

## **Is God Tolerant or Intolerant of Our Sexual Sin?**

- Is God tolerant of our sexual sin? That's the topic this week. My name is pastor Mark Driscoll. Been teaching through the Bible for, I think this is the 26th year, and I like to teach through books of the Bible. We're in the book of Genesis, and we hit Genesis 18 and 19 this week, the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. And God's Word isn't just about what happened, but it's about what always happens, and God's Word isn't old, it's timeless, so it's always timely. And it's really curious. I tend to pick books of the Bible about a year in advance, layout my preaching calendar, and what I've found for 26 years is that if you're in the scriptures, what happens in the culture absolutely is confronted by the scriptures, and it's no different. We'll get to it in a moment, but the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is one in which people are judged by God, if you believe the storyline of the Bible, for sexual sin, and what's happening right now is, in the culture, there is a very loud, very heated conflict and debate regarding human sexuality and what would be called transgenderism, homosexuality, and the gender spectrum. And what's really curious is, right now, at the forefront of this conflict is, of all corporations, Disney. So they have removed boys, girls, ladies, gentlemen, male, female from their parks, because they want to eradicate traditional Christian biblical God-given gender categories. In addition, there was parental bill that arose in Florida that was seeking to establish parental rights for the sex education of their own children, and the schools were pushing a very progressive sexual agenda for children as young as five, six, seven years of age, telling them to explore their sexuality, their genitalia, and their gender identity. Not surprisingly, many parents recoiled, and said it's too early, it's predatorial. In addition, this should be parental and not educational. And so it led to a great conflict, and Disney in the side of the fight sought to side against the parents and with the government, and so what this has led to is there was recently the release of a conference call with the executive producer Latoya Raveneau from Disney. She talks about the, quote, not at all secret gay agenda, and said she was, quote, adding queerness for kids anywhere she could in Disney, and their various platforms and products. Disney corporate president Carrie Burke says, quote, as the mother of one transgender child and one pansexual child," she then goes on to say that she would like to see 50% of characters in Disney products be LGBTQIA and/or racial minorities. There is, of course, an agenda. The backlash and the conflict is real. Erica Anderson is someone who is 71 years of age. They are transgender, a long-time transgender advocate, also trained as a psychologist on the forefront, having helped hundreds of teenagers transition in their gender reassignment. Also as a psychologist is a member or was a member of the American Psychological Association committee writing the guidelines for transgender healthcare. Here's a transgender person giving their whole life to transgender issues, transgender psychological and medical care, and they say, quote, "It's gone too far." It's now gone from trying to help kids who have these desires or inclinations, to, in my words, bullying, pushing, pressuring kids who are not transgender to at least explore a lifestyle that is not consistent with who they really are. And so they are saying, and this person is saying, it's now become trendy, and what we're seeing from education to political agendas to social media platforms and also to bullying and fear of man and peer pressure is pushing an entire generation towards homosexuality, toward transgenderism, toward lesbianism and such. And during the past few years, things have gotten even worse, especially for young people, because with COVID, many of their schools were closed. They were forced online, they were studying

online, so then that means they're more time in social media and they are being more pressured by the social media platforms. Well, what does this have to do with Genesis? Well, thus far in Genesis, in the first chapters, we saw that everything begins with God, and you don't understand anyone or anything unless you begin with God, and that God made us male and female in his image and likeness. So sex is binary, male and female. That's Genesis 1 and 2. In addition, gender is binary. Males are to be masculine. Females are to be feminine. Marriage is for one man and one woman in a covenant that is consummated. And number four, sexuality is exclusively for marriage between one man and one woman alone. If you believe the Bible, those are the categories. If you disbelieve the Bible, you lead to all of the confusion in our culture. And what I would say is if every and on the earth did what Genesis and the rest of scripture says, and of course, we won't, here's what you would have. You would have no more out of wedlock childbirths. You would have no need for abortion. You would have far less divorce. You would eradicate sexual assault victims. You would have far less sexual trauma. You would end human trafficking. You would have no sexually transmitted diseases, and you would have human flourishing at every single level of society. If we did it God's way, things would go great. The further we get from God's divine design, the worse things become and the more human suffering increases. So what I wanna do is I wanna read for you Genesis 18 and 19. It's a lengthy section of scripture. It's the entire story of Sodom and Gomorrah, and furthermore, as we dig into it, I just want you to hear God's Word, and then I'm gonna unpack it for you. "And the Lord appeared to him," that is Abraham, "by the oaks of Mamre," a place that we know, and monks still live, "as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed down to the earth and said, "O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I bring a morsel of bread that you may refresh yourselves, and that after that you may pass on, since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah," his wife, and said, "Quick! Three seahs," which is two gallons, "of fine flour. Knead it, and make cakes." And Abraham ran to the herds and took a young, tender and good calf, and gave it to the young man, who prepared it quickly. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate. They said to him, "Where is Sarah, your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." The Lord said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife and you shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, and advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. So Sarah laughed herself, saying, "After I am worn out and my Lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, "Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?" Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son." But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh, for I was afraid." He said, "No, but you did laugh." Then the men sent out from there, and they looked down towards Sodom." So now the scene shifts. "And Abraham went with them, set them on their way. The Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For have I

chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him." Then the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know." So the men turned from there and went towards Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord. Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are 50 righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the 50 righteous who are in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be it from you! Shall not the Judge earth do what is right?" And the Lord said, "If I find at Sodom 50 righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake." Abraham answered and said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, who am I but dust and ashes. Suppose 50 of the five righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find 45 there." Again he spoke to him and said, "Suppose 40 are found there." He said, "For the sake of 40, I will not do it." Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose 30 are found there." He answered, "I will not do it if I find 30 there." He then said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose 20 are found there." He answered, "For the sake of 20 I will not destroy it." Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry and I will speak but once. Suppose 10 are found there." He answered, "For the sake of 10 I will not destroy it." And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned his place. The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot," that's his nephew, "was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself down with his face toward the earth and said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house, and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square." But he pressed them strongly; so that they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old," this includes minors and children. "All the people to the last man surrounded the house. And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them." Same language of Adam knowing his wife Eve. "Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door him, and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Behold, I have two daughters who have not yet known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." But they said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break down the door. But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door. And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door. Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-laws, sons, daughters, or anyone else in the city, bring them out of the place, for we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it." So Lot went out and said

to his son-in-law, who was to marry his daughters, "Up! Get out of this place, for the Lord is about to destroy the city." But he seemed to his son-in-laws to be jesting. As the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, let you be swept away in the punishment." But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, and the Lord being merciful to him, brought him out and set him outside the city. And as they brought them out, one said, "Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away." And Lot said to them, "Oh, no, my lords. Behold, your servant has in favor in your eyes, and you have shown great mercy and kindness in saving my life, but I cannot escape to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die. Behold, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there. Is it not a little one? And my life will be saved." He said to him, "Behold, I will grant you this favor, so that I will, will not overthrow the city to which you have spoken. Escape here quickly, for I can do nothing until you arrive. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar," which means small or little. "The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar. Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire," literally fire and brimstone, "from the Lord out of heaven. And the Lord overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But Lot's wife behind him looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord. And he looked down towards Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley, and he looked up and, behold, the smoke of the land went up before him like the smoke of a furnace. So it was that, when God destroyed the cities in the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived. Now Lot went up to Zoar and lived in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to live in Zoar. So he lived in a cave with his two daughters. And the first born said to the younger, "Our father is older, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us the manner of all the earth. Come let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father." So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father. He did not know when she lay down or when she arose. The next day, the firstborn said to the younger, "Behold, I lay last night with my father. Let us make him drink wine tonight also. Then you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father." So they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know where she lay or when she arose. Thus both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father. The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab. He is the father of the Moabites to this day. The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-ammi. He is the father of the Ammonites to this day." All right, here's the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, and it's a case study in two families. Both are believing families. So there is Abraham, his wife, and Lot and his wife, and then Abraham and Sarah are gonna have a son, Isaac, and Lot and his wife have two daughters. What happened earlier is Abraham was a godless man in a godless place. He was in what is modern-day Iraq, ancient Babylon. He came from a godless family. His dad was an believer, and God showed up and saved him, and called him and said, "Leave your family and go to the land I will show you. I'm gonna give you a son, make you a great nation, the nation of Israel. Through that nation will come Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as the blessing and Savior of the nations of the earth." So he went and he took

