

you wonder why he made such a poor choice. The story hardly fits the situation in Palestine today, and it did not fit it any better in the days of the later Israelite kingdom, when the theories of the divisive school of Biblical criticism consider this document to have been written.

It is extremely difficult to see how anyone could have invented such a story in Palestine to-day, or at the time when this document is alleged to have been written. The story says that the situation was different before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Until recently few scholars imagined that such might have been the case. About 25 years ago, Professor Eduard Meyer, one of the greatest of German authorities on ancient history, made the statement that the Jordan River was never harnessed to irrigate the soil as was done with the Nile under similar circumstances. Aside from the statement in this chapter, this doubtless was the opinion of those who lived in Palestine in the days of the later Israelite kingdom. As you stand there to-day, it is hard to imagine such a situation as is described here.

Yet to-day the opinion of all who are familiar with the facts of archeology is very different, because as far back as 1924 striking new facts about the Jordan Valley began to come to light. In 1929, when I participated in an expedition of the American School of Oriental Research through a portion of the Jordan Valley, these discoveries were carried further, and it was ascertained that in the Jordan Valley there are between 40 and 50 hills which when examined prove not to be natural hills, but "tells". This word "tell" is used as a technical term for an artificial hill which covers the remains of an ancient city. Forty or 50 cities cannot exist in a valley like that unless there is plenty of irrigation, with large crops growing and a fertile area to support the towns. Examining the material from these towns, it is found that they all flourished before the time of Abram, but almost every one of them was entirely deserted in later periods. I well remember noticing the remains of an ancient city