

Part 4, Paper 132, The Sojourn at Rome, Midwayer Commission

📅 Fri, Oct 04, 2024 7:40AM ⌚ 17:32

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Jesus in Rome, Urantia Book, Roman life, spiritual engagement, Stoic philosophy, cynical questioning, Mithraic mysteries, indwelling Spirit, personal transformation, social responsibility, ethical wealth, lost child, spiritual growth, timeless debates, spiritual movements

SPEAKERS

John, Sarah

- S

Sarah 00:00

Okay, so are you ready for a deep dive into a chapter of Jesus's life that you might not know about. It's about his visit to ancient Rome.
- J

John 00:09

Yeah, this isn't something you'd just find in any old religious text, right?
- S

Sarah 00:12

We're talking about the Urantia Book here, specifically, yes, specifically, its take on Jesus's six month stay in Rome, and this is years before his public ministry even began.
- J

John 00:24

And it's not like he just, like, swung through the forum, yeah, and headed back home. This is Jesus, like, totally immersed in Roman life. Wow. And he's not just a passive observer either, right? We're talking about him alongside gnod.
- S

Sarah 00:38

Oh yeah, ganode.



J John 00:39
Remember him, yeah, yeah. And ganode son gone in, and they're actively engaging with all kinds of people in the city, yeah, from just everyday citizens all the way to, like, the intellectual elite of the Roman Empire. It's,

S Sarah 00:53
it's one thing to think about Jesus in Judea, but in Rome, this is, like, the heart of the Empire. It's a melting pot,

J John 00:59
huge, melting pot, yeah, cultures, philosophies and religions. I mean,

S Sarah 01:03
what better place for someone like Jesus to really like encounter humanity in all its forms,

J John 01:07
exactly? And that's what makes this so interesting. Like we always think about Jesus teachings as, you know, directly challenging the status quo, right? Yeah? But in Rome, he took a different approach. Imagine him surrounded by Stoics, right, cynics, even people who follow those mystery cults like mythrism, yeah, yeah. Instead of just attacking their beliefs, like head on, he like, sits down with them, yeah, engages with them, finds those truths that are kind of hidden within their philosophies, right? And he uses those as a starting point, yeah.

S Sarah 01:38
So it's less about tearing down and more about, like, building bridges, yes, yeah, planting those seeds of truth that might take root later on, almost like a, like a stealth operation for spirituality, exactly.

J John 01:49
It's like he knew that people rarely change because you have some big argument with them, right? You know? Yeah, instead, he just kind of gently nudges these influential Romans right? And kind of subtly shifts their perspective, yeah, and it's in a way that could have, like a ripple effect, wow. It's like he was paving the way for the early Christian movement that would, you know, come to Rome years later, and

S Sarah 02:13

the Iran too. Book doesn't just tell us this is all happening in the background or something, right? It names names exactly. It gives us glimpses of these, like individual encounters, yes, like his conversations with angemon, yeah, angemon, who was like a prominent stoic leader, right? And there's Martis, who was like a cynical philosopher. And then there's nabon, a high priest in the mithraic mysteries,

J John 02:36

that's right? And it's fascinating take angemon the stoic Yeah. He's like, wrestling with this question. It's a question that people are still asking today, in a world that's obsessed with material progress, can we, like, hang on to our moral compass? Oh, for sure. You know, can we advance scientifically without losing sight of our spiritual values? I

S Sarah 02:58

mean, it's like he's asking the question a lot of us are asking ourselves right now, it's like this deep dive is giving us, like a front row seat to these, like timeless debates. So how did Jesus address angomons concern? He didn't

J John 03:11

just reject stoicism completely. Instead, he kind of highlighted a key flaw in angemons thinking. He reminded him that when a civilization focuses only on material achievement. They're building their foundation on something that's, you know, temporary, fleeting. Yeah, temporary fleeting, not gonna last. True, lasting values, he argued, come from something more eternal, like our connection to the divine.

S Sarah 03:36

So he's not saying material things are bad, right, just that they can't be the foundation of a truly fulfilling life. Yeah, it's about shifting your priorities a little precisely.

