

Part 4, Paper 166, Last Visit ...ern Perea, Midwayer Commission

📅 Sat, Oct 05, 2024 11:20PM 🕒 11:35

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Jesus's teachings, spirituality insights, Pharisees critique, inner transformation, lepers' reactions, divine grace, salvation choice, narrow door, accidents explanation, natural consequences, free will, Abner's paradox, Philadelphia community, lifelong journey, unexpected discoveries

SPEAKERS

Sarah, John

- J** John 00:00
Ready to dive into some really thought provoking stuff. We're gonna be looking at this period near the end of Jesus's time in Perea. It's described in the Urantia Book. And, you know, they're captivating stories, yeah? But also some, like, really challenging teachings about about spirituality, like, what does it even mean? Yeah, you know, and then we get these kind of surprising insights on how to look at, you know, when life throws you a curveball, accidents and stuff, yeah,
- S** Sarah 00:28
this period, it's, it's really something else. It feels like Jesus kind of shifts gears a little bit, you know, like, instead of focusing on miracles and, you know, all the attention on him, his message is really the main thing here, right? Like, listen
- J** John 00:41
up everybody, yeah. Like, this
- S** Sarah 00:42
isn't a magic show, you know, this is, this is about something way bigger. This is
- J** John 00:46
the real deal. And he really. really lays down the law when he. you know. when he's with the

Pharisees, like that whole breakfast scene at Nathaniel's house. Oh,

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Sarah 00:55

talk about awkward. I know Nathaniel this, this well, to do Pharisee, right? And he's with all these other Pharisees, and for them, it's all about appearances, outward stuff. And then Jesus comes in, and he just skips the whole hand washing ritual that just sits down.

J

John 01:11

I can imagine the gasps, oh, yeah, but, I mean, that's nothing compared to what he says next. Oh. He goes there.

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Sarah 01:18

He really does. He doesn't sugarcoat anything. He calls them out right there, yeah, for being more concerned with, you know, looking the part than actually living it, it's like he saw right through them totally. And what's so powerful is he's pointing out their obsession with all these rituals, the external stuff, but they're totally missing the inner transformation, the real stuff that actually makes a difference. This is interchange, right? Exactly. And he even says it straight up, like you make sure to present a pious and holy appearance to the people, but your inner souls are filled with all manner of spiritual wickedness. Whoa.

J

John 01:52

Strong words makes you stop and think, doesn't. Yeah, it's

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Sarah 01:55

like putting lipstick on a pig, exactly.

J

John 02:00

You get the picture. It's a good

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Sarah 02:01

it's a good reminder for us to kind of check ourselves, you know, like, what are our motivations here? Are we trying to impress everyone else, or are we actually working on ourselves, you know, growing. And it makes me think about another story from this time period. It's the one with the 10 lepers. There are nine Jewish guys, and then one Samaritan, and all of them. They're desperate. They want a miracle, so bad,

J John 02:26
just the fact that they're all together like that says something.

S Sarah 02:30
It really does. They're from different backgrounds, different beliefs, but they're suffering. That's what brings them together, because everyone can relate to suffering, right? It's a universal language, it is. And of course, Jesus heals them all, but then it's how they react afterwards. That's, that's what gets me. That's where it gets interesting, right? Totally. I mean, you'd think they'd all be ecstatic over the moon,

J John 02:51
yeah, right. But it's the Samaritan,

S Sarah 02:53
the one who's different from the rest. He's the one who really gets it. The text says he felt exceeding great joy. He just falls to his knees thanking God at the top of his lungs.

J John 03:04
And Jesus even points this out right, like he asks, weren't there 10? Where are the other nine? Like, what

S Sarah 03:11
happened to the other guys? Did they forget to say thank

J John 03:13
you? It seems like they just expected it, almost like they felt entitled to be healed. It's a powerful contrast.

