

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:16,560

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

2

00:00:16,560 --> 00:00:21,083

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations, but not necessarily

3

00:00:21,083 --> 00:00:31,007

the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

4

00:00:31,007 --> 00:00:37,010

For twelve long summers, workers labored in the sun-baked earth of western Syria, digging,

5

00:00:37,010 --> 00:00:40,771

probing, turning back the centuries.

6

00:00:40,771 --> 00:00:47,094

An Italian archaeologist, Professor Paolo Matti excavated Ebla, capital of a previously

7

00:00:47,094 --> 00:00:49,655

unknown Bronze Age kingdom.

8

00:00:50,376 --> 00:00:57,619

Then in the fall of 1974, as his thirteenth season of digging was about to end, he unexpectedly

9

00:00:57,619 --> 00:01:01,220

unearthed the missing piece to an ancient biblical puzzle.

10

00:01:01,220 --> 00:01:07,663

After four thousand years, a written record, independent of the Bible, confirmed the existence

11

00:01:07,663 --> 00:01:09,624

of Sodom and Gomorrah.

12

00:01:09,624 --> 00:01:12,906

One crucial question remains, where did they exist?

13

00:01:19,669 --> 00:01:25,031

In four thousand years of recorded history, Jerusalem has been ruled by Turkish sultans,

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00:01:25,031 --> 00:01:30,434

Arab sheiks, Roman consuls, Crusader princes and Hebrew kings.

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00:01:30,434 --> 00:01:32,314

Each reign left a mark.

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00:01:32,314 --> 00:01:37,037

Yet the city itself remains the sacred source of three great faiths.

17

00:01:37,037 --> 00:01:43,399

Its walls enclose Solomon's temple, the stations of the cross, the dome of the rock, names

18

00:01:43,399 --> 00:01:45,240

that date to biblical times.

19

00:01:50,683 --> 00:02:00,767

In Jerusalem's streets, past and present flow visibly together.

20

00:02:00,767 --> 00:02:05,409

Jesus walked here, and Muhammad and David.

21

00:02:05,409 --> 00:02:09,131

Its shrines are evidence of a vast and ancient history.

22

00:02:09,131 --> 00:02:13,973

And before them, man humbles himself.

23

00:02:13,973 --> 00:02:18,055

The actual stories of the past remain shrouded in myth.

24

00:02:18,055 --> 00:02:24,138

The land guards mysteries, for it is old, older even than the earliest accounts preserved

25

00:02:24,138 --> 00:02:26,339

in holy scripture.

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00:02:30,340 --> 00:02:34,942

East and south of Jerusalem, fertile fields turn to stony wilderness.

27

00:02:34,942 --> 00:02:38,664

Here, ancient man left few traces.

28

00:02:39,264 --> 00:02:49,549

Across this arid expanse, roam modern Bedouins, people who hardly differ from herdsmen who

29

00:02:49,549 --> 00:02:55,192

wandered this same mountainous scrubland in biblical times.

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00:02:55,192 --> 00:03:02,675

No mad ways have remained constant, the endless foraging for pasture, for water, for new campsites,

31

00:03:02,675 --> 00:03:06,397

and then, inevitably, moving on.

32

00:03:06,397 --> 00:03:13,000

They resist all change, clinging to their simple black tents, their animals, to time-tested

33

00:03:13,000 --> 00:03:14,000

traditions.

34

00:03:17,802 --> 00:03:22,884

Bedouin storytellers maintained there were once lush valleys here, but they themselves

35

00:03:22,884 --> 00:03:27,646

have stripped the land by gathering firewood, feeding their goat herds.

36

00:03:27,646 --> 00:03:33,409

They have turned green fields to desert, still the nomads endure as they have for countless

37

00:03:33,409 --> 00:03:38,571

generations, somehow finding nourishment in the wilderness.

38

00:03:38,571 --> 00:03:43,693

Stories of the land and of the past are clouded by the legends of nomadic tribesmen and might

39

00:03:43,693 --> 00:03:47,495

have remained obscure but for the searching of scientists.

