

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah



A photograph of the Dead Sea

The Prophet Lut (as) lived at the same time as the Prophet Ibrahim (as) and was sent as a Messenger to a neighbouring tribe to the Prophet Ibrahim (as). That tribe, according to the Qur'an, practiced a perversion never before seen in the world: homosexuality. When the Prophet Lut (as) told the people to abandon one of the greatest sins and delivered to them the message of Allah, they rejected him. They denied that he was a Prophet and continued with their horrid lifestyle. As a result of this, the tribe was destroyed in a terrible disaster by Allah.

And Lut, when he said to his people, "Do you commit an obscenity not perpetrated before you by anyone in all the worlds? You come with lust to men instead of women. You are indeed a depraved people." (Qur'an, 7:80-81)

We rained down a rain upon them. See the final fate of the evildoers! (Qur'an, 7:84)

[Our Messengers said to Lut,] "We will bring down on the inhabitants of this city a devastating punishment from heaven because of their deviance." We have left a Clear Sign of them behind for people who use their intellect. (Qur'an, 29:34-35)

This city, in which the Prophet Lut (as) lived and which was later destroyed, is called "Sodom" in the Old Testament. It appears that this people, who lived to the north of the Red Sea, was destroyed in a manner compatible with the description in the Qur'an. Archaeological excavations have revealed that the city lay close to the Dead Sea on the present-day Israeli-Jordanian border. According to scientists, the area is covered in large deposits of sulphur. For this reason, no life in the form of animals or plants is to be found there and the region stands as a symbol of destruction.

[He is] the Lord of the heavens and the earth and everything in between them, if you are people with certainty. There is no god but Him—He gives life and causes to die—your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers, the previous peoples.
(Qur'an, 44:7-8)

Sulphur is an element which appears as a result of volcanic eruptions. Indeed, there is clear evidence in the Qur'an that the method of destruction was earthquake and volcanic eruptions. The German archaeologist Werner Keller says this about the region:

Together with the base of this mighty fissure, which runs precisely through this area, the Vale of Siddim, including Sodom and Gomorrah, plunged one day into the abyss. Their destruction came about through a great earthquake which was probably accompanied by explosions, lightning, issue of natural gas and general conflagration... The subsidence released volcanic

forces that had been lying dormant deep down along the whole length of the fracture. In the upper valley of the Jordan near Bashan there are still towering craters of extinct volcanoes; great stretches of lava and deep layers of basalt have been deposited on the limestone surface.[229](#)



The photographs above show the ancient settlement area around the volcano Mount Vesuvius. It is clear from the remains in the region that the Pompeiians who lived here enjoyed a luxurious and splendid lifestyle.

These layers of lava and basalt are the most important evidence showing that a volcanic eruption and earthquake once took place there. In any event Lake Lut, otherwise known as the Dead Sea, lies directly above a seismically active region-in other words, an earthquake belt:

The base of the dead sea is located with a tectonic rooted downfall. This valley is located in a tension stretching between the Taberiyeh Lake in the north, and mid of Arabah Valley in the south.[230](#)

The technical aspect of the disaster suffered by the people of Lut has been revealed in studies carried out by geologists. These have shown that the earthquake which wiped out the people of Lut came about as the result of a very long fault line. The Jordan River drops a total of 180 metres during its 190 km course. This, and the fact that the Dead Sea is 400 metres below sea level, combined to prove that that there once took place a major geological event in and around this area.

This interesting structure of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea comprise only part of the crack or fissure which passes through this region. It begins at the slopes of the Toros Mountains and runs southward past the southern shores of the Dead Sea, through the Arabian Desert, reaching the Gulf of Aqaba, from where it crosses the Red Sea before coming to an end in Africa. There is major volcanic activity in those areas through which the line passes. In fact, this occurs to such an extent that black basalt and lava can be found in the Mountains of Galilee in Israel, in part of the high plateaus in Jordan, the Gulf of Aqaba and other areas.

All these remains and geographical features show that there was a major geological event at the Dead Sea.

The December 1957 edition of *National Geographic* magazine contained these statements on the subject:

The mount of Sodom, a barren wasteland, rises sharply above the dead sea. No one has ever found the destroyed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, but scholars believe that they stood in the Vale of Siddim across from these cliffs. Possibly flood waters of the Dead Sea engulfed them following an earthquake.²³¹

One of the pieces of information regarding this destroyed city is-as revealed in Surat al-Hijr 76-that these cities are still on the main line. Geographers have identified this region as being on a line to the south-east of the Dead Sea, extending from the Arabian peninsula to Syria and Egypt.

We turned the place completely upside down and rained down on them stones of hard-baked clay. There are certainly Signs in that for the discerning. They were beside a road which still exists. There is certainly a Sign in that for the believers. (Qur'an, 15:74-77)

229. Keller, Und die Bibel hat doch recht, 75-76. ⁺

230. "Le Monde de la Bible" (The World of the Bible), Archeologie et Histoire, July-August 1993. ⁺

231. G. Ernest Wright, "Bringing Old Testament Times to Life," National Geographic 112, December 1957, 883. ⁺

The petrified body on the left is a remain testifying to the disasters that struck the people of Pompeii.

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