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Sermon Notes

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Fire from Heaven: God Destroys Sodom & Gomorrah

Genesis 19:1-38

Introduction: One of the Most Dramatic Moments in Human History... and one of the Most Disturbing

The Dead Sea Valley is one of the most extraordinary regions on earth...

It is the lowest spot on the earth's surface, 1,286 feet below sea level

The Jordan River feeds it constantly, but there is no outflow from the Dead Sea... every second, 883 cubic feet of water flows in... and there it stays until it evaporates

The constant evaporation of salty water leaves this a region encrusted in salt

There are also strange geologic formations there... at the southwest corner of the sea is a great mountain of rock salt seven hundred feet high and five miles long known as Jebel Usdum (Arabic for "Mount of Sodom")

There is a great deal of evidence of volcanic activity from the past... archaeology also shows evidence of a vast irrigation system which must have produced a lush green area "well-watered" as it says in Genesis 13, amazingly fruitful and prosperous

At one point this valley was among the most fertile and attractive in the world, like the Garden of Eden... now it is one of the most forbidding, desolate, and hostile environments on earth...

Once it teemed of life, now it screams of death

WHAT HAPPENED??

Simply, the wrath of God poured out on a wicked people and the earth was destroyed along with them

Genesis 19 is a story of the sinfulness of man, the holiness and power of God, and the salvation of one righteous man out of that fiery wrath

It is a message we need to hear today more than ever

This is a drama more compelling, more shocking, more riveting than any Hollywood blockbuster movie, or any tale of horror from WWII.

I. The Cast of Characters

A. Lot: Righteous but Polluted

1. Sad degeneration in Lot continues... more fully exposed here
 - a. at first, he saw Sodom from afar... from the ridge on which he overlooked the valley with Abram, deciding where to go

He chose Sodom because it was rich and lush and fruitful

Genesis 13:10 Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)

- b. then he moved his tents “toward Sodom”

vs. 12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near (toward) Sodom.

- c. then was abducted in the war of the nine kings in Genesis 14 and chose to return to Sodom afterward!!! Knowing by then how wicked they were!!!!
- d. eventually was living in a house within the walls of Sodom, perhaps even as a gatekeeper or official

One of the most sordid and despicable descents into corruption in the Bible

And it all began that fateful afternoon on the heights overlooking the lush valley of the Jordan

Oh the terrifying end of a journey in sin!!! Lot lifted his eyes and looked at the lush lifestyle and loved it more than God

He should have stayed near righteous Abram, the man who had received the promises from God... instead he chose his own way

2. YET the Bible calls him righteous!!!

2 Peter 2:7-8 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men, (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)

- a. Peter calls him a righteous man three times... an example of how God rescues godly people from this filthy world
- b. we'll talk more later about the nature of Lot's righteousness in Sodom

B. Lot's Family: Corrupted to the Core

- 1. His wife was totally enamored with Sodom and looked backward when fleeing
- 2. His sons-in-law perished there after mocking his earnest warnings to flee the wrath to come
- 3. His daughters were morally corrupt and no wonder... Lot had offered them as sexual substitutes for the angels who had come into his house
- 4. He ended up in a cave, drunk, with his two daughters, who conspired to become pregnant by their own father

Lot's weakness and desire to stay in Sodom destroyed his family's moral core... he was a terrible father, one of the worst among the godly of the Bible. He failed to see the spiritual dangers inherent in living in Sodom, and was a very poor spiritual leader. He was tormented in his righteous soul day after day by Sodom's extreme wickedness, but he did very little externally about it.

C. The Angels: Holy, Disguised, and Powerful

- 1. As in Genesis 18, appearing as men

Hebrews 13:2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.

- 2. Servants of God to serve His chosen children

Hebrews 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

- 3. Servants of God to bring wrath and judgment on God's wicked enemies

The wrath is God's, and He truly poured it out from heaven

vs. 24-25 Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah-- from the LORD out of the heavens. Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities-- and also the vegetation in the land.

However, it was these angels who accomplished it for Him

vs. 12-13 *The two men said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here-- sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, 13 because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it."*

Angels always do with gladness what God commands, even in the pouring out of wrath on earth

Here they simply carry out God's commands to the letter

D. The Inhabitants of Sodom: Violent and Perverted

1. As shown in this drama... they were sexually perverted and violent
2. As well shall see from Ezekiel, their sinfulness went broader than sexual perversion
3. This people was wicked day after day, and the outcry of their wickedness screamed for justice

II. The Drama Unfolds in Eight Acts

A. Act 1: The Angels Arrive and Lot Extends Hospitality (vs. 1-3)

The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. 2 "My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning." "No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square." 3 But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate.

