

Part 3, Paper 69, Primitive Hu...titutions, Midwayer Commission

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human institutions, industry origins, survival adaptation, work ethic, capital drivers, fire discovery, animal domestication, private property, marriage evolution, social stratification, communal living, technological advancements, social structures, primal fears, future progress

SPEAKERS

Sarah, John

S Sarah 00:00
Hey, everyone, welcome back for another deep dive.

J John 00:02
Hey, we're going deep into the Urantia Book, okay, specifically, paper 69 to unearth the surprisingly practical origins of human institutions.

S Sarah 00:12
Now, I know what you're thinking, institutions sounds a bit dry, right? But trust me,

J John 00:18
this is fascinating stuff. We're

S Sarah 00:19
talking about the roots of industry, capital, even that love hate relationship we have with money. Days, it's

J John 00:25
easy to forget that these structures we often take for granted, you know, emerged from very

easy to forget that these structures we often take for granted, you know, emerged from very human needs and anxieties, right? It wasn't some grand plan, but rather a series of adaptations and innovations driven by very relatable

S Sarah 00:39
desire Exactly. Take the dawn of industry, for example.

J John 00:42
You might picture some early Edison toiling away in a prehistoric workshop, right? But the truth is far more basic. It was all about avoiding starvation. Precisely. Early humans, just like many animals, experienced that feast or famine cycle of nature, those

S Sarah 00:57
who figured out ways to store food gained a survival advantage. This

J John 01:01
wasn't about innovation for innovation's sake, right? It was about adapting to survive. And

S Sarah 01:06
here's where it gets interesting. The Urantia Book points out that hard work wasn't exactly our natural state, right? It was a necessity driven

J John 01:14
by that constant struggle for survival, not some innate desire to punch a time clock. And as living

S Sarah 01:21
standards gradually rose, that desire for a less precarious existence also fueled that engine of industry. It

J John 01:28
wasn't just about surviving anymore, it was about striving for something more.

- S** Sarah 01:32
It makes you think about the whole rise and grind mentality, doesn't it? Yeah, maybe we're not all that different from those early humans dragging ourselves out of bed every morning driven by a primal need to secure our next meal, or,
- J** John 01:44
you know that promotion to afford those fancy groceries? It's a fascinating parallel. Now, while many early cultures embraced this concept of hard work, there
- S** Sarah 01:53
were exceptions. The Urantia Book highlights a fascinating contrast with the early Hebrews, who
- J** John 01:58
placed his significant emphasis on the value of labor.
- S** Sarah 02:01
Oh, right, he who does not work neither shall he eat.
- J** John 02:05
That's a pretty bold statement, especially when you contrast it with the prevailing attitudes of the time.
- S** Sarah 02:10
Absolutely this pro work ethic set the Hebrews apart many
- J** John 02:14
other religions and cultures. Think of the Greek gods always caught up in some drama, right? Or even Buddha, a figure of contemplation and yes,
- S** Sarah 02:22
leisure, lean towards a more, shall we say, relaxed approach to work. Makes you wonder if those early Hebrews were on to something, right? But maybe



John 02:32

we should say that philosophical debate for another time. So we've got industry up and running, which naturally leads us to capital. You'd



Sarah 02:38

think it'd be all about ambition, right, right? But the Urantia Book throws us a curveball, outlining



John 02:44

eight fascinating drivers of capital accumulation, and some are pretty unexpected.



Sarah 02:50

What's fascinating is that the text presents capital as this double edged sword,



John 02:55

a tool that can liberate but also creates new complexities. Yeah, okay, it's not just about greed, though, that certainly plays



Sarah 03:01

a role. It's about security, power and even some very human anxieties. Okay,



John 03:07

you have to give me an example. Some of those drivers listed in the book are, let's



Sarah 03:10

just say they're not your typical economics lecture material. For instance, the fear of ghosts. Our ancestors were so concerned with securing a good afterlife that they'd pay priests, essentially investing in their post life comfort. Okay, I have to admit that's not what I expected. But when you put it like that, it's not all that different from how people today invest in things like retirement funds or life insurance, right? It's about easing anxieties about the future, even if that future is in the afterlife, precisely. And

J John 03:38
then there's the desire to show off a driver

S Sarah 03:40
of capital accumulation that's as old as time itself. Imagine

J John 03:44
amassing a fortune just to burn it for prestige. Yeah, ancient influencers, anyone?