with him his nephew Lot. Lot was his nephew because his brother died, and that was Lot's dad. And so Abraham has some affection for Lot and takes him with him. Abraham and Sarah demonstrate faith. Lot and his wife, or at least Lot seems to be a believer, but he's not mature and he's not consistent. What we see in this case study, angels visit both households. Abraham is living in one piece of land. Lot is next door in a place called Sodom. And these three men, we are told, arrive, and then we are told that one of them is the Lord and that there are two angels. And so to summarize this, I believe this is two angels, divine beings, and Jesus Christ coming down in what's called a Christophany, an appearance before he was born of the Virgin Mary. So Jesus and two angels show up to Abraham's house. They practice hospitality, welcome them in and care for them. Lot does the same. They don't know it's Jesus. They probably don't even know that it's angels, because they appear as men. Hebrews chapter 13, verse two says, "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by doing so, some people have entertained angels without knowing it." So they appear as human beings. They are divine beings, Jesus Christ, our Creator, and two angels that are created beings. They go to the homes, and they're both welcomed in for hospitality. And so first they go to the home of Abraham and Sarah, and they are believers in the Lord. They worship the Lord. They plant a church. It's called building an altar, and they are going to raise their son to live in obedience to God through what was just inaugurated in the previous chapter, the covenant of circumcision. And this is Abraham and the men in his house, as well as the son that would be born into his house, would be circumcised in the flesh to show that they belong to the Lord. But especially their physical pleasures, their sexual desires, their marriages, their children should be consecrated, committed to, devoted to the Lord, because everything God was trying to do through this family would be undone by sexual sin. Conversely, when he, Jesus and the angels, shows up at the house of Lot and his wife, they are a less mature family. We're not sure if his wife is in fact a believer. Throughout the course of Genesis, they demonstrate living by sight, not by faith, and previously, when Abraham and Lot had to determine who was gonna take which piece of land, because they didn't fit on this same piece of property with their livestock and businesses, what Lot did is he looked at the land that was more green and lush, and he chose that which looked good by sight. Abraham received the Promised Land, which is now the nation of Israel, by faith, and the big idea is this. Lot moved right next to Sodom, that horrific city, and at some point there was an invasion or war, previously in Genesis. Lot and his family got taken as prisoners of war, taken captive, and Abraham had to ride over 100 miles with 318 mercenaries, bring together the kings of five kingdoms, to then wage war and siege these enemy combatants to deliver Lot and his family. The whole point is they should have never been near Sodom. They barely got rescued by a military campaign from being prisoners of war, and rather than staying even outside of Sodom, where they started, by this time of the story, they moved all the way into Sodom. So now you've got believers living in Sodom. They're the only believers living in Sodom. And it says something curious about this in 2 Peter 2:7 and 8. It says in the New Testament, "Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked, for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard." Here's the big idea. Lot moved his family into Sodom. He should have never been there. He stayed there, and it bothered him. It troubled him. It disgusted him. And the question is, why didn't he do something? The point is, this is what we all do. There are things that bother us, things that trouble us, things that disgust

us, but we're passive, not active, and this is oftentimes the sin of men. This was the sin of Adam back in Genesis 3. This becomes a habitual pattern of sin. Sometimes God's men know what is right, but they allow what is wrong to continue, and they don't do anything. And so what happens here? Now Lot has waited too long. He's raised his children in Sodom. His family has now fully joined the culture of Sodom, and God is going to destroy it, and he is going to need to deliver them. And Lot is so passive, he has no sense of urgency. Jesus and the angels show up and say, "It's all going to be destroyed. Get out." The next morning, he's still there. I don't know about you. If God told me, "I'm going to destroy this whole city," I would leave immediately. This is like you live in the National Forest, and the government sends out a decree, "Hey, there's a forest fire coming your way. Time to evacuate. Get in the car and leave." He apparently gets a good night's sleep, wakes up, and it says that he's sort of conducting affairs normally, and the point is, if you live in Sodom, if you live in a corrupted culture, if you're so overcome by sick sexuality and sensuality, you become so desensitized to it that you do nothing and you have no sense of urgency, and you're not even aware of the crisis that is impending, and he is a case study in that kind of man. And so it's kinda like the days of Noah. We saw previously, everybody was wicked and sinful, and God sent Noah and waited 120 years, and nobody repented, so only eight people were saved, and God judged the world by water. And here, God is judging the world by fire. And the conversation is, "Well, what if there's 50 guys?" And they keep whittling it down, and you realize there's not any righteous people who love the Lord. Nobody there cares. Nobody's gonna get saved. Nobody's gonna have a change of heart. And we tend to think that there's good people, and eventually we all come around, and the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is that's simply not true. So let me say this. The first question that many of you are gonna have is, is this a myth? Is this a fairy tale? Is this like the kind of fanciful story that we create to tell children, to warn them against bad behavior, and to reward them for good behavior? Is this just some mythical tale? Does it have any historical, archeological, factual evidence that it existed? It does. "Scientific Reports" was the first to report the findings of an archeologist named Professor James Kennett, and he's at the University of California at Santa Barbara. So let me just set this up. He's doing an archeological dig in the same region as Sodom and Gomorrah, and he finds findings from the same time period that report the same results as Genesis. And let me, if I could state the obvious, if you are professor at a college in the University of California system, you probably not predisposed toward believing and supporting and defending the Bible. So this is probably not a guy on our team. And so they called the dig Tall el-Hamman, and we'll show it to you, and we'll show you him, this archeologist, Professor Kennett in the archeological dig. There's a debate as to whether or not it is Sodom and Gomorrah, because they can't 100% verify it, and I'll tell you why. The big sign out front that said "Welcome to Sodom and Gomorrah" got eviscerated, so there's not a lot of archeological evidence that says Sodom and Gomorrah. But here is what they reported, and I'll just read it to you from the non-Christian source. "The biblical sin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah could have been destroyed by a meteor cloud burst that incinerated all 8,000 inhabitants. The giant space rock exploded over the town, creating a fireball. Now there seems to be hard evidence that a, quote, heavenly event really did happen around that time. The cosmic calamity laid waste to the Jordan River Valley's northern shore, razing a huge 100-acre city to the ground. It also exterminated other cities and multiple small villages," as is reported in Genesis. "Even at that distance, the blast created a 740-mile-an hour