40

00:03:47,495 --> 00:03:53,618

A series of spectacular finds began to open doors to a forgotten past.

41

00:03:53,618 --> 00:04:00,381

At Masada, archaeologists discovered a long-lost fortress, the final desert stronghold of Jewish

42

00:04:00,381 --> 00:04:03,142

resistance to the Roman Empire.

43

00:04:03,142 --> 00:04:08,104

North along the barren dead seashore, more ruins were unearthed, believed to be the

44

00:04:08,104 --> 00:04:13,947

monastery of legendary mystics, the Essenes, whose gentle teachings the young Jesus might

45

00:04:13,947 --> 00:04:14,947

have studied.

46

00:04:14,947 --> 00:04:20,070

They, too, had vanished and wellipped by the desert.

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00:04:20,070 --> 00:04:27,393

Then in 1947 came another sensational discovery, a cache of Essenes texts hidden in a remote

48

00:04:27,393 --> 00:04:32,275

cave, further proof of man's long presence in the wilderness.

49

00:04:33,195 --> 00:04:39,478

The Bedouin alone were not surprised.

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00:04:39,478 --> 00:04:45,801

High on cliffs overlooking the dead sea, from time immemorial, nomad folklore has traditionally

51

00:04:45,801 --> 00:04:51,884

labeled a jutting thumb of rock salt, Lot's wife.

52

00:04:51,884 --> 00:04:57,166

Somewhere here, somewhere within sight of this rock, according to an ancient story preserved

53

00:04:57,166 --> 00:05:02,889

in the biblical accounts of Genesis, once existed a lush and fertile plain and a league

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00:05:02,889 --> 00:05:07,691

of wealthy cities known as Sodom and Gomorrah.

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00:05:07,691 --> 00:05:15,454

Their remains have never been found.

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00:05:15,454 --> 00:05:17,815

The biblical accounts are clear.

57

00:05:17,815 --> 00:05:23,298

As the Hebrew elder Abraham led his nomadic tribe across the rocky hills, his nephew,

58

00:05:23,298 --> 00:05:28,860

Lot, wandered down into a fertile plain, the valley of Sodom.

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00:05:28,860 --> 00:05:34,623

Biblical storytellers peopled it with rich and decadent townsmen, sensualists, celebrants

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00:05:34,623 --> 00:05:36,504

of the profane.

61

00:05:36,504 --> 00:05:41,826

The geography is explicit, by the salt sea, under the Moab hills.

62

00:05:41,826 --> 00:05:47,189

But for 4,000 years, man has searched in vain for some trace of the wicked cities of the

63

00:05:47,189 --> 00:05:53,271

plain, for evidence that they were something more than biblical parable.

64

00:05:53,271 --> 00:05:57,793

One of Israel's foremost archaeologists, Dr. Avram Biran.

65

00:05:57,793 --> 00:06:04,717

Well, let me make something quite clear before we say anything else.

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00:06:04,717 --> 00:06:09,399

Archaeology is not here to prove or disprove the Bible.

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00:06:09,399 --> 00:06:14,841

The Bible, as a book of divine inspiration, needs no proof.

68

00:06:14,841 --> 00:06:19,723

But the Bible contains a lot of historical memories.

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00:06:19,723 --> 00:06:23,085

And what archaeology does is to illustrate these memories.

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00:06:23,085 --> 00:06:29,007

The amazing thing about archaeological research has been that the more we excavate, the more

71

00:06:29,007 --> 00:06:37,931

we uncover the past, the more we get evidence that these historical memories are correct.

72

00:06:37,931 --> 00:06:41,013

Archaeology seeks out small clues to the past.

73

00:06:41,013 --> 00:06:44,734

Sun, rain, and wind have etched this land.

74

00:06:44,734 --> 00:06:48,256

Man seems to have made only a slight impression.

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00:06:48,256 --> 00:06:52,458

Yet the soil can reveal layer after layer of cultural sediment.

76

00:06:52,458 --> 00:07:01,262

The high-water marks of armies, conquerors, once mighty civilizations.

