Let’s carefully examine the biblical text and its theological implications.

In Genesis 19:4-9 (English Standard Version, ESV), we read:

> Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house.
>
> They called to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.’
>
> So Lot went out to them at the entrance, shut the door after him,
>
> and said, ‘I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.
>
> Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. But do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.’

> But they said, ‘Stand back!’ And they said, ‘This one came to sojourn, and he 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.”

The Meaning of “Judging” in the Biblical Context

The word translated as “judge” here (Hebrew: שָׁפַט shafat) carries a broader meaning than simply sentencing someone to punishment. It primarily means “to govern,” “to decide,” or “to render a verdict.” In the ancient Near Eastern context, a judge was a figure of authority who resolved disputes and maintained social order.

Lot’s offer to give his daughters instead of the visitors demonstrates both his protection of the strangers (who were angels) and his appeal to the morality of the Sodomites. However, the crowd perceives his intervention as an unwelcome attempt to assert authority over their city, a city notorious for its wickedness (Genesis 13:13).

The Role of Judges in Scripture: The Example of Solomon

The Bible’s understanding of judgment is best illustrated by King Solomon’s request for wisdom.

In 1 Kings 3:7-12 (New International Version, NIV), Solomon prays:

> Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties.
>
> Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number.
>
> So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?
>
> The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, ‘Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies, but for discernment in administering justice,
>
> I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone

> like you, nor will there ever be.’”

This prayer highlights that biblical judgment is deeply tied to divine wisdom and justice (מִשְׁפָּט mishpat), not mere human opinion or punitive action.

The story of Solomon resolving the maternity dispute (1 Kings 3:16-28) exemplifies the practical application of God-given wisdom in judgment — discerning the truth in a complex and emotional dispute.

Theological Insights on Lot’s Situation

Lot is a resident alien in Sodom—a city marked by sin and divine judgment (Genesis 18-19). The Sodomites’ accusation that Lot “wants to judge” (Genesis 19:9) reveals their rejection of any moral authority except their own corrupt desires. This rejection is symbolic of humanity’s broader resistance to God’s righteous judgment.

Lot’s offer of his daughters can be troubling to modern readers, but it reflects the ancient cultural context where hospitality was

sacred and protecting guests was paramount—even at great personal cost. The narrative sets the stage for God’s impending judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah for their grave wickedness.

Applying This to Our Lives

The biblical concept of judgment (justice) involves wise, discerning decision-making, rooted in God’s character of righteousness and mercy. As believers, we are called to seek God’s wisdom when making judgments in faith, family, and daily life.

The example of Solomon teaches us that:

Wisdom is a gift from God (James 1:5), essential for fair judgment.

True judgment considers both mercy and justice, reflecting God’s nature (Micah 6:8).

Judgment is broader than punishment—it involves governance, reconciliation, and restoration.

Therefore, instead of only asking God for material blessings or success, we should pray for the wisdom to judge rightly and live justly, trusting that God will provide what we need according to His will (Philippians 4:19).

Closing Blessing

May the Lord bless us with the wisdom and discernment to judge rightly, just as He blessed Solomon, so that we may live in His justice and truth.

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