

Part 3, Paper 85, Origins of W...orship, Brilliant Evening Star

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SPEAKERS

John, Sarah

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Sarah 00:00

We throw around that word worship pretty casually these days, but what did it actually mean to those who came before us? You've brought us the Urantia Book to kind of unpack this very question, and I have a feeling we're about to uncover some surprising insights into the roots of religious experience. It's
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John 00:19

fascinating, isn't it? We often think of worship in terms of organized religion, but the Urantia Book takes us back further to a time when, you know, our ancestors were just starting to grapple with the world around them. We're talking about the very dawn of spiritual impulse.
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Sarah 00:33

Okay, so unpack that a little bit. So we're talking free temples, pre scriptures, even before, like the idea of gods and goddesses as we now kind of know them exactly.
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John 00:41

Imagine a world where every sunrise, every storm, every animal encounter was a mystery waiting to be unraveled. Our ancestors were driven by a primal need to understand these forces, to find, you know, some kind of order in the chaos.
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Sarah 00:56

It makes you think about how central that need to understand, to find meaning is to like the human experience. And the Urantia Book suggests that one of the earliest ways we tried to do this was through the worship of wait stones. That seems surprisingly I don't know basic.

J John 01:12

It might seem basic to us now, but imagine being an early human and witnessing a meteorite crashing to Earth. It would be a powerful, even terrifying display of an energy you couldn't begin to understand. The Urantia Book points to this as a key example of how the worship of stones, particularly meteorites, emerged.

S Sarah 01:29

He's like, okay, whatever just happened. I don't want that to happen again. Maybe if I show this rock some respect

J John 01:33

precisely, it's about seeking favor, protection, trying to appease forces beyond your control. And what's interesting is that the Urantia Book highlights how these very basic forms of worship, as primal as they seem, still resonate today. It mentions the Kateri, people who continue to worship stones even in the modern era. Yeah, it's a

S Sarah 01:52

powerful reminder that these ancient impulses, these ways of connecting to something bigger than ourselves, haven't entirely disappeared, in a way we still do it today, right? Maybe not with meteorites, but think about monuments tombs. We imbue objects with meaning, with a story that transcends their physical form Absolutely.

J John 02:09

It's that human need to connect to something that endures, something that represents, something larger than ourselves, whether it's the memory of a loved one or a pivotal moment in history. But going back to the Urantia Book, it's not just stones that captivated our ancestors' spiritual imaginations. They also found themselves drawn to the power of, well, this is interesting, intoxicating plants.

S Sarah 02:31

Okay, now this is where things get interesting. So we're talking about early forms of shamanism, rituals involving altered states of consciousness. It's like every culture has that story of the magic potion or the sacred herb,

J John 02:42

exactly, and the urachia book suggests that these experiences, while perhaps induced by something as simple as a fermented beverage or a plant with psychoactive properties, were often interpreted as divine encounters, as glimpses into a hidden realm. Which

S Sarah 02:57

makes sense, right? You eat a berry, you feel strange, you see visions suddenly, the spirit world feels a lot closer than it did before, precisely.

J John 03:05

And the Urantia Book doesn't shy away from drawing parallels between these early experiences and those described by religious figures throughout history. It even mentions the Apostle Paul finding spiritual significance in sprouting grain, something that has resonated with various cultures for millennia.

S Sarah 03:21

It's interesting how these seemingly disparate threads, ancient rituals, religious texts, even our modern fascination with altered states, all point back to this fundamental human desire to transcend the everyday, to connect with something beyond the purely material. But tell me, in those early days, did our ancestors limit their worship to just stones and mind altering substances, or were there other objects of fascination? The Urantia Book makes it sound like they were just getting started. So the Urantia Book it like paints this picture of early humans worshiping pretty much anything and everything, right? Animals, the elements, you name it, they probably bowed down to it at some point. It's true.

J John 03:57

It speaks to that same impulse we were talking about earlier. You know the need to make sense of a world that's full of these powerful, often unpredictable forces, only this time, instead of just trying to appease those forces, they're starting to see them as embodying specific qualities or spirits. So

S Sarah 04:15

instead of just scary thunderstorm, it's thunderstorm God who must be appeased, like like that, exactly.

J John 04:21

And what's fascinating is how those early beliefs, they often centered around things humans envied or feared. The Urantia Book talks about the veneration of animals, especially those with powers or senses that humans lacked. You know, like man,

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Sarah 04:34

I wish I could fly like that eagle. That must be one sacred bird. We were talking about that a little bit

J

John 04:39

earlier, precisely, the speed of a cheetah, the strength of a bear, the ability of birds to, you know, soar above the Earth. These attributes would have inspired both awe and a desire to connect with that power. And this ties into another fascinating aspect of early worship, anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism.

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Sarah 04:58

Oh. So break that down for me is that like where we give human traits to non human things exactly

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John 05:05

we see ourselves and therefore the divine reflected in the world around us. And what better example of this than like the myths and legends that emerged from these early beliefs, the Urantia Book specifically mentions dragons. Those are inspiring, fire breathing creatures that you know, peering cultures all over the world. Okay, dragons, I

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Sarah 05:21

am all out on this. Tell me everything. Well, the

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John 05:24

Urantia Book suggests that the dragon, particularly in Chinese mythology, is actually a holdover from ancient snake cults. Snakes, with their power and their connection to the earth, were often seen as intermediaries between the human and the spirit world.

