

Jericho was the only town of any importance remaining in the Jordan Valley, which in Abraham's time had been a very prosperous and well-occupied area, exactly as described in Gen.13. It is extremely improbable that anyone in the time of the Israelite kingdom would invent a story that described conditions so very different from those that had already existed for hundreds of years.

Gen.19 gives a terrible picture of the corruption of Sodom, with great riots. The mob threatened to do harm to the guests of Lot, and the only way that Lot himself escaped was that an angel pulled him into the door of his house. In Gen.15.16 Abraham was told that "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full," and that consequently the divinely-ordered destruction would not take place for yet a period of time. Excavation of the pre-Israelite period in various Palestinian sites has given evidence of a civilization of high culture and wealth, but of constantly increasing corruption, that reached a state of moral degradation scarcely to be paralleled elsewhere, shortly before the Israelite conquest. Excavation at Tell Beit Mirsim has shown that in the Canaanite time it was a very prosperous community. In the early days of Israelite settlement everything was far simpler and economically on a lower level. In the later Israelite time culture and wealth reached a position fully equal to that of the Canaanite period. However, a sharp difference between the high point of Israelite prosperity and that of the Canaanites is evidenced by the difference in the nature of the doors. In the Canaanite time each house had a very strong doorpost, so that it could resist a riot similar to that which Lot faced in Sodom. The house of the later Israelite time had only a little hanging over the door, giving mute evidence of the comparative security of the later Israelite period, as compared with the degeneracy of the latter part of the Canaanite period.

All over Palestine there is evidence of a sharp break between Canaanite