

Third Lesson from Genesis 11-20
A study on socio-cultural background of Ancient Israel

Wife and sister relationship: Passing off one's wife as his sister is a weird thing that we find in the life of Patriarchs Abraham and Isaac. It happens three times in the Bible. Twice Abram does it to Sarai (Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-19) Once Isaac does it to Rebecca (Gen 26:1-6). In our culture, we find it difficult to comprehend Abraham's actions. We find it difficult to explain to ourselves, our children, or others why Abraham did this. Why are the patriarchs passing off their wives as their sisters? The explicit reason given in the text is fear for their own lives. The reason they claimed to be siblings was to protect Abram's life. Abram apparently thought that since Sarai was beautiful, the Egyptians would want her for themselves. If the Egyptians knew that Abram and Sarai were married, then the Egyptians would conclude that the only way to have Sarai for themselves was to kill Abram. There is another interesting reason for Abram to lie. He claims that he was in fact Sarah's brother, that they had the same father but not the same mother (Gen 20:12). While this claim may provide a hint for how Abraham came to this ruse, it does nothing to explain Isaac's calling Rebekah his sister. Abraham did not lie but told a truth. Sarah was indeed his sister or niece (Gen 20:12).

These three wife – sister incidents revealed God's determination to fulfill His covenant promises despite the faithless human efforts of the patriarchs to save themselves. In each case, while Abraham and Isaac both thought they could control the situation, they instead placed Sarah and Rebekah at risk of defilement with another man; only God could safeguard their purity and chastity for the blessings that would come. The extent of how faithless the Patriarchs were cannot be appraised in the absence of their historical context; each wife – sister incident followed significant historical covenantal events with God. And in the end, despite their show of faithless behavior, both Abraham and Isaac were noted for their faith in God in Hebrews 11:8-19. As we go through life, we also encounter times when we are given commandments that seem strange or that are difficult to understand. We may not always see their immediate purpose, but if we respond as Abraham did, then we can also experience the power of God in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

Surrogate motherhood: Using a surrogate mother to bear children for a childless couple is as old as the story of Abraham and Sarah in Genesis chapter 16. Sarah could not bear children, so she gave her servant, Hagar, to Abraham so she could have his children. This was a common practice at the time, since a childless woman was shamed by her friends and family. We learn from Hagar's story that using a surrogate parent has the possibility to cause pain, heartache, and confusion. One problem that arose with Hagar is that she did not want to give her child over to Sarah when it was born. This can still happen today, as women discover that giving away their children (despite financial compensation) can cause immeasurable pain because of the bond that forms between the pregnant mother and the child she is carrying, even before it is born.

The Bible does not forbid the use of a surrogate parent but raises questions as to whether or not it is ethical. Marriage is designed to be between two people, and children are to be born of that union (Gen 1:28, 2:24). To bring in a third party means that the child will have a third parent. Then there may arise difficult questions, such as will the baby know its surrogate mother? Will

there be visitation? How will the child be expected to feel about the surrogate mother, and will there be jealousy? All these issues should be prayerfully considered before a Christian couple uses a surrogate.

Catholic Church's stand on surrogacy: Surrogacy is an offense against women; how can you “rent” the body of another human being? And how does paying the rent make you a parent? Motherhood is not merchandise and should not be for sale. The bond between mother and child is forged at conception in the womb; no one has the right to break that bond. Pope Francis has spoken clearly (*Amoris Laetitia*, 54) against the exploitation of poor, third-world women: *“History is burdened by the excesses of patriarchal cultures that considered women inferior, yet in our own day, we cannot overlook the use of surrogate mothers and the exploitation and commercialization of the female body in the current media culture.”* There are things that are *extra commercium*, they cannot be bought. Children are gifts with their own inherent dignity – rather than goods one has the right to purchase on the open market.