S Sarah 03:20
You know, it really is. You know, it makes you think like when we assume we deserve good things. Do we miss out on that pure joy of just receiving, you know, like a gift? That's a

J John 03:31

really good point. It makes you think about all the assumptions we carry around, like, who deserves grace, who deserves healing, who deserves love? What if being worthy has nothing to do with deserving it at all, you know, like, what if it's about recognizing that we receive these things because we're loved and embraced by something way, way bigger

S Sarah 03:50

than us? I love that. And you know, it kind of goes back to what we were talking about with the Pharisees. Yeah, they're both missing something, but in totally different ways, right?

J John 03:58

One's so focused on proving their worthiness, yeah, and the other just assumes it exactly. And then you've got this believer in Gerasa, and he comes up to Jesus with this question that I'm sure we've all wondered about at some point, like, how many people are going to be saved? Big question, right? Like, you'd expect

S Sarah 04:16

a straightforward answer, totally some kind of formula or something, right? But Jesus, of course,

J John 04:21

he flicks the script. He doesn't give a number. It's not about that, right? It's not like some exclusive club with limited membership. He's talking about choice. Yeah, you know you gotta choose. You gotta actively choose it. It's gotta be your own decision.

S Sarah 04:33

It's about aligning yourself with God, like your will and God's will becoming one. And it's not about checking off boxes on some list you know about that at all. And it's definitely not about you know who your ancestors were. It doesn't work. That doesn't matter who you're related to, right? Your family tree doesn't give you a free pass. And then he uses this image a narrow door. Oh,

J John 04:56

right, right. It's not easy. It's not. Not get a

S Sarah 05:00



PC, not at all. And he even says, like, don't wait around, don't, don't wait for a better time. Like, oh, I'll get around to it later, you know,

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but it's more convenient. Yeah, yeah, now's the time right now,

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this is it. And don't, don't even think about coming at it with the wrong reasons. Like, you know, thinking you'll get some kind of reward for it later. Like, Oh, I did all this good stuff. Now I get my prize, like some kind of cosmic transaction, exactly, saying it's not like that. This is about your heart. You gotta really mean it.

J

This is about real change, and that's gotta be hard to hear, especially these days. Like we're constantly told we can have everything without giving up anything. It's the opposite of what he's saying totally. We have to make tough choices sometimes. And you know what? We have to talk about, the whole thing with accidents. Oh

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yeah, this is where it gets really interesting. This is where things get kind of mind blowing. This one's a real head scratcher, because let's be real.



When bad things happen, we want to know why it's like, whose fault is

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the nature, right? We need an explanation, especially when it's something painful, absolutely.

And so remember when Thomas asked Jesus straight up, like, are spiritual beings behind accidents? I

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can only imagine what was going through his head, like, trying to understand fate, free will, all of that. Oh, right, it's a lot. And then Jesus, he just turns everything upside down. He

J John 06:20
really does, like, whoa, okay. He's

S Sarah 06:22
like, look, I live here too. I'm subject to the same laws of nature as you are. It's

J John 06:27
not like he's exempt from the rules. No,

S Sarah 06:29
not at all. And then he even brings up those terrible events that happened, the ones everyone knew about, the Galileans remember, killed by pilot soldiers, and that tower that collapsed, the tower of Salomon that killed 18 people, tragic,

J John 06:44
absolutely awful, and he acknowledged it that doesn't he, he doesn't try to downplay it,

S Sarah 06:48
right? But he says those things weren't punishments from God. It's not like

J John 06:52
that even today. Yeah, that's a lot to take in. I know it still trips people up, right?