77

00:07:01,262 --> 00:07:07,505

From these long-buried clues, often no more than a few scattered stones, archaeologists,

78

00:07:07,505 --> 00:07:11,066

like detectives, must piece together ancient mysteries.

79

00:07:19,190 --> 00:07:24,152

The first break in solving the puzzling biblical legend of Sodom and Gomorrah came in the fall

80

00:07:24,152 --> 00:07:26,673

of 1974.

81

00:07:26,673 --> 00:07:32,396

Near the modern Syrian town of Tel-Mardik, a chain of laborers employed by an Italian

82

00:07:32,396 --> 00:07:37,798

archaeological expedition cut slowly into a tell.

83

00:07:37,798 --> 00:07:47,763

A man-made hill composed of the stratified remains of past civilizations.

84

00:07:47,763 --> 00:07:53,765

Created by professors Paolo Mati and Giovanni Petinato of the University of Rome, the dig

85

00:07:53,765 --> 00:08:00,088

had gradually uncovered the city of Ebla, large and wealthy capital of a previously unknown

86

00:08:00,088 --> 00:08:04,650

Bronze Age Canaanite kingdom.

87

00:08:04,650 --> 00:08:13,214

Then, near the end of their 13th excavating season, the unearthed treasure far more priceless

88

00:08:13,214 --> 00:08:16,215

than the mute riches of gold and silver.

89

00:08:16,215 --> 00:08:19,217

The Royal Archives of Ebla.

90

00:08:19,217 --> 00:08:26,500

Treaties, legal documents, tax records were preserved on 16,000 clay tablets covered in

91

00:08:26,500 --> 00:08:33,223

wedge cuneiform, an early form of writing pressed by palace scribes into wet clay.

92

00:08:33,223 --> 00:08:37,865

The tablets listed names associated with the early accounts of Genesis.

93

00:08:37,865 --> 00:08:40,346

The find was astounding.

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00:08:40,346 --> 00:08:45,629

Trade records from the 3rd millennium BC documented business transactions with the cities of the

95

00:08:45,629 --> 00:08:46,629

plain.

96

00:08:46,629 --> 00:08:52,992

For the first time in 40 centuries, sources independent of the Bible confirmed the existence

97

00:08:52,992 --> 00:08:57,234

of Sodom and Gomorrah and placed them near the Dead Sea.

98

00:08:57,234 --> 00:09:00,435

The veil of mystery at long last had been lifted.

99

00:09:00,435 --> 00:09:05,357

Yet, if Sodom and Gomorrah existed, what happened to them?

100

00:09:05,357 --> 00:09:10,640

Here where biblical accounts placed them, there exists today only a vast wasteland divided

101

00:09:10,640 --> 00:09:17,443

by the Israeli Jordanian frontier, the Dead Sea, 1300 feet below sea level, the lowest

102

00:09:17,443 --> 00:09:19,924

point on the earth's surface.

103

00:09:19,924 --> 00:09:26,767

Its brackish waters are completely lifeless, 25% salt, it drains a desert table land where

104

00:09:26,767 --> 00:09:32,250

temperatures often reach 125 degrees.

105

00:09:32,250 --> 00:09:40,453

The Bedouins say not even a bird can fly across the Dead Sea without dying.

106

00:09:40,453 --> 00:09:50,458

Yet the Bible places Sodom and Gomorrah exactly here.

107

00:09:50,458 --> 00:09:56,460

Sodom, 1900 BC.

108

00:09:56,460 --> 00:10:01,623

Motion pictures have depicted the tumultuous populace of the wicked cities of the plain.

109

00:10:01,623 --> 00:10:10,827

Their reputation has survived 40 centuries.

110

00:10:10,827 --> 00:10:24,473

Embedded in this legendary image is the solution to the mysterious end of Sodom and Gomorrah.

111

00:10:24,473 --> 00:10:31,836

Frescoes, painted in 1900 BC inside the tomb of Egypt's border governor, depict new tribes,

112

00:10:31,836 --> 00:10:36,518

nomads who had begun to emerge from the trackless wilderness.