The Catholic Church has consistently taught that human life is sacred because, from the moment of conception, it involves the creative action of God and remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. No one should play God and produce human beings in reproductive centers, exploiting disadvantaged women. In 1987, St. John Paul II approved the Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation which specifically speaks of surrogacy: *Surrogate motherhood represents an objective failure to meet the obligations of maternal love, of conjugal fidelity and of responsible motherhood; it offends the dignity and the right of the child to be conceived, carried in the womb, brought into the world and brought up by his own parents; it sets up, to the detriment of families, a division between the physical, psychological and moral elements which constitute those families.*

Incest: Scripture contains examples of incest that were allowed (tolerated) before the giving of the law. For example, God allowed Adam and Eve's children, such as Cain and Seth, to marry their sisters out of necessity. Abraham was allowed to marry his step (half) sister Sarah (Gen 20:12). Lot had intercourse with his daughters after being made drunk by them (Gen 19:31 - 32). It is important to distinguish between incestuous relationships prior to God commanding against them (Lev 18:6–18) and incest that occurred after God's commands had been revealed. Until God commanded against it, it was not incest. It was just marrying a close relative. It is undeniable that God allowed “incest” in the early centuries of humanity. Since Adam and Eve were the only two human beings on earth, their sons and daughters had no choice but to marry and reproduce with their siblings and close relatives. The second generation had to marry their cousins, just as after the flood the grandchildren of Noah had to intermarry amongst their cousins. One reason that incest is so strongly discouraged in the world today is the understanding that reproduction between closely related individuals has a much higher risk of causing genetic abnormalities. In the early days of humanity, though, this was not a risk due to the fact that the human genetic code was relatively free of defects. Intermarriage among close family members was a necessity in the generations immediately following Adam and Noah and was not a sinful perversion of sex.

It seems that, by the time of Moses, the human genetic code had become polluted enough that close intermarriage was no longer safe. So, God commanded against sexual relations with siblings, half-siblings, parents, and aunts/uncles. Many centuries later humanity discovered that incest is unsafe and unwise. Genetics was not an issue in the early centuries of humanity, and the marriages that occurred between Adam and Eve's children, Abraham and Sarah, and Amram and Jochebed were not selfish pursuits of sexual gratification or abuses of authority; accordingly, those relationships should not be viewed as incestuous. The key is that sexual relations between close relatives were viewed differently pre-Law and post-Law. It did not become "incest" until God commanded against it. God's law enumerated differing penalties for those found committing incest. They included exclusion from the covenant people (Leviticus 18:29, 20:17 - 18), childlessness (Leviticus 20:20 - 21) or even death (Leviticus 20:11 - 12, 14). The reason why he forbids this behavior (other than he says so) is that those who practice it defile and destroy themselves through it (Leviticus 18:24 - 25, 27).

New Testament teaching: By the time of the New Testament, however, incest was strictly forbidden. John the Baptist condemned the marriage of Herod Antipas to his brother Philip's wife (Mark 6:17), an act that was clearly a sin (Lev 18:16, 20:21). The apostle Paul had to grudgingly deal with a case of incest occurring in the church at Corinth. The church had a member who was having sex with his stepmother while his father was still alive (1Cor 5). **In conclusion,** the Bible not only does not approve of incest, it also forbids we have sex with anyone outside the union of marriage. In fact, according to Jesus, even lusting after someone (before any physical act can take place) is considered a sin (Matthew 5:28)

Melchizedek: Who is Melchizedek? Why Jesus is called the priest in the order of Melchizedek? Melchizedek prefigures Jesus himself (Hebrews 4:14-5:10; 7:1-28)