- Note Lot's possible position of authority, sitting at the gateway of the city where business is frequently conducted
- Note also Lot's remarkable commitment to hospitality... especially not knowing who they were
- The angels were determined to spend the night in the town square, which would have resulted in an amazing clash with the sex-crazed townspeople
- Note Lot's humility, bowing low to the ground, and also his insistence that the angels stay at his house. Lot knows full well what the evil citizens would try to do... what he didn't realize was what kind of power these "men" wielded
- Lot completes the hospitality by feeding the men... but the meal is simple, only unleavened bread. Like the bread eaten by the Jews the night they escaped from Egypt, a simple meal eaten in haste

B. Act 2: The Sodomites Attack, Lot Fails, Angels Protect (vs. 4-11)

vs.4-11 Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom-- both young and old-- surrounded the house. 5 They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them." 6 Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him 7 and said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing. 8 Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof." 9 "Get out of our way," they replied. And they said, "This fellow came here as an alien, and now he wants to play the judge! We'll treat you worse than them." They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door. 10 But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door. 11 Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door.

- News spread quickly and inflamed by perverted passion, all the men of the city surrounded Lot's house
- In verse 5, they say literally, “**Bring them out to us that we may know them.**” As we shall see later, some people who deny that homosexuality is outlawed in Scripture say that all they wanted to do was to know them in open-armed hospitality
- Hard to imagine that when Lot calls it a “**wicked thing**” and then offers his daughters instead
- Notice Lot’s moral confusion: properly desiring to protect the men who have come under his roof; sinfully failing to protect his own daughters
- The inhabitants of Sodom reveal their hardened consciences when they say Lot is a stranger who has now come to “play the judge”
- Amazingly it is the other strangers, the two men in Lot’s house, who have come to bring judgment!
- The violence of these evil men reaches fever pitch and Lot is in grave danger
- The angels show their great power by pulling Lot inside and striking the men with blindness
- The lust-crazed men grope around wildly in blindness trying to find the door
- The time for judgment is almost at hand

C. Act 3: Lot Fails to Rescue His Family, Lingers in Sodom (vs. 12-14)

vs. 12-14 The two men said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here-- sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, 13 because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it." 14 So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters. He said, "Hurry and get out of this place, because the LORD is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.

- **URGENCY:** the angels are absolutely urgent to Lot to get his family out... notice how important family ties are to God Almighty
- **IMPOTENCE:** Lot is completely unable to persuade his extended family to leave... they take him as some kind of mocker, proving how lightly they regarded his character

D. Act 4: Angels Strongly Rescue Lot, His Wife and Daughters (vs. 15-17)

vs. 15-17 With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished." 16 When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD was merciful to them. 17 As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, "Flee for your lives! Don't look back, and don't stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!"

- **INTENSE URGENCY !!!!** The time has come for destruction...the night is over and the dawn is almost upon them
- Note the incredible grace of God through the angels... they refuse to allow Lot and his wife and daughters to perish. Lot's will is to wait, but that will will get him killed
- The narrative stops to highlight the mercy of God in verse 16
- Once safely out of the city, Lot, his wife and daughters are commanded to run for their lives. The terrifying urgency must have electrified these people
- Note also the command not to look back and not to stop anywhere in the plain... disobeying these commands would cost Lot's wife her life

E. Act 5: Angels Graciously Allow Lot to Stay in Zoar (vs. 18-22)

vs.18-22 But Lot said to them, "No, my lords, please! 19 Your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can't flee to the mountains; this disaster will overtake me, and I'll die. 20 Look, here is a town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee to it—it is very small, isn't it? Then my life will be spared." 21 He said to him, "Very well, I will grant this request too; I will not overthrow the town you speak of. 22 But flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it." (That is why the town was called Zoar.)

