

Part 4, Paper 162, At the Feas...bernacles, Midwayer Commission

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Jesus's journey, Samaria encounter, disciples' reaction, Feast of Tabernacles, Sanhedrin division, Temple talks, Sabbath controversy, woman caught in adultery, living water, true freedom, spiritual renewal, Pharisees' hostility, eternal nature, radical compassion, divine spark

SPEAKERS

John, Sarah

S Sarah 00:00

So you know, when you sent in the Urantia Book as a source, I have to admit, I I wasn't sure what to expect. But this section on the Feast of Tabernacles, wow. This is, this is intense. It really throws you right into this pressure cooker moment in Jesus's life. It's

J John 00:18

really fascinating, isn't it? You have all this religious and political tension, and Jesus is walking this tightrope right through the middle of it. And what's striking is how he uses this very specific journey, you know, to Jerusalem. It's almost like this deliberate detour to reveal these deeper truths to his disciples and to us, you know, reading about it now, and that's, uh, that's

S Sarah 00:37

exactly where we're diving in today, Jesus's journey to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. And this wasn't just any trip, right? He chooses to go right through Samaria, which, if you know how Jews typically avoided Samaria, that's kind of that's a big deal. Oh,

J John 00:49

absolutely. It's like he's intentionally walking right into this Lion's Den of prejudice. I mean, remember the historical context here, centuries of animosity, right? Jews and Samaritans. So for him to even enter Samaria with His disciples. It's a bold move before anything else even happens, and



Sarah 01:05

sure enough, the text tells us no surprise here they are refused lodging, just straight up refused in a Samaritan Village just because they're Jewish. Really makes you think about how these everyday moments of bias we still encounter them today. What do we do? How do we react when we're faced with that kind of rejection?



John 01:24

That's where the disciples reaction is so revealing, right? Because James and John,



01:28

oh boy, here



John 01:29

we go. Those two firebrands. They want to just call down divine fire on the entire village. If you



Sarah 01:34

don't take us, we'll give you a reason to it's very human, a



John 01:37

very, very visceral response to injustice, isn't it? You reject us. We'll show you. It's



Sarah 01:42

like they're ready to fight fire with fire, literally. But Jesus, he shuts that down immediately. Vengeance savors not of the outlook of the kingdom of heaven. Such a stark contrast. It makes you think, what did the disciples even understand about Jesus's mission at this point? Right?



John 01:58

They want a revolution, like a political one, a Messiah to overthrow Roman rule. Their idea of a kingdom is very much here and now, you know, focused on power and might, but Jesus, he's operating on an entirely different plane. He's



Sarah 02:09

constantly like, trying to expand their understanding, move them beyond this very simplistic us

constantly like, trying to expand their understanding, move them beyond this very simplistic us versus them mentality. And that's something we all struggle with, even today, isn't it? Recognizing our way isn't the only way, and sometimes choosing compassion, choosing it over retaliation, that is sometimes the much more the more courageous path, the more divine path. And

J John 02:30

that is what makes his response to the Samaritans so powerful, because he doesn't meet that hatred with more hatred. He embodies the love and the forgiveness that He preaches, even when it's the hardest thing to

S Sarah 02:41

do, it's a powerful reminder that living by these teachings, it's not always these grand gestures, these epic battles. Sometimes it's those very quiet moments choosing Compassion Over prejudice, and honestly, that can be just as radical. It's not more so than any show of force.

