

Appendix 5: Sodom & Gomorrah and the Cities of the Plain.

One of the major archaeological mysteries still puzzling Biblical scholars and archaeologists is the location of the five cities of the plains, **SODOM, GOMORRAH, ADMAH, ZEBOIM and BELA also known as ZOAR.**

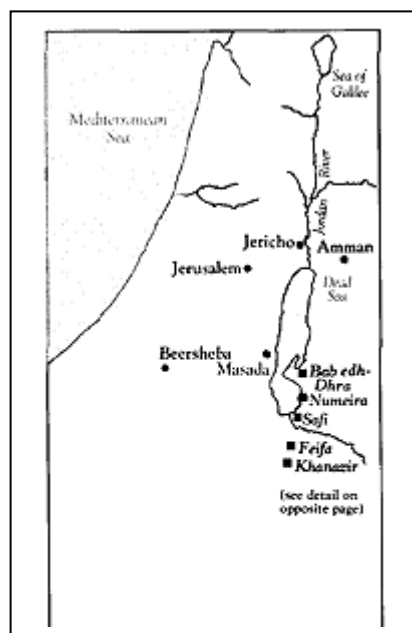
These cities were situated in the Valley of Siddim which the Biblical account states became the Dead Sea. [Gen 14:3]

Between 1973 and 1979 two archaeologists, Walter E. Rast and R. Thomas Schaub surveyed an area around the South East of the Dead Sea and located the remains of five sites each at the head of a small *wadi* (river-bed).

From North to South the sites are:

- Bab Edh-Dhra (first discovered in 1924)
- Numeira (found by Rast and Schaub in 1973)
- Safi
- Feifa and
- Khanazir.

The location of these sites are indicated on the maps below.



What is of particular interest is that **Safi**, one of the sites discovered is identified on the famous Madaba Mosaic Map located only an hour's drive away. The map found on the floor of a 6th century AD Byzantium Church categorically identifies Safi with Zoar, one of the five Cities of the Plain. Could the other four sites also be the lost cities?

All five sites date from the same archaeological period, the Early Bronze Age conventionally dated 3150-2350 BC. The site of **Numeira** was consumed by fire around 2350 BC using the same convention. This was the end of the Early Bronze Age.



The principal site of **Bab edh Dhra**, lying right at the edge of the Lisan, which is the peninsular jutting into the Dead Sea, consists of a town and a cemetery which contains an estimated 500,000 people (half a million). That is the only estimate ever made by the now deceased archaeologist Lapp who originally worked on the survey of the archaeological dig. Rast and Shaub tend to suggest that the 500,000 figures was an over-estimation.)

The author of an article in Biblical Archaeological Review (Vol. 6 no.5 pp 27ff) entitled "Have Sodom and Gomorrah been Found" states: "Less than a half mile south west of the town site of **Bab edh-Dhra** is the mammoth cemetery. The earliest burials occurred around 3200 BC (conventional dating) **EVEN BEFORE THE TOWN WAS BUILT.**

*The cemetery was used as a burial ground for over 1,000 years. It must have been used not only for the people of the nearby town, but also for the large nomadic population which brought their dead to be reburied..... there were three kinds of graves in the extensive cemetery, the **OLDEST** and more numerous were the so-called shaft tombs..... After the town was settled the population began to use the charnel houses (bone houses) to rebury their dead.....One charnel house containing the bones of over 300 people, another over 200."*

The first settlement at Bab edh-Dhra was established about 3200 BC (conventional dating). The archaeologists Rast and Schaub suggest that these five cities could be the cities of the plain... It must be noted for example that the majority of the dead found at the site are dated 1,800 years BEFORE the sites were finally destroyed.