

Part 4, Paper 135, John the Baptist, Midwayer Commission

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

John the Baptist, Urantia Book, religious family, Nazarite vows, personal sacrifice, kingdom of heaven, baptism rituals, Messiah doubts, Jesus recognition, Herod's threat, prison faith, Jesus' mission, spiritual change, faith endurance, prophetic role

SPEAKERS

Sarah, John

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Sarah 00:00

All right, ready to dive into a story that's a, well, it's history, sure, but it's also about, you know, like, the big questions we all ask about faith, about purpose. You know, we're talking John the Baptist, and it's
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John 00:11

amazing, right? This guy lived 1000s of years ago, yeah, but his story, it's like, still so relevant today. I mean, who hasn't struggled with figuring out their place in the world?
- S

Sarah 00:20

Totally it's like he's like a mirror or something. And for this deep dive, we're going deep into the Urantia Book paper 135 which gives us this whole different view of John. Some of it will really surprise you, for
- J

John 00:33

sure. It fills in a lot of blanks that, like other historical accounts, just kind of gloss over. So we get a much more, I think, complete picture of John and his relationship with Jesus, which is really interesting. So let's
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Sarah 00:43

start at the beginnina. Iohn. born March 25 seven BCE to Zacharias. a priest. And Elizabeth talk

about being born into like a deeply religious family, right?

J John 00:54

And not just religious, but his dad being a priest puts him right in the center of it all, all those rituals, the expectations, the debates that were happening in the Jewish world at the time, he had been surrounded by it,

S Sarah 01:06

like growing up backstage at the opera or something. You just absorb it all even before, like knowing what it all meant exactly.

J John 01:13

There's this one part in the Urantia Book that always gets me. It says that when John was just six, he meant Jesus, like in Nazareth, and not just a quick hello, they spent some real time together even at that age. Whoa, hold

S Sarah 01:26

on. Seriously, they knew each other as kids. That's wild. Yeah, okay. But even with that, most of John's early life was, well, pretty average. He wasn't like, born preaching in the desert or anything

J John 01:35

true. But then at 14, he decides to become a Nazirite, and that that's a big deal. Yeah,

S Sarah 01:41

it's not like, Oh, I'm giving up soda for a month. This was serious commitment time.

J John 01:44

And the Urantia Book goes into detail about what that meant for John's life. Couldn't cut his hair, no alcohol, and get this, couldn't even be near a dead body, not even family, No way.

S Sarah 01:54

Seriously, I mean, that's intense. You gotta be like, really, really devoted to your beliefs to live like that absolutely

like that absolutely.

J John 02:01

And it shows, even as a teenager, how strong John's convictions were. Think about it not being there to comfort your mom as she's grieving. It really sets them apart. The Naz writes like living, breathing examples of religious devotion. People saw them as, I don't know, kind of mysterious, set apart

S Sarah 02:18

totally. And the fact that he chooses this so young, it tells you something about John. He wasn't afraid to be different, to follow what he believed, you know, exactly.

J John 02:27

And the book, it doesn't just list these rules. It connects them to John's ministry later on, like this early choice, it shaped how he saw the world, the message he ended up preaching. It's like he

S Sarah 02:37

was like laying the groundwork without even realizing it, you know, but then big shift, his dad dies. John's just 18, and those

J John 02:44

Nazarite restrictions now, they really hit home. He couldn't even mourn with his own family heavy, and this

S Sarah 02:50

is where the book gets really, I don't know, intimate almost. You see John struggling grief, isolation, questioning everything, but he still chooses to honor his vows, does those purification rituals. It's a very human moment in the middle of all this ancient tradition. It

J John 03:06

really is, even in his grief, he's trying to stay true to his faith, even though it means huge personal sacrifice.

S Sarah 03:12



Sarah 03:12

And it's after this that he takes over the family business, sheepherding. Not exactly what you picture for the guy who's gonna baptize Jesus, right?