J John 02:55

I completely agree. And it's in those moments when we choose that love over anger that we really get a glimpse of that divine spark within ourselves. Now imagine the disciples state of mind, right? If they finally reach the outskirts of Jerusalem, they just have this incredibly tense encounter in Samaria, and they're completely aware of the danger that is waiting for Jesus in the heart of their own religious center. You've

S Sarah 03:17

been pushing him go public proclaim yourself king. But now they're approaching Jerusalem. They know the authorities are out for blood. Now they're terrified. It's such a pivotal moment in how they understand his mission. This isn't about earthly power. It's not about conquest,

J John 03:32

and that is where you start to see the full weight of his decisions. Because he knows, he knows the danger. He's heard the whispers, but he doesn't lay low. Instead, he deliberately chooses a path of even greater risk. He's going to Teach openly in Jerusalem and defy the apostles anxieties and the sanhedrin's murderous intent. Which

S Sarah 03:52

brings us to, of course, the Feast of Tabernacles itself, the very reason for this whole tense journey. And this isn't just some local gathering, right? We're talking pilgrims from all across the Roman Empire, Spain, all the way to India, all converging on Jerusalem. It's like the stage is

set for Jesus to deliver this message. But on this global scale, it's

J John 04:09

not an accident that timing, the setting, all of it, it's all part of this much bigger picture that he is slowly revealing to the disciples and to us, you know. But before we get swept up in the energy of the feast, let's look at the political landscape in Jerusalem for a minute. Remember the Sanhedrin, right?

S Sarah 04:26

The Supreme Jewish Council the law of the land,

J John 04:29

and they're deeply, deeply divided on how to deal with Jesus.

S Sarah 04:33

Divided. Might be putting it mildly. This council supposed to be a united front, but behind closed doors, total chaos. Some believe in Him, secretly. Some are just terrified of the crowds that flock to him. And others are playing this dangerous game of politics trying to figure out, Okay, how much protection will Rome actually give him, this

J John 04:53

internal division, this infighting within the Sanhedrin. It becomes this huge factor in everything that happens, because they know. They can't arrest him without sparking a riot, especially with all these pilgrims in town for the feast. They are stuck in this web of their own making. And Jesus, well, he knows exactly how to use

S Sarah 05:09

that. It's like watching this chess game where one player can see 10 moves ahead and the other is still trying to figure out the rules. But here's the thing, even though he knows that the Sanhedrin is watching every single move he makes. He doesn't shy away from teaching at all. As a matter of fact, he steps right into, you could say, the lion's den, and starts teaching in the temple courts.

J John 05:31

This isn't just casual conversation. This is him speaking with an authority that is both captivating and completely terrifying to anyone in power. 1000s of people hearing him,

opinions divided, but even his enemies are amazed at his knowledge, his authority.

S

Sarah 05:47

And this is where things get really, really interesting. We're about to dive into the first of these temple talks. And this is where his teachings really start to challenge absolutely everything. But we'll save that all for the next part of our deep dive. So we

J

John 06:00

left off with Jesus walking right into the middle of this whole thing. Right? The Feast of Tabernacles, throngs of pilgrims, the watchful eyes of the Sanhedrin. Talk about a pressure cooker. And it's here we get this incredible discourse. It's called the First Temple talk. I think in the text you sent in, I like how

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Sarah 06:15

it's called a talk and not a sermon, because even though he's obviously teaching, there's this directness. It feels very conversational, like he's not just lecturing at people, he's engaging with

J

John 06:25

them, and he masterfully uses the setting and the crowd's expectations to really drive his points home. So picture this right? You're in the temple courts, surrounded by all this buzz, all this debate, the rituals of the feast, and Jesus starts talking about the very things they're all there to celebrate. But he kind of flips the script. Oh, I

S

Sarah 06:45

bet you can practically hear those ghosts from the crowd, those skeptical voices piping up. Now hold on. Who are you to be saying these things? What gives you the authority to just reinterpret traditions that go back centuries?

J

John 06:57

And his response, it's brilliant in its simplicity. He basically says, No man has taught me these truths that I declare to you, this Teaching isn't mine, but his who sent me. Now, on the surface, it sounds like he's dodging the question, right? But if you really think about it, it's actually this powerful statement about where his knowledge comes from, like his connection to something beyond human understanding.

