

Part 3, Paper 83, The Marriage...nstitution, Chief of Seraphim

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

marriage history, arranged marriages, dowry system, group marriage, totem systems, polygamy types, wedding rituals, bridal veil, monogamy evolution, marriage challenges, non-traditional relationships, family dynamics, societal pressures, love and marriage, future of marriage

SPEAKERS

Sarah, John



John 00:00

All right, ready to ditch those wedding bells and dive into something a little different with marriage this time? Yeah, definitely



Sarah 00:04

trading in the romance for a deep dive into the history of marriage should be interesting, absolutely.



John 00:09

And you know, we wouldn't go on this journey without an awesome guide, right? We're gonna be looking at the Urantia Book for this deep dive.



Sarah 00:17

That's right. Paper 83 the marriage institution sounds dry, but trust me, this is a fascinating read.



John 00:24

It really is so much more interesting than it sounds. I mean, we're talking ancient customs, societal pressures. We're gonna look at what marriage used to be all about.

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Sarah 00:33

Totally get ready to rethink everything you thought you knew about marriage as we explore how it went from basically a contract to well, the complex thing it is today, it's

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John 00:43

wild when you think about it like imagine your parents picking your spouse. Talk about pressure,

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Sarah 00:48

right? No Tinder. Back then, early marriage was all about practicality, you know, survival, managing property, keeping things in order, socially, love not so much a priority back then.

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John 01:01

It really needs to think about those old stories of like kings and emperors having arranged marriages. Must have been a wild time to be alive. We even see, and this is crazy to think about now, but like, wife purchase right branding to show ownership kind of makes your skin crawl. Honestly. Yeah, it's

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Sarah 01:17

intense when you compare it to how we think about marriage. Now, that's the thing. Back then, a wife was considered property, plain and simple. Branding was, well, it was a transaction, very permanent receipt, if you will.

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John 01:27

Wow. Yeah, human receipt, yeah. Makes you realize how deeply ingrained these ideas of like ownership were in those early societies, even if we might find them abhorrent. Now, absolutely so. Okay, that's wife purchasing, but then at some point, we get this shift right. The dowry system comes into play. Now the bride's family is offering up goods or money. What prompted that?

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Sarah 01:48

You know, that is a fascinating development, and it really speaks to this change in how society viewed women as civilizations become more well civilized, the dowry becomes this way to offer a woman security, some independence. It's like saying she's not property. She's coming to the table with her own assets. You know,

- J** John 02:07
it's amazing how these customs, the ones that seem so strange to us now, can actually reveal how people thought about women and marriage. But okay, it wasn't just the economics of it, all right, the whole structure of marriage
- S** Sarah 02:20
was different. You're hitting on a good point, because we tend to think of marriage as two people. But for a huge chunk of human history, it wasn't just two people. It was get this group
- J** John 02:29
marriage. Group marriage. Okay? Now that is not something you hear every day, so paint us a picture what that looked
- S** Sarah 02:35
like, all right? So imagine a group of brothers, right? They go and marry a group of sisters from another family. It probably seems a little out there now, but it was all about keeping those family ties strong. So
- J** John 02:45
less about, you know, love and more about, like survival, making sure everyone was taken care of.
- S** Sarah 02:50
Exactly these early forms of group marriage. They were all about practicality, especially in those societies with these strong totem systems. Totem systems,
- J** John 02:59
what are those again? Oh, right.
- S** Sarah 03:00
So a totem system uses animal symbols or even natural stuff like the weather to represent different clans, family groups in a society. It wasn't just symbolic, though. Totems had a huge impact on everything, even who you could marry, like marrying inside or outside your totem group that came with a whole lot of social and even spiritual baggage.

J John 03:23

It's fascinating how they wove all of that together. Back then, social order, spirituality, marriage, it was all connected, but okay, we have to ask, how did we go from these massive group marriages to something a little more well defined? I mean, polygamy still multiple partners, but more structured. Yeah,

S Sarah 03:43

it's a really interesting progression, and it's not like there was one day where everyone decided to change things up. You know, as societies change, so do their ideas about marriage. So group marriage, with all those relationships, it kind of gradually morphed into more structured. Polygamy, still, more than two partners, but not like a whole village worth, right?

J John 04:01

Right? So it became more about one person having multiple spouses. I mean, that's what usually comes to mind when you say polygamy Exactly.

S Sarah 04:07

And even within polygamy, you've got different flavors. The one we hear about most often polygyny, one man multiple wives,

J John 04:14

which, let's be real, pops up in history a lot, and a lot of times it's tied to this idea of a man's status, wealth, family line, that kind of thing. It's true

S Sarah 04:23

polygyny. It's got this complicated backstory. Sometimes it was about straight up economics. Sometimes it was about social climbing. And you know, back in the day when infant mortality was high, having more wives and kids meant a better chance of your family line surviving.

J John 04:38

It's crazy how something that seems like, Oh, this is just about someone wanting more. Partners could actually be tied to these really deep, social and even, like, biological impulses, you know. But you mentioned there were other types of polygamy too. What about polyandry? That's where a woman has multiple husbands, right? That seems even more, I don't know, unusual from where we sit today.

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Sarah 04:59

Oh, for. Sure, polyandry is definitely less common, and it often popped up in really specific situations, like sometimes Queens practiced it, or women of high rank, or think about a situation where resources are scarce so brothers might share a wife.

