

Part 4, Paper 138, Training th...Kingdom's, Midwayer Commission

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

apostles' origins, Urantia Book, Jesus's choices, family drama, diverse team, Matthew's dinner, Pharisees' reaction, personal connection, apostles' struggles, practical approach, spreading word, radical teachings, leadership advice, final ordination, mission launch

SPEAKERS

John, Sarah

J John 00:00
Ever wonder what it was like before the apostles,

S Sarah 00:02
you know, actually became the apostles, kind of like a behind the scenes peak before they were well, the apostles, exactly.

J John 00:08
And today we're diving into that period, those five months before they became like the the A team of early Christianity, right?

S Sarah 00:16
Using the Urantia Book as our guide.

J John 00:19
And full disclosure, this book, it's a it's a spiritual text, so

S Sarah 00:23
not exactly your typical history book

not exactly your typical history book,

J John 00:25

right? But for this deep dive, we're going to treat its version of events as like our historical playground. Just to be clear, sounds

S Sarah 00:34

like an adventure, and this period, it's full of surprises. Think about it. We usually see the apostles as these almost mythical figures, right? Larger than life, definitely, exactly. But here we get this glimpse into their lives before all that, when they were just regular guys figuring things out. And

J John 00:50

it all kicks off with Jesus making a decision that honestly, kind of makes you think about those family dinners that get a little awkward. Oh, tell me about it. He starts choosing his apostles, yep, right? And his own brothers, James and Jude, not on the list. Can

S Sarah 01:05

you imagine? Talk about a tough conversation with the family, right?

J John 01:08

And the book says this actually caused, like, a real rift. His mother's faith even wavered for a bit because of it. It wasn't until after you know everything happened, the resurrection and all that, that things kind of settled. Wow. I mean,

S Sarah 01:21

if Jesus had family drama, maybe the rest of us shouldn't feel so bad when our life choices raise a few eyebrows at Thanksgiving. Makes you feel a little better, right, right? But anyway,

J John 01:30

back to those he did choose, starting with the OG six the first ones, we've got Peter, Andrew James, John, Philip and Nathaniel, big names later on, but at this point, they're just starting to figure out what they've signed up for.

S Sarah 01:43

 Sarah 01:15
They're basically going, okay, so what now, exactly?

 John 01:47
And to shake things up even more, Jesus tells each of them to pick someone else to make a team of 12. And here's the thing, each new apostle chosen. There weren't just random guys Jesus bumped into. He

 Sarah 01:59
was curating quite the crew, wasn't he, it's true. Like take Matthew

 John 02:03
the tax collector, not exactly the most beloved professional vendor. Now, honestly,

 Sarah 02:07
yeah, not winning any popularity contest with that one, but he had the skills, right? Then the

 John 02:11
connections, yeah. Then there's Thomas. He was a fisherman, a carpenter and a Mason. Talk about multi talented, right? A regular first century. Bob the Builder. And,

 Sarah 02:20
you know, this wasn't by accident. Jesus saw the value in a diverse team. So

 John 02:25
you're saying Jesus was all about that diverse hiring strategy, even back then. Tell me more.

 Sarah 02:30
Oh, absolutely. Then we have James, the brother of John, who brings in James Alpheus, another fisherman, but also a farmer. And then John picks James's twin brother, Judas Alpheus, also a fisherman. So

 John 02:47



John 02:41

experience on the water was a hot commodity, it seems like it now, Peter,



Sarah 02:45

he went for Simon, this former merchant, but Simon was really passionate about the zealot movement, you know, fighting for Jewish independence. And then to run it all out, Nathaniel brings in Judas Iscariot. And, okay, we all know how that turns out, but



John 02:59

yeah, things didn't exactly end. Well, there, no, they didn't, but



Sarah 03:03

at this point, Judas Iscariot was trusted with managing their money. He had this whole background in Jericho knew his way around finances.



John 03:10

It's wild, right? This isn't just a group of fishermen anymore. It's more like, like Jesus looked around and thought, We need everyone at the table. We need different voices, different experiences, if we're gonna actually make a difference exactly,



Sarah 03:22

and that actually perfectly foreshadows his message. It wasn't about fitting in, but about celebrating what makes us different



John 03:28

and how those differences can actually make us stronger, right? Totally.



