

Part 4, Paper 125, Jesus at Jerusalem, Midwayer Commission

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SPEAKERS

Sarah, John

S Sarah 00:00

Ever get that feeling, you know, like you're rereading a familiar story, but suddenly, this time, something new jumps out at you. That's what we're doing today, kind of taking a deep dive into a story you probably know. You know a young Jesus visited in the temple in Jerusalem, but this time, oh boy, with some some really surprising new layers and the

J John 00:21

source we're looking at today. Well, it might surprise you, too. It's not from the Bible. No, we're going with a book called The Urantia Book.

S Sarah 00:28

Okay, now, before anyone goes thinking, we've totally gone off the deep end here, right? We're not going to get into the whole debate about, you know, where this book came from, or it's, it's whole message, but what we are interested in is how it portrays this event in Jesus's life and and really what, what unique insights it might offer.

J John 00:47

Exactly. Think of it this way, even if you know the Gospels account like the back of your hand, looking at different versions of the same story, it's like it can give you that, that richer understanding of the whole context, yeah, the culture, the beliefs people had back then. You know the historical setting,

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Sarah 01:02

all right. So picture this. It's the first century. You're in Palestine, and a 12 year old Jesus is on his first big trip to Jerusalem. It's for Passover, of course. Huge deal, huge E. Now, this isn't just a family vacation, right? This is like, for Jewish people, a huge deal. It's like a pilgrimage, but also kind of like a coming of age ceremony all rolled into one, absolutely

J

John 01:22

this pilgrimage. It marked a significant transition in a young person's life, you know, signifying their growing responsibility within their faith, their community, is a big step.

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Sarah 01:33

Okay? And here's where the Urantia Book, it throws in a really intriguing detail. It wasn't just Jesus and his parents making the journey. See, it describes a whole group from Nazareth traveling together. And get this, there were a surprisingly large number of women in the group.

J

John 01:49

That's a detail worth noting. While we can't say for sure what it means for certain, it could suggest maybe a more inclusive social dynamic than, well, than what we typically associate with that time period, at least, at least when it came to religious pilgrimages, it makes you wonder, yeah, fascinating.

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Sarah 02:08

So they finally arrive in Jerusalem, and young Jesus, I mean, you got to figure he's full of excitement, maybe a little nervous even he finally enters the temple. And you'd think, right? You'd think it'd be this, this serene, spiritual place? Yeah,

J

John 02:20

you'd expect that given, I guess, our modern perception of what a religious space should be, peaceful and all right,

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Sarah 02:26

but the Urantia Book, it paints a very different picture. Instead of peaceful reflection, it describes the scene. It's really something. It's loud. It's chaotic. Crowds of people everywhere. Animals are being bought and sold. You can practically hear the money changers clinking their coins. It's that vivid. And even the priests, according to this account, they seem well more caught up in the rituals themselves than, you know, actual, genuine devotion. Yeah.

J John 02:53

And this is where I think we see one of the first hints of that, that conflict that will really come to define Jesus's ministry later on. It's this tension, this tension between the idealized vision of faith, right, and then the messy reality of, well, of religious institutions, almost as if this experienced whole thing, maybe it planted a seed of disillusionment in young Jesus that makes you wonder, yeah,

S Sarah 03:14

and it's not just the overall atmosphere either. The Urantia Book specifically mentions Jesus being really bothered, like deeply disturbed by the commercialism. He sees it everywhere in the temple, people buying and selling animals for sacrifice, right there, right there, in this holy space. And you gotta remember

J John 03:31

this whole encounter kind of foreshadows that pivotal moment in Jesus' later ministry when He famously drives the money changers out of the temple. It really makes you wonder if this early experience, if that's what fueled his anger, you know, his desire to cleanse what he saw as this, this corruption of faith. It's an interesting link. That's

S Sarah 03:51

a really good point. So, so instead of finding peace enlightenment, young Jesus walks into two Well, it sounds more like a chaotic marketplace in a holy temple. What happens next? I gotta know. Well, according

J John 04:00

to the Urantia Book, this whole experience, as jarring as it was, it kind of ignites this, this spark, this intellectual curiosity in Jesus, like he's suddenly confronted with all the complexities of his faith, right? And he's not afraid to start asking questions. Okay?