J John 03:47

And this is where the Urantia Book talks about this indwelling Spirit, okay, which you know, if you're not familiar with the Urantia Book, it might be a new concept for you. Basically, it's that piece of the Divine that's inside each of us, and it guides us towards truth and towards a connection with the source of all creation. It's through nurturing that connection that we can find real and lasting values. And

S Sarah 04:09

did that? Did that resonate with angamon?

J John 04:11

Oh, absolutely. Imagine this. You've got this stoic leader, totally grounded in logic and reason, and he hears this idea of a spiritual core within him, something beyond the material world that he'd always focus on, right? And it challenged him. It challenged his worldview without just dismissing it, right, right? And he wasn't the only one wrestling with these huge questions. So

S Sarah 04:35

let's talk about martus the cynic. Oh, Martis always questioning authority, poking holes in established norms. I bet he was a tough nut to crack. Oh,

J John 04:45

he was. But instead of shying away from that cynicism, Jesus uses it as a jumping off point to explore the very nature of good and evil. Martys, with his cynicism, probably saw those concepts as black and white, like set in stone. Exactly clearly defined, unchanging. But Jesus offers a totally different way to look at it.

S Sarah 05:06

I'm intrigued. How do you even debate good and evil with a cynic? You

J John 05:10

gotta reframe the whole conversation. Yeah, you gotta reframe it. So Jesus argues that the way we understand right and wrong, it's not static. Oh, he actually evolves. As we grow Okay, as our capacity for love grows, as our compassion grows, right, our understanding of truth grows. It's not about just blindly following the rules that society makes okay or religious dogma, right? It's about like really checking in with yourself, looking at your actions, and making sure they're lining up with you know, your evolving understanding of what is truly good, and just so

S Sarah 05:42

it's less about like, Okay, what am I supposed to do? But more okay, what is like my what does my evolving understanding of goodness, yes, compel me to do in this moment exactly.

J John 05:52

It's about personal responsibility, right? Constantly trying to like, be better, you know? Yeah, yeah, align yourself with your highest understanding of truth, yeah. And this, like, totally clicked from artists, wow. Imagine you have this cynical guy, yeah, and then he realizes that all

that questioning he's doing, right? It wasn't a bad thing, yeah, it was a vital part of his own spiritual growth.

S

Sarah 06:15

It's like Jesus was showing him how to, like, redirect that cynicism, you know, instead of it always being like outward criticism, it's like inward reflection, exactly like a continuous like self evaluation of like, yes, yes, exactly, okay. Am I living in accordance with what I believe? And you know what?

J

John 06:36

Perhaps the most interesting conversation is with nabon. Oh yeah, nabon, here you have a high priest of mithraic mysteries, right? This is a religion steeped in ritual and symbolism, right? And he's coming face to face with Jesus, yeah?

S

Sarah 06:50

It's like a clash of ideologies. Oh, totally. You've got Jesus over here, like, advocating for this direct relationship, yeah? Like, personal relationship with God, yeah? And then you have nabon, who's like, entrenched in these rituals and secret knowledge of, like, the mithraic tradition. Like,

J

John 07:06

how could these two even find common ground, right? But that's what's amazing they do. It's remarkable. It is, instead of getting lost in, like, a theology debate, yeah, Jesus just steers the conversation toward, like, the core, yeah, faith, right? And the pursuit of truth, I love that he describes truth, not as like a list of facts or doctrines, yeah, but as a lived experience. Oh, wow, something that's like, bigger than just knowledge, right?

S

Sarah 07:33

So it's one thing to like intellectually grasp a concept, right? But it's another thing entirely to like, embody it, yeah, to have it like, actually shape how you're interacting with the world. Yes,

J

John 07:45

it's about making your life match the truth that you say you're seeking, right, right? And this really resonated with Navon mythrism, for all of its emphasis on ritual, also emphasized personal transformation. It was about taking these divine attributes and actually living them out. Okay, every day.

S

Sarah 08:03

That's cool. So how did Jesus address like, the concept of faith with someone like nabham? Because his whole religious experience was, like, rooted in ritual and tradition, right?

