Chapter 6: Sodom and Gomorrah
Salty Story or Sinful Cities?
- Genesis 10,13,14,18-19
- Time of Abraham
- Pentapolis (Group of five cities)
- Well watered plain southern portion of Jordan valley
- Lot (Abraham's Nephew) choose to live in the plains of Sodom

Genesis 13:10-11
(10) And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) (11) So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other.

Genesis 14
- Kings of the East attack Sodom and Gomorrah along with other cities
- Lot is taken hostage
- Abraham rescues Lot
- Returns with people and possessions of Sodom
- Abraham is met by 2 Kings Melchizedek King of Salem (Jerusalem)
- Bera King of Sodom
- Abraham rejects Sodom
- Abraham is anointed by King of Salem

Genesis 18:19
- The LORD along with 2 Angels appears to Abraham
- The Lord tells of the coming destruction of Sodom (Gen. 18:20-23)
- Abraham negotiates mercy for Sodom
- 50 to 10 Righteous
- God would spare the city (Gen. 18:23-33) if 10 were found
- Lot, his wife and 2 daughters were spared
- Lot's wife turned into salt
Then the LORD rained sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD.

And he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley, and he looked and, behold, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace. So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived.

Skepticism of the Scholars

"Purely mythical tale". Theodor Gaster

Created by Israelite storytellers to communicate theological concerns. Not real history

Kernel of historicity...fragment of local recollection

Earthquake destroyed Sodom in 2350 BC

Caused “Light fractions of hydrocarbons escaping from underground reservoirs”

David Neev & K.O. Emery

Primitive recollections of the past...

Skepticism of the Scholars

Skepticism of the Scholars

Skepticism of the Scholars

The Search for Sodom and Gomorrah

Concentrated on the Dead Sea region

Biblical Text specifies “The Valley of Siddim” (The Salt Sea)

1924 W.F. Albright & Rev. M. Kyle

Believed city was under the waters

1960 Ralph Baney explored the sea floor (Dead Sea) found Tress at 23 foot level

No trace of city structures

Assumed the city was consumed

Others “Jebel Usdum”..Lot’s Wife

Sodom and Gomorrah Represent Sin

Sodom is mentioned 48 times in scripture

From Genesis 10 to Revelation 11 Jesus spoke of Sodom and Gomorrah

Philo and Josephus also spoke of Sodom

Matthew 10:15

(15) Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

Matthew 11:23

(23) And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.
Albright also discovered structures on the Eastern shore of Transjordan. Across from Lisan Peninsula, Bab Edh-Dhra remains heavily fortified and settled community. Walled buildings, houses and numerous cemeteries, artifacts. Collapsed 13-foot blocks (monoliths). He dated to 3150-2200 BC. Believed ceased to be occupied with the period.


Estimates have placed the graves at Bab edh-Dhra at over 500,000 people. Over 20,000 grave holes have been identified.

Archaeologist Bryant Wood suggests Sodom 1 Kilometer away. cemetery. Proves large population. Type of burial...dead buried in a building on the surface. Quote from Pg. 115-118.

Charnel House: Collecting of bones of the dead. Following they would bury bones. Charnel houses were burned from the inside out.
Excavation of Bab edh-Dhra

- The burning of Bab edh-Dhra implies a vast area was burned.
- 1920's, 30's abundant deposits of asphalt, petroleum and natural gas were noted.
- Genesis 14:10, Tar bits
- Genesis 19:24, salt, brimstone (Sulphur)

God rained on the city fire and Brimstone

More Extensive Survey

- 5 Cities were identified:
  - Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zoar, and Zeboiim
- Other cities have been found:
  - es-Safi has been identified as Zoar from Byzantine times
- Numeria
- Feifa
- Khanazir
- These sites were destroyed and abandoned at the same time (2450-2350 BCE) Early Bronze Age III Period
- Same ash deposits found

Numeira A heavily fortified city (Gomorrah)
- One layer of ash was over 7-feet thick
- City was in perfect condition underneath it
- Every city, ash deposits caused the soil to have consistency of spongy charcoal
- Impossible to resettle
- Only Zoar did not share the ash (Gen. 19:30)
Which City goes with which site

- Which site hosted which city?
- Sodom and Gomorrah
- Admah and Zeboiim
- Zoar was near Sodom
- Sodom and Gomorrah were most prominent
- Lot choose Sodom--the best
- King Bera represented other cities
- Angels visited Sodom
- Visible, Abraham viewed destruction
- Bab edh-Dhra largest

Which City goes with which site

- Numeira connected with Gomorrah
- Southwest sector of the city destroyed by extensive burning
- Foundations buried under tons of burnt bricks
- Rooms sealed in ash, 5000 barley seeds recovered--bread and bear
- Ezekiel 16:49--fullness of bread

Which City goes with which site

- Bab Edh-Dhra with Sodom
- Numeira with Gomorrah
- Es-Safi with Zoar
- Feifa with Admah
- Khanazir with Zeboiim

Which City goes with which site

- Numeira connected with Gomorrah
- Southwest sector of the city destroyed by extensive burning
- Foundations buried under tons of burnt bricks
- Rooms sealed in ash, 5000 barley seeds recovered--bread and bear
- Ezekiel 16:49--fullness of bread