

Modern Sodom

The site of the present Dead Sea Works, a large operation for the extraction of Dead Sea minerals, is called "*Sdom*" (סדום) according to its traditional Arab name, *Khirbet as-sudūm* (السدوم خربت). Nearby is Mount Sodom (הר סדום in Hebrew and جبل السدوم in Arabic) which consists mainly of salt. In the Plain of Sdom (סדום מישור) to the south there are a few springs and two small agricultural villages, Neot Hakikar and Ein Tamar.

The Judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah

The story of the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah is told in Genesis 18–19. Three men, thought by most commentators to have been angels appearing as men, came to Abraham in the plains of Mamre. After the angels received the hospitality of Abraham and Sarah, "the Lord" revealed to Abraham that he would confirm what he had heard against Sodom and Gomorrah, "and because their sin is very grievous."

In response, Abraham inquired of the Lord if he would spare the city if 50 righteous people were found in it, to which the Lord agreed he would not destroy it for the sake of the righteous yet dwelling therein. Abraham then inquired of God for mercy at lower numbers (first 45, then 40, then 30, then 20, and finally at 10), with the Lord agreeing each time.^[36] Two angels were sent to Sodom to investigate and were met by Abraham's nephew Lot, who convinced the angels to lodge with him, and they ate with Lot.

Genesis 19:4–5 described what followed, which confirmed its end:

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

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

(NRSV: know them, NIV: can have sex with them, NJB: can have intercourse with them).

Lot refused to give his guests to the inhabitants of Sodom and, instead, offered them his two virgin daughters "which have not known man" and to "do ye to them as [*is*] good in your eyes". However, they refused this offer, complained about this alien, namely Lot, giving orders, and then came near to break down the door. Lot's angelic guests rescued him and struck the men with blindness and they informed Lot of their mission to destroy the city. Then (not having found even 10

righteous people in the city), they commanded Lot to gather his family and leave. As they made their escape, one angel commanded Lot to "look not behind thee" (singular "thee"). However, as Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed with brimstone and fire from the Lord, Lot's wife looked back at the city, and she became a pillar of salt.

Other references

Major and minor prophets in the Hebrew Bible have referred to Sodom and Gomorrah to parallel their prophetic events. The New Testament also contains passages of parallels to the destruction and surrounding events that pertained to these cities and those who were involved. Later deuterocanonical texts attempt to glean additional insights about these cities of the Jordan Plain and their residents.

Moses

Moses referred to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in **Deuteronomy 29:22–23**:

"Your children who follow you in later generations and foreigners who come from distant lands will see the calamities that have fallen on the land and the diseases with which the Lord has afflicted it. The whole land will be a burning waste of salt and sulfur—nothing planted, nothing sprouting, no vegetation growing on it. It will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboyim, which the Lord overthrew in fierce anger." —NIV

See also: **Deuteronomy 32:32–33**

Major Prophets

Isaiah 1:9–10, Isaiah 3:9 and Isaiah 13:19–22 addresses people as from Sodom and Gomorrah, associates Sodom with **shameless sinning** and tells Babylon that it will end like those two cities.

Jeremiah 23:14, Jeremiah 49:17–18, Jeremiah 50:39–40 and Lamentations 4:6 associate Sodom and Gomorrah with **adultery and lies**, prophesies the fate of Edom, south of the Dead Sea, predicts the fate of Babylon and uses Sodom as a comparison.

In **Ezekiel 16:48–50**, God compares Jerusalem to Sodom, saying "Sodom never did what you and your daughters have done." He explains that the sin of Sodom

was that "She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me."

Minor Prophets

In **Amos 4:1–11**, God tells the Israelites that although he treated them like Sodom and Gomorrah, they still did not repent.

In **Zephaniah 2:9**, Zephaniah tells Moab and Ammon, southeast and northeast of the Dead Sea, that they will end up like Sodom and Gomorrah.

New Testament

In **Matthew 10:1–15**, cf. **Luke 10:1–12**, Jesus declares certain cities more damnable than Sodom and Gomorrah, due to their response to Jesus' disciples, in the light of greater grace (RSV):

"And if any one will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. Truly, I say to you, it shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomor'rah than for that town."

In **Matthew 11:20–24**, Jesus prophesies the fate of some cities where he did some of his works (RSV):

"And you, Caper'na-um, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall 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. But I tell you that it shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you."

In **Luke 17:28–30**, Jesus compares his second-coming to the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah (RSV):

"Likewise as it was in the days of Lot—they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom fire and sulphur rained from heaven and destroyed them all—so will it be on the day when the Son of man is revealed."

In **Romans 9:29**, Paul the Apostle quotes Isaiah 1:9 (RSV): "And as Isaiah predicted, 'If the Lord of hosts had not left us children, we would have fared like Sodom and been made like Gomor'rah.'"

In **2 Peter 2:4–10**, Saint Peter says that just as God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and saved Lot, he will deliver godly people from temptations and punish the wicked on Judgement Day.

Jude 1:7 records that both Sodom and Gomorrah were "giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire".

Revelation 11:7–8 makes an allegorical use of Sodom when it describes the places where the two witnesses will descend during the Apocalypse.