S Sarah 06:57
It does. It makes you think, like, Why do bad things happen to good people

J John 07:02
if there's some higher purpose some reason. But what gets

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Sarah 07:06

me is, Jesus doesn't try to give us all the answers, like, here's the reason why you're suffering, right? No, easy answers. No. He just, he just turns the whole idea of divine reward and punishment on its head,

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John 07:19

and instead, it's like he's saying, This is life, folks. Good stuff happens. Bad stuff happens. It's not always fair, but it's not completely random chaos either,

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Sarah 07:28

right? It's not totally random. He connects it to natural consequences. Remember that whole analogy? He uses the fig tree. Oh, yeah, yeah. The owner of the vineyard wants to cut it down, right? Because it's not producing. But then the gardener is like, give it another chance. Let me take care of it. It just needs a little more. Needs a little more time. I love that part me too, and it's such a perfect metaphor, because it's like, that's us. We got to take care of ourselves, make choices that, like, work with the natural order of things,

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John 07:53

yeah, like, we can't just expect to thrive if we don't put in any effort. Yeah, we have to do our

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Sarah 07:58

part exactly, nourish ourselves, connect with that divine spark within. It takes work.

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John 08:04

It's about realizing we have free will, yeah, right, but we're also part of this bigger picture. And there are these principles at play, like we can choose to align with them or not. But those choices, they have consequences,

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Sarah 08:15

absolutely consequences. And when we work with those laws, we set ourselves up for growth. For you know, feeling good and whole,

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John 08:23

it's powerful. We're not just helpless bystanders. Yeah, we have a say in how our life unfolds.

it's powerful. We're not just helpless bystanders, yeah, we have a say in how our life unfolds. But even after all that, the text even says the apostles, they were still struggling to wrap their heads around

S Sarah 08:34

it. Sometimes these big truths, they take a while to sink in. You really do. You can understand it in your head, but until you feel it in here, yeah, yeah, yeah, in your heart, it doesn't quite click, you know, it

J John 08:45

makes you think about teachers, you know, like, how patient they have to be, especially when they're trying to keep something totally new. Oh, for sure. And speaking of someone who is trying to teach something new, we should probably talk about Abner, oh, yeah, and that whole community in Philadelphia totally because they were all about open mindedness, yeah, thinking for yourself, you know, absolutely

S Sarah 09:05

they were like, a breath of fresh air after running into so much resistance everywhere else, Jesus finds this community, and they're not just open to His message. They're all in they're like, tell us more. Yeah. And it all started with Abner. What a guy,

J John 09:21

he's described as, like, tenderly loving, but also dogmatically uncompromising. I mean, it's quite a combination, right?

S Sarah 09:28

Talk about a paradox, but that was Abner, a real original. He loved Jesus's teachings, like, really took them to heart. But he also wasn't afraid to question anything, even if it was the apostles, especially the apostles, like Peter, James, even Paul, later on, they had some real disagreements, you know, how to interpret things. The whole direction of the early church. Abner had his own ideas about how it should be done. Wow. It's kind

J John 09:53

of mind blowing to think, what if things had gone differently? What if people had listened to him more, right? I mean,

S Sarah 09:58

who knows, but even. Even though most people haven't even heard of him, his story is still important. I think it reminds us that there's never just one right answer, winning thumbs to spirituality. You know, like Abner story, it's like its own little deep dive, right within the deep dive, exactly he makes us act like, whose interpretation am I buying into here? Is it really mine, or am I just going along with what everyone else is saying, even if it doesn't feel quite right? Yeah. And, you know, it takes us back to the heart of this whole thing, this look at Jesus's time in Perea. Because whether you agree with everything in the Urantia Book or not, it definitely makes you think twice about some big stuff, spirituality, yeah, life even, and and even about Jesus himself, because it reminds

J John 10:41

us that there are always new ways to see things, even stories we think we know, like I don't know, peeling back the layers of an onion or something. That's

S Sarah 10:50

a good analogy. There's always more underneath you know, more to discover. That's

J John 10:54

what I love about this kind of exploration. It's a process totally

S Sarah 10:57

you never really reach the end. You just keep discovering new stuff. And sometimes those aha moments, they come from the sources you least expect. So

J John 11:07

to everyone listening as you're on your own journey. Remember Abner, right? That guy was fearless, and that community in Philadelphia, they were open to something new, something different, and they embraced it. Yeah, they really did, and remember that finding your own truth, it's a journey as a lifelong adventure, it really is, and sometimes the most amazing discoveries happen when we dare to question, to really explore and to be open to the unexpected.