

Part 4, Paper 165, The Perean ...on Begins, Midwayer Commission

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SPEAKERS

Sarah, John

 John 00:00

Hey everyone, welcome back for another deep dive. Today, we're gonna be looking at a lesser known period in Jesus's life, his time in Perea towards the end of his ministry, yeah,

 Sarah 00:09

Paria. It's not exactly a household name, is

 John 00:12

it definitely not as familiar as say, Galilee or Jerusalem, right? So we're gonna need some context here, and to make things even more interesting. Our main source for this deep dive is the Urantia Book. Have you ever heard of it?

 Sarah 00:25

I'm not surprised if you haven't. It's a bit of a mystery, really, even though some consider it to be a really significant spiritual text, that's

 John 00:32

not your typical historical account. Is



S Sarah 00:34
it definitely not, but it offers some unique perspectives on Jesus's life and teachings. Okay, so

J John 00:39
before we get into the specifics of the Urantia book's account of Jesus in Perea. Let's set the scene geographically and culturally. What was Perea like?

S Sarah 00:47
Well, imagine this. It's east of the Jordan River, known for its beautiful landscapes, really stunning countryside, and at the time it was experiencing this revival of Jewish life after years under Gentile rule.

J John 00:58
Wow. So a real melting pot of cultures and ideas, exactly.

S Sarah 01:02
So you can imagine how fascinating it must have been when Jesus arrived, right?

J John 01:06
So what was Jesus actually doing in Perea? Was he just wandering around preaching, or was there a more organized mission happening? Oh,

S Sarah 01:12
no, it was definitely organized. The Urantia Book tells us that he had 70 disciples led by a man named Abner, who were going from town to town, village to village, spreading his teachings like a coordinated effort, exactly like a well oiled teaching machine. And meanwhile, Jesus himself was based in a town called Pella, you know, teaching, supporting their efforts. Yeah,

J John 01:33
okay, so they're going out, spreading the word. But what was the main message during this time in Perea? Was it any different from his earlier teachings.

S Sarah 01:41
That's where things get really interesting, because the Urantia Book points out a noticeable

That's where things get really interesting, because the Urantia Book points out a noticeable lack of miracle working in this period,

J John 01:48
really. So no more healing the sick or walking on water,

S Sarah 01:52
it seems not, at least not according to this text, that's

J John 01:55
a pretty big shift. What do you make of that? Well, it

S Sarah 01:58
suggests that there was a real focus on the spiritual message of the gospel during this time, almost like saying, Okay, we've covered the miracles. Now let's dive deep into the heart of the matter.

J John 02:08
Interesting. So what was the spiritual message? What was Jesus saying to the crowds in Perea?

S Sarah 02:14
Well, the Urantia Book highlights two really powerful teachings from this time. The first is the parable The Good Shepherd, which he actually delivers to a mixed crowd of devoted followers and skeptical Pharisees, some of whom had actually followed him from Jerusalem. Okay,

J John 02:28
so let's unpack that parable. I mean, most people have heard it before, but I'm guessing the context here is important. What makes it so significant in this instance, it's actually

S Sarah 02:37
pretty radical. See in this parable, Jesus compares himself to both the door of the sheepfold and the shepherd himself, and he contrasts true shepherds with those who exploit the flock. Okay, essentially, he's claiming to be the only way to reach God.



John 02:52

Wow. I bet that didn't go over well with everyone, especially the Pharisees, who are all about their own interpretations of religious law.



Sarah 02:58

Yeah, you can imagine the whispers. But Jesus doesn't shy away from challenging his audience. In fact, the Urantia Book tells us he follows this up with another powerful teaching a whole sermon on trust and spiritual preparedness. Okay, give me the highlights. What



John 03:12

did he say? Well, he



Sarah 03:13

starts by warning against hypocrisy, which, let's face it, is always relevant, right? Always. And then he offers this beautiful reassurance of God's care. He points out that God even cares for the sparrows, you know, even the smallest creatures. And finally, he calls for courageous faith, even in the face of opposition. There's that



John 03:31

incredible image of Jesus urging his followers not to fear death, which seems like the opposite of what people expect from religious leaders, right?



Sarah 03:39

Absolutely. It's incredibly powerful. Instead of promising safety and security in this life, he's urging them to focus on something far greater, something okay.



John 03:48

And that actually ties in directly with his teachings on wealth and possessions, which also come up in Priya through this really fascinating encounter.



Sarah 03:57

You mean, the story about the young man who asks Jesus to intervene in an inheritance dispute with his brother.



John 04:03

Yeah, exactly, yeah. Seems like such an everyday problem, it does, doesn't it?



Sarah 04:06

But classic Jesus, right? He uses this seemingly ordinary event to launch into this really profound teaching about wealth and possessions.