113

00:10:36,518 --> 00:10:42,401

The Egyptians called them Habiru.

114

00:10:42,401 --> 00:10:49,084

The desert's precarious natural balance allows no excess, no room for deviation from the unending

115

00:10:49,084 --> 00:10:53,446

basic struggle to survive.

116

00:10:53,446 --> 00:10:59,008

Washed by the desert's harsh, immutable laws, the nomads' faith reflected the overreaching

117

00:10:59,008 --> 00:11:15,776

sky, vast and formless.

118

00:11:15,776 --> 00:11:23,900

Embedded by stern patriarchs, the tribal caravans searched for new pastors.

119

00:11:23,900 --> 00:11:29,942

How inviting a tree-lined horizon must have seemed to dusty Hebrew wanderers 40 centuries

120

00:11:29,942 --> 00:11:34,985

ago.

121

00:11:34,985 --> 00:11:43,628

The lush lands they entered were held by a people known to us as the Canaanites.

122

00:11:43,748 --> 00:11:49,511

Villars of fertile fields, clever artisans, sophisticated townsmen, such people likely

123

00:11:49,511 --> 00:11:52,913

inhabited the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

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00:11:52,913 --> 00:11:55,914

Fertility lay at the core of their religion.

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00:11:55,914 --> 00:12:00,436

We know that they performed ecstatic rites that openly attempted to fuse the sensual

126

00:12:00,436 --> 00:12:02,357

and the spiritual.

127

00:12:02,357 --> 00:12:06,479

Their gods and goddesses have survived them.

128

00:12:06,559 --> 00:12:14,642

Baal, mighty thunderer, bringer of life-giving reign, chief deity of ancient Canaan.

129

00:12:14,642 --> 00:12:19,204

This image of the great mother symbolized the fertile earth.

130

00:12:19,204 --> 00:12:26,728

Goddess of many names, Ishtar, Isis, Astarti, her heavenly sign was the planet Venus.

131

00:12:26,728 --> 00:12:32,570

Within her, the forces of life and death mystically entwined.

132

00:12:32,650 --> 00:12:38,173

The gods guarded her mysteries.

133

00:12:38,173 --> 00:12:47,177

Among such men went to dwell the Hebrew lot.

134

00:12:47,177 --> 00:12:53,900

According to the biblical story recreated in film, angels came to Sodom to find Lot.

135

00:12:53,900 --> 00:12:58,902

They warned him to abandon the city, to renew his nomad ways.

136

00:12:58,902 --> 00:13:05,905

It was torn by doubt.

137

00:13:16,350 --> 00:13:21,352

Sodom's excesses repelled the angels.

138

00:13:21,352 --> 00:13:26,354

The Sodomites threatened to attack the heavenly visitors.

139

00:13:26,354 --> 00:13:29,356

They are the men of the kingdom of the city.

140

00:13:29,356 --> 00:13:32,357

Yes, bring them out, uncle Ashtar.

141

00:13:32,357 --> 00:13:36,359

Bring them out, that we may know them.

142

00:13:36,359 --> 00:13:41,361

Whosoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place.

143

00:13:41,361 --> 00:13:46,363

For the Lord has sent us to destroy it.

144

00:13:48,364 --> 00:13:51,366

A flash of brilliant light blinded the crowd.

145

00:13:51,366 --> 00:13:56,368

Drive. Take your wife and your two daughters who are here.

146

00:13:56,368 --> 00:14:00,370

Lest they be consumed in the punishment of the city.

147

00:14:00,370 --> 00:14:03,371

I cannot see.

148

00:14:03,371 --> 00:14:06,372

I cannot see.

149

00:14:10,374 --> 00:14:13,375

Leave your life.

150

00:14:13,375 --> 00:14:16,377

Leave to the hills lest thou be consumed.

151

00:14:16,377 --> 00:14:19,378

Look not behind thee.

152

00:14:21,379 --> 00:14:28,382

Absolutely faith was demanded of Lot.