S

Sarah 07:19

It's like he's saying my authority doesn't come from some degree or some fancy lineage. It comes from something, something higher, a deeper well of truth that had to have been intriguing, but also pretty unnerving for those listening in.

J John 07:35

And he doesn't stop there. He doesn't just assert his authority. He backs it up by contrasting their very, very rigid interpretation of Sabbath laws, with his own healing miracles. It's almost like he's saying, You claim to uphold the law, but are you really living by its true spirit? What's more important, blindly following the rules or actually showing compassion, easing suffering?

S Sarah 07:54

This whole Sabbath controversy is so fascinating to me, because it really gets to the heart of why Jesus was such a problem for the religious elite at the time, for them, upholding the letter of the law, even if it meant ignoring suffering, that was everything. But Jesus is arguing that real piety, true piety, it comes from love, not from legalistic rigidity. He's

J John 08:14

challenging their entire worldview, and there's no way to ignore it. You can just imagine those murmurs rippling through the crowd, some scandalized, but others captivated. They've never heard anyone speak with this kind of authority, this compassion, this total disregard for the very rules they've built their lives around.

S Sarah 08:30

And this is where it really it really hits home for me, you know, because it's so easy to get caught up in the rituals, the doctrines, the right way of doing things, but Jesus reminds us that true faith, it's not about checking boxes. It's about aligning our actions with love and with compassion. That's the true measure, the deeper measure, of our spirituality. And

J John 08:51

you can feel that tension right building as he continues to teach. The text even mentions that some people are whispering that he's a prophet. Others are even calling him the Messiah. This isn't just some abstract theological debate anymore. People are starting to see him as the answer to these deep, deep longings for liberation, for totally different way of being in the

S Sarah 09:09

world. It's electric. But of course, not everyone is happy about this. The Sanhedrin. They are watching all of this unfold, and they're getting more and more alarmed. They know they have to act fast before this Jesus movement spirals out of control,



John 09:23

and that is where you know good old Eber enters the picture. Remember him? He's the one that the Sanhedrin sends to apprehend Jesus, right? But this encounter, it does not go according to plan. It's almost



Sarah 09:34

comical when you really think about it. Here they are. They send this guy to arrest Jesus, thinking they can just silence him, problem solved, but they underestimate him at every turn.



John 09:43

They don't get it. Jesus isn't playing their game, their game of power and control. He's operating on a whole other level well, and



Sarah 09:50

don't forget the sheer audacity of Jesus during this arrest attempt. It's like he can read Eber's mind.



John 09:56

Oh, absolutely. It even says that Jesus looks at Eber. With compassion, not anger, not fear. Can you imagine being Eber approaching this man who just radiates this otherworldly calm knowing you're there to arrest him? It must have been completely disarming. And in



Sarah 10:13

that moment, that moment of complete vulnerability, Jesus says these incredible words to Eber, I know you have been sent to apprehend me, but you should understand that nothing will befall the Son of Man until his hour comes.



John 10:26

It's like it's not even power in a traditional sense, is it? It's this deep knowing, this unshakable faith in His purpose. I mean, even the people sent to silence him, they're speechless.



Sarah 10:36

It really makes you wonder, what did Eber see in that moment? What did he hear in those

words that made him turn back empty handed.

J John 10:42

Whatever it was, it shook him, yeah, deeply, and it's just a tiny glimpse into the kind of impact Jesus had on the people who met him, who really encountered him. It wasn't

S Sarah 10:50

just his words, though, right? It was the way he lived, the way he loved, the way he challenged absolutely everything and everyone, but always with this fearlessness, a fearlessness that could only come from that deep inner knowing

J John 11:04

exactly. And there's that combination that wisdom, that compassion, and this unwavering conviction that leads us to the next big event in our deep dive, the woman caught in adultery. But we'll explore that story, and it's really surprising twist the final part of our journey through the Feast of Tabernacles. You

S Sarah 11:20

know that Eber thing that always gets me, like, what was he thinking walking away from that? But this next part, this is intense and in a completely different way. We're talking about the woman caught in adultery, this story, this could be a deep dive all on its own, right? Yeah, and it's one

J John 11:35

of those stories that so many people think they know, right? But the way it unfolds in the Urantia Book, it adds this whole other layer of depth and complexity you don't always get in those traditional tellings, because

S Sarah 11:46

honestly, in those versions, you just kind of think, okay, here come the gotcha questions. Poor woman doesn't stand a chance totally.