John 04:15

So true. So what was the message? Was it as simple as money is the root of all evil.



Sarah 04:21

It's definitely more nuanced than that. It's about the danger of covetousness, you know, placing too much importance on material wealth. He tells the story of the rich fool who hoards possessions but forgets about his own mortality. Okay? And ultimately, the takeaway is that spiritual treasure, that cut that lasts, is far more valuable than anything we can accumulate here



John 04:39

on Earth. Spiritual treasure versus material wealth. It really makes you think about what we prioritize in our own lives, doesn't it? It really does. And you know, speaking of priorities, the Urantia Book also talks about how Jesus counsels His apostles during this time. Remember, they've left everything to follow him, so naturally, they have some concerns about their material. Needs? Oh,



Sarah 05:00

I bet that's a pretty relatable worry, isn't it, giving up everything to pursue a spiritual path, and then it's like, wait a minute, how am I going to pay rent?



John 05:07

Right? Exactly. It's that tension between our spiritual aspirations and our very real material needs.



Sarah 05:14

So how does Jesus address that? Did he just tell them to have faith and everything would work

out?

J John 05:19

Well, it's actually more nuanced than that. It's not about neglecting your responsibilities or expecting miracles. He's really emphasizing the right relationship to material things. Right relationship, right so like finding a balance between taking care of our needs and not getting too caught up in the pursuit of more exactly,

S Sarah 05:36

it's not that material things are inherently bad, but they shouldn't be our primary focus. It's about keeping them in perspective,

J John 05:43

which is where that beautiful analogy of the lilies of the field comes in. Yes, such a powerful

S Sarah 05:48

image. Consider the lilies, how they grow. They toil, not neither do they spin. Yet I say to you, even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. It's like if God cares so beautifully for a simple wildflower, imagine how much more He cares for us. It's both

J John 06:05

reassuring and challenging at the same time, because it requires a lot of trust right to believe that we'll be taken care of even when we don't have all the answers absolutely.

S Sarah 06:13

And you know this trust wasn't just about their personal needs either. Remember, Jesus was preparing his followers for a life dedicated to spreading the gospel, right? And that

J John 06:23

requires immense sacrifice and unwavering faith. It's like he's

S Sarah 06:27

asking them to commit to a whole new way of living where material possessions just take a back seat and service to others is paramount

back seat and service to others is paramount.

J John 06:34

It's a theme that echoes throughout his teachings, isn't it true? Wealth isn't about what you own, but the strength of your relationships, your generosity, your connection to something greater than yourself. And it's interesting that

S Sarah 06:45

all of this is unfolding in pareia, this region, on the cultural fringes, right? It wasn't exactly the heart of religious power or influence that's

J John 06:54

such an important point. It makes you wonder, does the context of these teachings delivered in this place where Cultures and Ideas were mixing change how we should interpret them today.

S Sarah 07:04

Yeah, it really does make you think it's like these teachings coming from a place that's kind of off the beaten path have this timeless quality to them. You know what I mean? Absolutely they transcend any particular time or place exactly.

J John 07:16

So as we wrap up our deep dive into Jesus's time in Pera, what are the key takeaways? What can we learn from this lesser known chapter of his life?

S Sarah 07:25

Well, I think it really highlights the importance of the spiritual over the material. You know, it's a call to trust in something beyond ourselves, to find true wealth in our relationships and our connection to something bigger than us.

J John 07:38

And let's not forget that this isn't about just passively accepting things, either. Yeah, right. Remember how Jesus challenged his followers to be courageous, to stand up for their beliefs, even when it was difficult?

S Sarah 07:48

 Sarah 07:10
Oh, absolutely. That message is as relevant today as it ever was totally and it makes

 John 07:52
you think about what it means to be a good shepherd in our own lives. I mean, it's not just a religious concept, is it? No,

 Sarah 07:58
not at all. It's about looking out for each other, showing compassion and generosity, standing up for what's right, even when it's tough,

 John 08:05
living a life of purpose and integrity, guided by something bigger than ourselves. And you know, after this deep dive, I'm really starting to see that you don't have to be religious to find value in these

 Sarah 08:15
teachings. I completely agree, stripping away the centuries of interpretation and dogma. You know, you get down to these universal truths about trust and compassion, living a life that's aligned with our values,

 John 08:27
that's a great point to end on. So to everyone listening, maybe these teachings from Priya will spark some reflection for you. Think about it. How do they resonate with your own life? What does it mean to prioritize your own spiritual well being, to cultivate trust, to be a good shepherd in your own way,

 Sarah 08:43
those are really good questions to ponder. Thanks

 John 08:45
for joining us for this deep dive into Jesus' time in Perea until next time. Keep seeking, keep exploring and keep those questions coming.