

Part 4, Paper 150, The Third P...hing Tour, Midwayer Commission

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Jesus's ministry, third preaching tour, Urantia Book, women ministers, radical appointment, patriarchal society, Susanna, Joanna, Mary Magdalene, Magdala, Nazareth confrontation, Tiberius gathering, star interpretation, superstition vs. faith, women evangelists

SPEAKERS

John, Sarah

- J

John 00:00

Welcome back, everyone. Let's dive into a pivotal moment in Jesus's ministry, his third preaching tour. And no, this isn't a repeat performance with the same old material this tour. Well, it reveals how much his movement has grown, but also some of the challenges that come with expansion. It's
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Sarah 00:16

like that saying more hands make light work, but then again, too many cooks in the kitchen you know exactly
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John 00:21

and to understand this pivotal moment, we turn to as always, the Urantia Book, I have to say, it offers a perspective on Jesus's life that's well, frankly, rare to find elsewhere.
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Sarah 00:33

Absolutely. It dives into the details other texts often just kind of skip over, for example, one detail about the third preaching tour that always makes me stop and think is the appointment of 10 women as ministers. 10
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John 00:44

women. I mean. that number itself is strikina. Havina a few female followers is one thina. but

officially making them ministers, that's unheard of in first century Palestine.

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Sarah 00:53

You're right. It was a bold move, not just unusual, downright radical, especially considering the patriarchal society at the time, it really challenged the very structure of their world. To get it we need to understand just how rigid social structures were then women, their place was in the home, their voices silent, especially in religious matters. So

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John 01:14

Jesus formally recognizing them as ministers, it was him saying no. Things don't have to be this way. Makes you wonder who were these women and how they get this pivotal role? Well,

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Sarah 01:23

some were already familiar with his teachings. Take Susanna her dad. He was a synagogue leader, so she had some exposure to religion, but only what women were allowed, which wasn't much, okay,

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John 01:33

so some religious background, but not exactly a clear path to ministry, not

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Sarah 01:38

at all. Then there's Joanna, her husband, he was a steward for Herod Antipas himself. Talk about a different world. We're talking about the political elite, a far cry from the lives of most women. Then that

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John 01:51

contrast is fascinating. It's like Jesus wasn't concerned with social standing or background when it came to sharing his message to him, they had the potential to lead, to teach exactly.

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Sarah 02:03

Remember women back then, they couldn't even step foot on the main floor the synagogue, relegated to the women's gallery, if they were lucky, and

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John 02:09

suddenly, boom, not only are they on that main floor, but they're entrusted with teaching, with ministering. What a change. What did that role actually involve, though passive followers? Or did Jesus have something more in mind.

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Sarah 02:20

The Urantia Book is very clear on that these women, they were given specific tasks, responsibilities, comfort, care, spreading the kingdom's message and acting as crucial context for other women drawn to Jesus, active participants they were

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John 02:36

that's strategic, considering how strict social rules were between men and women, who better to reach the women of Galilee than women themselves? Exactly

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Sarah 02:43

shows how deeply Jesus understood people, reaching everyone he was, no matter what society threw their way, appointing

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John 02:49

them ministers. It's like a pebble creating ripples that just keep going. It set the stage for women in religious roles. Though, that journey hasn't been easy, has it? You're right.

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Sarah 02:59

We see women in leadership in many faiths today, but it's not a given, and the path to get here long and winding, two steps forward, one step back. Sometimes

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John 03:09

makes me think of Paul. Some of his writings. They echo Jesus's radical equality, neither male nor female. In Christ, he said, yet some things he wrote, well, they sound less than enthusiastic about women leading the

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Sarah 03:22

enigma of Paul right, even those closest to Jesus grappled with fully living out his teachings and that tension, that struggle to embrace equality within faith, it didn't end with them.