shock wave. Human remain suggests they had been blown up or incinerated with extreme disarticulation and fragmentation of bones." Quote, "We saw evidence for temperatures greater than 2,000 degrees Celsius," says study lead author Professor James Kennett of the University of California at Santa Barbara. "An international team also found building materials and pottery shards melted into glass. Mud bricks had heat bubbles. These are all indications of unusually high temperatures, which would have occurred during the biblical account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah." Here's what's interesting. "There was no manmade technology at the time that could have produced such astonishing damage. "There is evidence of a large cosmic fireball, close to Tall el-Hammam," says Professor Kennett. He likens the extraordinary event to the 1908 Tunguska Event when a 12 megaton meteor destroyed 800 million trees across 830 square miles of eastern Siberia." The point is, Genesis says it happened. The archeologists go to investigate, and their conclusion is that seems like it's exactly what happened. So let's just assume or presume for the moment that what Genesis is reporting is historical, actual, and factual. Then the question is, why would God do that? Even if you're not a Christian, you don't agree with me, you don't believe, just for a moment entertain the storyline of Genesis, that this was an act of God, destroying people and also an environment. And the question is, well, what would cause him to be so angry or upset to pour out such extraordinary wrath? And let me say this. In the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, like any city, like all of our lives, it wasn't one thing that aroused his wrath. There was I believe a prominent sin, and that was the sexual sin, but it included other sins. We are here not far from the Mexican border, and if somebody from a drug cartel is escaping into our country, it's not like they have impeccable character and they have a minor flaw of drug trafficking and murder. You either have good character or you have bad character, and if you are someone that has lost your conscience and you are operating according to just absolute base desires, you're gonna have more than one category of sin. And the debate in Sodom and Gomorrah is this. Those who are more progressive, those who are more liberal, those who want to suppress the truth, they will go to one of the minor sins in Sodom and Gomorrah, and they will ignore the major sin. And it says this in Ezekiel 16:49 and 50. "Behold, this was the guilt of Sodom." And here's the list of their sins. "Pride, excess of food," they're gluttons, "prosperous ease," they were thieves and greedy, "and they did not aid the poor and needy," so they weren't generous or helpful. "They were haughty," more pride, "and they did an abomination before the Lord," that's the sexual sin. "So I removed them, when I saw it." The point is this. There was a lot of sins, and the worst sin was sexual. Now, many will come to Genesis and they will try to say that the sin was not sexual, and it certainly was not same sex. The greatest argument against this erroneous conclusion is put forth by a scholar named Robert Gagnon. He wrote a book called "The Bible and and Homosexual Practice" It's about 500 pages. It is considered the leading academic work on homosexuality in the Bible in particular, and also in Sodom and Gomorrah. And so if you are a bit of a nerd and you wanna dig deeper, that's a good place to go, but let me give you the six reasons why we need to conclude that what really aroused God's anger and wrath in Sodom and Gomorrah was sexual sin. Number one, since the earliest days of our language and church, ultimately, sodomy has always been interpreted and understood as a particular sexual sin, so that has been the historic and traditional interpretation of the primary sin in Sodom and Gomorrah. Number two, God warned earlier in Genesis 13:12 and 13. We read this. "Abraham lived in the land of Canaan,

while a Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord." So God previously said the guys there are really bad guys doing really naughty, nasty things. Number three, we just read in Genesis 18:20 and 21, "Then the Lord said the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sins so grievous that I will go down to see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know." Throughout the Bible, when there is an accusation of wrongdoing, the Bible talks a lot about two or three witnesses. That's exactly what we get here. There's two angels and Jesus, so there's two or three witnesses. And what God says, there is such an outcry by all the oppression, the assault, the perversion, the corruption in Sodom and Gomorrah, and Jesus says, "I'm gonna come down and check for myself. I will be one of the two or three witnesses." Genesis 19:5 tells us this. "They, the men of Sodom, called out to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them." I don't know how you could miss this. And some will say, "Well, the word there in Hebrew doesn't mean sex." It means sex throughout the Old Testament, and in that same section, when Lot says, "Hey, don't assault my guests, assault my daughters," which is just a horrifying concept that will... I can't even imagine that thought crossing your mind, let alone offering it as an alternative, but what he says is, "For my daughters have not had sex with any men." It's the exact same word. You can't get around the clarity of scripture. Number five, there's a parallel account of Genesis 19 in Judges 19. It's a similar account. Similar words are used. Similar condemnation is given. And lastly, in the New Testament, Jesus' own brother Jude reflects back and gives commentary on Sodom and Gomorrah. Jude verse seven says, "In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns," absolutely what Genesis reports, "gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of hell." So what Jude is saying is this. Sodom and Gomorrah is an internship for hell, everybody sinning, doing whatever they want, thinking that they're going to get away with it, and God says, "No, fire and judgment." And what he says is, it's to warn the rest of us, that if we live as they live, if we do as they do, if we think as they thought, we will suffer as they suffer, and there is a greater fire coming. And when it comes to Genesis 18 and 19, we've really got three options. Number one, Genesis 18 and 19 has been wrongly interpreted over the course of church history. I just kind of proved to you, you can't come to any other conclusion, other than a bunch of guys had a bunch of perversions and naughtiness, and the whole culture was corrupt to the core. It included their children and grandchildren, and so God judged them and brought it all to an end. The other two options are that Genesis 18 and 19 is a denunciation of sin in general, but sexual sin in particular, but this is an old book, it's outdated, it's repressive, it's bigoted, it's limiting, that we have evolved, that we have progressed, that we've moved past this, that this is a sad chapter in human history, and we've entered into a more tolerant world where we don't have this kind of intolerant bigotry. The third option is it is unchanging, it is true. God is judging human sin and sexuality. He sent fire to judge, and if we don't repent of sin and trust in him, there's a greater fire awaiting us. So we really only have two options, and what I would encourage you is this. Just practice academic honesty. Don't take the Bible, do origami, and make it into something it's not. Just have the academic integrity to say, here's what it says. I think that's good, or I think that's bad, but let's just be honest about what it says. And the big idea here for us is, for those of us who are