S Sarah 03:50
Okay, that's a flex for the history books. But again, you can see how that desire for status, for that external validation, still resonates today. Oh yeah. Think about those over the top social media posts flaunting luxury purchases. It's

J John 04:03
that same impulse, just with better lighting and filters, absolutely but let's move on from prehistoric influencers to another fascinating element, fire.

S Sarah 04:11
We've talked about surviving famine, but this discovery was just as crucial for our development.

J John 04:16
The Urantia Book calls fire the basic human invention or discovery, and for good reason, it quite

S Sarah 04:22
literally separated us from the animals offering protection from predators

J John 04:25
at night, right? And think about it, fire was probably the earliest form of altruism.

S

Sarah 04:30

Sharing those live coals without any loss to yourself is such a simple yet profound concept, and from

J

John 04:35

that simple act of sharing fire, so much emerged that glowing ember gave rise to the family hearth, a center of early education and storytelling. It's no wonder we still feel drawn to a campfire, right? It's a primal instinct, a reminder of those early connections forged in the warmth and light of fire.

S

Sarah 04:55

It's like a direct line back to our ancestors huddled around those flickering flames, sharing stories. Probably roasting some questionable prehistoric snacks. But fire wasn't just about warmth and light, right? I mean, it also played a role in shaping our beliefs.

J

John 05:07

Absolutely fire myths, fire worship, rituals like passing through fire, these all speak to the profound impact fire had on the human psyche. Is a powerful force, both literally and symbolically, and it's fascinating to see how those early encounters with fire manifested in cultural and spiritual practices. Speaking

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Sarah 05:26

of powerful forces, let's talk about another pivotal moment in human history, the domestication of animals. It's easy to take for granted, but it was a game changer for our ancestors. It

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John 05:36

really was. Imagine a world where your food source could just run away. Oh, yeah. Domestication brought a level of stability and predictability that was previously unimaginable. The Urantia Book mentions bison hunting, specifically, how early humans learn to corral these animals for easier killing, right? It's not hard to imagine how that eventually evolved into, hey, maybe we can keep them around and skip the whole hunting part altogether.

S

Sarah 05:58

Let's talk about a light bulb moment. But as with many innovations, the domestication of animals had its downsides, especially for women.



John 06:05

Sadly, yes, the text points out that as we began herding animals, the treatment of women and many tribes deteriorated. They were often seen as possessions, much like the animals they helped attend.



Sarah 06:16

It's a reminder that progress isn't always linear, and even those advancements that seem positive can have unintended consequences, absolutely.



John 06:23

And this ties into our earlier discussion about slavery. The Urantia Book presents it as a stage in social evolution, a step up from practices like cannibalism. So it



Sarah 06:33

was seen as a more merciful if you can even call it that alternative to slaughtering captives still a horrific practice, of course, but you're saying that even slavery, as awful as it was, played a role in pushing society forward. It's a



John 06:46

difficult concept to grapple with, but the text argues that the need to manage large enslaved populations forced societies to create more complex governing structures. It's this strange paradox, slavery, driven by brutality and oppression, also contributed to the development of more sophisticated social organizations.



Sarah 07:04

Talk about unintended consequences, but as societies grew more complex, so did their understanding of property. Right earlier, we talked about how early humans weren't exactly idealistic communists, but that communal living eventually gave way to the concept of private property,



John 07:21

exactly. And it's interesting to see how the concept of ownership was initially tied to deeply personal, almost spiritual beliefs. Early humans believed that objects held a piece of their owner's personality, so stealing within a tribe was almost



Sarah 07:22

 Sarah 07:35
unthinkable. Wow. That puts a whole new spin on the whole finders keepers thing, right? Your

 John 07:38
sleeping spot was sacred, and any place where you shed blood, well that became your territory. These were serious boundaries backed by a deep respect for personal space and belongings. So

 Sarah 07:47
fast forward a bit, and we're laying claim to waterholes than entire fields. Was this when things started shifting from a communal approach to something more hierarchical,

 John 07:57
you're spot on as societies became more agricultural, the concept of land as a source of individual wealth to cold, we start seeing life tenure ships, then inheritance and boom, land becomes capital cue

 Sarah 08:11
the dramatic music, and thus landlords were born. Okay,

 John 08:14
I'm being a bit facetious, but it is fascinating to see how these ancient concepts of ownership still resonate in our modern world, and

 Sarah 08:21
it's crucial to remember that this wasn't some linear, inevitable march toward private ownership. The Urentia book makes it clear that this shift happened because communal control wasn't working. So it wasn't necessarily about greed, but rather a solution to a very real problem that makes sense, but as we've seen, solutions often come with their own sets of new problems.

