

The Bible in Context Ep 24: Sarai's Exodus and Lot's Fall Gen 12:10-13:18

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Welcome back to The Bible in Context. Hey Nate. How are we doing today?

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doing great. Still the same day. We just got done with the Abraham's Exodus episode and we're actually moving straight into another Exodus episode with Sarai's Exodus out of Egypt. Because we talked about previously how after Abram's Exodus, just like in creation, at the end of that Exodus, Adam and Eve fell. At the end of Noah's Exodus, he and his family fell.

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now here at the beginning of Abram's first exodus, he falls. And they go to Egypt. They exile themselves out of the land of Canaan to Egypt where some bad stuff happens and they need another exodus. Yeah, so it's interesting. You've got Abram fearful that the land's not going to satisfy him or be able to sustain his family. And then he gets into Egypt and he's fearful because Pharaoh...

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is gonna see that his wife is beautiful and kill him. And so he fears for his life again and talks to his wife into lying, or giving a half truth. Are we gonna talk about that at all? Yeah, we'll mention that. I mean, that's actually part of the Exodus cycle here because it's repeated in a later one, or in the Exodus cycle. So all this time, Yahweh, he's just trying to get somebody in...

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the elect line at this point in Shem's line to be a faithful covenant partner and use that person to redeem humanity, to be the snake crusher. Obviously Abram's not that guy. He has messed up, he's been disloyal to Yahweh. And Yahweh at this point, he has the option to just say, all right, forget it Abraham.

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I'm out. I'm going to pick one of your cousins, someone else in Shim's line, and keep this project up over here. That's a valid option. But he doesn't do that. He sticks with Abraham. Just like we saw previously, Abram possibly got lazy and took a rest in Heron. We don't know all the details, but this may not be the first time that you always had to dig Abram out of a ditch. And he's going to do it again.

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Now again, I'm going to walk through this and talk about some of the links between this Exodus and the Exodus of Israel, just so that we can again see how the author has intentionally

constructed this narrative to mimic the Exodus of Israel. So this starts off with a famine. And in Joseph's day, there was a famine that causes him to bring his brothers down to Egypt. When they get down to Egypt...

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Abram tells Sarai to tell a half-truth, to say, hey, tell Pharaoh that you're my sister, which she is his half-sister. So this is a half-truth. They're just not mentioning that she's his wife. It's kind of gross, but whatever. They're ancient Near Easterners and yeah, I don't know. They didn't have that many options. Yeah, exactly.

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Well, Joseph, he does something similar in telling his brothers to tell a half-truth. When they get down to Egypt, he says, tell Pharaoh that you are herders of livestock, not shepherds. Because Egyptians don't like shepherds, it's going to go better for us if you just say you're herders of livestock. So that's what they do. They tell a half-truth to secure their well-being in Egypt. Well, when they get there, Sarai is oppressed by Pharaoh.

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Pharaoh's officials see her, that she is beautiful, and he takes her into his house. Just like Eve saw the fruit and took it, the sons of God saw the daughters of women and took it. Here, Pharaoh is portrayed as sinning against Abram and Sarai with this fall kind of sin. So we're not given all the details. Yeah, Pharaoh didn't know that this was someone else's wife. Was this just a culturally acceptable way to become married? What did everything?

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Did Pharaoh do what was right per their customs in this? We don't really know, but we are told through this literary convention that Pharaoh sinned against Abram and Sarai with whatever he did. I think often I've seen people really dig into this narrative and say like, Pharaoh didn't deserve this. God is acting out of turn by afflicting him. But we don't have to know all the details. The author threw this convention of saying that Pharaoh saw and took.

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portrays him as sinning in a significant way. So, Sarai is oppressed, she's taken into Pharaoh's house, Israel will later be taken into Egyptian service and be oppressed as slaves. Then in both these stories, the Pharaoh is afflicted with plagues, same words there, in the Hebrew, and then Pharaoh sends out the elect family. The elect family comes out with a mixed multitude and great possessions.

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this story that Abram, while in Egypt and because of Sarai, he acquires all kinds of livestock and servants and wealth and then when he comes out he brings all that with him as well as with Lot out of Egypt. So just like the Exodus of Israel, he comes out as a mixed multitude with great possessions. Abram then comes back to the place where he was at the beginning. We see that

in chapter 13 verse 3, which is at this mountain which has already been seen to have some Edenic connotations attached to it.

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Abram ends his first exodus on a mountain just like Adam does and Noah where he offers sacrifices and he comes to a tree right before that which has some links back to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and just the trees of the garden. So as he comes back to where he was at the beginning, he is kind of rested in Yahweh's dwelling again. The word rested is not used here but it's the same idea. He's able to come back to Yahweh's mountain.