Christians, is the Bible is not, as a friend of mine says, supposed to just be binoculars where we look at everybody else's sin, but a mirror, where we look at our own. And it's a good chance for us who are Christians, because here's the big idea. Lot is a believer. That's what's terrifying and horrifying. You look at the guys in Sodom, and you're like, "Well, they got problems." Lot's got problems too. He's got a lot of problems. None of them are sexually pure and clean. The believers and the unbelievers have problems. The believer gets grace and the unbelievers get judgment, but it's not like Lot is morally superior. He's just given grace by God. And we learned last week in Genesis 17 that Abraham walked with God in covenant, and that he was supposed to have his wife and their son Isaac walk with him covenant. So as a husband and a father, it's to walk with God in covenant relationship with your wife and your kids and your grandkids so that there is integrity and holiness for generations. The problem here with Lot, he's a believer, but he's not only in Sodom. Sodom is in him. That's the problem. And you can live in a debased, fallen, sick, perverted culture, and after a while, so much of it is in you that it's starting to affect you, and that's the story of Lot. And let's just say that we live in Sodom. Sexual perversion of every sort and kind is not just something that we need to get dressed and leave our house to go find. We can just click on our phone and find this thing in an instant. Here's what we know about Lot. He is sitting at the city gate. That is where the leaders sat in Sodom. There's a woman in Proverbs 31. She's extolled as an incredible woman, and it says that her husband will be honored and sit at the city gate. He's not only in Sodom, he's a leader, he's a public figure, he's a business leader, he's affluent, and he's partly responsible for the culture in Sodom. In addition, his daughters he allowed to be engaged to godless men. How do we know? He says, "God told me we're in trouble," and the guys just laughed at him and God didn't deliver them because they were ungodly men. In addition, they didn't follow him as Noah's sons and daughter-in-laws followed Noah, so he's a bad family leader. In addition, when the men do arrive, and they're trying to break into the home so that they can have sex with the new guys in town, his answer is horrifying, shocking, terrifying, and that is, "I'll send out my daughters." So obviously Lot's not just in Sodom. Sodom is in Lot. At that point, any father should die before he allows anything to happen to his little girls. And then after they barely escape, his two daughters come up with the plan to get him drunk. So he repeats the sin of Noah, and they he's so drunk and passed out that they lay with him and they become pregnant by their own father. So the big idea is this. Sodom is in Lot. In addition, Sodom is in Lot's wife. God told him, "When you leave, don't look back." Jesus said, "No one fit for the kingdom of God sets their hand to the plow and looks back." They're leaving and they're supposed to go forward, and she's looking backward, and it's her way of saying, "Oh, I miss our lifestyle. I miss our sexual sins. I miss our swinger lifestyle." Who knows what they were doing. It's not good, but what she is doing is she is regretting walking in God's will. She wishes that she continue in Sodom and in sin, and God turns her to a pillar of salt, which is curious, 'cause in the New Testament, Jesus says that God's people are supposed to be salt in culture. What salt does, it preserves. So let's say you take a piece of meat and it's going to die and decay, but if you salt it, it will extend its life. It will slow the deterioration process. God's people are supposed to be salt in the culture. She wasn't, and as a result, God turned her into a pillar of salt because she failed to do the thing that God sent her to Sodom to be. I actually don't think God sent them, but if they are there as believers, they were to be salt. They were to help preserve godliness, and instead, they had not only moved to

