

Part 3, Paper 87, The Ghost Cults, Midwayer Commission

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

ghost cults, primal fear, supernatural connection, death terrors, ancient rituals, ancestor worship, spirit beliefs, good vs evil, human evolution, ritual complexity, temple prostitution, cultism definition, modern superstitions, spiritual growth, Urantia Book

SPEAKERS

Sarah, John

S Sarah 00:00

Okay, so we're diving into the Urantia Book again today, and this time we're tackling this idea of ghost cults. You sent over paper 87 right? And it really digs into this, like primal fear of ghosts that early humans had.

J John 00:15

It really was all consuming, wasn't? It wasn't just a, you know, a passing fear. The Urantia Book really drives home how this fear permeated every single aspect of their lives. It even like it even affected the way they built, or rather, didn't build permanent structures, right? Because

S Sarah 00:31

who wants a haunted house, or, I guess, in this case, a haunted village? Yeah, it's like they were more scared of a grumpy ghost moving in than they were of like, wild animals or whatever, which, I mean, I guess when you think about it makes sense in a way, right?

J John 00:45

Totally. The Urantia Book does a good job, I think, of getting us back into that mindset where even just basic stuff, like, if you got sick, it wasn't just like, Oh, I'm sick. It was like, what spirit Did I upset? What's going on

S Sarah 00:59

here, right? It's all connected to, like, the supernatural, exactly.

J

John 01:03

And so death then becomes even more terrifying, because it's not just the end of a life, it's potentially an opening, right, for something else to enter. Oh,

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Sarah 01:11

it's a good way to put it, yeah. And they took some, uh, some pretty extreme measures to try and, like, outsmart these ghosts, right? Yeah, smashing stuff, burying people through the walls instead of the door, like the ghost wouldn't notice. They won't see us if we right. And then, and then there's that whole thing with taking the long way home from a funeral. Oh,

J

John 01:30

yeah, yeah. Like, a ghost can't, like, figure that out exactly,

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Sarah 01:34

exactly. But it is interesting. You know, the hierarchy book brings up this example of Eskimos, and how even today, there's still this belief that the soul hangs around for three days after death. It's

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John 01:47

fascinating, isn't it, how these ancient fears, these these anxieties, they still echo through generations. It's like they still shape the way that we see the world. It's a

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Sarah 01:56

direct line back to those like, you know, those early humans huddled around a fire, just absolutely terrified of the dark, but as the Urantia Book explains, you can only outrun those fears for so long, right? Eventually, you have to figure out a way to deal with them head on. So it's like, all right, running away didn't work. What's next on the human to do list when it comes to ghosts? Well, if

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John 02:15

the Urantia Book is anything to go by, it's appeasement time, kind of like how you deal with, I don't know a friend who's really into borrowing your stuff, never returning it. You just, you start giving them things preemptively,

S Sarah 02:25
right, though, hopefully with slightly less existential dread involved. Well, there's

J John 02:29
that, but, yeah, this is where you start seeing the offerings, the feasts, that whole bit about never, ever saying a ghost's name out loud. Imagine how complicated, just like, basic conversation must have been back then

S Sarah 02:42
talk about an awkward first date, right? So you come here often gestures vaguely at the afterlife, but seriously, this is where the Urantia book makes this connection to ritual, which I think is super interesting. Oh, absolutely.

J John 02:53
And not just any rituals, but things that would genuinely go on to, like shape entire belief systems. The example that always gets me is funeral sermons. We think of them now as for the living, but the Urantia Book suggests those were originally like how to guides for the afterlife.

S Sarah 03:10
It's like, all right, Steve, listen up. No returns or exchanges Once we cross over. So I need your full attention exactly

J John 03:15
so you've got this fascinating transition from fear based ritual to eventually ancestor worship, which I think is a really important point that the Urantia Book brings up. It's not starting from respect,

S Sarah 03:27
right? It's still rooted in that same like, please don't haunt me energy, exactly, and

J John 03:32
that fear, I mean, it really did impact every single little thing. Did you know, even yawning was considered risky business. Wait, seriously, the whole idea was like a spirit could just slip in when your mouth was open. Imagine living with that

when your mouth was open. Imagine living with that.