153

00:14:28,382 --> 00:14:35,385

The angels warned his family to flee without once looking back.

154

00:14:35,385 --> 00:14:42,388

Lot's wife, Weber, turned according to biblical accounts into a pillar of salt.

155

00:14:43,389 --> 00:14:52,393

As if to confirm the biblical contention, there are columns of rock salt overlooking the Dead Sea today.

156

00:14:52,393 --> 00:14:57,395

A portrait of the Dead Sea was made from a NASA Earth Resources satellite.

157

00:14:57,395 --> 00:15:02,397

The waters are divided by a spit of land called by the Bedouin Lodge.

158

00:15:02,397 --> 00:15:06,399

The water is the source of the water.

159

00:15:06,399 --> 00:15:11,401

The Bedouin Lodge is the source of the Earth Resources satellite.

160

00:15:11,401 --> 00:15:18,405

The waters are divided by a spit of land called by the Bedouin L.L.San Batang.

161

00:15:18,405 --> 00:15:25,408

To the south along the shore, five riverbeds score the rocky land.

162

00:15:25,408 --> 00:15:31,410

Since biblical times, five freshwater streams have flowed down from the Moab Hills.

163

00:15:31,410 --> 00:15:39,414

Could they once have continued onto a fertile plain, watering towns, irrigating lush fields?

164

00:15:39,414 --> 00:15:44,416

To the north of the L.L.San spit lie depths up to 1,300 feet.

165

00:15:44,416 --> 00:15:48,418

Yet the waters of the southern half are less than 10 feet deep.

166

00:15:48,418 --> 00:15:54,421

Forty centuries ago, was L.L.San the Dead Sea's south shore?

167

00:15:54,421 --> 00:15:58,423

What could have destroyed its banks?

168

00:15:58,423 --> 00:16:03,425

Tar, mineral pitch, bubbles to the surface off L.L.San.

169

00:16:07,427 --> 00:16:11,428

Nearby, modern Israelis have struck oil.

170

00:16:11,428 --> 00:16:15,430

There are also rich deposits of natural gas.

171

00:16:21,433 --> 00:16:25,435

The Israeli proprietor of a Dead Sea hot springs.

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00:16:25,435 --> 00:16:29,436

Here in Ngedi, we have the sulfur spring. Nature water came from the ground.

173

00:16:29,436 --> 00:16:35,439

And you can see here in the water, you can see the sulfur.

174

00:16:35,439 --> 00:16:40,441

You can see the sulfur. If you burn this sulfur, it gives you poison gas.

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00:16:40,441 --> 00:16:44,443

In biblical times, sulfur was known as brimstone.

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00:16:44,443 --> 00:16:50,446

Pitch, oil, gas, sulfur. A volatile mixture.

177

00:16:56,449 --> 00:17:03,452

Dr. Bruce Bolt, internationally acclaimed seismologist.

178

00:17:03,452 --> 00:17:10,455

The extraordinary river valley of the Dead Sea is one of the deepest points that we have on the surface of the Earth.

179

00:17:10,455 --> 00:17:18,458

It's bounded on the western side by a great fault which runs from the Gulf of Elyat up towards Antioch.

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00:17:18,458 --> 00:17:21,460

And this has been the site of many great earthquakes.

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00:17:22,460 --> 00:17:29,463

Could an earthquake have been a link in a chain of events that led to a massive explosion in 1900 BC?

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00:17:29,463 --> 00:17:34,466

Earthquakes are produced by the slow building up of strain in the rocks of the Earth,

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00:17:34,466 --> 00:17:39,468

such as occurs along the Rift Valley in Palestine.

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00:17:39,468 --> 00:17:47,471

However, it's been suggested that the tidal forces between the other planets and the sun and the moon on the Earth

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00:17:47,471 --> 00:17:53,474

might subtly vary the strain field and trigger earthquakes.

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00:17:53,474 --> 00:18:02,478

There have been many reports associated with earthquakes of lights in the sky, flashes of lightning, glowing skies and so on.