- Here we see how much Sodom has a hold on Lot

- One commentator divided this text into two sections: Lot in Sodom, and Sodom in Lot
- Lot begs for an accommodation to his weakness... rather than fleeing to the mountains as he was commanded, he wants to stay in a town instead—Zoar, which means small
- Lot lacks faith and is focused on his own limitations... he doesn't think the angel's command will actually save his life
- Note how constrained the angel is... "**Flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it.**" This is a measurement of God's commitment to save Lot, and of the servant status of angels
- Yet look how powerful the angel is: He grants Lot's request, and decides not to overthrow Zoar
- Note also how the presence of one righteous man in the city of Zoar spared it from overthrow

F. Act 6: The Wrath of the Lord Destroys Sodom & Gomorrah, and Lot's Wife (vs. 23-26)

vs. 23-26 By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. 24 Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah-- from the LORD out of the heavens. 25 Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities-- and also the vegetation in the land. 26 But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

- The sun rose on Sodom's last morning
- The decreed time for destruction has arrived, and the first rays of sunlight are the last experience of God's love and grace they would ever experience

Matthew 5:45 He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

- Usually God's mercies are new every morning, but this morning there would be no mercy for Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and the cities of the plain... other than Zoar
- Most scholars believe that the Dead Sea is the most likely place for Sodom and Gomorrah... they note that this region is the lowest on earth, 1300 feet BELOW sea level;

From the research of geologist Frederick G. Clapp, who visited the area in 1929 and 1934, it was discovered that there are **fault lines** along the east and west sides of the Dead Sea. ... Also, earthquakes are common to the area. In Clapp's research, asphalt and petroleum accompanied by natural gas were found in the area. From Genesis 14:10, it is evident that the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits. This tar is naturally occurring asphalt.

Genesis 11:3; Exodus 2:3 It is a well-known fact that the southern end of the Dead Sea is a location for these tar pits. With the assistance of the imagination, the destruction of the Cities of the Plain can be recreated. Bryant Wood speculates that, *'these combustible materials could have been forced from the earth by subterranean pressure brought about by an earthquake resulting from the shifting of the bounding faults. If these combustibles were ignited by lightning or some other agency as they came spewing forth from the ground, it would indeed result in a holocaust such as described in Genesis 19.'*

Archaeology magazine Graham Harris and Tony Beardow argue in the Quarterly Journal of Engineering Geology that the land near the Dead Sea on which the cities may have stood literally liquefied in an earthquake, swallowing them up ca. 1900 B.C. A similar event, in which loosely packed, waterlogged soils liquefy under seismic force, destroyed an area of nearly 30,000 square miles in China in 1920. ... they suggest that a tidal wave caused by the earthquake might have stranded a large block of salt on shore, inspiring the tale that Lot's wife, ignoring God's command not to look back at the burning cities, was turned into a pillar of salt. Few scholars are likely to believe this hypothesis. "This is Noah's Ark stuff," says ARCHAEOLOGY Contributing Editor Neil Asher Silberman. "The real challenge for biblical archaeologists today is not to search for long-lost cities, but to understand why the ancient Israelites formulated these powerful myths."

- NO... the real issue is accepting the Biblical account as true and as a warning to flee the wrath to come
- The Biblical account says **the Lord rained down burning sulfur**... the wrath came from heaven down, not from the earth up
- Jesus simply told us what happened in Luke 17

Luke 17:29 But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

- “Brimstone” is usually associated with sulfur, and it stands for any inflammable rock
- God made it clear for all time that these cities were destroyed by fire from heaven... overthrown by the wrath of God
- He would have left no doubt or wiggle room for skeptics to claim it had merely been a “natural disaster”
- The text specifically mentions that the Lord overthrew the cities AND the vegetation in the land

Genesis 13:10 Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)

- The days of their lush harvests and wicked luxurious lifestyles was over
- One final tragedy awaiting Lot... the loss of his worldly wife, who despised leaving Sodom and lingered in the plain until destruction overtook her

G. Act 7: Abraham Beholds the Destruction, But Not Lot's Salvation (vs. 27-29)

vs. 27-29 Early the next morning Abraham got up and returned to the place where he had stood before the LORD. 28 He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, toward all the land of the plain, and he saw dense smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace. 29 So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.