John 03:34

It's a reminder progress isn't always a straight line, challenging what society says is right. Well, it's a constant effort,



Sarah 03:41

and it makes those women even braver. They were pioneers paving the way, even if they couldn't have imagined how far their actions would echo. Living their faith, they defied expectations and shaped the early Jesus movement in a powerful way. It's



John 03:53

truly remarkable. They lived out those teachings even when it meant going against the grain, especially



Sarah 03:58

considering where their ministry led them next the Urantia Book, it mentions their work in Magdala and that town well, that had a bit of a reputation. To put



John 04:08

it delicately, the text calls it a red light district. It's important we understand what that meant back then, historically speaking, absolutely,



Sarah 04:15

we can't just impose our modern views. Back then these districts, they were a complex social reality, often meaning exploitation and very limited choices for the women involved.



John 04:25

So we're talking about a marginalized group, even within a society that already marginalized women precisely.



Sarah 04:30

And what happens next? It's incredibly significant. Even some of Jesus's closest male disciples, they seemed hesitant to engage with the women in these areas,



John 04:30



John 04:39

but the women evangelists, they didn't shy away, did they no they embraced



Sarah 04:43

the challenge they had access and understanding that the men simply didn't, and they used that to connect, offering hope and healing. And this



John 04:52

is where we meet a pivotal figure, Mary Magdalene, long before her more familiar Appearances in other accounts.



Sarah 04:59

This is Mary Magdalene before the labels, before the assumptions. Just a woman seeking something more, and she finds it through these women who saw her, not her circumstances. It speaks



John 05:09

to the power of genuine human connection, of seeing the inherent worth in every person



Sarah 05:15

the very heart of Jesus's teachings, he challenged those social norms by engaging with those on the margins, the overlooked, the ostracized, like he



John 05:22

was saying, The kingdom isn't exclusive, it's for everyone, no matter what,



Sarah 05:26

exactly, and how better to show that than by sending these women to those most often judged and rejected.



John 05:32

And Mary magdalene's transformation is remarkable, from a marginalized woman in Magdala to one of the most prominent voices the Urantia Book even calls her the most effective teacher among the 12 women.

S Sarah 05:44
It really speaks to the power of Jesus's message to transform lives, no matter the background. And

J John 05:50
it doesn't stop there. This group of women ministers, it grows to 12, mirroring the 12 Apostles,

S Sarah 05:56
a powerful statement, an intentional parallel, I think, highlighting their equal importance,

J John 06:01
and these women, they remain dedicated to Jesus until the very end, present throughout his ministry, through good times and bad, even in his crucifixion, that

S Sarah 06:09
level of unwavering faith and dedication, especially in the face of such adversity, it's truly remarkable. Makes

J John 06:15
you think, what was it about Jesus's message that resonated so deeply, and what can we learn from their courage, their commitment? But maybe, before we go too far down that road, let's shift from the WHO to the what of this preaching tour.

S Sarah 06:30
You're right. It's not just about people and places. The teachings themselves. They're full of insights into the nature of faith, superstition, what it truly means to follow Jesus, like one particular gathering in Tiberius. It all revolves around something you might not expect, a star, a star, huh? That's something that could be interpreted in so many ways, especially back then,

J John 06:51
exactly back in those days, seeing something new in the sky. It wasn't just astronomy. It was an omen, a sign of big things to come, good or bad. So

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Sarah 06:59

new star appears, I imagine the rumor mill went into overdrive. What were people saying? Oh, you know the usual, a great leader is born. The end is near. All that doomsday stuff. People looking for answers in the stars, trying to figure out what it all meant. And then

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John 07:14

into all that walks Jesus, who, ironically enough, was a great leader, but something tells me he wasn't big on unfounded celestial interpretations.

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Sarah 07:23

You got it this gathering in Tiberius. It's fascinating. The Urantia Book tells us Jesus saw this star craze as a chance to teach, to show the difference between superstition relying on signs and rituals and true

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John 07:37

faith. So instead of adding fuel to the fire, he took a different approach.

