengeance.

But whatever heathens might please to fabricate, is no concern of ours. It is only of importance to consider, whether the narrative of Moses contains anything absurd or incredible. And, first, I ask; Since God created men out of nothing, why may he not, if he sees fit, reduce them again to nothing? If this is granted, as it must be; why, if he should please, may he not turn them into stones? Yea, those excellent philosophers, who display their own acuteness, in derogating from the power of God, daily see miracles as great in the course of nature.

For how does the crystal acquire its hardness? and -- not to refer to rare examples -- how is the living animal generated from lifeless seed? how are birds produced from eggs? Why then does a miracle appear ridiculous to them, in this one instance, when they are obliged to acknowledge innumerable examples of a similar kind? and how can they, who deem it inconsistent, that the body of a woman should be changed into a mass of salt, believe that the resurrection will restore to life, a carcass reduced to putrefaction?

When, however, it is said, that Lot's wife was changed into a statue of salt, let us not imagine that her soul passed into the nature of salt; for it is not to be doubted, that she lives to be a partaker of the same resurrection with us, though she was subjected to an unusual kind of death, that she might be made an example to all. However, I do not suppose Moses to mean, that the statue had the taste of salt; but that it had something remarkable, to admonish those who passed by.

It was therefore necessary, that some marks should be impressed upon it, whereby all might know it to be a memorable prodigy. Others interpret the statue of salt to have been an incorruptible one, which should endure for ever; but the former exposition is the more genuine. It may now be asked, why the Lord so severely punished the imprudence of the unhappy woman; seeing that she did not look back, from a desire to return to Sodom? Perhaps, being yet doubtful, she wished to have more certain evidence before her eyes; or, it might be, that, in pity to the perishing people, she turned her eyes in that direction.

Moses, certainly, does not assert that she purposely struggled against the will of God; but, forasmuch as the deliverance of her, and her husband, was an incomparable instance of Divine compassion, it was right that her ingratitude should be thus punished. Now, if we weigh all the circumstances, it is clear that her fault was not light. First, the desire of looking back proceeded from incredulity; and no greater injury can be done to God, than when credit is denied to his word.

Secondly we infer from the words of Christ, that she was moved by some evil desire; (Lu 17:32;) and that she did not cheerfully leave Sodom, to hasten to the place whither God called her; for we know that he commands us to remember Lot's wife, lest, indeed, the allurements of the world should draw us aside from the meditation of the heavenly life. It is therefore probable, that she, being discontented with the favor God had granted her, glided into unholy desires, of which thing also her tardiness was a sign; for Moses intimates that she was following after her husband, when he says, that she looked back from behind him; for she did not look back towards him; but because by the slowness of her pace, she was less advanced, she, therefore, was behind him.

And although it is not lawful to affirm any thing respecting her eternal salvation; it is nevertheless probable that God, having inflicted temporal punishment, spared her soul; inasmuch as he often chastises his own people in the flesh, that their soul may be saved from eternal destruction. Since, however, the knowledge of this is not very profitable, and we may without danger remain in ignorance, let us rather attend to the example which God designs for the common benefit of all ages.

If the severity of the punishment terrifies us; let us remember, that they sin, at this days not less grievously, who, being delivered, not from Sodom, but from hell, fix their eyes on some other object than the proposed prize of their high calling.

27. And Abraham got up early in the morning . Moses now reverts to Abraham, and shows that he, by no means, neglected what he had heard from the mouth of the angel; for he relates that Abraham came to a place where he might see the judgment of God. For we must not suspect that (as we have lately said respecting Lot's wife) he trusted more to his own eyes than to the word of God; and that he came to explore, because he was in doubt. But we rather infer from the text, that he, being already persuaded that the angel had not spoken in vain, sought confirmation, by the actual beholding of the event; which confirmation would be useful both to himself and to posterity. And it is not to be doubted, that during the whole night, he suffered severe anguish respecting the safety of his nephew Lot. Whether he became satisfied on this point or not we do not know; yet I rather incline to the conjecture, that he remained anxious about him. And it is possible that, hesitating between hope and fear, he went forward to meet him, in order that he might see whether he was delivered or not. And although he beholds nothing but the smoke, which generally remains after a great fire; yet this sign is given him from the Lord, for a testimony to posterity, of a punishment so memorable. God indeed designs, that, in the very appearance of the place, a monument of his wrath should exist for ever: but because, through the readiness of the world to cast a doubt upon the judgments of God, it might be easily believed, that such had been the nature of the place from the beginning; or that the change had occurred accidentally; the Lord was pleased to exhibit his act of vengeance before the eyes of Abraham, in order that he might discharge the office of a herald to posterity.

29. God remembered Abraham . Although Moses does not assert that the deliverance of Abraham's nephew was made known to him; yet since he says, that Lot was saved from destruction for Abraham's sake, it is probable that he was not deprived of that consolation which he most needed; and that he was conscious of the benefit, for which it became him to give thanks. If it seems to any one absurd, that the holy man Lot should be granted for the sake of another; as if the Lord had not respect to his own piety: I answer, these two things well agree with each other; that the Lord, since he is wont to aid his own people, cared for Lot, whom he had chosen, and whom he governed by his Spirit; and yet that, at the same time, he would show, in the preservation of his life, how greatly he loved Abraham, to whom he not only granted personal protection, but also the deliverance of others. It is however right to observe, that what the Lord does gratuitously, -- induced by no other cause than his own goodness, -- is ascribed to the piety or the prayers of men, for this reason; that we may be stirred up to worship God, and to pray to him. We have seen, a little while before, how merciful God proved himself to be, in preserving Lot; and truly, he would not have perished, even if he had not been the nephew of Abraham. Yet Moses says, it was a favor granted to Abraham, that Lot was not consumed in the same destruction with Sodom. But if the Lord extended the favor which he had vouchsafed to his servant, to the nephew also, who now was as a stranger from his family; how much more confidently ought every one of the faithful to expect, that the same grace shall, by no means be wanting to his own household? And, if the Lord, when he favors us,