- Devastating experience for Abraham... he had stood before the Lord and passionately interceded for Sodom and Gomorrah
- Now all he can see is a dense cloud of smoke arising from the plain where these cities used to be... thick, black smoke as from a furnace
- YET amazingly, God ascribed Lot's rescue (at least in part) to Abraham's intercession for him: "**He remembered Abraham and brought Lot out of the catastrophe...**"
- The judgment of Sodom was obvious, God's answer to Abraham's prayer was hidden
- A picture of the mysteries of prayer, as we mentioned: sometimes you may feel that your prayer life is like that... a dense cloud of smoke rising from the plain, the exact opposite of what you prayed for; AND YET God has answered your prayer in His own way and for His own glory

H. Act 8: Epilogue: Lot and His Daughters in the Cave (vs. 30-38)

III. Seven Timeless Lessons

A. God's Fearsome Display in Sodom: The Holiness and Wrath of God

1. Display: Sodom and Gomorrah were meant to be an example to the world
 - a. again and again God refers to Sodom and Gomorrah in Scripture

Deuteronomy 29:23 The whole land will be a burning waste of salt and sulfur-- nothing planted, nothing sprouting, no vegetation growing on it. It will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in fierce anger.

Zephaniah 2:9 Therefore, as surely as I live," declares the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, "surely Moab will become like Sodom, the Ammonites like Gomorrah-- a place of weeds and salt pits, a wasteland forever.

Isaiah 13:19 Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the glory of the Babylonians' pride, will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah.

Sodom and Gomorrah themselves stand as a benchmark for wickedness and future judgment:

Jeremiah 23:14 And among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen something horrible: They commit adultery and live a lie. They strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from his wickedness. They are all like Sodom to me; the people of Jerusalem are like Gomorrah."

Matthew 10:15 I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

- b. ultimately an example of the torments of hell

2 Peter 2:6 [God] condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly

What is hell going to be like? Something like Sodom and Gomorrah... fire from heaven, eternally burning the enemies of God

- 2. Wrath of God: Aggressive, initiative, devastating, inescapable

Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness

Definition: Wrath of God is the perfection of God's character in which He responds passionately to evil, judging it with fearsome and relentless power

Imagine all of God's power and knowledge bent to your personal destruction

God is a passionate, emotional being... not some machine or electronic control unit

Sin greatly angers God, and His wrath is put on display here in Sodom and Gomorrah

- 3. Holiness: God's hatred of sin... He will have it out of His universe

Habakkuk 1:13 Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous?

Answer: God does not tolerate the wicked... they are storing up wrath against themselves

Sodom and Gomorrah forever vindicate God's justice and stand as a warning to wicked people

How shall we escape such a wrath? What refuge could there ever be for us?

- 4. Amazing courage and love: Christ drank the cup of God's wrath

This was precisely the cup that Christ shrank from in the Garden of Gethsemane, but which He willingly drank for believers all over the world

Revelation 14:10-11 he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night

Matthew 26:39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

By dying on the cross, Jesus absorbed the wrath of God all of us rightly deserved as rebels against the King of the Universe

B. Sodom's Open Sin: The Perversion of Homosexuality

1. Some people question whether homosexuality is even an issue here

Pro-homosexual website: In Genesis 19:5, the word was used to express the request of the people of Sodom that Lot should bring out the strangers in his house so that they could know who they were. Sodom was a tiny fortress in the barren wasteland south of the Dead Sea. The only strangers that the people of Sodom ever saw were enemy tribes who wanted to destroy and take over their valuable fortress and the trade routes that it protected. Lot himself was an alien in their midst.

The story of Sodom clearly teaches that evil and violent people who attack aliens and strangers whom they do not know or understand receive God's quick and terrible punishment. The purpose of the story is to show that misunderstood, strange, or feared minorities in any community are in danger from violence by the majority when that majority is ignorant, ungodly, selfish and afraid.

2. They focus on the euphemism “know”

ESV Genesis 19:5 And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them."

They say the issue in Sodom and Gomorrah was bad hospitality... violence! They say the word “know” NEVER means “have sexual relations with”... but they are WRONG

Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition, Dr. Sherwin Bailey argues that the Hebrew word translated "know" in this verse does not refer to sex at all. Instead, the request on the part of the townsmen to "know" the visitors was merely a request to become acquainted with Lot's guests, especially since they were outsiders.