 John 08:41
Sadly, that's often the case, and the text doesn't shy away from acknowledging the downsides of private property. It led to social stratification with slaves, serfs and landless classes.

S Sarah 08:52

It's a sobering reminder that progress isn't always pretty. It's messy, it's complicated, and often comes at a cost. But speaking of messy and complicated, let's talk about marriage. Yeah,

J John 09:02

yes, the evolution from polygamy to monogamy is particularly fascinating, especially as the text frames it as directly related to the concepts of ownership and, unfortunately, slavery. So

S Sarah 09:11

are you saying that early marriage was basically just another form of property exchange in

J John 09:15

many ways? Yes, early on, women were considered the property of the tribe with the chief controlling marriages, men accumulated wives, much like they did livestock. It wasn't exactly a recipe for romance. Okay,

S Sarah 09:27

so how did we get from that to like sharing a Netflix account and arguing over the thermostat with our significant others? Well,

J John 09:35

the Urantia Book attributes this shift to the decline of communal living and the rise of the individual household, yeah, as men gained more control over their property, including women, the family unit as we know it today began to emerge, and with it the concept of

S Sarah 09:51

monogamy, because having multiple wives was a logistical nightmare. I can only imagine the family dramas precisely, but beyond the practicality, the text also. At a more idealistic shift, describing monogamy as the slave free ideal of the matchless association of one man and one woman. It's a recognition of that deep, exclusive partnership that humans crave.

J John 10:10

That's a pretty poetic way to describe a system that, let's be honest, probably caused its fair share of ancient arguments and headaches. But it's interesting to see how even something as fundamental as marriage, was shaped by these larger social and economic forces. So we've

journeyed from those early struggles for survival to the complex dance of ownership, power and even love, all shaped by forces both practical and, dare I say, a little bit spiritual.

S

Sarah 10:38

It's quite a story, isn't it, and the Urency book doesn't just leave us there, contemplating the origins of these institutions, right?

J

John 10:44

It goes a step further, hinting at where we might go from here. The text talks about

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Sarah 10:47

achieving a higher social order, but it's careful not to offer any easy answers. It reminds us that what we have now, for all its flaws, is still a vast improvement over the systems of the past. Progress isn't always about tearing down the old it's about building upon it carefully and thoughtfully.

J

John 11:04

It's like that saying those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it, right? Except in this case, it's more like those who don't understand the past might accidentally stumble backward while trying to move forward

S

Sarah 11:17

Exactly. We need to be mindful of those missteps, those seemingly quick fixes that could actually set us back. The Urantia Book specifically warns against clinging to outdated formulas just because they're familiar. It's a call

J

John 11:29

for progress that's both informed and compassionate, not just change for the sake of change, precisely

S

Sarah 11:34

and perhaps even more importantly, it encourages us to question our assumptions we tend to think of human institutions as just that human creations, but this deep dive suggests they might be even more deeply rooted in our shared history than we realize.

J John 11:49

It's like we're carrying the echoes of those early struggles and triumphs within us even today, which leads to a pretty mind boggling question, if our ancestors could see us now, what would they make of it all? Wouldn't

S Sarah 12:01

that be fascinating to see? Would they marvel at our technological advancements or be horrified by our complex social structures? Would they recognize those primal fears and desires that still drive us or see us as utterly alien?

J John 12:15

It really makes you think, doesn't it? Yeah, and I think that's the beauty of a deep dive like this. It's not just about unearthing the past, it's about understanding ourselves and our place in this grand, messy, constantly evolving story a little bit better,

S Sarah 12:28

and hopefully it inspires us to approach the future with a bit more wisdom, a bit more compassion and maybe even healthy dose of humility, after all, or just the latest chapter in a story that began long before us and will continue long after we're gone, well

J John 12:41

said, and on that note, we'll leave you to ponder the surprising origins of everything and anything until next time. Keep exploring, keep questioning and keep on diving deep.