Sodom, they moved Sodom into themselves, and this includes their daughters. So Sodom lives in Lot, in his wife, and in his daughters. And they ultimately devise a plan where, "Let's get dad drunk, and then we can have kids with our dad." And from these two daughters come two people groups you'll see throughout the rest of the Old Testament, the Moabites and the Ammonites. They are bitter enemies of God's people. It's constant war. From these two godless gals come godless lines. Converse, from Abraham and Sarah come Isaac, not a perfect family, but a believing family that leads to the Lord Jesus, though there is some grace that is given as there is one woman who is a Moabite named Ruth, who is saved and becomes part of the family line of Jesus. And so ultimately, the question I want to ask then is, if we just look at this and say, okay, a bunch of guys got together and they wanted to have whatever kind of sex they wanted to have. Some of the story can shock and horrify us, but let's just boil it down to its base. A bunch of guys wanted to have sex, and they wanted to use it as an opportunity to sexualize their children. The question is, are we morally superior to Sodom and Gomorrah? Are we sexually pure and keeping our children in a position that is sexually pure? Of course not. And so the question I would ask is why does sexual sin seem so normal to us today? We may see it a little more clearly in Sodom, but we see it a little less clearly in our own Sodom. So let me just read a scripture to you, probably gonna offend you, and maybe even get me kicked off social media. So let me just read Romans 1:8 through 17. "For the wrath of God," same thing we just saw in Sodom and Gomorrah, "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth." Meaning God says no, and what it is is it's not that we don't understand what God is saying. We don't like it, so we suppress it, we fight it. And even when it comes to Sodom and Gomorrah, it's like, I know what it's saying, but I don't like what it's saying, so we suppress it. In social media, we call it throttling and we call it cancel culture. We've found creative technical ways to suppress the truth. "For what can be known about God as plain to them, because God has shown it to them. They are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise." We're evolved, we're progressive, we are beyond those old days of bigotry and intolerance. "Claiming to be wise, they became fools. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up." He let them do what they want. Same thing as Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom and Gomorrah is an illustration of a principle in Romans 1. "God gave them up to dishonorable passions for their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature," lesbianism, "and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another," homosexuality, "men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error." The point is this. Roman says you either worship the Creator and enjoy created, or you worship creation instead of Creator, and if you worship created things instead of the Creator, you end up worshiping the human body, nakedness, nudity, 'cause there's nothing as beautiful that God made as a human body, and sex and pleasure, 'cause there's nothing as fun and exciting for the human body as sexual pleasure. What's curious. Here we are 4,000 years removed from Abraham, 2,000 years removed from Paul, and in a February 2020 Gallup poll,

5.6% of us adults said they are not heterosexual or straight. 5.6%. You probably would've thought it was 50% or 60%. In addition, that number grows as the younger generation is considered. Of those 18 to 23, 16.7% of Americans are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. The education, the I would call it brainwashing, the social media throttling and agenda pushing is having an effect to where younger generations are experimenting and exploring more sexually. And let me say this. If you're born into a world, that world seems normal to you, because it's the only world you've ever known. But if you were born, let's say before 1960, let me tell you how the world has changed. In 1960, we legalized the birth control pill and birth control. Prior to that, if you had sex, you might get a disease or pregnant. Birth control lowers your odds. In the 1960s, public education in America changed to what's called values curriculum, values clarification curriculum. It used to be that there was an external authority and you would learn about abiding by that external authority, and then the authority moved internally, so the highest authority is you. So whatever you feel is true, whatever you think is true, whatever you want to be true, that's true for you. So if you're a girl, but you feel like you're a boy, you're a boy. If you're a boy and you feel like a girl, you're a girl. And at the end of the day, it's not what corresponds with reality, but everyone gets to define reality for themselves. Then we had the sexual revolution of the sixties and seventies, all kinds of sexual rebellion, and what tended to be more hidden now becomes more public. In 1973, we legalize abortion. Now, if you're having sex and you get pregnant, you can murder the child. In 1974, the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders removed homosexuality as a mental disorder. Here's what's crazy. When I was born 1970, homosexuality was a mental disorder, a clinically diagnosed mental disorder. Today, it's a civil right. That happened in my lifetime. Then we had the invention of pornography and most of technology is driven by pornography, the internet, cheap digital filmmaking, and distribution. Now we have lots of sexual abuse. We have sexual addiction. We have pornographic addiction. We have trauma. All of that contributes to confusion about sex, gender, and sexuality. The more porn you watch, the more pornified your brain is, the less you think clearly and biblically. Now we've got social media that is pushing an agenda. We've got cancel culture for those who would speak against it. And so here's where we've come today, and this is what I'd like to say. Today, sex is a religion, and it's a religion that is opposed to Christianity. LGBTQIA, those are denominations from the Christian perspective. They're different denominations within the same religion. Just like Christianity has evangelists who are trying to recruit people, this religion has evangelists. Join us, put up the hashtag, post the rainbow, try the sexual act. We have baptism where people go public with their faith. The converse of that in the religion of sex is coming out. There are sacraments. We have baptism and communion. They would have sexual acts and also public activism. And the result is the conflict now is that the religion of sex is trying to get into kids ministry. That's what's happening. In every church, there's kids ministry, and this religion, they're now trying to establish their children's ministry and their children's ministry curriculum in social media and in the classroom. In addition, what we have now is a generation of confused Christians, and George Barna, a researcher, says that 30% of millennial Christians identify as LGBTQ in a recent Newsweek poll, meaning they are feeling the pressure, so they are sort of participating in the worldview. It doesn't mean that they are actively engaged in the acts, but they're saying that they're willing to open as non-binary, open and affirming across the