It makes no sense in the flow... if sexual relations were not on the minds of the men, why did Lot offer his two daughters who he says “have never known a man” (vs. 8)? Clearly the issue is sexual

The word is used obviously in the wretched parallel passage in Judges

Judges 19:22 *As they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, worthless fellows, surrounded the house, beating on the door. And they said to the old man, the master of the house, "Bring out the man who came into your house, that we may know him."*

Judges 19:25 *But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine and made her go out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until the morning. And as the dawn began to break, they let her go.*

3. Clincher: Jude

ESV Jude 1:7 *just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.*

Literally Greek is “go away after different flesh” ... clear the issue in Jude is that the people of Sodom did something sexual... since two words are used, and one of them is clearly sexual; Jude 7 says Sodom and Gomorrah were judged for pursuing strange or other flesh. The Gay Rights folks who know about this passage say the word in this text is “hetero”, but the context is one of sin and of pursing something DIFFERENT, something other than God designed

4. Bible is very clear about the perversion of homosexuality

Leviticus 18:22 *"Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.*

Leviticus 20:13 *"If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.*

Romans 1:26-27 *Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.*

Though homosexual activist try to escape the force of these verses, they cannot. They try to deal with the situation by twisting Scripture... Scripture itself points to a different way... the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 *Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

God has power to transform and save sinners, including homosexual sinners, from their sins. Through faith in Christ, wrath is averted and the very basic nature of sin is changed!!

Next Week: Five Other Timeless Lessons

- C. Sodom's Other Sins: The Danger of Prosperity, Leisure, and Unconcern
- D. Lot's Dreadful Descent: The Degeneration of Godliness Immersed in Wickedness
- E. Being Tormented by Lawlessness Saved Lot's Life
- F. God's Merciful Display in Sodom: Knowing How to Rescue the Godly
- G. Remember Lot's Wife: Loving Life Means Losing It

IV. Application

1. Flee from the wrath of God:

- a. God intends that Sodom and Gomorrah should stand forever as a warning against sin
- b. God is not neutral about sin
- c. Christ specifically told us to fear God's wrath

Matthew 10:28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

- d. Paul warned us that God's wrath is coming

Colossians 3:5-6 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

- e. only one place of refuge... Christ!!

1 Thessalonians 1:10 Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

2. Stand in awe of the courage of Christ

- a. Christ figuratively drank God's wrath at the cross
- b. He stood under the raining wrath of God and provided a shelter for all who flee to Him

3. Trust in Christ alone

4. Understand the Biblical teaching on homosexuality... very unpopular these days, but irrefutable Biblically

Homosexual agenda in America today very aggressive

Desire: not just tolerance, not just acceptance... they want America to CELEBRATE homosexuality

June 15, 2004: President Bush refused to authorize a “Gay Pride Month”. That proclamation would have enabled Gay Activists to use government monies to promote their lifestyle; some groups have prepared a lawsuit on this question

GLAAD = Gays & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation... purposely chosen to be positive and cheerful; GLAAD has actively sought to train media outlets (news stations, for example) on how to handle stories about gay people. Realizing that the strange behavior and bizarre clothing worn by “Gay Pride Parade” marchers is not the image they want to show, instead advocate showing homosexual people in everyday life situations (making dinner, driving to work, playing sports), playing up the “human interest” angle so they are not seen as “fringe people” in society

ALL GEARED TO MAKING AMERICA EMBRACE AND CELEBRATE THIS LIFESTYLE

TV programs, movies, songs... popular culture controlled by the media elite in Hollywood and other places are seeking to brainwash Americans on this issue

HOWEVER, anyone who rejects this lifestyle is painted with the darkest colors possible:

Boy Scouts of America was reviled in popular magazines for their refusal to allow gay men to lead Boy Scout Troops. Government agencies and community groups like United Way pulled their support funds from the Boy Scouts

Major recent issues So-called “Gay marriage”, led by activist Mayor of San Francisco, Gavin Newsom... who issued 2000 marriage licenses for same-sex couples despite the fact that the “law of the land” rejected these so-called marriage

On May 17, 2004, due to a court order, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts became the first state to authorize same-sex marriage

Deepest concern: That people will be deceived into thinking that this is not a sin to be judged, and they will not flee to Christ for salvation

Second deepest concern: that the church will think that homosexuality is an unforgivable sin, that Christ cannot transform a person and make them a new creation

ALSO: That the church will think that homosexual perversion was the only sin of Sodom and Gomorrah, or even the most prominent... Ezekiel the prophet told us otherwise as we will see next week

HOWEVER, It is vital to see the center of this text concerns God... His character, His wrath AND His ability to save even a single individual from destruction