Melchizedek is both priest and king. The priest is an intercessor between God and human beings. God ordained certain men who were ritually cleansed and called to serve the people of God. They would offer sacrifices to God on behalf of people. When God established His covenant with the Jews at Sinai, he chose one family to act as priests. This family was the family of Aaron and in addition, Aaron's tribe, the Levites. The book of Leviticus is written to instruct the "levitical" priests on how to perform their service. One example of their service is the day of atonement. Read Leviticus 17: On this day, among other things, the priest in charge would give an animal sacrifice for the forgiveness of the people's sins. He then would take some blood from the sacrifice and enter the small cubicle where God dwelt in a special way. There he would display the blood symbolically to God thus demonstrating that the sacrifice had been given--a life had ended, implying that the wages of sin (death) had been paid. Hebrews 5 Priests give sacrifice to God and represent the other peoples (5:1). Priests must be cleansed in a special ritual way (5:3). Priests are chosen for the office by God (5:4). As mentioned above, a Jewish priest must be from the tribe of Levi. Jesus was not from the tribe of Levi but from the tribe of Judah. (See Heb. 7:13, 14.) This means that according to Mosaic law, Jesus lacked the first requirement for priesthood.

Melchizedek: a Priest out of nowhere (Gen 14:17-20) After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh. Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. This passage introduces us to a rather obscure Old Testament figure named Melchizedek. Melchizedek is a priest coming from nowhere although priesthood was formally established after 500 years. Obviously, this man must have been a priest in some order other than the levitical order. This unusual man meets patriarch Abraham and blesses Abraham who in turn gives a tithe of his booty to Melchizedek. This also indicates that Abraham recognized Melchizedek as his priest. Both the blessing and the tithe point to the same thing--the great stature of this man. He stands as a priest at a time there were no priests, and holds a stature greater than the patriarch Abraham.

Why Jesus is a priest in the order of Melchizedek? Psalm 110:4 "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: *You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek*". Melchizedek is a type of Christ. The comment in Heb. 7 that "*without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever,*" would be referring to Psalms 110 according to this interpretation. There, as we saw, Messiah is a priest forever. The lesson is the same for us--Jesus Christ is the sole authorized priest for all time, completely and permanently replacing the Old Testament priestly cults. The author of Hebrews repeatedly contrasts Old Testament heroes and practices and then profoundly reveals how Jesus is the better and truer fulfillment of the Hebrew's beloved traditions and patriarchs. In chapters 5 through the beginning of chapter 8 the author focuses on the superior priesthood of Jesus over the Levitical Priesthood as the eternal, perfected priest of the order of Melchizedek

Circumcision in the Old Testament: How did circumcision start in the Bible? According to Genesis, God told Abraham to circumcise himself, his household and his slaves as an everlasting covenant in their flesh on the 8th day. Those who were not circumcised were to be 'cut off' from their people (Genesis 17:10-14).

Who was to be circumcised? Abraham, his descendants and those who were bought with their money (Gen 17:12-13). Also, all the males of a household were to be circumcised if one of them wanted to join in the Passover celebrations (Ex 12:43-49). Circumcision applied to the slaves of Jews. Apart from that, circumcision never applied to people outside the Jewish faith. Circumcision never applied to Christians (Acts 15:5-11). The Apostle Peter, who was circumcised, said: We believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will. (Acts 15:11)

Should we follow the Law of Moses? No. We Christians were freed from the Law, including circumcision (Acts 15:1-20). Many of these laws, including the food laws, were repudiated in the New Testament (Acts 10:1-33). Jesus himself criticized the scribes and their traditions. (e.g., Matthew 15: 1-9, also Isaiah 29 :13).

What did the early church decide about circumcision? Some were saying that Christians must follow the Law of Moses and be circumcised. Peter replied: Now therefore why are you

putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? (Acts 15:10). The early church followed Peter, and all were welcome, circumcised or not. The early church rejected the ideas that Christians had to be circumcised and follow the Law of Moses.