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at least to this mountain that kind of fits within the Exodus pattern as Eden and Noah's mountain did as Yahweh's dwelling mountain. Then again we see towards the end of chapter 13, there's some things in the middle of chapter 13 we're going to talk about in a minute, but towards the end of chapter 13 Abram again is blessed to be fruitful and multiply. He's promised that he will be given the land and his offspring will be given the land so in that we have that same commission to subdue idea present.

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He again builds an altar to Yahweh and presumably offers sacrifice on it, so he acts as a priest. So he has these same priest-king connotations as Adam did and as Noah did. And then something that I saved for last here is the fact that he received his wife back after she comes out of Egypt, or after she comes out of Pharaoh's house. I think we talked about in one of the earlier episodes, the creation Exodus episode, that

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the receiving of a wife or marriage covenant is part of the exodus motif at the end of the creation exodus he was given to adam at sign i the prophets later look back at that event and look at it as a marriage between israel and yawai now here at the end of sarah's exodus out of ferro's house she is given back to her husband the elect one receives his bride again so

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I do think that there is something going on throughout Genesis where the Elect One will receive his bride and they both go through their own exoduses throughout the story. So I think that's a significant element of the story. And then again we'll see there is a rebellion element to this narrative, but it's actually not Abram's rebellion or Sarah's rebellion yet. They will have more mistakes in the future, but for now we have another rebellion to talk about.

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Before we go there, any thoughts about the Exodus motif in the story? I just love the connections that you're making. There's a whole lot more. The story is just setting up this pattern that we're going to see over and over and over in the climaxes and the Exodus. So it's pretty much, it seems to be preparing us for what's about to happen. So yeah, let's move on to the rebellion. Yeah.

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And then maybe we can talk about before we go just a little bit of why this is here. Oh, yeah. So I think that would be good. Yeah, for sure. Because at this point, we talked about four exoduses and why in the world are these... Why do we keep building on this pattern? Yeah. Yeah, why did the author do it and then why are we pounding it to death and talking about it so much?

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So again, there's a lot in this narrative to unpack in Genesis chapter 13. But ultimately what we see is Abram has just come out of this Exodus with his wife. And then we see that Abram's servants and Lot's servants, or their shepherds, start striving together. And we start to have this scene of brotherly strife, just like we had with Cain and Abel. And so Abram and Lot, because of the previous riches they have acquired in the past Exodus, are too great to dwell together.

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And Abram has the opportunities to say, well, this land has been given to me and to domineer over Lot and to be violent or just whatever it is to break unity and to break loyalty with his family here. And I think to further this a little bit, often in Hebrew, they'll call extended family brothers. And whenever you see in this story, in chapter 13, verse 8, a lot of translations will say that we are kinsmen.

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but the actual word there is we are brothers. And that may just be part of the cultural convention, but it may also be the author trying to just highlight the fact that this could be a brotherly strife narrative. So what does Abram do? Does he decide to dominate over his brother or does he sacrifice for him? Well, he tells Lot, tell you what, you go left, I'll go right. You go right and I'll go left. He says, take your pick. And he sacrifices his land, his inheritance.

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for the sake of maintaining loyalty, love, and unity with his brother. Abram makes the right choice here. It is interesting that in Hebrew, if you look up just cardinal directions or north, south, east, west in the Bible dictionary, you'll see that in Hebrew thought they took directions with their face towards the sunrise. So left is north, right is south, and then looking ahead is east and behind you is west. It's

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possible that what Abram was talking about here was saying if you go north, I'll go south you go south. I'll go north Maybe he wasn't talking about directions, but in either case it's interesting that he may have been giving been given a choice between the north and south of the skinny strip of land of Israel and lot goes east Which was east? That's a way for the blessing of the Lord. Yeah, it's continually it's been the direction of exile

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with Cain, with Adam and Eve, with the Babylonians, and then now with Lot. You brought this up, I think, with Lot explicitly a couple episodes ago. He sees with his eyes, and he chooses a land according to what he sees that he thinks looks like the Garden of the Lord. And he comes, pairs it to Egypt, which I think is a real, it's a real interesting one too. Yeah, which I guess that's probably why, well yeah, and this just makes this whole- And they just came from Egypt. Right, this makes this whole story fold back. He's making the same mistake- He keeps wanting to go back to Egypt. Yeah.

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Abram just made this mistake. And the Israelites are going to make this mistake too. They're going to want to go back to Egypt. Right. Lot here is just replaying exactly what Abram just did one story ago. The markers of Lot's seeing and taking are not in the story, but he does lift up his eyes and see this good land and he chooses it. It sounds so familiar to what we've been talking about before. I think it tracks with that same motif of seeing and taking. He's doing what is wise in his own eyes.