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Sarah 03:44

I'd be walking around like a mime, just, you know, gestures vaguely at a closed mouth. Oh, thank you. It kind of puts things in perspective, though, right? Like today we stress about bad reviews online, but back then, it was about literal soul stealing entities. It's wild,

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John 04:00

and it all ties back into this idea that the Urantia Book emphasizes again and again, how religion, spirituality, it's all intertwined with how we're understanding the world at any given time.

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Sarah 04:12

So we've gone from running in terror from ghosts to basically trying to bribe them with snaps. But the Urantia Book makes this point, right? Human Thought It doesn't exactly stay still for long, right? Like it's constantly evolving. It's like they were playing some kind of cosmic game, and the difficulty level just kept going up

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John 04:30

because it wasn't enough to just have like, generic ghosts anymore. The Urantia Book talks about how humans start to get more, I don't know, sophisticated than their thinking about these things, different types of spirits, different levels of like, power, some good, some not so much. Like the

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Sarah 04:46

spirit world got its own employee handbook or something. Suddenly, it's not just don't make the ghosts mad. It's okay. Who's actually in charge over there in the afterlife. And that's

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John 04:55

where the Urantia Book points to this, like, massive shift in how humans are seeing things do. Muslim, right? This idea of good versus evil, it's not just out there in the world. It's like the fundamental principle of everything. And let's

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Sarah 05:06

be real, that's an idea we're still wrestling with today. Good versus evil. Are we born this way? Is the universe on our side? All that fun stuff,

J John 05:13

exactly? And that's what I think is so cool about the Urantia Book is like tracing these big, huge ideas we still care about. Back to their, like, their earliest versions, yeah. Makes you wonder, what are we taking for granted? Now that'll seem profound in like, 1000 years, right?

S Sarah 05:29

That's Wow. Okay, I'm gonna be thinking about that later, for sure. But back to these early humans. It's funny in a way. The Urantia Book points out there weren't actually evil spirits yet, not really. That comes later. So they're creating this whole system, this whole belief around something that doesn't even exist.

J John 05:48

It's like they were worried about the wrong problem. But it makes sense. Humans, we crave order, right explanations, even if we have to make them up. We like to be prepared Exactly. And the Urantia Book shows how that desire mixed with a good dose of Fear leads to more and more complex ways of trying to not just appease the spirits, but to actually, like control them.

S Sarah 06:09

And we're not talking just like lighting a scented candle here, right? The Urantia Book even talks about things like get ready for it temple prostitution as a way to influence these spirits, right? And this is where

J John 06:21

it's super important to remember what the Urantia Book is saying about context. It's not about pleasure or any of that. It's still tied into these ancient beliefs, this idea that you could, like, bargain with the universe. It's a

S Sarah 06:33

whole different way of looking at things, though, when you think about it, we're not that different today, are we? We might knock on wood or say, bless you, but it's like these little rituals, these little ways we try to exert some control over the unknown

J John 06:44

totally. And the Urantia Book calls all of this, the beliefs, the rituals, the whole shebang cultism, which, you know, gets a bad rap these days, but it's really just a way of describing how we organize our beliefs and how those

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Sarah 06:58

beliefs shape us, right? Which is, I think, a good place to leave it. The Urantia Book is asking us to really think about what we believe, those things we do without even thinking, and ask ourselves, are they helping us grow, or are they just holding us back?

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John 07:11

It's a call for something new, a way of seeing the world that's based on love, on understanding, not on being afraid of every little thing that goes bump in the night,

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Sarah 07:21

and that, I think, is something worth thinking about. So from those terrified early humans trying to outsmart ghosts to the complex relationship we have with spirituality today, it's been quite a journey through the Urantia Book, and if it's taught us anything, it's that this exploration, this questioning, it's not just about the past, it's about figuring out what we believe here now, and for that, listeners, you're on your own.