What did Paul teach about circumcision? Genesis 17:14 says that an uncircumcised man shall be 'cut off from his people' but Paul taught that those who accept circumcision are obliged to keep the whole law, and those who want to be justified by the law have cut themselves off from Christ (Galatians 5: 2-4). Paul confirmed that circumcision was nothing (Galatians 6:15) and Christ was all and in all (Colossians 3:11). Paul taught that Jesus accepts people as they are and does not ask them to become circumcised or uncircumcised to become Christian (Galatians 5: 6). Paul said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved...' (Acts 16: 31).

Connection with Baptism: Baptism is, in some sense, the sign of the New Covenant God makes with His Church. Jesus commanded baptism in the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Baptism is the outward sign of an inward change. It represents rebirth in Christ. We find a very close parallel between circumcision and baptism and we can use the Old Testament teaching on circumcision to justify the baptism of infants. The argument goes like this: since infants born into the Old Testament Jewish community were circumcised, infants born into the New Testament church community should be baptized.

Difference between OT and NT: While there are parallels between baptism and circumcision, they symbolize two very different covenants. The Old Covenant had a physical means of entrance: In contrast, the New Covenant has a spiritual means of entrance: one must believe and be saved (Acts 16:31). Therefore, one's spiritual life is closely connected to the sign of baptism. If baptism indicates an entrance into the New Covenant, then only those devoted to God and trusting in Jesus should be baptized.

What is name? Dale Carnegie says, "*A person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language*". Since birth, we have been conditioned to respond to the sound of our name. Our name is an incredibly important part of our identity. It carries deep personal, cultural, familial, and historical connections. It also gives us a sense of who we are, the communities in which we belong and our place in the world. Many times, a person's name holds special meaning. Children today are named after family members to show respect or to honor their memory. After marriage, a woman usually changes her last name to signify the beginning of the next chapter.

In Biblical times, names were even more intentional, often saying something about that person's character or their situation. For example, King David's name means "beloved", and he was known as the man after God's own heart. In each case, God wanted to instill a new vision for that person's life or a new role He wanted them to play in His Kingdom. Pope takes a new name upon his election. On the day of baptism, we are given a name. We also take a saint's name on the day of our confirmation signifying a new life. Therefore name is not just an identity of a person but an essence and character of one's life.

What is naming or renaming in the Bible? Every single thing on planet Earth has a name. The biblical concept of naming was rooted in the ancient world's understanding that a name expressed essence. To know the name of a person was to know that person's total character, nature, destiny and his/ her future. In biblical tradition the task of naming a child generally fell to the mother (Gen 29:31-30:24; 1Sam 1:20) but could be performed by the father (Gen 16:15; Exodus 2:22) and in exceptional cases by non-parental figures (Exodus 2:10; Ruth 4:17)

Naming is tied to authority and intimacy: Naming demonstrates authority. When God created man, he gave him the name Adam, and one of the first jobs he gave Adam was to give names to everything put under his care. While naming is tied to authority in the scriptures, it also reveals intimacy. Naming happens in the context of relationships. In John 10:3, Jesus says He calls his sheep by name. He tells his disciples in Luke 10:20 not to rejoice because the demons were subject to them, but to rejoice because *their names* are written in Heaven.

But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, Jacob, and formed you, Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine” (Isaiah 43:1) But Zion said, “The LORD has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me.” Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you. See, upon the palms of my hands I have engraved you; your walls are ever before me (Isaiah 49:14-16)

6 Reasons Why Names are Important in the Bible

1. A biblical name could record some aspects of a person's birth.
2. Biblical names sometimes expressed the parents' reaction to the birth of their child.
3. Biblical names were sometimes used to secure the solidarity of family ties.
4. Biblical names could be used to communicate God's message.
5. Biblical names were also used to establish an affiliation with God.
6. Biblical names are given to establish authority over another, or to indicate a new beginning or new direction in a person's life.