John 03:19

But this is key. It's not just a job. It's like this time for John to tend to his inner life too out in the wilderness, years of quiet, studying scripture, just wrestling with these huge, huge questions, feeling maybe the weight of prophecy on him already. Yeah,



Sarah 03:37

you've got this young man shaped by religion, deeply devout. And now he's alone with his thoughts surrounded by like the vastness of nature, perfect setting for some soul searching,



John 03:47

totally. And he was drawn to Daniel, you know, the prophet. Oh, yeah, Daniel,



Sarah 03:50

End Times, kingdom of God, all that that was the big stuff back then.



John 03:54

And it wasn't just reading it, it was people trying to figure out, what does it mean, you know, for us right now, like some people, they thought kingdom of heaven, that meant a real king, kicking out the Romans, Israel back in charge. Others, they thought it was more about spiritual change, judgment, day coming. The Urantia Book says John. He really struggled with all these different ideas. So it's



Sarah 04:16

not like he had it all figured out. From day one, he was grappling with it, just like everyone else, man to carry that weight, those prophecies I can't even imagine, and that's what the Urantia



John 04:24

Book gets at. You know, it shows John as driven, but also unsure, sometimes doubtful, and that's what makes him human, even after all this time, it's



Sarah 04:34

 Sarah 04:34

like he's holding, I don't know, like a treasure map, but it's old, faded, and he's trying to match it up to the real world, which is, well, messy and

 John 04:42

right when he's, you know, deep in thought, things change, yeah, big time. Around 25 CE, he's done with the quiet life. He becomes this, like this preacher, but bigger, a voice in the wilderness, literally. And

 Sarah 04:56

the Urantia Book, it like, puts you right there, John, you know, the. Intense guy, hair down to his shoulders, wearing like animal skins by the Jordan River. And he's saying, repent, the kingdom of heaven is here. Oh,

 John 05:07

you can feel it, that energy. And it wasn't just the words, it was him. He looked like he walked out of the Bible. People must have thought, This is it. Maybe those old stories, they were true totally.

 Sarah 05:17

And he's not messing around. He starts baptizing people like in the river, a symbol, right of i guess starting fresh, cleaning up your act. We might take it for granted now, but back then, whoa radical,

 John 05:29

the Urantia Book is clear about that. John's baptism different, not just like a ritual. It was interchange, big time, facing your own demons, saying you believe in something bigger, and that the world about to change. And man, people

 Sarah 05:45

were into it, like over 100,000 baptized in a year. The book says, imagine that all those people from everywhere lined up to be dunked in the river. It's like spiritual spring cleaning, everyone at once, right?

 John 05:58

Like the whole region's holding its breath. Don't forget, back then they were under Roman rule.

They wanted a savior, someone to like, set them free, the Messiah. So

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Sarah 06:07

John shows up talking about the kingdom of heaven. It's like he's speaking directly to their deepest hopes. They're probably thinking, is this, is he the one? Even

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John 06:14

John? It seems he's wondering that himself. The book suggests, at first, he might have thought, Maybe I'm the Messiah, or, like, the one who sets up the Messiah's kingdom. Wow,

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Sarah 06:24

hold on, really. I never thought about it like that. That changes things. But if you believe that, it seems like later on, he changes his mind,

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John 06:31

yeah, as he's preaching, baptizing his message, it changes too. Less about power, more about, I don't know, like your soul changing being good, a different kind of Kingdom, like he's getting these like hints of a bigger plan, but can't quite see it.

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Sarah 06:46

And right then Jesus shows up, and John's

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John 06:49

story, things are about to get interesting.