S Sarah 04:14

So he doesn't just run back to Nazareth and tell everyone the temple was a bus. He

J John 04:18

stays, oh, he stays. In fact, he stays behind and spends, get this an entire week, completely engrossed in temple life. The Urantia Book describes him engaging in these deep conversations, attending debates, just absorbing knowledge like a sponge. It's quite something.

So

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Sarah 04:35

he's just hanging out with these scholars, like soaking up all their wisdom. That's That's not exactly the image that comes to mind when I think about a 12 year old, yeah, you

J

John 04:43

got that, right? Not your typical preteen activity, is it? But we got to remember, right? This is, this is the ancient world. We're talking about learning, debating, religious texts, all that it was huge in that culture, and it seems young Jesus, well, he had a knack for it, even then.

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Sarah 04:59

Okay, so he's. Asking his questions. Learn from the best. But then what he just like becomes this mini scholar, totally content with everything he's hearing. Not

J

John 05:08

exactly this is, this is where it gets really interesting. The Urantia Book suggests see that while Jesus was, Oh yeah, definitely eager to learn, he wasn't afraid to, you know, yeah, poke at things. A little challenge the status quo. Maybe he starts questioning some of the core stuff, the bedrock of his faith, stuff that seems to have been bothering him, even from a young age, really like what?

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Sarah 05:29

Give me an example. What kind of things are we talking here?

J

John 05:32

Well, for instance, he questions animal sacrifice, which you got to remember, that was like the central part of Temple worship back then. And and think about it. This is the kid who, if we look at the Gospels later, calls himself a shepherd right caring for his sheep. So even at 12, just the idea of sacrificing innocent animals had to have felt, I don't know, just wrong to him. Yeah,

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Sarah 05:54

I know it tracks. It's like those, those core values, they were always there, you know, shaping his way of seeing the world exactly,

J John 06:00

and it wasn't just the sacrifices, either. He also questioned why women, why they were stuck in separate areas of the temple, like there was something just not right about it, yeah? Which, again, hints at that sense of fairness, that inclusiveness, that Yeah, well, it becomes a huge part of this whole message later, doesn't it?

S Sarah 06:16

Yeah, totally. So he's not just this passive little student. He's really engaging with these, these huge, complex issues, even challenging traditions that had been around for centuries. I mean, got to wonder what those scholars thought. Having this, this outspoken kid in their midst, probably drove him a little crazy, right?

J John 06:30

You can imagine, had to cause a stir, and it gets well more intense. The Urantia Book claims that Jesus's questions, his pushback. It actually escalates into full on debates with these guys. The most respected religious figures of the time says, for three days straight, this 12 year old is holding court in the temple, going toe to toe with them on matters of faith, scripture, even the very nature of God. Hold

S Sarah 06:56

on. Well, three days a 12 year old debating these guys, the top dogs. That sounds kind of hard to believe, to be honest, are we? Are we meant to take that literally? Definitely

J John 07:05

a bold claim. Got to give him that, and we don't have any other historical sources to back it up. That's for sure. But it's still a powerful image, don't you think? Just imagine the sheer audacity this young boy questioning the wisest man of his time whether it happened exactly like that or not, it highlights something, something important about Jesus. He was never afraid to challenge assumptions, to speak truth to power, even as a kid. Okay,

S Sarah 07:30

I'm hooked. So we've got young Jesus deep in theological debate, shaken things up. It's a sight of him you don't often hear about, that's for sure. But eventually his parents are gonna realize he's, well, he's not with the tour group anymore. Yeah.

J John 07:44

And can you picture the panic when they finally get back to the temple, searching everywhere

for their son? Yeah? The Urantia Book really gets into it, the details, the raw emotion of it all, you can practically feel

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Sarah 07:55

it. So, so they find him safe and sound in the middle of some some intense theological throwdown with the bigwigs. Exactly

J

John 08:05

there he is, cool as a cucumber, just calmly discussing things with these guys, these scholars, the very people Mary and Joseph would consider, you know, the pillars of their faith must been, I don't know, a relief, but also totally bewildering for him.