Why God changes name? In the Bible people have got their names changed and some people have got more than one name. Why God renames His people? He doesn't do this because He doesn't value our uniqueness. The reason He strips us of our own identities is because He offers us a greater identity. There are many times in the Bible when a person's name was changed, or a nickname is given marking a transformation in the people who were renamed. Here are a few examples

Name changes in the Bible

Name	Changed as	By whom?
Abram (father of one nation)	Abraham (father of many nations)	God
Sarai (my princess)	Sarah (Mother of nations)	God
Joseph	Barnabas	Apostles

James and John	Boanerges and Sons of thunder	Jesus
Simon (God has heard)	Peter (Rock)	Jesus
Jacob (Supplanter)	Israel (Struggler with God)	God
Saul (Jewish name)	Paulus (Roman name means short)	Hebrew to Latin
Thomas	Didymus	Jesus
Noemi (beautiful)	Mara (bitter)	
Joseph of OT (Hebrew name)	Zaphenath - Paneah (Egyptian name)	
Daniel (Hebrew name) Hannah (Hebrew name) Mishael (Hebrew name) Azariah (Hebrew name)	Belteshazaar (Persian name) Shadrach (Persian name) Meshach (Persian name) Abednego (Persian name)	

The holy name of Jesus: on the eighth day Jesus was named Luke 2:21 as the angel has already foretold about it (Mt 1:21-22). There Is Power In The Name Of Jesus.

Salvation: Acts 4:8-12 reminds us that *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”*

Prayer: When we pray “in the name of Jesus”, we align our will and our petitions with His. John 14:13 says; *“I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”*

Healing: We ask for healing in the name of Jesus. Mark 16:17-18 reminds us; *“In my name, they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues;... they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”*

St. Paul gives a beautiful and powerful statement on the name of Jesus in Philipines 2:9-11.

The land of Canaan and the Canaanites: The land of Canaan in the Bible refers to the ancient geographical area God promised to give to Abraham and his descendants. It is not merely the land where the Israelites would live, but the sworn inheritance of God’s chosen people: “The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God” ([Gen 17:8](#)) Where is Canaan now? The boundaries of the ancient land of Canaan included territory on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea west of the Jordan River, which today encompasses modern Lebanon, portions of southern Syria, and Israel.

Noah’s grandson was Canaan, the son of Ham, from whom the Canaanite peoples originated (Gen 9:18). The Canaanite race was cursed because of the sin of Ham against his father, Noah (Gen 9:25–26). The Bible does not specify the sin of Ham (in which Canaan may have been involved), but the act was disgraceful enough for God to pronounce judgment on Canaan’s descendants, the Canaanites. When the Israelites led by Moses arrived at Canaan, they found the

inhabitants of the land to be mighty people, giants even, with many large, fortified cities (Numbers 13:28). The Canaanites worshiped numerous foreign deities, and their religion and culture were known to be extremely immoral and wicked (Genesis 10:19; Exodus 13:5; Leviticus 18:27; Judges 1). Canaan was also an exceptionally fertile region, described in the Bible as “a land flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 3:17; Numbers 13:27). In Deut 7:1, as Israel was poised to take possession of the land of Canaan under Joshua’s leadership, seven separate nations inhabited the region: Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.

Scripture depicts the people of Canaan as idolatrous and superstitious (Deut 29:17). God warned the Israelites not to follow in the detestable practices of the Canaanites: “When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, be very careful not to imitate the detestable customs of the nations living there. For example, never sacrifice your son or daughter as a burnt offering. And do not let your people practice fortune-telling, or use sorcery, or interpret omens, or engage in witchcraft, or cast spells, or function as mediums or psychics, or call forth the spirits of the dead” (Deut 18:9–11; Lev 18:26).