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Sarah 05:38

So the dragon, this mythical creature that still captures our imaginations today is actually a symbol with roots in these like, very primal forms of worship. It's incredible how these threads, like weave their way through history.

J John 05:51

It speaks to the enduring power of these early beliefs, how they shape not just our understanding of the past, but also our relationship to the present. But as societies became more complex, as they moved from small, nomadic roots to larger, more settled communities, we see a fascinating shift in how worship manifests. It's no longer just about placating the forces of nature or even seeking favor from animal spirits. The Urantia Book describes a move towards something new, the emergence of ghost gods. Ghost gods.

S Sarah 06:21

Okay, now that's a term I haven't heard before. This is where we leave the realm of the tangible and start venturing into the, shall we say, more metaphysical. Exactly,

J John 06:28

as humans grapple with the mysteries of life and death, with the question of what happens to us after we die, we start to see, you know, the emergence of ancestor worship. The dead are no longer just gone. They become a presence, a force to be reckoned with.

S Sarah 06:41

It makes a lot of sense when you think about it. These are people who were once part of the community, who held knowledge and experience. It's natural to want to honor them, to seek their guidance, even in death, I think,

J John 06:52

and perhaps also to fear them, to worry about what might happen if they're not properly respected. The Urantia Book suggests that this fear played a significant role in the development of rituals and practices designed to, you know, to appease the spirits of the dead. So we've

S Sarah 07:07

gone from rocks and rivers to the great beyond. But what I'm really curious about is how this idea of ghost gods, of ancestor worship, might have shaped the development of like, more complex religious beliefs. Is that something the Urantia Book dealt into. It's a fascinating progression, right? We've gone from like worshiping tangible objects like stones and plants to, you know, unseen forces in nature. And now this whole idea of spirits in the afterlife feels like a pretty natural evolution of how we as humans, I guess, try to understand our place in the universe. Yeah, you've

J John 07:39

hit on a key point there, it's not simply that the objects of worship become more complex. It's that our ancestors, they're grappling with, like bigger questions. The Urantia Book really highlights this shift towards a more, I'd say, nuanced understanding of the Divine. It's moving beyond simple transactions, right? Like appease this God, avoid that danger, and into this whole realm of asking, why? So it's

S Sarah 08:03

not just, don't strike me down lightning God. Now it's, what is my purpose in life, a wise sky spirit, something like that, exactly.

J John 08:08

And as those questions become, you know, more complex, so too do the entities that we're seeking answers from. Ghost gods, ancestors, these figures offer not just protection, but also guidance, a connection to something that endures beyond our, you know, earthly existence. The Urantia Book suggests that this is like a crucial turning point in the evolution of worship, kind of paving the way for more abstract religious ideas, the concepts of a soul, an afterlife, a moral code, all of that.

S Sarah 08:35

So even though these early forms of worship might seem kind of foreign to us now, they actually laid the groundwork for many of the beliefs that have, you know, shaped human civilization. But what I'm curious about is how the Urantia Book explains this leap from, say, honoring your ancestors, to developing these like, complex theological systems. How do we bridge that gap? That's where

J John 08:55

things get really, really intriguing. The Urantia Book introduces this concept of adjutant spirits, which I know might sound a little

S Sarah 09:03

little out there like. Are

J John 09:05

we talking about ghosts? Maybe a little but stick with me. The Urantia Book uses this term to describe what it sees as an inherent human capacity for spiritual understanding. It's not about

like supernatural beings kind of dictating beliefs, but rather this idea that you know what we're hardwired with, this desire to connect with something, you know, larger than ourselves, something transcendent. So

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Sarah 09:28

it's less about like specific deities or you know, rituals, and more about acknowledging that drive within us, that yearning for something beyond just like the material world

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John 09:37

exactly. It's that feeling you get when you look up at a like star filled sky, or you witness the birth of a child, or you connect with a piece of music or art, on this, like, really profound level, these experiences, they point to a dimension of human existence that goes beyond just the purely rational the Urantia Book argues that this capacity for spiritual understanding has been with us. In the very beginning, fueling those early forms of worship and continuing to shape our relationship with the sacred, even today.

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Sarah 10:06

It's a pretty powerful thought that even though you know, the way we express our spirituality might evolve over time. That core desire, that impulse, is something like innate, something fundamentally human. It

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John 10:17

really is, and it makes you wonder what would be the future of worship, right? As technology advances, as our understanding of the universe expands, how will we as humans continue to seek out that connection to something greater than ourselves? What will be the, you know, the stones or animal spirits that'll capture the imaginations of those future generations? Who knows

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Sarah 10:37

it's like we've journeyed all the way from like, literally worshiping rocks to contemplating the very nature of spiritual impulse. You know, it's funny, every time we do one of these deep dives, I feel like I come away with even more questions, which I suppose is kind of the point, right? The Urantia Book, it offers this fascinating perspective on, you know, the origins of worship, but it also reminds us that this journey of seeking and understanding. It's ongoing. It's one we all share. So thanks for joining us on this exploration of the Urantia Book and the roots of religious experience. Until next time.