spectrum, so that they're not seen as intolerant. Well, and you may ask why does this keep getting pushed in media and social media? And why is there this sudden rush toward corporate progressivism? This will kind of shock you. There are three large money management firms. They would control things like your and my retirement fund. They are BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street. They are completely woke, progressive. They are anti-Christ. They own upwards of 20% of most or all of the Fortune 500 companies, and they have redefined capitalism. Capitalism used to have shareholders, people who owned a part of the company and wanted to see a profit. They have added to it woke capitalism, which would be not in addition to shareholders, stakeholders, and these would be representatives from certain groups in the community that want to see the company and its money used for two things, social activism and climate change. So they are taking your money and using it to push agendas. That's exactly what is happening with Disney and other major corporations. And of course, the entire agenda is against the Bible. That's just the way that it is, and that's why there's this constant corporate and social media platform push. Well, let me get toward the end. How about we do this? We ask, what does Jesus say about Sodom and Gomorrah? I mean, some of you would say, well, Jesus was nice. He was loving, he was kind, and he was and he is. He didn't judge anybody. Actually, he judges everybody. And Jesus would never, you know, do something like this. Well, actually, Jesus was the one there who sent in the flare to call in the strike from heaven, and Jesus says this. Luke 17:26 through 32, "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man." What he says is, "When I come back, it's gonna be like it was in the past. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot." Jesus talks about Lot. "They were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all." He's strong. "So it will be on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back." And he says, quote, "Remember Lot's wife." Jesus says, "Hey, if you've read Genesis, I judged everybody once with water. I judged everybody a second time with fire." It was Jesus who went to Sodom and Gomorrah. It was Jesus who called in the fire and brimstone strike from heaven. Jesus came back a second time about 2,000 years ago. He lived without any sin. For him, it was living in Sodom, and he was pure and holy and righteous and good. Though he was in Sodom, Sodom was not in him. Here's what's crazy about Jesus. He lived an adult male life on the earth as a virgin. We have a hard time even conceiving of a life that doesn't have sexuality, but God expects us to practice chastity before marriage, fidelity within marriage, and at certain of points in marriage, health, deployment, travel, we're not having sex. And the point is this. Jesus Christ lived the perfect life, the best life, the most impactful life, the most incredible life in history of the world as a virgin, meaning if you're gonna follow in his footsteps, self-control is going to need to be part of that path. So Jesus died so that we can be forgiven, and this is the season of forgiveness, where Jesus is in heaven and he's not sending down fire and brimstone. He's sending down love and mercy and grace and forgiveness, and he's sending down the Holy Spirit to help us. But there is a day coming, he says, when he will return and it'll be like the days of Lot. Everybody will think nothing's gonna happen. Jesus will never return. We'll be eating and

