

Part 4, Paper 124, The Later C... of Jesus, Midwayer Commission

Fri, Oct 04, 2024 7:39AM 11:46

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Jesus's boyhood, Nazareth environment, cultural diversity, childhood illnesses, love of art, intellectual curiosity, nature fascination, philosophical debates, Greek influence, Passover pilgrimage, celestial messenger, divine mission, family responsibilities, spiritual awakening, human development

SPEAKERS

John, Sarah

J John 00:00

Hey everyone and welcome today, we're diving into a fascinating period, one that doesn't get a ton of attention, at least not in this much detail. We're talking about the boyhood of Jesus.

S Sarah 00:09

It's true, most people only think about the Jesus of the Gospels, you know, already doing miracles and teaching Exactly.

J John 00:14

But there were years leading up to all that, years that must have played a huge role in shaping who he became, and thankfully, we have the Urantia Book to give us some incredible insights into that period.

S Sarah 00:28

It's really a unique perspective, because it's not so much about theology, like trying to prove anything about his divinity or anything. It's more like a biography, almost. We get these glimpses into his human development. Okay, so

J John 00:41

let's jump right in. We're talking about Jesus. About Jesus growing up in Nazareth, right? What was Nazareth like back then? I mean. it wasn't exactly a bustling metropolis.

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Sarah 00:48

no, not at all like, say, Alexandria. And, you know, Alexandria was kind of the place to be back then, if you were really looking for a top notch education, it was like the center of intellectual and cultural life, really cosmopolitan. So

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John 01:01

why Nazareth? Then? What was it about that environment that influenced

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Sarah 01:05

him? Well, the ranch book describes it as a real crossroads, a melting pot, really. You had caravans constantly coming and going from all over, bringing in goods, and, more importantly, people from all walks of life. You know, merchants, traders, travelers, all with their own cultures and beliefs.

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John 01:22

So Young Jesus would been exposed to all these different languages, customs, everything,

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Sarah 01:26

exactly. And I think you can see how those early exposures to such diversity might have planted the seeds for the kind of inclusive message that he would later preach. Right? This idea of connecting with people from all backgrounds, no matter who they were, where they came from. That's a really

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John 01:41

interesting point. I never quite thought about it like that before, and it's interesting because the book doesn't shy away from the more ordinary parts of his life, either, like it actually talks about him having normal childhood illnesses. Yeah,

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Sarah 01:54

it's kind of refreshing. Actually, no divine immunity from the sniffles. I guess it really reinforces the idea that he lived a real, relatable human experience, even as a child.

J

John 02:06

It makes you think about how he balanced that right, this awareness of something extraordinary within him, but also just living the life of a normal kid. And speaking of extraordinary, one of the things the Urantia Book highlights is his love of art, right? Like he loved to draw and sculpt

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Sarah 02:20

Absolutely. And that really stood out, even back then, especially in a culture where those kinds of activities, well, they weren't always seen as, I guess you could say, religiously appropriate, right? Some people had strict interpretations of what was considered acceptable, and art sometimes pushed those boundaries. So

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John 02:37

even as a child, he was already challenging the status quo a bit. It's like he had this inherent drive to express himself, explore his creativity, even if it meant, you know, ruffling a few feathers along the way.

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Sarah 02:50

Yeah, definitely. And that curiosity, that thirst for knowledge, it wasn't limited to art. The Urantia Book talks about how he was captivated by nature, by the workings of the physical world around him,

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John 03:00

right? Like the states of water, for example, he was fascinated by how something could be solid ice one minute, then flowing water and then just disappear into the air as vapor.

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Sarah 03:09

It's like his senses were just heightened the wonders of creation. He saw these profound truths hidden in plain sight, things that most people just took for granted. It reminds me of those nature documentaries where they zoom in on like a drop of water and you see this whole teeming world that you never even knew existed.