J John 11:53

It's often presented as this simple morality tale, did Jesus follow the law or not? But the Urantia papers, they paint a much more nuanced picture. This woman, she's the victim of a setup, not just some object lesson. Okay, so

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Sarah 12:07

break this down for me, the usual story, it's the scribes and Pharisees trying to trap Jesus, right? Knowing that the law is stoning for adultery, the Urantia Book saying otherwise,

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John 12:16

well, it goes way deeper than that. Yeah, this wasn't just about trapping Jesus. It was about discrediting him publicly, using this woman as a pawn. The text actually says it wasn't even the scribes and Pharisees who set this whole thing up. It was this group of thugs basically working directly for the Sanhedrin. They hired out to get

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Sarah 12:34

rid of him. They were that threatened by him.

J

John 12:36

Oh, it gets worse. They actually hired the woman's husband to be in on it. He's the one who'd forced her into prostitution in the first place. Yeah, using her for his own financial gain.

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Sarah 12:46

That is just awful. So she's a victim twice over, then, first by her husband, then by these guys who are supposed to, you know, uphold the law. Makes you wonder if they cared about justice at all, or if this was all just a big show to hold on to their power. And

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John 13:00

that's where Jesus's response is just masterful. He sees right through it, immediately knows exactly what they're up to. And instead of, I don't know, playing their game this moral one upmanship, he just does the unexpected. So

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Sarah 13:13

it's writing on the ground. That part always got me. What do you think he was even writing

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John 13:18

the text doesn't say and kind of love that, because we can just sit with the mystery of it. What could he have written that was so powerful these accusers, they can't even look at it. It's like

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Sarah 13:27

he's exposing their hypocrisy without saying a word, and one by one, they just melt away. Can't meet his gaze. Then it's just him and the woman, and you're waiting for, I don't know, a lecture, public shaming. What's he gonna do? But instead total grace,

J

John 13:43

neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more. And it's not about saying what she did was okay. It's about her humanity. She deserves compassion even then,

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Sarah 13:52

like he's saying, look, the past is the past. Now you're free to choose something different, and that is a message that it just resonates even now we all screw up, right? Have those moments we wish we could take back, but there's always that chance, that fresh start.

J

John 14:07

It's often when we feel the most judged, the most condemned, that real compassion, that's where it hits different it's like he's offering her, offering us a way out, out of that cycle of shame and all that, a path to, I don't know, being whole again. And it's

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Sarah 14:21

interesting, this is all happening during this huge celebration, right? The Feast of Tabernacles. These massive crowds are celebrating God's faithfulness, this joy of liberation. And yet, here's this darkness, this manipulating and exploiting. It's woven

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John 14:34

throughout the whole feast, isn't it, these beautiful rituals like that water pouring ceremony that's all about spiritual renewal and God's blessing, and at the same time, you've got these people in charge who are using religion as this tool, controlling people,

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Sarah 14:48

right, right? Remind me about the water ceremony again. That's a big deal, and what comes next?