Sarah 03:32

But speaking of bringing people together, we have to talk about the dinner party Matthew throws for Jesus, which, of course, wouldn't be a good story without some drama. Well, I'm



John 03:43

sure the Pharisees had something to say about this, didn't they give me the good stuff. What went down?

S Sarah 03:47

Well, imagine it. Matthew's hyped to show off his new life, his new path, right? So he throws this big dinner party. The only problem is his old friends weren't exactly who the Pharisees expected Jesus to be hanging out with.

J John 04:01

Let me guess they weren't exactly following all the rules, not

S Sarah 04:04

even close. We're talking tax collectors, sinners, you name it, anyone who was anyone in Capernaum, but not exactly welcome in the synagogue. It caused a stir. To say the least. Pharisees were probably freaking out. Oh, big time. But here's the real kicker, Jesus didn't try to smooth things over, not at all. Instead, he just doubles down, saying, Look, I'm here for everybody. Everyone is welcome at my table,

J John 04:26

my Trump. He really knew how to make a statement. He absolutely did, and he actually

S Sarah 04:31

said something like, I have come to proclaim joy to the socially downtrodden and spiritual liberty to the moral captives. I have come not to call the righteous, but sinners powerful,

J John 04:42

right? He knew his message of love, of acceptance was for everyone, regardless of their past. It makes you think, how often do we let societal expectations dictate who we hang out with, who we offer kindness to Jesus, clearly didn't care about any of that

S Sarah 04:59

and that message. Is as relevant now as it was back then. But here's the thing, while he was publicly challenging the norms, privately, he was all about connecting with His disciples on a personal level. In fact, the book says he spent a whole day with each of the new apostles, just answering questions, calming worries, getting to know them. Imagine having



J John 05:17
that kind of one on one time with Jesus. It makes you wonder, what was it like to have that level of access to his teachings? It definitely

S Sarah 05:23
wasn't just about information overload. It was about creating a bond, fostering genuine understanding, building a foundation, right? And even with the best teacher, the most revolutionary ideas, well, they take time to sink in. You know, like, have you ever had a moment where you hear something life changing and you're just like, wait. So does that mean I have to change too, more

J John 05:44
often than I'd like to admit? So are you saying the apostles weren't perfect students? Oh, they

S Sarah 05:49
definitely weren't. The book talks about how much they struggled to like reconcile his radical ideas with what they already believed, how they tried to make his words fit into their old way of thinking. It's

J John 06:01
that human thing, isn't it to resist change even when we know it's good for us. Totally. Welcome back to our deep dive into the apostles, kind of like origin story. I guess you could say they're

S Sarah 06:11
pre fame days, right? Like we always think about them as apostles, but this period, these five months, they're still figuring it all out

J John 06:19
totally, and we've seen how Jesus put his team together, how he, you know, trained them, challenged them, and even told them, hey, don't forget to rest, which, let's be honest, is a lesson we all need. Sometimes, amen to that. But now it's time to, like, get real. Even with the best preparation in the world, launching anything new is tough, right? Absolutely. So what about these guys during this testing period? What challenges did they bump into?

S Sarah 06:45

Okay, put yourself in their shoes for a second. You're a fisherman just trying to make a living, right, feed your family. You've got nets to fix, bills to pay, and all of a sudden you're signing up to follow this well, this radical teacher who's claiming to be the Son of God.

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John 07:00

It's a bit of a career change to say the least. Yeah, a bit

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Sarah 07:03

of an understatement. It'd be like quitting your office job to join a band hoping to make it big, except

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John 07:08

in this scenario, the stakes are a lot higher than just selling out a concert, right?

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Sarah 07:13

And it's not like the world was, you know, just waiting for their message. They faced skepticism, rejection, even hostility and their own families were struggling to understand it all. I

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John 07:24

bet it's tough when your family doesn't get it. You know the worst,

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Sarah 07:27

it really makes you think what kept them going through all of that? Was it blind faith, sheer willpower, or was there something deeper there?

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John 07:36

It's easy for us to look back at these figures, you know, from a distance and see them as almost superhuman, you know, like they never doubted, never struggled. But here we see them as they were, human,

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Sarah 07:47

messy, flawed humans, just like the rest of us. Exactly



John 07:50

You know what's interesting, the Urantia Book suggests that what really bound them to Jesus, what helped him through all the tough stuff, wasn't just his message. It was Jesus himself.