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John 03:26

And maybe those early observations, those moments of awe and wonder, maybe they influenced his teachings later on, when you think about it, Jesus was a master of taking something ordinary, like a seed or a shepherd and revealing these profound spiritual truths through

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Sarah 03:41

them. It's true, there's a real beauty in the way he could take something so simple and make it resonate on this whole other level. And that reminds me. You know, he wasn't just content to observe this kid. He loved to debate. He'd really dive deep into intellectual conversations. Yeah, I

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John 03:56

remember reading about that in the Urantia Book. You even mentioned an incident where he like challenges this tradition of the doorpost parchment as a kid. Oh

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Sarah 04:06

yeah, that's a classic story. It really shows you how he was wired even then. Okay,

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John 04:10

but for those of us who aren't up on our ancient Jewish customs, what exactly is a doorpost parchment?

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Sarah 04:16

Sure, so back then, it was common practice to have these little scrolls, right? And they'd be inscribed with verses from the scriptures, and people would attach them to, well, their door posts,

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John 04:26

okay, like a daily reminder of their faith, exactly.

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Sarah 04:29

And when people would pass by, they'd touch the parchment and then kiss their fingers as a sign of reverence, okay,

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John 04:34

so something considered very sacred. So what was Jesus's issue with that? Well,

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Sarah 04:40

S Sarah 04:10
see, he saw it as a contradiction. He pointed out that they were taught against making idols, you know, worshiping physical objects. And here they were revering this scroll. It's like he was saying, shouldn't our devotion be directed inward, not towards something external?

J John 04:57
I can see how that would ruffled some feathers. It's like. He was already challenging the established dogma, even as a kid, absolutely,

S Sarah 05:03
he had this innate ability to see through to the heart of the matter, to cut through the rituals and traditions to the deeper meaning beneath

J John 05:12
and this independent streak of his it sounds like it really became more pronounced as he got older, right? Like during his adolescence? Oh, definitely.

S Sarah 05:19
The Urantia Book talks about how, unlike most teenagers who just want to hang out with their friends, Jesus actually preferred the company of older, more intellectually stimulating people interesting

J John 05:29
so, like deep philosophical discussions, instead of, you know, whatever the ancient equivalent of video games was, exactly,

S Sarah 05:35
they debate everything under the sun, philosophy, ethics, even politics and economics. Wow,

J John 05:41
that's pretty heady stuff for a teenager. Makes you wonder what those adults saw in him. You know, what was it about this young boy that drew them into these complex conversations?

S Sarah 05:52
I think it was his ability to ask questions that no one else was asking. He was always looking at things from a different perspective, questioning the status quo. It was that curiosity and that willingness to challenge the established order that made him so fascinating to those around him.

It speaks to a mind that was already grappling with life's big questions. You know, a soul that wasn't content with surface level answers. He was a seeker even then, and this intellectual curiosity, it went beyond just philosophical debates too. Remember the story about his trip to sothopolis? Right? The

J John 06:09

Greek city? That was significant, wasn't it very

S Sarah 06:11

much so it offered a stark contrast to the more conservative Jewish culture he was raised in. Imagine you're 11 years old and you're exposed to this entirely different way of life, the architecture, the art, the whole atmosphere, it would have been eye opening to see the least. Okay,

J John 06:28

so I'm trying to picture this through the eyes of an 11 year old boy. What would have stood out to him the most.

S Sarah 06:33

Well, the text mentions his fascination with the grand open air theater they had there and this beautiful temple made of marble structures like that would have been completely different from anything he'd seen in Nazareth. And

J John 06:45

remember, there was a pretty big cultural and religious divide between the Jews and the Greeks back then.

S Sarah 06:50

Oh, absolutely, the Greeks, with their emphasis on physical beauty and let's just say, a more relaxed approach to religious practices, they were seen as pretty scandalous by a lot of the stricter Jewish folks. So

J John 07:03

how did young Jesus react to all that? Was he put off by it?

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Sarah 07:06

Not at all. He was totally enthralled by it. In fact, he even suggested that Nazareth should adopt something similar to the Greek games he witnessed at the amphitheater wait like the Olympics. Well, similar, but on a smaller scale. These games were all about physical prowess competition, things that weren't really emphasized in the same way in Jewish culture, interesting.

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John 07:26

So even at that young age, he was already like, looking beyond his own cultural boundaries, finding inspiration in unexpected places, exactly.