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Sarah 08:18

I bet they're probably thinking, there you are. We've been worried sick. And what in the world have you been doing? So what does Jesus say for himself? Does he apologize for, you know, scaring them half to death?

J

John 08:29

Well, funny enough. According to the Urantia Book, it's Mary who speaks first, and her words, man, they're so relatable, that mix of relief and and mom exasperation, you know, son, she asked, why have you treated us like this? Your father, I we've been searching for you, and we've been so worried.

S

Sarah 08:44

Oh, man, I can only imagine, right? Poor Mary, it's like that classic lost in the mall story, but yeah, with way higher stakes. Ha, ha, ha, and then to find your kid just calmly debating theology with like the intellectual elite, I wouldn't even know where to begin, hug him or ground him right. Talk

J

John 09:01

about a parenting dilemma. Haha. But Jesus's response is really something. He doesn't make excuses or anything, and he doesn't back down from what he did either. He just kind of calmly tells Mary and Joseph, look, I'm just about My Father's business. That's all, wow.

S

Sarah 09:13

So even at 12, he's already got this sense of, like a higher calling, this purpose, that goes way

beyond what anyone else expects. And that's powerful stuff,

 John 09:23

no kidding. And this is where the story takes us to a really pivotal moment. Okay, picture this young Jesus. He's standing on the Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem. It's here, according to the Urantia Book, that he has this really profound experience, kind of like a spiritual awakening, you know. Okay,

 Sarah 09:39

so we've gone from a crowded, kind of chaotic marketplace to these deep theological debates, and now we're on a mountaintop, looking out over Jerusalem. I'm definitely sensing a theme here. What happens next? This is where it gets good, right?

 John 09:51

This is it Jesus. He's overcome with emotion, and he just he makes his powerful declaration, he talks about the struggles of Jerusalem. How much the people are longing for liberation? Yeah, and he talks about his own role in what's to come and get this. He doesn't just talk about kicking out the Romans, there's that, but he also talks about something much deeper, like freeing his people from these rigid traditions that he sees them trapped in, freeing them from the very systems that he thinks are corrupting their faith. Wait, so

 Sarah 10:19

hold on. He's not just talking about a political revolution. It's like he wants a revolution of the heart, like a total transformation how they think about God, faith, everything,

 John 10:28

exactly. And that's what makes this account so fascinating. You know, even if we don't take it completely literally, it suggests that Jesus, even as a young guy, was already wrestling with these big questions, the limitations of organized religion, how things were being done. He was already picturing a better way, a way that was more just more compassionate. It's pretty amazing. It's

 Sarah 10:50

like he's laying the foundation right then and there for the message he'll preach later. Love, forgiveness, radical inclusivity. It's all there. But in this 12 year old kid

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John 11:00

totally and while we can't, you know, hop in a time machine and get inside his head for real, the Urantia Book gives us this, this really intriguing possibility, this idea that his message, this message of love and liberation, wasn't just something that he preached about. It was something he lived, something he struggled with from the very beginning. Man, that's



Sarah 11:17

pretty powerful. So where does that leave us? We've gone deep on this text, this not exactly conventional book. What are we what are we taking away from this deep dive?



John 11:25

I think the big takeaway, and this is true, no matter what you believe, is that even these stories, the ones we think we know by heart, they can surprise us when we look at them through a new lens. There's always more to find. The Urantia books, version of Jesus's younger years. Maybe it's literal, maybe it's metaphorical, but either way, it makes you think it challenges us to look beyond those simplified stories and really wrestle with the complexity of his journey, just like he did.



Sarah 11:53

It's a good reminder that everyone, even someone as extraordinary as Jesus, well, they started out as kids, wrestling with big questions, pushing back against the way things were, and finding their own path. Couldn't



John 12:04

have said it better. And hey, who knows, maybe this will even get some of our listeners doing some deep dive into their own there's always something new to learn, a new perspective to consider another story, just wait and be uncovered. Thanks for joining us for this deep dive.