

# Judges 19:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the old man said, Peace be with thee; howsoever let all thy wants lie upon me; only lodge not in the street.

## Analysis

**And the old man said, Peace be with thee; howsoever let all thy wants lie upon me; only lodge not in the street.** The old man's response exemplifies covenant faithfulness. His greeting "Peace be with thee" (shalom lecha, שָׁלוֹם לָךְ) invokes God's blessing, using the comprehensive Hebrew shalom (שָׁלוֹם)—wholeness, wellbeing, security. This greeting appears throughout Scripture (Genesis 43:23, Judges 6:23, Luke 24:36) and reflects covenant relationships where God's people ensure others' welfare.

"Let all thy wants lie upon me" (raq kol-machsorecha alay, רַק כָּל־מַחְסוֹרְךָ אֵלַי) demonstrates extraordinary generosity. The phrase "lie upon me" (alay, אֵלַי) indicates assuming full responsibility, bearing another's burdens (compare Galatians 6:2). Despite the Levite's self-sufficiency, the old man insists on providing everything needed—modeling the gospel, where Christ bears our needs despite His owing us nothing.

"Only lodge not in the street" (raq barechov al-talin, רַק בְּרֹחוֹב אַל־תֵּלִין) reveals urgent concern. The verb lin (לִין, "lodge, spend the night") with the negative particle al (אַל, "do not") creates emphatic prohibition. The street posed real danger, which the subsequent narrative confirms (vv. 22-28). The old man's urgency mirrors Lot's insistence that angels not spend the night in Sodom's street (Genesis 19:2-3)—both knew their cities harbored evil. Genuine covenant love compels protective action, not mere sentiment. As 1 John 3:17-18 asks: "Whoso

hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern hospitality operated on reciprocity principles—travelers today might be hosts tomorrow, so universal participation in the hospitality system benefited everyone. The old man's assumption of "all thy wants" went beyond minimal obligation, reflecting Abrahamic hospitality that provided abundant food, water, and rest (Genesis 18:4-8). His urgency about not lodging in the street reveals knowledge of Gibeah's character—law-abiding cities posed minimal street danger, but morally compromised places threatened travelers. The subsequent attack (vv. 22-28) vindicated his warnings. This passage contrasts sharply with Jesus's teaching that hospitality to "the least of these" is service to Christ Himself (Matthew 25:34-40).

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does the old man's assumption of responsibility for another's needs model Christ's bearing of our burdens despite our insufficient claim on His mercy?
2. What does the urgency to protect the vulnerable ("lodge not in the street") teach about active versus passive righteousness in Christian community?
3. How should believers respond when we know our communities or churches harbor dangers to the spiritually vulnerable?

לִּי יְהוָה  
lie upon me only lodge  
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