J

John 08:13

He connects faith to self reflection, okay, and a commitment to actually living a moral life. Oh, okay. He's basically saying that real faith isn't just blindly accepting things, right? It's like an active pursuit of the truth, yeah, aligning yourself with the will of God, right? Constantly questioning, looking inward, and, you know, refining your understanding so it's

S

Sarah 08:34

not passive. It's like this dynamic force journey that, like, propels you forward, yeah, in this journey of spiritual growth, exactly,

J

John 08:43

yeah. And then he ties this in beautifully with this concept of the indwelling Spirit, that spark of the divine within each of us, yeah, it guides us toward truth, right? And it's through that connection, Jesus says that we can go beyond death. Our souls can endure. They can keep evolving. Wow.

S

Sarah 09:01

It's interesting how these themes keep coming up, you know, yeah, truth, faith, this indwelling Spirit. It's like this common thread connecting all these different people. It

J

John 09:12

is. It's the unifying factor in all of Jesus teachings, and it might look different depending on who he's talking to, right? Yeah, but it's always there. And it's not just philosophers and religious leaders who are drawn to this right? The Urantia Book makes it clear that Jesus also wants to interact with everyday Romans. Oh, like you know a senator who's struggling with a political decision, or a rich slave owner who's facing a moral dilemma, or a doctor who wants to heal the body and the soul. It's

S

Sarah 09:40

like he really wants to understand the human experience and all its complexity. You know, it's like that saying I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly. Yeah, it wasn't about just like preaching. It was about enriching the lives of the people he met. It was



John 09:58

about helping them live. Better lives. And he did take the story of the Roman senator. He was really troubled, according to the book, by the injustices in Roman society, right? So he goes to Jesus, looking for guidance, right? And they talk about social responsibility, about the government's role in helping people thrive. I



Sarah 10:17

mean, that's a conversation that's so relevant today. Absolutely. How do we create a more just world? Yeah, how do we ensure that the people in charge are really accountable to the people they're supposed to be serving?



John 10:28

And that conversation, according to the Urantia Book, really got to the Senator. Wow. It lit a fire in him this commitment to using his power to make a real difference.



Sarah 10:40

That's amazing to think that one conversation with Jesus could change the course of Roman politics, right,



John 10:46

even in a small way. Yeah. And then there's Claudius, okay, the rich slave owner. He goes to Jesus, right? Really wrestling with this dilemma, yeah? Imagine that he's grown up in a society where slavery is just normal, right? But he's starting to question it, right, questioning his own privilege, yeah, his wealth, his whole way of life. It



Sarah 11:07

says a lot about Jesus's message. It does to, like, make him question something so fundamental



John 11:14

to penetrate those deeply held beliefs, right, the things you just don't even think to question exactly. And he has one conversation with Jesus, wow, just one, yeah. And he hears this like revolutionary idea that all people have value, inherent dignity, right? And he decides to free all 117 of His slaves. Oh my gosh. It gives me chills, amazing. It wasn't just talk, right? His words inspired action. Yeah, made people really look at themselves and make different choices. Wow. And that's the thing about truth, you have to live it out, right? And that's something that he emphasized even in his practical advice. Like the Urantia Book tells a story about this rich man

who comes to Jesus for guidance. He wants to know how to handle his wealth, right? And what's fascinating is, Jesus doesn't condemn him for having money, right? He goes deeper. He explores how the man made his fortune, inheritance, luck, hard work, right? And for each one, he outlines what the ethical responsibilities are. Oh, it went way beyond just giving money away, right?

S Sarah 12:20

So it wasn't just about writing a check and feeling good about yourself,

J John 12:23

it was about analyzing your relationship with wealth, right? And actually using it to do good.

S Sarah 12:29

And I love that we see all of this nestled in with these stories of influential people and these profound philosophical conversations, but then we get this really beautiful story about a Lost Child. Oh, yeah, it's like a parable, it is, isn't it? It's like a perfect example of the human experience.

J John 12:46

Pick up this Jesus is walking with a son, a girl, right? And they come across this little boy who's lost. Oh, he's scared and alone. And Jesus, he doesn't care who this kid is, right, where he comes from, what his family status is, yeah, he just sees someone who needs help, someone who needs compassion. So he picks up the boy, he calms him down. Oh, and he reunites him with his mom, who's freaking out, looking for him.

