

 Offline



Re: Tall El-Hammam Part 2

« **Reply #240 on:** May 03, 2008, 09:13 AM »

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Hello. My name is Dr J. G. Leslie. These are my first comments on the BAS website so I would like to briefly introduce myself: I have a PhD in Experimental Pathology (1980), an MD (1989), and specialty training in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics (1993). Presently, I am enrolled in a doctoral program in Biblical Archeology at Trinity Southwest University. I have been diligently studying the scriptures and science for over 30 years. In Jan. 2007 I had the great experience of digging at Tall el-Hammam.

I would like to go back in the discussion to again address the issues of the Biblical geographic indicators for the location of the site of Sodom. They are quite specific, and for those who are conservative, i.e. believe that the scriptures are inspired and their composition directed by G-d, they can be used to triangulate in a very persuasive way a nearly precise location for Sodom and the cities of the Plain. I would like to outline what I think are key points which support the concept that the site lies to the north of the Dead (Salt) Sea:

1) Between Bethel and Ai (accepted as being north of Jerusalem), Lot looked down into the Jordan Valley, and then he traveled east to get to it, Gen. 13:10-11. It says it was well watered like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Eygpt, toward Zoar. The site of Zoar will be discussed below, but suffice it to say it was probably to the southward side of Lot's view.

From the Tall el-Hammam looking west the ridges containing the areas considered to be around Bethel can be seen. As well, I'm told, even today, that looking down the wadi at the accepted site for Bethel one can see the Jordan Valley north of the Salt Sea.

2) The angel and the Lord appeared to Abram at the Oaks of Mamre (accepted as being near Hebron) Gen. 18:1. It then says that they looked towards Sodom and that Abram walked with them " to see them on their way", Gen.18:16. He probably walked to the crest of the hills. Then when he, Abram, woke in the morning he returned to where he spoke with the Lord. He looked down at the area of Sodom and saw smoke going up as from a furnace from it, Gen. 19:28. the linear distance form

where he stood is approximately the same to Tall el-Hammam and to Bah edh-Dhra (the commonly accepted site for Sodom among many archeologists). Thus, from this vantage he could have seen smoke either to the south or the north along the Salt Sea. But, it is a point that can be used in triangulating the site.

3) When Moses stood on Pisgah on Mt. Nebo looking west towards the Jordan River, G-d revealed the lands given to the Israelites, Gen. 34:1-3. Zoar is listed as the last and probable southern boundary on Moses' left hand. When Lot looked east down on the Plains of Jordan it was well watered- like Egypt, toward Zoar, i.e. that Zoar was to the southward part of his view or his right hand. (My understanding of the sentence structure.) But his line of view would have only extended to the upper part of the Dead Sea. Thus Moses was looking west and Lot was looking east.

Zoar had to be north of Edom and Moab as God told the Israelites not to take their land- it belonged to the descendants of Lot and Esau, Deut. 2:9-19. But when the Israelites crossed the Arnon Gorge they were told to begin to possess the land, Deut. 3:12. Therefore, Zoar had to be at the Arnon River or north of it. (This conflicts with the Mababa map- but it was made in the 5th century A.D., and could easily be based on anecdotal information to such an ancient site- even to when the map was made. The scriptures are more reliable.)

4) The path of the Elamite King Kedorlaomer, in his wars against the area of Canaan, appeared to cross over to the King's highway in Jordan from northern Mesopotamia. This was a common trade route from that region. He went directly towards the south and the hill country of Seir, then he turned back going towards En Mishpat (Kadesh) , conquered the Amalikites (hill country people), and then on to the Amorites at Hazazon Tamar (En Gedi, see 2 Chron. 20:2). It was after this that the coalition with the King of Sodom met Kedorlaomer's coalition, probably on the northwest corner of the Salt Sea. There are still to this day large flat muddy areas in that area.

It is very likely that had Sodom been in a southern site kedorlaomer would have attacked it earlier on in his series of conquests, and would have listed it as such. It is unlikely that he would turn back again south to attack Sodom.

By Sodom not being attacked early on the King of Sodom had

time to build a coalition. However, he would probably have desired to meet the foreign armies away from his city, and thus they crossed the Jordan River to meet them coming up from En Gedi on the north east corner of the Dead Sea.

5) Abram, the King of Sodom, and the King of Salem met at the Valley of Shaveh (the King's Valley), Gen. 14:17. As I understand, this valley is the extension of the Kidron Valley which empties into the northern area of the Dead Sea. This would argue for the King of Sodom living in the northern approximate area- Abram would have dropped off the recaptured people and goods that he reclaimed from King Kedolaomer near Damascus on his way back down to the Hebron area.

6) In Ezek. 16:46, G-d in speaking to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, compares them to an older sister Samaria on the left and a younger sister Sodom on the right. Facing east from the temple in Jerusalem both a northern and a southern site for Sodom would fit this description. As well, this is clearly a metaphor.

7) The term Kikkar means disk, such as a loaf of bread. It is the term used to describe the plains of the "cities of the plains". While this area in the northern Dead Sea region is not perfectly round, it does have a roundish shape- the best of the areas where the Jordan River flows south of the Sea of Kinnereth.

If one triangulates Lot's and Abram's two sightings of Sodom; and uses the references to Zoar, and the King of Salem: a northern site, north of the Dead Sea, can be designated.

I believe that for those who accept the Bible as an historic document, the geographic indicators are compelling for a northern site. This goes contrary to what Dr. William Abright, a great scholar, proposed. Yet others like H. B. Tristram in his book Natural History of the Bible, 1875, proposed a northern site for Sodom.

Dr. Collins' work at Tall el-Hammam is critical for understanding the stratigraphy of the numerous sites in the Jordan Valley; and of which are very important to understanding Abram and his times. There is much more work to be done especially on the east side of the Jordan. The Middle Bronze/Late Bronze Age

interface needs much more clarification. (But this is another subject.)

For those who are conservative scholars, the work at Tall el-Hammam is very important because hundreds of student volunteers are being trained by professional conservative scholars. This will have a significant impact on archeology in the region. Whether some scholars agree with a northern site for Sodom or not, these scholars should give Dr. Collins the full weight of their support.

« Last Edit: **Today** at 12:36 PM by Dr J G Leslie »

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