

And Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan that it was well-watered everywhere before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gommorah . . . like the land of Egypt . . . A century ago this was a wonderful story to read, to tell in S.S. classes about the unselfishness of Abraham and the selfishness of Lot who chose out beautiful Jordan valley like the garden of the Lord and left the barren hill country up beside Ai and Bethel.

In 1929 when I was over there--I don't know about the recent developments--I walked along between Bethel and Airx and saw those little springs and saw the men coming along with their little pipes and sheep following them, and it was such a beautiful place for pasture land. Then I looked down thousands of feet below down at the Jordan valley and there it was bleak and desolate.                      Meyer, the greatest German Historian of ancient ~~ix~~ time, that had been up to that time, said in those days that the whole land of the Jordan was bleak, desolate, and barren, he said, just like the condition of the Nile. He said it never was developed like the Nile in Egypt, under almost identical circumstances.

Already when I was there in 1929, a few years before an expedition had gone down there into the Jordan valley, and they had found remains of 70 cities, all destroyed before the time when Moses wrote the book of Genesis, and they found that the Jordan valley had been irrigated, and had been a region of great prosperity until Sodom and Gommorah were destroyed by the Lord. When that happened people decided it wasn't a very healthy area to stay in, and the result was that many left and the irrigation got filled up, swamps developed, malaria came and the rest of the people left, and this situation did not fit at all with the days of Moses and never fitted since as far as I know but it's exactly what it was in the day of Abraham!

And Moses wrote it down with a background that was exactly true of the situation when this was given. And there is situation after situation where we find that the Biblical states are ~~srue~~ true to the situation as it is described in the Scripture, even if they are not true to the time that critics say that different sections of the Scripture were written. We can trust the Bible when it speaks of physical things. It not undertake to explain all of science to us. It does not attempt to explain everything of ancient history to us. It ~~does not~~ does not attempt to explain everything of the history of Israel.

But whatever we can clearly draw from the Bible we can trust. A very interesting illustration is found in Daniel 5. Most of you are familiar with the incident described there. You remember how it tells that at Belshazzar's great feast there was a hand that came down, and wrote on the wall, and they tried to find someone to explain it, and his mother came in and said there is a man in the kingdom now living in retirement who used to be able to explain great mysteries. You get hold of him, and I think he will explain it to you.