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Sarah 07:35

And you know, the book even mentions that this fascination with the games caused a bit of friction with his father, Joseph. It

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John 07:42

makes you wonder if maybe there's a connection there, right like between his early appreciation for the Greek emphasis on physical excellence and how he later approached healing. I mean, he placed a lot of importance on addressing both the physical and spiritual needs of people. That's

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Sarah 07:58

a fascinating thought. It suggests a worldview that saw those two aspects of our being as interconnected, which of course, became a central theme in his later teachings. It's

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John 08:08

like he was already piecing together elements of his philosophy, even as a young boy, drawing from all these different sources. But for now, he's still a teenager about to enter manhood and dealing with all that entails, identity, responsibility, not to mention the expectations that come with being well Jesus, and those expectations

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Sarah 08:26

are only going to get more complicated as he embarks on a journey that will change everything you're

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John 08:31

talking about, the family pilgrimage to Jerusalem for Passover Exactly.

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Sarah 08:35

It's a coming of age experience for any young Jewish boy, but for Jesus, it becomes a major turning point. So

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John 08:42

we're picking up with a 13 year old Jesus traveling to Jerusalem with his family for Passover. I mean, can you imagine the excitement? This was a huge deal, especially back then. Oh,

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Sarah 08:52

absolutely. This was a pilgrimage steeped in centuries of tradition, you know, and for a young Jewish boy, it marked this important transition into adulthood. The Urantia Book even calls it becoming a son of the commandment, right? I

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John 09:04

remember reading that. What does that actually mean, though? Like, what did it entail for a young man to become a son of the commandment? Well, it

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Sarah 09:10

basically meant taking on the full weight of religious responsibility. From that point forward, he was considered an adult within the Jewish community bound by all the laws and traditions.

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John 09:21

Wow. That's a lot to put on a 13 year old shoulders, and then to experience the grandeur of Jerusalem for the first time. I mean, the city itself must been awe inspiring, especially for someone coming from a smaller town like Nazareth. The Urantia

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Sarah 09:33

Book actually describes how deeply moved Jesus was by the whole experience, especially the temple. He was struck by its magnificence, the sheer scale of it all. But you know, even if it's all that those earlier questions he had about things like animal sacrifice, they never really went away. It's like



J John 09:50

he was constantly searching for deeper meaning, even, or maybe especially, when confronted with the weight of tradition,

S Sarah 09:56

exactly, he wasn't content to just accept things at face value. You, and this is where things take a really interesting turn. The book describes how during a night of deep contemplation, a celestial messenger appears to Jesus,

J John 10:09

okay, talk about a life changing moment. This is where he gets the like official call to action, right?

S Sarah 10:14

You could say that the messenger's words are simple but powerful. The hour has come. It is time that you began to be about your father's business. Wow,

J John 10:24

just hearing that, it sends chills down my spine. You get this sense of destiny unfolding, a path being laid out before him

S Sarah 10:32

exactly. And from this point forward, there's this noticeable shift. He's increasingly aware of his unique purpose, this cosmic role he's meant to play.

J John 10:39

But at the same time, he's still got this very real human life to live. And let's not forget, his father, Joseph, is getting up there in years, Jesus is about to become the head of his family, responsible for his mother and his younger siblings. And

S Sarah 10:53

that's what I find so compelling about the Urantia book's account, this portrayal of Jesus navigating these dual realities. He's got this growing awareness of His divine nature, his mission, yet he continues to live a seemingly ordinary life, fulfilling his responsibilities. It really



John 11:07

makes you think about the nature of faith, doesn't it? How do we balance this sense of calling this bigger purpose with the demands of our everyday lives? It's a question we all wrestle with on some level. I think, well, that is all the time we have for this week's deep dive, it's been fascinating to explore this often overlooked period of Jesus's life, to catch these glimpses of the person he was before the world knew his name, from the bustling streets of Nazareth to the grandeur of Jerusalem, these formative experiences, these questions and these revelations undoubtedly shaped the man who would forever change the course of history? Join us next time as we delve deeper into the mysteries and the humanity of Jesus.