J John 14:52

Okay, so picture it climax of the feast. Priests are at the altar. They've got these golden pictures, right, filled with water from the pool of Siloam. Yeah. And they're pouring it out very solemnly as this symbol of God's presence, you know, giving life, this powerful image of spiritual thirst being quenched. You

S Sarah 15:10

can almost feel it even now, the anticipation in the air being spiritually refreshed like that. And

J John 15:16

boom, right at that moment, everyone's focused on that water, and Jesus steps right up. Says, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink from the Father above. I bring to this world the water of life. He's

S Sarah 15:27

not messing around. He's saying, you think that water's something I'm offering something way better,

J John 15:32

right? Audacious, but that's what makes it land. He takes this thing they all get, something they revere, and he just infuses it with this whole new level of meaning. It's like he's saying, Look, rituals, they have their place, but I'm talking about something deeper, more sustaining, a direct connection to the source itself, the source of living water, this

S Sarah 15:53

thirst that goes way beyond just the physical, this longing for something that truly, I don't know, truly satisfies on this, this soul level,

J John 16:01

and honestly, so many of us still feel that. Don't we? That longing for meaning, for purpose, for something that connects us to something bigger than ourselves?

S Sarah 16:09

Makes you think, what are we thirsting for in our own lives? Are we looking for fulfillment in all the wrong places, when what we really need is that, that deep connection to something that takes us beyond the everyday stuff the worries and all that

takes us beyond the everyday stuff, the worries and all that

J John 16:22

100% it's a question we all gotta sit with, and it points us to this whole other theme that comes up during this feast, the idea of true freedom.

S Sarah 16:31

Because it's not enough to just recognize the thirst, is it? We have to actually be willing to break free from whatever's holding us back from that water, from that source.

J John 16:39

And this is where things get really, really interesting, because Jesus's whole understanding of freedom, it was completely different from how those Pharisees, the keepers of all those traditions, how they viewed it. For them, it was all about lineage. You're descended from Abraham. You hold the law. Boom, you're free. Jesus cuts right through that.

S Sarah 16:57

If my words abide in you, He says, Then are you truly my disciples? You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. He's talking about a different kind of liberation altogether, one that comes from within, you know, from choosing to align yourself with what's true, letting that truth break down, the fear, the ignorance, all that. And it's not about

J John 17:17

a political revolution, even though, let's be real. That's what a lot of folks were hoping for. He's offering something way more radical, way more enduring, too, a revolution of the heart and mind, and

S Sarah 17:27

that, honestly, that's the scariest kind, isn't it? Because it means we have to look inward, confront our own stuff, our own limitations. It's not about changing the world out there, it's about changing the world in here, and

J John 17:39

that that is a threat to the people who benefit from things staying the same, who get their power from keeping others trapped in fear, in not knowing. So it's not surprising at all that Jesus's message, it's met with more and more hostility. The

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Sarah 17:53

text even says they were enraged by his words. Called him a get this child of the devil. They even picked up stones to stone him. It's a good reminder that when you speak truth to power, you often face the well, the consequences.

J

John 18:05

But even with all that, Jesus doesn't back down. He doesn't water down what he's saying. Doesn't try to make it easier for them to hear. He says one of the most, I don't know, audacious things in well ever as he's getting away from this mob. He looks back and says, Verily, verily, I say to you, Before Abraham was I AM

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Sarah 18:24

chills every single time. It's like he's saying, you think you can silence me, you think you can erase this. You have no idea who you're dealing with. It's

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John 18:33

like this statement that just explodes their entire understanding of time, of lineage. He's not just saying he's older than Abraham. He's declaring his eternal nature, his oneness with with everything. It's

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Sarah 18:44

like he pulled back the curtain on the infinite, and they're terrified because it throws everything they thought they knew out the window, power, God, even reality itself.

J

John 18:52

And as we leave the Feast of Tabernacles behind, you know, and we follow Jesus on this last part of his journey, this final journey to Jerusalem, we're left grappling with these big questions, what does it mean for us to really live his message, the love, the compassion, that spiritual freedom in a world where that fear and division, it's still so strong

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Sarah 19:13

a question for the ages, right? And one I think we all have to answer well for ourselves. Thanks for joining us for this deep dive. We'll be back next time with another one.