S Sarah 13:12

I mean, that just says so much about it, right? You

J John 13:15

know, such a simple act of kindness, yeah? But it speaks volumes. And afterward, he actually uses it as a teaching moment for a girl. He compares lost humans to lost children, like we can get so caught up in our fear and worry that we can't see the path to truth and peace. It's true, a perfect metaphor for what it means to be human. You know, totally we've all felt lost. Yeah, we've all felt alone, and we all want that feeling of belonging, that connection to something bigger than ourselves. Yeah,

S Sarah 13:15

S **Saran 13:45**
it's like, no matter our differences, it doesn't matter, like our social status or how much

J **John 13:52**
money we have, it doesn't matter. We're all in this together. We all share that need for love and

S **Sarah 13:56**
connection and guidance. We do and sometimes just a little kindness is all it takes to remind us of that

J **John 14:03**
exactly. And for ganeed, that lesson really hit home. Yeah, he never forgot it. He carried that experience with him, that awareness of the people around him, yeah, people who might be lost, right, who might just need a little guidance. Yeah,

S **Sarah 14:18**
wow. It's amazing how during this time in Rome, we don't just see Jesus's wisdom and compassion, right, but we also see his sense of humor. Oh, totally. I'm thinking about that story where he's talking about Buddhism with ghannoud and ganede. I mean, it's not every day you think about Jesus like having this theological debate about Eastern philosophy. It's great,

J **John 14:39**
but you can see how open and curious he is, and he's not afraid to share his perspective on Buddhism either, right? He acknowledges that Buddha was a great man, a prophet, even, who understood some spiritual truths, right? But he also points out what he sees as flaws, specific. Actually the lack of a personal God. It's

S **Sarah 15:02**
like he saw Buddhism as, like, almost reaching its goal, yeah, but like, getting stuck, right? Like it was missing, like a key piece of information, exactly

J **John 15:11**
like a ship that almost made it to shore. And then he compares it to Judaism, okay? He sees how deeply they understand God, okay, but sometimes he says it lacks a real philosophy of life. Oh, interesting. It's like it's missing that practical guidebook to help you deal with life's ups and downs, yeah, and to, you know, find true freedom. So

S

Sarah 15:32

he's seeing both traditions as incomplete. Yeah, they both have pieces of the puzzle, but not the whole picture. Yeah, it's almost like he's setting the stage for a new path. Yes, that combines the best of both, and

J

John 15:44

that's when guy need always thinking big, suggests they just, like, start a new religion.

S

Sarah 15:49

Ah, ganyad, classic ganede. I

J

John 15:53

know, right? Always the entrepreneur, yeah, but Jesus, with his, like, perfect blend of wisdom and humor, just smiles and kind of steers him away from that idea, right? He reminds gunned that real spiritual movements, they're not created on purpose, right? They happen naturally. Yeah, as people's hearts and minds are changed, yeah? But here's the thing, even though he's telling Ghana, this isn't how you start a new religion, right, Gannett is already living it. Wow. That's interesting without even realizing it, yeah? His willingness to learn, to consider new ideas, to blend traditions, yeah, those are the things that would come to define this new faith.

S

Sarah 16:32

It's like he's a living example of how change happens exactly, subtly, naturally. We might not even know we're a part of something groundbreaking that's so true, something that's gonna echo for generations. And

J

John 16:44

that's what this deep dive really shows us about Jesus's time in Rome. Yeah, even though it's often overlooked, right? It's proof that those small moments, those little conversations, those seemingly insignificant encounters, right? They can spark real change. It makes

S

Sarah 17:01

you think about, like, what impact are we having? What about our conversations, our ideas, our choices? Absolutely, they all have the potential to make a difference. Every single one that's powerful. Well, that was fascinating.

 John 17:13
It really was. Thanks

 Sarah 17:15
for taking us on this deep dive into the Urantia books version of Jesus in Rome. Of course,

 John 17:20
it's a side of him we don't always get to see. It's

 Sarah 17:23
a story full of like unexpected encounters and timeless wisdom, absolutely, and I think there's a lot we can all learn from it. I agree.