drinking and sleeping around and carousing, and some of us will be passed out drunk, sleeping with somebody like Lot, when Jesus shows up and the judgment begins. Let me close with a few things. Number one, the issue of sex outside of the Bible. It's a closed-handed issue, not open. Ultimately it's about repentance of sin and not tolerance of sin. And let me say this. Everybody who's ever read the Bible finds at least one thing that they wish they could change. Everybody. If we let everybody who read the Bible take one thing out, there'd be nothing left, because everyone is offended by something. And so what I would say to you is this. Some of you are gonna struggle with what the Bible says because you have trauma. You've been abused, and as a result, it's hard for you to even see sexuality as a beautiful gift from God. You need to heal from that. Some of you are very conservative, and you're more conservative than God, so when the Bible has some freedom, it kind of freaks you out. You need to scoot over. If you're further to the right than God, you're sitting in the wrong place. For some people that go too far to the left, they want to eradicate things that God says. Well, let me say this. When it comes to sex, every single one of us probably has one thing that we're frustrated by in the Bible. For the dating couple, they're like, why can't we live and sleep together? Well, 'cause it's fornicating. For the married couple, why can't we have sex outside of marriage? 'Cause it's adultery. Well, if we wanna have an open marriage, it's not an open marriage, it's an adulterous marriage. Why can't we look at pornography? 'Cause Jesus says lust of the heart counts as well. For the person who is gay, for the person who is transgender, for the person who is bisexual, we all have our struggles, and let me say this. The world we live in, it takes quite an effort to submit to the power of the Holy Spirit, to live a life of self-control without giving into your desires because everything around you is like gravity, and it's pulling you down toward those most base desires. In addition, we all know and love somebody who's disobeying what the Bible says. We all know people that are living and sleeping together, cheating on one another, doing things they shouldn't be doing. We love those people. And let me close with this, that God can change our desires, he can forgive us, and he can heal us. I'll close with my story. So I grew up on the top of the hill, and if I jumped on my bike and didn't even pedal and just rolled down the hill, I could go to a strip club or an hourly rate massage parlor or a corner that was filled with prostitutes. That's where I grew up, next to an airport. Now, I never did any of those things, just to be clear, but if I was on my bike, that's where my bike went. It literally went downhill towards sexual temptation. That's exactly where I lived. So I was sexually active as a teenager, and then met a gal named Grace at the age of 17. She was a pastor's daughter. I was not a virgin. I thought, "I'm doing better than everybody else in my neighborhood. I'm not sleeping around. I'm not going to strip club. I'm not doing any of that stuff. I'll just date a girl," and we started sleeping together. That was a sin. The Bible calls it fornication. It was wrong. I was no better than anybody and what they were doing in Sodom. So then, and she's a pastor's daughter, by the way, so now I'm sleeping with a pastor's daughter, so whatever you've done, I probably have done worse, because sleeping with a pastor's daughter is bonus points for hell. That's how it works, so anyways, we start sleeping together, and then she gives me a Bible. She wasn't walking with Jesus, of course. I go to college and I'm at a state university. I'm taking sociology, anthropology, human sexuality, and everything is telling me the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is what should happen, that those were good people just living the fullness of their desires. So then out of curiosity, I start reading the Bible, and I get to Romans 1, that section that I read you,

where Paul condemns sexual sin and base desires. And I realize that this book disagrees with everything I think, and it rebukes exactly how I'm living, and so I had to come to the conclusion, either I'm gonna come under the authority of the scriptures and ultimately Jesus Christ, or I'm not. And I came to the decision that Jesus is God, that he did die for my sin, and he did rise, and that this book is written by God, and it has authority over me. I have no right to edit any of it, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, I need to seek to obey all of it. So I go to Grace and I tell her, I said, "Hey, we've been sinning." She's like, "Yeah, I know. I'm a pastor's daughter." I'm like, "I'm sorry about that." So then I went to my pastor and I said, "Hey, I'm wrong. I wanna be a Christian. What do I do?" He said, "You stop all sexual activity until marriage, and once you're married, you be faithful to your wife for the rest of your life." So we're coming up on 30 years of marriage. I've been faithful to my wife. I'm telling you this. Without the Bible, I wouldn't have even thought about having any guardrails on my sexuality. Without the Holy Spirit, I eventually would have blown my marriage and blown up my family. And ultimately, God has saved me not just from hell but from myself. And we are now entering into our 30th year of faithful marriage. The reason I'm recording this is we're out of state, teaching at a marriage conference for the largest marriage ministry in America on sexuality, and we're finishing a book this week that is a commentary on the Old Testament book of the Song of Solomon, and it's about the pleasures of marriage sexuality. And here's what I'm telling you. I'm not Jesus. I'm for sure not Jesus, and I need Jesus, and my sin was so great that Jesus died for me, but he rose and he helps me and he sends the Spirit to keep me relationship with him. And so what I would simply tell you this, my friend, is my goal here is to teach the Bible with a lot of love and compassion. I know we've all got our struggles. I've got mine, you've got yours, everyone's got theirs, and when it comes to sexuality, we've all got the areas that are really tempting and difficult for us, and I understand that, but I found that after 30 years that the Bible is right and I am wrong, and when I disobey the Bible, I not only hurt God, I hurt myself and the people I love the most. And I'm happy to report that after 30 years of faithful marriage to the same woman, I don't have any regrets, and God's way is the best way, and I would encourage you to open God's Word. I would encourage you to receive the Lord Jesus Christ. I would encourage you to come under the authority of scripture, and I would encourage you to ask the Holy Spirit for help so that you can walk in the path of God, and ultimately, we worship a virgin, and so obviously there has to be a way to have a great life without having a great sex life if that is what it takes for you not to live out of your deepest, darkest, most debased desires. I'll pray for you. Father, thanks for a chance to teach, and God, thanks for technology, and God, I thank you that the world we live in has lost its mind, but we can be transformed by the renewing of our mind, and God, our desires will just lead us to death, but the Holy Spirit can lead us to life. And God, I thank you that you forgave me. I'm no better than anyone, and what I did is bad. It's wrong. God had to die for it. And God, I thank you that you gave Grace and I a fresh start. You've given us a pure marriage and you've given us an encouraging testimony, and wherever people happen to be, I pray they would take that next step toward purity and holiness. In Jesus' good name. Amen.