

Sodom's True Story

The story of Sodom and Gomorrah is the go-to narrative for fundamentalists who hate homosexuality. It's safe to say that it's their favorite. In case you're not familiar with the story, I'll quickly recap it here. If you already know the story, feel free to scroll down to the next section.

I guess the first thing I should do here is introduce you to the cast of characters.

- At the top in a starring role is God and His costar Abraham.
 - We don't see them directly here, but they had a significant discussion about the Cities of the Plain only a chapter back.
- God's other costar is Abraham's nephew, Lot, now a resident of Sodom.
- Lot had a wife and two daughters still living at home (*both virgins as you will soon find out*).
- Rounding off the cast are two angels.

And of course, the story is set in the plains just north of the Dead Sea surrounded by cliffs and rocks.

In this infamous saga, God tells Abraham that he has had about as much as he could take from "*The Cities of the Plain*," which Sodom and Gomorrah are the biggest. He complains "*the stench of their sins*" had reached him all the way into heaven. That must have been some stench since it would take thousands of years traveling at the speed of light just to get out of our galaxy—let alone all the way to heaven.

Genesis 19 opens with two angels walking into Sodom. Lot sees them while sitting at the gate. There's no reason given for the angels' visit, nor are we told what Lot was doing at the gate.

- Were they on reconnaissance?
- Were they there to warn Lot?
 - That doesn't seem to be the case since it was Lot who spotted them.
- Were they following Onstar?

And what about Lot at the gate of the city. Who sits all day at the gate of a city?

- Was he begging?
- Was he on the un-welcoming committee?
- Was he changing the locks?

As they say in show biz, "sometimes you just kinda-hafta roll with it!"

Yet the narrative is: in the evening, Lot sees the angels and, fearing for their safety, takes them to his house to hide them. Though they don't get there unseen. That night all the men of the Sodom show up at Lot's house and demand the two angels so that they may "know" them. Lot is appalled and in order to save the angels, he offers his two daughters to be gang-raped instead.

This act only makes the men angrier and they threaten Lot with the same treatment as his two guests. Then, just as they reach Lot's front door, one of the angels pulls Lot back inside,

and the men of Sodom are struck with blindness. They then tell Lot to take his family and get out of town that night before God rains fire down on them, told Lot not to look back.

Lot was rather attached to Sodom, so the angels literally had to take him by the hand and lead him out of the city, telling him to head for the hills.

So they left Sodom just before dawn. As the angels promised, fire came down from Heaven. Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, thus proving throughout history, that God hates fags and the women who look back upon them (i.e. fag-hags).

First let's address some of the issues that those who tell the story don't seem bothered by:

- Number one: God, of his own volition took it upon himself to destroy men, women, and children, and yet never told anybody why. This seems profoundly out of character for a "love."
- What about these "Men of Sodom"? I'm from Seattle, one of the gayest cities in the country. You'd be hard-pressed to find a situation where "every man in the city" would come out to rape two strangers. Believe it or not, most of us have lives, and there are plenty of men around who want our love.
- But the most troubling is Lot and his two daughters. Lot is called a righteous man, and yet he offered up his daughters to be gang-raped by an angry mob—specifically highlighting their virginity. In this version of the story, the men of Sodom wanted to have sex with adult males, and Lot countered by offering two young virgin females (eleven or twelve), his own daughters, knowing that they would die.

So Genesis 19 strikes me not as much as a condemnation against homosexuality, but an invective against God and his dysfunctional and downright dangerous family values.

If you look at the reasons given for this horrific event, there aren't any. God tells Abraham that the stench of their sins has reached him but what was that stench? Did it smell:

- Like soiled condoms?
- Like lube?
- Like jock straps?
- Like the gym?

Throughout the Bible Sodom and Gomorrah have been used to represent sins other than sexual and are synonymous with greed and selfishness and inhospitality, not with homosexuality.

In Ezekiel 16, God accuses Israel of being greedy and selfish. He also claims that they didn't help the poor and needy, the widow and the orphan. And then he (*God*) accuses Israel of being *worse than Sodom and Gomorrah*.

There's also another possibility:

This has been put forth by scholars going as far back as Augustine. Scholars have noted some interesting peculiarities about the story, starting with the word, *know*.

We laypeople think that the word *know* refers to some sort of sexual connection as in, *“And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain...”* However, only the King James version of the Bible translates the word *know* in this context.

- The Hebrew verb *“to know”* occurs 943 times in the Old Testament.
- Of those 943 occurrences, only ten refer to *“carnal knowledge”* such as *Genesis 4:1*.
- *Genesis 19:5* would be the only place in the entire Bible where the word *“know”* would refer to homosexual relations.
- So, out of the 943 occurrences, 933 of those times the verb *“know”* means *“know.”*
 - Nine out of the 943 times, *“know”* means carnal knowledge between a man and a woman.
 - One time out of the 943 times, *“know”* means gay carnal knowledge.

Within this context, Lot (*who was not a citizen of Sodom but still a sojourner*) invited two men to his home though he did not have the authority to do so. So the men of the city show up and demand that Lot bring out the men he’s hiding so that they might *“know them.”* In other words, interrogate the strangers and find out why they were there; an outcome could be tragic for Lot’s guests. They could have been put out of the city, or worse, tortured and killed.

This might also make more sense out of Lot’s counteroffer: his virgin daughters. It certainly makes sense that if the men were straight, they would be more tempted to take up Lot’s offer. If the men had come to rape two men, why would Lot consider that they might be tempted by his two daughters instead?

The result of this translation would lead to the conclusion that the cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, were destroyed for the sin of inhospitality:

“Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.”
(Ezekiel 16:49)

Jesus himself may have believed this to be the case when he gave this command to his disciples:

“Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when you depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of our feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.”
(Matthew 10:14-15, Luke 10:10-12)