Sarah 08:00

It was the connection, the relationship exactly



John 08:03

they felt seen by him, you know, understood he believed



Sarah 08:06

in them, even when they doubted themselves. Remember Matthew saying how the less he understood Jesus, the more he loved



John 08:13

him, right? It's like this paradox. Sometimes, the more we learn, the less we feel like we know. But sometimes,



Sarah 08:18

pushing through that, you come out the other side even stronger with a deeper understanding, yes, and that's what they had with Jesus, this connection, this shared purpose. It



John 08:31

reminds me that we're not meant to go through this life alone. We need each other preach.



Sarah 08:35

But okay, we've talked about their struggles, but what did their day to day look like? Was it all philosophical debates and prayers? Yeah, give us the behind the scenes. Okay, so remember how Jesus was all about the practical approach? He tells them every other week, go back to fishing.



John 08:51

Wait, really? So even while spreading the word, they still had to, like,

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Sarah 08:56

pay rent. Apparently, it seems something's never changed. It's the original side hustle, right? They'd fish for two weeks, sell their catch and that would support their ministry for the next two weeks. Talk

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John 09:07

about dedication. Okay, so when they weren't fishing, what were they up to?

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Sarah 09:10

Spreading the word? Of course, they traveled to different towns, you know, talking to people, sharing meals, offering comfort to those in need, and sometimes, I'm sure, challenging some strongly held beliefs.

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John 09:23

It was a grassroots campaign, town by town, person by person, exactly.

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Sarah 09:27

It's actually incredible how organized they were. Even back then, they had someone in charge of money, someone in charge of travel logistics, even crowd control. Jesus knew what he was doing. Oh, for sure. He understood that if you wanted to make real lasting change, you needed more than just passion. You needed a plan structure, a solid foundation, right? It wasn't enough to just talk about this new way of living, this new way of experiencing. God. You had to create a system to support it. It's

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John 09:56

a good reminder that anything worthwhile takes more than just. Intentions. You got to put in the work. But let's talk about the message itself, the teachings. What were they actually saying that was resonating with people? Were they just repeating what was already being said, or were they preaching something totally different? Well,

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Sarah 10:14

that's what's so fascinating. What Jesus was teaching was completely different from what everyone else was preaching. Oh, this. I

J John 10:19
gotta hear what? Made it so radical? What was he saying? Okay, so

S Sarah 10:22
back then the Pharisees, right? They were all about the law, the rituals, doing everything exactly by the book, according to them, salvation, that was something you earned through good deeds and perfectly following every single rule. Sounds a little rigid, to be honest. Oh, it was. It was a system that left people feeling trapped, burdened like they could never measure up. I can imagine. But Jesus, he offered this completely different way. His way was about love, grace, a personal connection with God. It

J John 10:54
was about your heart, not just your actions. Exactly. He was saying that

S Sarah 10:57
God's love was, get this unconditional. It was available to absolutely everyone, no matter what,

J John 11:03
whether you were the richest guy in town or, you know, a tax collector,

S Sarah 11:06
it didn't matter. Everyone was worthy of love. Can you imagine how refreshing that must have

J John 11:11
been, especially back then, it must have been a breath of fresh

S Sarah 11:13
air. It's what drew people to him. He offered hope to the hopeless, freedom to the captives, a clean slate to those who felt trapped by their past mistakes. Instead

J John 11:22
of you messed up, you're out. It was more like Come as you are. Let's try again. Yes

or you messed up, you're out. It was more like come as you are. Let's try again. Yes,

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Sarah 11:27

he taught that real change, real repentance, wasn't about some big, showy display. It was about what was going on inside, in your heart. It makes

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John 11:37

you think, how often do we get so caught up in appearances and doing all the right things that we forget about the most important thing, connecting with something bigger than ourselves. It's

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Sarah 11:47

so easy to lose sight of that. But even with this beautiful message, I'm guessing not everyone was thrilled about it, right? I mean, change is hard, even when it's

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John 11:54

good, totally. Some people probably felt threatened by Jesus's message, oh, absolutely,

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Sarah 11:58

because his message was about more than just personal change, right? It challenged the whole system. People in power, the Pharisees, the religious leaders. They saw him as a threat,

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John 12:09

because he was challenging their authority, their whole way of life, exactly.