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Sarah 07:40

Exactly. He spoke directly about it challenging a lot of common practices, astrology, looking at animal guts, to predict the future, trying to talk to the dead, things rooted in fear, and trying to control the unknown. It's funny,

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John 07:51

those things seem so outdated now, but that need for certainty, that's something we all still deal with. Oh,

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Sarah 07:56

absolutely, it's human nature. But Jesus, he offered a different way, a direct connection with the Divine through the Spirit within no need for all the extras, the rituals, the omens, just you and the source of creation.

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John 08:11

That's a powerful idea, empowering, but also maybe a little scary. No more relying on external stuff just you and your faith. That's

start, just you and your faith. That's

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Sarah 08:18

the core of it, owning your faith journey. It's not about perfectly following rules or relying on omens. It's about that internal relationship with the divine. Makes

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John 08:27

you wonder how that went over with the people who were really invested in those old ways of thinking. It's a

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Sarah 08:33

good question, and it's something we see play out dramatically when Jesus goes back to his hometown, Nazareth. Remember those growing pains we mentioned earlier? Well, they come to a head in Nazareth. You know,

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John 08:42

you always hope for a warm welcome when you go back home, but for Jesus, Nazareth was a whole different story. Yeah,

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Sarah 08:48

there was a lot going on under the surface, jealousy, resentment, a feeling of being overlooked. They'd heard the stories about his miracles, but it's like some folks are thinking, why not us? Why not here? And of

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John 09:00

course, it all comes out in the synagogue. You can practically feel the tension. Picture this.

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Sarah 09:05

They hand Jesus a scroll to read from right, and the Urantia Book says it was the very same manuscript he had donated years earlier. Full circle moment, right?

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John 09:14

Can't make that up. So which passages did he chew? What was he trying to get across? He

S Sarah 09:18
picks two, Deuteronomy, 6.4 to nine. And Isaiah, 61.1, to two. Not random at all. These were carefully chosen, packed with meaning for the people listening. Break

J John 09:29
it down for us, what was so important about those specific passages? The Deuteronomy passage,

S Sarah 09:34
it's about loving God with everything you've got, your heart, your soul, your strength, a deep personal connection, not about rituals or appearances, and

J John 09:42
I'm guessing that didn't sit well with the religious authorities of the day. What about Isaiah?
Now

S Sarah 09:48
that one's really interesting, talking about good news for the poor, freedom for the captives, sight for the blind, hope, healing and liberation, especially for the downtrodden,

J John 09:58
a message that would resonate with anyone. Who felt overlooked, forgotten. But not everyone was happy to hear it. I imagine, sadly,

S Sarah 10:06
not. The Urantia Book talks about a confrontation in the synagogue, and it's not just the townspeople, even some of his own followers, they get caught up in it make what's called a tactical blunder. Shows

J John 10:16
how even those closest to Jesus, even believers, could slip up when faced with opposition. It highlights

S Sarah 10:23
the struggle of spreading a message of peace when there's so much anger and resentment already there.

J John 10:28
So what happens to Jesus and his followers after this? They leave Nazareth

S Sarah 10:31
feeling, as the arendt book says, sober and disillusioned. It was a wake up call. You know, spreading this message, it wasn't going to be easy.

J John 10:41
It reminds us that living out your faith, standing up for what you believe, it can be incredibly tough.

S Sarah 10:46
It really drives home that point about true faith, that it's not about things being easy or blind acceptance. It's about holding on to hope when things are hard and staying true to your beliefs even when they challenge the norm.

J John 10:59
And that unwavering faith is something we see in Jesus's followers, particularly those women he empowered. Their stories from this preaching tour, they offer a lot to think about about faith leadership and the struggle for a better world. Absolutely,

S Sarah 11:11
they remind us that even small acts of courage, of compassion, they can inspire others to challenge the way things are and work towards a brighter future.

J John 11:20
It makes you think about why Jesus embraced those who were pushed aside. Why did his message resonate so strongly with them? What can we learn from their strength, their dedication as we try to navigate our own complex world, big questions to ponder as we

consider the legacy of Jesus's teachings. Thank you for joining us for this deep dive, and until next time, keep seeking and keep asking those tough questions, and we'll be here to explore them with you. Bye.