

Genesis 19:8-10

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Lot reminded the lustful hoard the two visitors were under his protection and offered his two virgin daughters to the men to appease them, and protect his guests. The crowd pressed Lot against the door trying to break inside. But the two visitors quickly grabbed Lot and shut the door.

Lot offers to appease the men's lust by handing over his *two daughters who have not had relations with man* to the sexual predators. It is difficult for someone with a western mindset to conceive how someone the Bible calls righteous could make such an offer.

There is a similar story in [Judges 19](#) that might provide some insight. In [Judges 19](#), an Israelite traveling with his female concubine passes by a foreign city in order to stop for the night at an Israelite city, Gibeah. There he would expect to be hosted well. He waits in the city square, expecting to be hosted. After a long wait, an Israelite that lived in Gibeah, but who was not a native of Gibeah, invites him to his house. But the host admonishes him not to spend the night in the city square, as Lot did in [Genesis 19](#).

And, just as in this story, the men of the town come and demand to have relations with the visitor. The Israelite host pleads with the men not to do this "since this man has come into my house." This demonstrates the ethic common in the ancient near east regarding hospitality. Once a host had taken in a guest, he was honor bound to protect that guest.

It seems both Lot as well as the host of [Judges 19](#) viewed their predicament of protecting their guest and protecting their daughter's chastity as choosing between two evils. Any time we have to choose between two evils, the greater evil is avoided. An example often used is seeing a baby in a burning house, and having to choose between breaking and entering or letting the baby die. Both Lot and the Israelite host in the [Judges 19](#) story placed a higher ethical priority on their duty to protect the guest over the sexual purity of their daughter. That did not mean they did not care for their daughter. It meant they place a higher ethical value on their duty to a protect stranger they agreed to host.

This was an enduring ethic of the ancient near east. The period of Judges began in Israel roughly five hundred years after this episode of the destruction of Sodom.

In the Judges story, the host offers his virgin daughter and the traveler's concubine, but the men refuse. It is worthwhile noting that the hoard refused the offer of the virgin daughters in each case. It could be that the offer of the daughters is expected to be refused.

In the [Judges 19](#) story, the Israelite traveler pushes the concubine out of the door. The story says:

So the man seized his concubine and brought her out to them; and they raped her and abused her all night until morning, then let her go at the approach of dawn. As the day began to dawn, the woman came and fell down at the doorway of the man's house where her master was, until full daylight. ([Judges 19:25-26](#)).

The Israelite traveler was on his journey because his concubine had “played the harlot against him” ([Judges 19:2](#)). So perhaps his pushing the concubine out the door was intended to teach her a lesson.

When the girl's master opened the door, he sees her at the door, and tells her to get up and continue the journey. He might have wanted to teach her a lesson, but clearly did not expect her to be brutalized. However, she was dead. He then cut her into four pieces and sent the pieces to all parts of Israel to show what was going on in Gibeah. All Israel is shocked and dismayed, saying “Nothing like this has ever happened or been seen from the day when the sons of Israel came up from the land of Egypt to this day” ([Judges 19:30](#)). Israel musters and comes to war against Gibeah. This makes it clear that this wicked behavior was not condoned.

Like the situation in [Judges 19](#), Lot offers up his daughters in order to save his guests. He offers his two virgin daughters for them to sexually abuse. But he calls the entire approach acting *wickedly*.

Lot pleaded, “*let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like.*” He offered to give his daughters into the power of the mob to protect his guests who had *come under the shelter of his roof*. Lot warns the crowd of men that if they carry out such contemptible behavior it would be an appalling breach of hospitality. To violate this custom would brand the city lawless.

Just as in [Judges 19](#), the mob rejects the substitute offer. Further, the mob focused on his description of their planned actions with the two angels as being wicked. They accused Lot of judging them, *“This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge.”* In Hebrew, the word ‘alien’ means to sojourn or dwell as a foreigner (not a blood relative) with the sense of “for a little while,” not permanently. In other words, not a native-born citizen. The word “judge” means more than *to criticize*. In Hebrew, it is a verb meaning “to govern” like a ruler or governor especially over disputes. In other words, the crowd of men was saying, “this fellow Lot is not a full-fledged citizen, but only a foreigner. He dares to judge our behavior in our own hometown.”

As 2 Peter tells us, Lot remained righteous while living in Sodom. But he had progressed in the extent to which he was integrated into the city’s life. First, he merely “pitched his tents near Sodom” ([Genesis 13:12](#)). Then “he had settled in Sodom” ([Genesis 14:12](#)). It was solely because of him that the city had earlier been saved by Abraham ([Genesis 14](#)). As we will soon see, his daughters were engaged to some young men of Sodom. Clinging to a righteous standard has caused him to remain an outsider, and he is now in personal jeopardy.

The men respond by attacking Lot, assuring him they *will treat him worse than them*. The crowd *came near to break the door*. It seems at this point that whatever immunity Lot believe he enjoyed had now evaporated. The crowd of men refuses Lot’s offer and move toward his door to secure by force what Lot would not give freely. They were enraged by Lot’s attempt to stop their wickedness. They did not want to be condemned or judged. They might have restrained themselves earlier from fear of Abraham. Now their lust and rage causes them to abandon all caution. But they are going to get much more severe judgement than what Abraham could have delivered.

Having failed to persuade the mob, Lot himself needs to be rescued. The two angels *reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house*. Lot attempted to save his guests but ended up being saved by them. The angels *shut the door*.

Biblical Text:

⁸ “Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof.” ⁹ But they said, “Stand aside.” Furthermore, they said, “This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them.” So they pressed hard against

Lot and came near to break the door. ¹⁰ But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door.