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Sarah 12:12

And it wasn't just external resistance they had to deal with, you know, even the disciples, the ones closest to Jesus, the ones who'd seen the miracles firsthand, even they struggled. Oh,

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John 12:23

I bet they were human after all. Right? And the book talks about their

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Sarah 12:27

S Sarah 12:27
doubts, their worries, the uncertainty they felt about it all. They questioned Jesus's methods. They worried about what would happen next. They even struggled to fully grasp what his kingdom actually meant, which honestly

J John 12:39
makes them a lot more relatable. Don't you think even they had their doubts for sure? Because

S Sarah 12:44
doubt is a part of faith, right? It's a part of being human, exactly. And what's amazing is that Jesus didn't shame them for their doubts. He didn't demand blind faith. He met them where they were at he

J John 12:54
listened, he answered their questions, and he trusted that they would find their way. What a lesson in leadership, right?

S Sarah 13:01
Sometimes the best thing we can do is just create space for questions, for doubts, you know, because that's where real growth happens. And we're

J John 13:08
back for the grand finale of our deep dive into like apostle boot camp, right?

S Sarah 13:14
We've seen how Jesus built his a team, trained them, gave them pep talks, even encouraged naps, which, let's be real. We all need sometimes, amen

J John 13:21
to that. But now it's show time, right? Go time. So how does Jesus take them from those heart to hearts to like, shouting from the rooftops? Well,

S Sarah 13:30
picture this. It's Sunday, January 12. The apostles gather, probably thinking they're in for

another quiet lesson, right?



John 13:36

Yeah, maybe a little more strategizing, a little more one on one time, exactly. Instead,



Sarah 13:40

Jesus throws him a curveball. He officially ordains them.



John 13:45

Wait. So no more practice rounds. It's straight to the big leagues. No more practice



Sarah 13:48

rounds. He's like, All right, guys, you're ready go out there and be my ambassadors. Wow.



John 13:53

Talk about a vote of confidence. That's huge, right? He was basically



Sarah 13:56

handing them the keys to the kingdom, or at least the keys to, you know, spreading the word about the kingdom.



John 14:02

What a moment. So what were his final words of wisdom before sending them off?



Sarah 14:06

Well, ever the pragmatist, he gave them some pretty concrete advice. Knowing this next part wouldn't be easy. He was like, Listen, if you need to call out the authorities, let me handle that.



John 14:18

Smart. Don't get bogged down in politics focus on the message

S Sarah 14:22
exactly he wanted them to avoid unnecessary drama and stay focused on what mattered. You know, love, forgiveness, that whole deal,

J John 14:32
which honestly is still good advice today, it's easy to get caught up in the, you know, the back and forth, the arguments, but sometimes the most radical thing you can do is just like, lead with love. Totally

S Sarah 14:44
actions speak louder than words, right? Always. Okay. So

J John 14:47
they've got their instructions, their marching orders. Are they finally ready to, like, drop their nets and change the world

S Sarah 14:53
almost. But first Jesus, being Jesus adds one more thing, and it's so telling about who he was. It okay? Lay it on me. He reminds them to make sure their families are taken care of while they're out there doing their thing. Always thinking

J John 15:05
of others. That's incredible. It's one thing to like preach about compassion. It's another thing to actually live it. You know, he

S Sarah 15:11
walked the walk, that's for sure. Okay, back to the story. So they do what he says. They head back home for a few weeks, get everything sorted, spend time with their families, you know, do one last haul of fish, stock

J John 15:24
up on snacks for the road, exactly, and then they

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Sarah 15:28

set their sights on Jerusalem and Judea, ready to share what they'd learned, what they had experienced, with anyone who'd listen. What a journey we

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John 15:36

started with. A group of ordinary guys. Saw them become Jesus's inner circle watched them struggle and grow, and now they're about to launch a movement that will change the world. It's honestly inspiring. It

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Sarah 15:49

really is, because it reminds us that you don't have to be, you know, some kind of superhero to do something amazing. These were regular people with families and doubts and fears, but they said yes. Anyway, they said yes to something bigger than themselves, and that yes changed everything.

J

John 16:03

It makes you wonder, what are we saying yes to in our own lives? What lights us up? What makes us feel like we're part of something bigger?

S

Sarah 16:11

It's a good question to ask ourselves.

J

John 16:14

It really is. Well on that note, thank you for joining us for this deep dive into the early days of the apostles. Until next time, keep exploring, keep asking questions, and maybe just maybe, you'll discover something incredible.