embraces others also who are connected with us, for our sake, how much more will he have respect to ourselves? In saying that Lot dwelt in those cities, the figure synecdoche, which puts the whole for a part, is used, but it is expressly employed to make the miracle more illustrious; because it happened, only by the singular providence of God, that when five cities were destroyed a single person should escape.

30. And Lot went up out of Zoar. This narration proves what I have before alluded to, that those things which men contrive for themselves, by rash counsels drawn from carnal reason, never prosper: especially when men, deluded by vain hope, or impelled by depraved wishes, depart from the word of God. For although temerity commonly seems to be successful at the beginning; and they who are carried away by their lusts, exult over the joyful issue of affairs; yet the Lord, at length, curses whatever is not undertaken with his approval; and the declaration of Isaiah is fulfilled,

'Woe to them who begin a work and not by the Spirit of the Lord;

who take counsel, but do not ask at his mouth,'

(Isa 30:1.)

Lot, when commanded to retake himself to the mountain, chose rather to dwell in Zoar. After this habitation was granted to him, according to his own wish, he soon repents and is sorry for he trembles at the thought that destruction is every moment hastening on a place so near to Sodom, in which perhaps the same impiety and wickedness was reigning. But let the readers recall to memory what I have said, that it was only through the wonderful kindness of God, that he did not receive either immediate, or very severe punishment. For the Lord, by pardoning him at the time, caused him finally to become judge of his own sin. For he was neither expelled from Zoar by force nor by the hand of man; but a blind anxiety of mind drove him and hurried him into a cavern, because he had followed the lust of his flesh rather than the command of God. And thus in chastising the faithful, God mitigates their punishments so as to render it their best medicine. For if he were to deal strictly with their folly they would fall down in utter confusion. He therefore gives them space for repentance that they may willingly acknowledge their fault.

31. And the firstborn said 427 Here Moses narrates a miracle, which rightly brings the readers to astonishment. For, how could that unchaste intercourse come into the mind of the daughters of Lot, while the terrible punishment of God of the Sodomites stood still before her eyes, and while they knew that the scandalous and sinful lusts were the chief causes thereof? True, they were not so much moved through sensual lusts, as through a foolish desire for the procreation of their family; nevertheless, this urge was too absurd, because it forces the nature to forget all chastity and sense of shame, and, like the beasts, to destroy all difference between scandalous and honorable. To understand the better the whole of the case, I will deal with the separate parts, in order.

In the first place, concerning the plan of Lot's oldest daughter, whom the younger obeyed, concerning that I take for granted that none of both is urged through fleshy lust, but that they both have only thought about the propagation of the family. For, what kind of passion would that have been, to desire for intercourse with an already old father?

That the oldest furtively comes in for but one night, and puts her sister in her stead, the next night, and that they, being pregnant, not think to return to the embrace of their father; from that we decide in the second place, that they have had no other goal but to become mother. But I do not approve of what some conjecture, who say that they were misled by a great error, thinking that the whole world had perished

together with Sodom. For, they had just dwelt in Zoar, also there were sweet regions before their eyes, which were surely not without inhabitants, and also they had learned from their father that a special punishment was inflicted upon the Sodomites and the other neighbors.

They also were not ignorant of the family whence their father came, and what kind of uncle he had followed out of his fatherland. So, what must we think? That, because they were assured that families are maintained by children, it was hard for them and it was a continual cause of grief, that they were without children. Also the emptiness, when their father would be dead, could seem to be unbearable for them, because they saw that they then would be lonely, and without any help.

So, hence their impudent desire, and that absurd urgency to seek this unchaste intercourse, as they were afraid of a lonely life, which was liable to many concerns. Also I doubt not, that Moses not narrates what they have used as a pretext, but what they have said in a sincere feeling of their hearts. So, they wanted to bring forth seed, like the custom of all the nations. They adduce the example of the entire world, because they would deem it unfair when their state would be worse than that of the others.

Everywhere, they say, the young women are praised, who conceive children, and thus build their families; why must we then be condemned to be always childless? In the mean time, they well know that they commit a great sin. For, why make they their father drunken? Is it not, because they guess, that he cannot be made willing? When he has had an aversion to unchastity, the daughters must necessarily have had the same notion in their consciences. So, in no wise they are to be excused, that they lend themselves to a scandalous intercourse, which all the nation abhor by nature.

While the people, with normal crimes, are forced to admit their crimes; how will they plead themselves free with important crimes, as if no fear for God's judgement prickled them? Therefore, with suppression of the conscience, Lot's daughters devote themselves to that crime. The reason to mislead their father was no other than this, that they knew the disgrace, which they themselves necessarily had to condemn, because they knew that it was against the order of the nature. From this appears, whereto the people come when they follow their own will; for nothing can be so absurd or bestial, that we not decay to that, when we give free rein to our flesh. Let this, therefore, be the beginning of all our desires, to examine what the Lord allows, in order that it comes not in our mind to ask something, what according His Word is free to us.

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