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Absolutely. Yeah, and then you know we're told pretty quickly we're not left in suspense very long because it just says yeah Sodom was wicked They were all great sinners against the Lord. He's going to live in this valley and by the way It's next to the people that are really wicked. Yeah, we'll tell you more about that later. Right, right So that's that's the fall. That's the rebellion that we see Lot chooses with what is good in his own eyes and he self-exiles

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into Sodom, east of the land of Canaan. When he had the land of Canaan of Yahweh's blessing before him, the wise thing to do would have been to say, you know, blessing Lot with Yahweh and his elect. So I'm staying inside this land. I'm staying where the blessing is. I'm staying in a place where I will be tied to Abram, even if we need to move our tents a few hundred feet away so we have more space. Yeah. Well, and the thing is, it's like Lot's already experienced blessing because he's been near

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Abraham. Twice. Twice. And then the first sign of conflict or strife, he's like, I'm out. Yeah. Yeah, he chooses what seems immediately good to him. Yeah. So Lot has exiled himself because he lifted up his eyes and saw that a land was good in his own eyes. But then in verse 14, chapter 13, the Lord comes to Abraham and says, lift up your eyes now and look at this entire land.

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all for north, south, east, west. All of this will be given to you. And that's again where we see Abram being blessed as Adam and Eve were. So we've been through another Exodus cycle in the book of Genesis. Maybe we should talk about why this is even here a little bit. Is there any other thoughts? I mean, there's a lot in this narrative to unpack. And we're trying to not overturn every stone where there are little.

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minute things to talk about that will be very helpful. I want to do that, but we're trying to get the flavor of the narrative in general so that we get to the end of the book of Genesis and beginning of Exodus and we feel like that wasn't just a bunch of hodgepodge stories. This is one unified story that makes a lot of sense and shapes our hope. I think one of the reasons that this is here is it's setting up the next story, which I see that a lot in Genesis.

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the stories absolutely build on one another and lead you into the next narrative and so in the next narrative we're going to see the consequences of Lot's decision to basically be selfish and do what was wise in his own eyes and it doesn't go well for him so I think that was part of it and really that story's there to set up the next story where Abram gets to be the hero and and then that leads into the next story where he gets to meet Melchizedek and I mean it just

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It's meant to carry the story on and like every good story, each section builds upon it, builds up the next section. I love how the author even, I think, gives you a little bit of a cliffhanger here with letting you know that, okay, Sodom is not a good place. Like, it's bad, you know. And then he breaks away and he goes back to Abram and the blessing of Abram is re-

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restated again and so I think that part of reason I think also like we've been talking about just it's building this pattern that we're going to continue to see over and over

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climaxes and the exodus and ultimately in Christ, the ultimate exodus in Christ. And so I think that's another reason. What are your thoughts? Well, I mean, I'm going to piggyback on some of that. I mean, I think first off, as we see this pattern repeated again and again and again throughout the book, it ties the book together. These stories aren't just disjointed anymore. We're seeing the same story told with different nuances and different tweaks.

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We have a hundred different Cinderella stories in our culture, and they all have little tweaks to make new points. So as each of these stories play out, we should be asking the question, what does the elect do this time? Do they fall? Do they not? How are they loyal? What did Yahweh do? What did Yahweh do in response to the elect one's fall or act of loyalty? So we're learning new things about all these characters. We're learning new things about what the elect should look like when he comes, the final elect. So that's really what we're doing is we're...

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We're building the profile of all of these characters. And I think as we see these characters put into so many different situations, we learn how to think with the wisdom of the author of Genesis. Right. Well, yeah, because you're learning about the character of God in the midst of

all this. Right. And we're not just given a list of the attributes. We're learning to live in this world. Right, right. Yeah, what does it look like when you're in a situation where?

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It doesn't seem like there's enough resources around you. Do you trust Yahweh and cry out to him, or do you try to take things into your own hands and run to a place that looks like Eden, but in reality, it's doing what's lives in your own eyes and it's gonna end in disaster. Right. Well, I think too, this is, like you said, this is all gonna culminate.

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in the Exodus of Israel, at least within the Torah. I mean, throughout the rest of the Bible, the prophets are going to look back to the Exodus and portray the future hope of Yahweh in terms of that. When Paul or the Gospels or just the New Testament looks at what Jesus did on the cross or what He will do when He returns, they look back to the Exodus and portray it in those terms.

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or at least the whole Exodus cycle. I'm saying Exodus, but I'm talking about the whole story from Exodus to Deuteronomy, where you've got the Day of Atonement in there and being brought to Canaan. So I'm not just talking about Exodus 14. I'm talking about the whole span of Israel's Exodus journey into Yahweh's land. So just keep that in mind. But yeah, as this builds the climax in the Exodus of Israel, each time we see this repetition, we're being pointed towards

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that hope and that story and being taught to think about it in a new light. Yes, it's good stuff. Absolutely. I'm looking forward to continue on and next time we're going to be looking at another Exodus already because now Lot's going to need one after what he just did so we will pick up next week and it'll be actually next week not just five minutes from now. Right. And continue on with that story. Sounds good. Looking forward to it.