

THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM

The Sodomites possessed a very rich valley and comparatively avoided that feature of the curse declaring that bread must be won by sweat of face. These conditions were conducive to the selfishness and sin which the Bible charges—'pride, fullness of bread and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and the needy; and they committed abominations; therefore I took them away as I saw good.'—Ezekiel 16:49, 50.

God saw good to make the *destruction* of the Sodomites an *example* of the fate of sinners—death, not everlasting torture, St. Jude says. Jesus declares, 'Fire came down from God out of heaven and destroyed them all.'—Luke 17:29.

But the Bible teaches that the Sodomites are **not** hopelessly destroyed—that God's mercy through Christ includes the Sodomites, sinners though they were. Jesus Himself, as well as the Prophet Ezekiel, declares that at His **Second Coming in His Messianic Kingdom** He will give a trial, or judgment, to the world in general, to all who do not have an opportunity in the present life. The Sodomites will then have opportunity to hear of God's grace, to accept and rejoice in it.

Jesus declared that in that glorious Epoch the condition of the Sodomites will be *more tolerable* than that of the people to whom He preached at His First Advent. The reason for this He explains, saying that if the Sodomites had been granted the same opportunity afforded the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes; wherefore, in the future testing time, 'it will be more tolerable for them' than for people who heard and rejected the Message.—Matthew 10:15; 11:21-24.

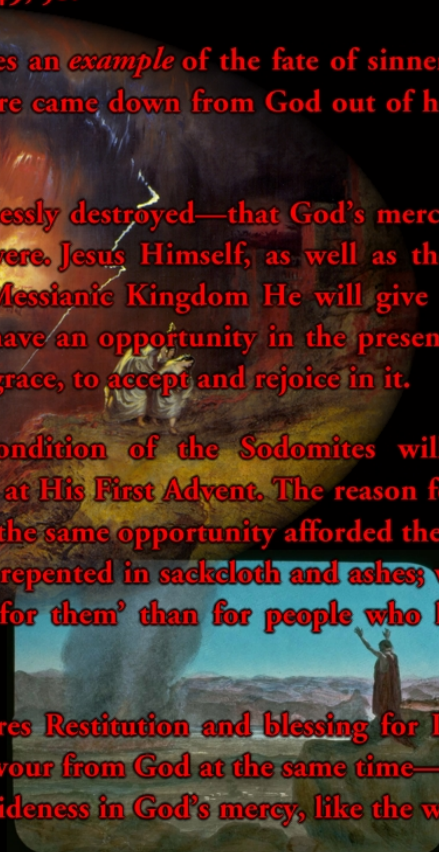
Ezekiel's prophecy (16:49-61) is most explicit. It declares **Restitution and blessing** for Israel, and incidentally mentions that the Sodomites will receive favour from God at the same time—under the New Covenant, under Messiah's Kingdom. 'There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea.'—Photodrama of Creation, p. D25.



And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (2 Peter 2:6-7)



LOT'S FLIGHT



ABRAHAM VIEWING SODOM'S DESTRUCTION



LOT AND DAUGHTERS