God’s chosen people were to conquer the Canaanite nations, utterly destroying them and occupying their land. They were to show them no mercy, make no treaties with them, or intermarry with them (Deut 7:23–24; Joshua 23:12; Judges 2:2). God strictly warned Israel, “Do not bow down before their gods or worship them or follow their practices. You must demolish them and break their sacred stones to pieces” (Exodus 23:24). Moses encouraged Joshua and all of Israel not to fear the Canaanites. The same God that had brought them out of Egypt would take them into the Promised Land: “Be strong and courageous! For you will lead these people into the land that the LORD swore to their ancestors he would give them” (Deuteronomy 31:7; Deuteronomy 7:17–18). Joshua led Israel into the land of Canaan and thus became a type of Christ. It is Jesus who takes believers into the place of spiritual rest and victory and gives them their promised inheritance. As Joshua assigned the tribes of Israel their allotted inheritance of land, so Jesus has granted us our spiritual inheritance (Ephesians 1:3–23).

Sodom and Gomorrah: The biblical account of Sodom and Gomorrah is recorded in Genesis. Genesis 18 records the Lord and two angels coming to speak with Abraham. The Lord informed Abraham that “the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous” (Genesis 18:20). Genesis 19 records the two angels, disguised as human men, visiting Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot met the angels in the city square and urged them to stay at his house. The angels agreed. The Bible then reveals the sin lurking in the Sodomites’ hearts: “Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. They called to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them’” (Genesis 19:4–5). The angels proceeded to blind the men surrounding the house and urge Lot and his family to flee the city. The wrath of God was about to fall. Lot and his family fled the city, and then “the Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the Lord out of the heavens. Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities” (Genesis 19:24).

What was the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah? According to Gen 19, the sin involved homosexuality. The very name of that ancient city has given us the term sodomy, in the sense of “copulation between two men, whether consensual or forced.” Clearly, homosexuality was part of why God destroyed the two cities. The men of Sodom and Gomorrah wanted to perform homosexual acts on what they thought were two men.

This is not to say that homosexuality was the only reason why God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Ez 16:49–50 gives some more insight: “Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me.” So, the sins of Sodom included pride, apathy, complacency, idleness, and unconcern for the underprivileged. Ez16:50 adds that a sin of Sodom was that they did “detestable things.” The Hebrew word translated “detestable” refers to something that is morally disgusting. It is the same word used in Lev 18:22, where homosexuality is an “abomination.” Jude 1:7 also weighs in: “Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion.” So, again, while homosexuality was not the only sin of Sodom and Gomorrah, it does appear to be the primary reason for the destruction of those cities. Sodom and Gomorrah were guilty of many other sins, but homosexuality was the principal reason God poured fiery sulfur on the cities, completely destroying them and all of their inhabitants. To this day, the area where Sodom and Gomorrah were located remains a desolate wasteland. Sodom and Gomorrah serve as a powerful example of how God feels about sin in general and homosexuality specifically.

Why Abraham pleaded for the people of sodom and Gomorrah? When God revealed His plan to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah due to the wickedness of those cities, Abraham asked God to spare the people. In fact, Abraham engaged in a lengthy conversation to mediate for the cities. **First**, Abraham wanted God to spare the righteous people who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah. **Second**, Abraham’s nephew Lot lived in Sodom. God did spare Lot and his two daughters, perhaps as a direct result of Abraham’s request. Gen 19:29 states, “So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of 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.” Abraham certainly wanted to see his own extended family protected from God’s judgment. **Third**, Abraham had compassion for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. While he understood God’s judgment of sin, Abraham asked God to spare the city even if there could be found as few as ten righteous people (Genesis 18:32). God agreed to spare the city for the sake of ten righteous people. Apparently, fewer than ten righteous were found, since God did destroy the cities, sparing only Lot and his two daughters. (God also planned to rescue Lot’s wife, but she died when she disobeyed God and turned back to look at the city as it was being destroyed.)

Abraham’s compassion for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah reveals the heart of a man who cared greatly for others, including those who did not follow God. In fact, the angelic visitors who visited Lot were threatened by men of Sodom who desired to have sex with them. Though Sodom’s citizens were wicked, Abraham did not wish to see their destruction. Like Abraham, we are called to have great compassion for others, including those whose lives do not follow God’s ways.