187

00:18:02,478 --> 00:18:06,480

But when I read the biblical account of the destruction of Solomon Gamorah,

188

00:18:06,480 --> 00:18:12,483

I can reconstruct something like this in my mind that there might have been a very great earthquake.

189

00:18:13,483 --> 00:18:18,485

The actual mechanism for this is not at all understood.

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00:18:18,485 --> 00:18:22,487

There could have been a great avalanche which came down from the Rift.

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00:18:22,487 --> 00:18:28,490

The opening up of the Rift might have released some gases, petroleum gases.

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00:18:28,490 --> 00:18:32,492

The fires would have ignited this. There could have been explosions.

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00:18:32,492 --> 00:18:36,493

The sulfur, which is of course brimstone, might have well caught on fire.

194

00:18:37,494 --> 00:18:42,496

And sulfurous gases would have been given out by the fires.

195

00:18:42,496 --> 00:18:48,499

So I think if we put together all the natural phenomena which could occur there south of the Dead Sea,

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00:18:48,499 --> 00:18:54,501

we can see that as the years went by there could have been an account grow up very similar to that,

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00:18:54,501 --> 00:18:57,503

which is briefly given in the Bible.

198

00:19:06,507 --> 00:19:11,509

The Rift is a very common phenomenon in the world.

199

00:19:11,509 --> 00:19:16,511

It is a phenomenon that is very common in the world.

200

00:19:16,511 --> 00:19:21,514

It is a phenomenon that is very common in the world.

201

00:19:21,514 --> 00:19:26,516

It is a phenomenon that is very common in the world.

202

00:19:26,516 --> 00:19:31,518

It is a phenomenon that is very common in the world.

203

00:19:31,518 --> 00:19:36,520

It is a phenomenon that is very common in the world.

204

00:19:36,520 --> 00:19:41,523

It is a phenomenon that is very common in the world.

205

00:19:41,523 --> 00:19:47,525

Well, it is fascinating for scientists to work as detectives on these ancient problems.

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00:19:47,525 --> 00:19:55,529

The situation is clearly so complicated that to reach the ultimate cause of such a catastrophe

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00:19:55,529 --> 00:20:02,532

is to stretch every piece of scientific knowledge that we have at the present time.

208

00:20:02,532 --> 00:20:05,533

There is an ultimate cause for it.

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00:20:05,533 --> 00:20:10,536

For many people, the ultimate cause would be God.

210

00:20:10,536 --> 00:20:16,538

Clues point to the Dead Sea, to a solution to the mystifying biblical puzzle.

211

00:20:16,538 --> 00:20:24,542

Yet no material evidence of Sodom and Gomorrah, not a single blackened pottery shard, has ever been found here.

212

00:20:24,542 --> 00:20:28,544

Israeli archaeologist Dr. Avram Biran.

213

00:20:28,544 --> 00:20:36,547

Now the difficulties are that undoubtedly Sodom and Gomorrah are covered under the silt of the Dead Sea.

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00:20:36,547 --> 00:20:44,551

And until something happens to remove the silt at the bottom of the Dead Sea on the southern part, which is not very deep,

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00:20:44,551 --> 00:20:47,552

I don't think we have a chance of finding Sodom and Gomorrah.

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00:20:47,552 --> 00:20:55,556

However, if we do, as for example we are doing now when removing some of the water for the manufacture of potash and bomb eyes,

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00:20:55,556 --> 00:21:03,559

and the earth will be uncovered, it is very possible that under one or two or three feet of silt,

218

00:21:03,559 --> 00:21:10,562

you will find remains of the city of the second millennium BC, which would be Sodom and Gomorrah.

219

00:21:11,563 --> 00:21:22,568

Coming up next in search of continues with a probe into the possibility that Joshua really did bring the walls of Jericho tumbling down,

220

00:21:22,568 --> 00:21:29,571

then agents race against time to stop a rash of drug tampering on FBI The Untold Stories.

221

00:21:29,571 --> 00:21:39,575

And later tonight, Top Secret Missions of the CIA takes you on an operation to kidnap a terrorist at 9 Eastern 10 Pacific.