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John 05:16

Wow. So even though it seems strange to us, there were reasons for it, inheritance, keeping the family together when times were tough. It just goes to show that normal when it comes to marriage is a really, really relative term, 100%

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Sarah 05:30

and you know what else we can't forget when we're talking about marriage, all of rituals, all the traditions that go along with it. I mean, even way back when, even when it was mostly practical, people still marked the occasion. You know, they had ceremonies, customs, and some of them are pretty wild. I

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John 05:44

bet this is back when people really believed in spirits, in superstitions, right? Spill the tea. What were some of these crazy marriage rituals?

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Sarah 05:51

All right? Picture this. The wedding's about to happen. Everyone's ready, and suddenly, bam, the groom pretends to kidnap the bride.

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John 06:00

Wait. What like as part of the ceremony? Oh,

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Sarah 06:03

yeah, a whole staged kidnapping, complete with a chase and everything they thought it would appease the spirits, or maybe it symbolized a time when, well, wife capture was a real thing.

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John 06:13

That's intense. Talk about an unconventional wedding video. What else did they do? Oh, I've

S Sarah 06:17
got another one. How about guests parading through the bed chamber after the ceremony. You're kidding,

J John 06:23
like a receiving line, but in the bedroom, right? I don't think people would be down for that today, right?

S Sarah 06:29
But back then, it was all about like, making it official. No marriage licenses, so you needed witnesses to make sure everything had been consummated.

J John 06:37
Wow. So strange to think about what used to be normal, but it makes sense they were trying to ensure good luck, avoid bad spirits all that. Okay, what about the bridal veil? That's like a classic wedding image, right? Did it have some weird origin story, too?

S Sarah 06:51
The bridal veil? Oh, yeah, that iconic piece of fabric, believe it or not, it was all about hiding the bride from

J John 06:58
spirits. No way. So not about looking beautiful or mysterious. It was like a magical invisibility cloak. Pretty much,

S Sarah 07:04
they thought if the evil spirits couldn't see her, they couldn't mess with the marriage. It's amazing how these traditions we take for granted have these totally unexpected and often kind of superstitious beginnings.

J John 07:15
You're telling me. Okay, so we've talked about all these different ways people have done marriage, but now let's talk about the one that's most common. Now, monogamy. It's wild to

think about, but this idea of just two people, it's actually a pretty recent thing. Historically speaking,

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Sarah 07:30

you're right on the money when you look at the big picture monogamy with its emphasis on two individuals, it's really just a chapter in a very, very long book. So

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John 07:39

what changed did we all just wake up one day and decide love conquers all, or was there more to it?

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Sarah 07:44

I mean, love is definitely part of it, right? But the rise of monogamy, it's like this whole bunch of things coming together. You've got economics changing social values, even religion playing a role.

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John 07:55

So it's like this gradual shift, not just an overnight thing, right? How societies thought about marriage, how they saw men and women's roles. It all fed into this change. But okay, monogamy might be the most common form now, but it's not like it's a walk in the park, right? I mean, it's got its own challenges. It

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Sarah 08:13

definitely does. And you know, the Urantia Book, it really gets into that it's like, yeah, we hold up monogamy as this ideal, this romantic fairy tale, but real life, real life's messy, right? Keeping relationships strong, it's not always hearts and flowers. It's

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John 08:26

like they say, Love is a feeling. Marriage is work, right? So you need communication compromise all. It's not just about feeling lovey dovey all the time,

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Sarah 08:34

exactly, and that's something we don't always talk about. The Urantia Book makes a big deal about preparing young people, not just for the honeymoon phase, but for all of it,



John 08:42

right? Give them the tools to deal with the hard stuff, the arguments, the compromises. That's just part of being in a relationship, even one where you love each other a lot, totally,



Sarah 08:50

it's about helping them see that you know, challenges aren't the end of the world. It's how you grow closer. And to do that, you've got to learn to communicate, have empathy, figure out how to work through disagreements together. Those are the skills that make a relationship last. So it's



John 09:05

not about being a downer, right? It's about giving people the tools they need to build something strong that can handle whatever life throws at them



Sarah 09:14

exactly. And that brings us to this really interesting question that the Urantia Book asks, If marriage has already changed this much like insanely. So what's next? Whoa.



John 09:25

It really makes you stop and think, especially now, when everything around us is changing so fast, I mean technology, how society views things, what people value, it's all in flux.



Sarah 09:35

No doubt. Who knows? Maybe we'll see way more non traditional relationships, different ideas of family, maybe we'll find a way to take old wisdom and blend it with new ways of thinking about love and commitment.



John 09:47

It's kind of exciting, but also a little scary to think about all the possibilities. But one thing's for sure, we all crave connection, intimacy, that sense of belonging that's not going anywhere. Yeah, 100%



Sarah 10:01

and marriage, however it evolves, it'll probably always be one of the main ways we try to find that.

J John 10:06

Well, there you have it, from wife capture to group marriage, ancient rituals to the stuff we're still figuring out. We've covered a lot of ground. It's amazing how much history and how much change is wrapped up in something we often take for granted, for

S Sarah 10:19

sure. And you know, we've only just scratched the surface. The Urantia Book goes into so much more detail, but hopefully this deep dive has given you a lot to think about.

J John 10:28

It definitely has. So next time you hear those wedding bells, or maybe just find yourself thinking about relationships, remember this chat. It's a reminder that love and marriage, they're always evolving, and who knows what the future holds

S Sarah 10:41

exactly. Be curious, be open minded, and don't be afraid to question the way things have always been done. There might just be a better way out there waiting to be discovered.