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Sarah 06:51

So picture it Jordan River, people everywhere. John's preaching line for the baptism. And then Jesus gets in line. Now the Urantia book says they'd met before as kids that hadn't seen each other in like decades. And here's where

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John 07:05

it gets different from the usual story. A lot of accounts say John hesitated to baptize Jesus, but the Urantia Book, it says John knew almost right away, like boom, memories of that kid, and suddenly this feeling like destiny or something you

S Sarah 07:20
mean, instead of doubt, it's like recognition exactly

J John 07:23
John sees him, not just some guy getting baptized, but something way bigger, like fate walking right up to him. Man,

S Sarah 07:31
can you imagine being John in that moment? Everything you thought you knew might be about to change, huge

J John 07:35
moment, not just for John, but well, for everything that came after. And the Urantia Book makes it powerful. It says, as John is doing, the baptism, the sky opens up. This voice. This is my son, my beloved Son, in whom I am, well pleased. Okay,

S Sarah 07:47
now I've got chills. It's like you can almost feel the ground shake. Talk about confirmation. But for John, it's gotta be confusing, too. Son of God, what does that even mean? Where does he? John fit into all of this, and that

J John 08:01
question that's gonna stay with John as he sees Jesus starting his own thing, and it leads to this, like one last desperate attempt to get answers, but we'll get to that.

S Sarah 08:10
So John's at this, like this fork in the road. He thought he knew the way, and then Jesus shows up,

J John 08:15
and as he sees Jesus doing his thing, teaching healing, it just, I don't know, raises more questions for John. The Urantia Book says he was sure about Jesus, but then also confused, like what Jesus was doing, it didn't match up with what he thought the Messiah would do.

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Sarah 08:30

So even John, right, the guy who's all about the kingdom coming, he has those doubts too. It's like, Wait, is this how it's supposed to be? Makes you realize he was human, just like us, absolutely.

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John 08:41

And you see his humanity in that struggle here. He is prepared his whole life for this, and now he's wondering, did I get it wrong? Like did I misinterpret everything?

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Sarah 08:49

And he's not afraid to voice those doubts even challenge authority. He calls out. Herod, Antipas, the ruler, right? Doesn't hold back. And Herod,

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John 08:57

well, let's just say he wasn't into criticism. John was popular. People listened to him. So to Herod, it wasn't just religious talk, it was dangerous, like a threat. So what

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Sarah 09:06

does Herod do? Silences him. John ends up in prison. All that preaching, silenced behind bars,

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John 09:13

dark times, but in that prison cell, the Urantia Book, it shows us John's faith like really being tested. He sends people to Jesus, and he asks this question. It's like a punch to the gut. Are you really the one, or should we be looking for someone else?

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Sarah 09:29

Man, the weight of that question, he needs to know it's not just curiosity. It's like his whole life, everything he's sacrificed. It's all writing on this answer. He needs to hear it from Jesus himself and

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John 09:40

Jesus. His response is interesting. He doesn't just swoop in, you know, do some miracle to prove it. He says, tell John what you've seen. The blind see. Lame walk. Lepers healed. The deaf hear.

it, he says, tell John what you've seen. The blind, see, lame walk, lepers healed. The deaf, hear, the dead are raised. Good news for the poor.

S

Sarah 09:53

It's subtle, but powerful, like he's saying, John, just look around. This is the kingdom right here, right now. But it's not about power. It's about love, about helping people.

J

John 10:01

Yeah, it's like you did your part, John. You prepared the way. He's not there to create some empire, force people to believe. It's about opening their hearts, showing them a different way. And

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Sarah 10:11

John, even in prison, it seems like he gets it. Find some peace, you know, like the sense of completion.

J

John 10:17

Unfortunately, it doesn't last. Herod, egged on by his wife. He's still scared of John, so he hasn't killed tragic

S

Sarah 10:22

end. But even with his death, John's impact huge, his message. It lived on his baptism of Jesus. It became central to Christianity and his story. It's like this reminder that faith, it can survive anything, doubt, even persecution, totally

J

John 10:37

and for us today, it's still powerful. It's about facing our own doubts, figuring out what we believe, even when things are tough make no sense. John the voice in the wilderness, he's still speaking, reminding us sometimes the strongest faith comes from those moments where we question everything, and even when we're not sure what the future holds. There's something amazing about being part of something bigger than ourselves.