

Part 3, Paper 90, Shamanism—Melchizedek Men and Priests, Melchizedek

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SPEAKERS

John, Sarah

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Sarah 00:00

Okay, so today we are diving into something, well, it's always kind of blown my mind the ancient roots of religion, like, it's easy to just dismiss all those old timey beliefs as just superstition, right? What if I told you, like some of those practices were actually people being pretty smart, trying to figure out this crazy world, you know? And we're gonna be using this really interesting text to explore this idea of early religious practices. It's called the arantia book. Now I know when you hear that, you might think, oh, boy, here comes a super long, boring analysis. But seriously, guys, this book has some wild insights into how those practices, like especially shamanism, how all that got started. So picture this. You're alive way back when, no science, no iPhones, every morning, you never know what's gonna happen next, predators, diseases, floods, you name it, total chaos, right? Totally, yeah. I

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John 00:47

mean, no way to really understand nature. It makes sense that people back then would start thinking, hey, maybe there's something bigger going on, something supernatural. When you feel that vulnerable, that scared of the unknown, well, you'll believe just about anything that makes you feel a little more in control, you know, or at least like you get it what's going on, right?

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Sarah 01:04

And that is where the shamans come in. These are almost like legendary figures, a link between what's real and the spirit world, the healers, the mystics, those who could talk to spirits and keep the gods happy, kind of like the original influencers, but with way more on the line. What

J John 01:21

always fascinates me is that, according to the Urantia Book, a lot of these shamans weren't exactly your average Joe, like today, we might think they had epilepsy or were having visions or trances, but back then, these weren't always seen as like medical problems, but more as a sign that they had a special connection to the spirit world.

S Sarah 01:38

It's crazy how viewpoints change, don't they? So someone having a seizure or seeing things, they can actually become powerful because of it,

J John 01:46

exactly. And get this, a lot of these early shamans were women. The book points out that women back then experienced these altered states of consciousness a lot, which gave them a ton of power their communities. Now, whether those societies were actually matriarchal, that's a whole other discussion. Yeah, but it definitely makes you rethink the whole women's role thing in ancient times.

S Sarah 02:05

It really does. So we've got these people, often women, who experience the world a little differently than everyone else, and they're suddenly the interpreters, the go betweens, between the spirit world and all these real dangers everyone's facing every single day,

J John 02:18

right? And that's a lot of pressure. Think about it. People depended on them for everything, healing the sick, making sure they had a good harvest. What if they failed? Let's just say Yeah, it did not go well. Yeah. The Urantia Book actually says that if a shaman wasn't successful, they could be banished, or worse, killed. Talk about pressure to perform.

S Sarah 02:40

Wow. I can see why they might want to jazz things up a bit. You've got a whole tribe looking to you for answers, and failing isn't an option. They were almost forced to become like Master magicians, right?

J John 02:49

In a way, yeah, but the book does say that many of them really did believe in their powers. After all, they were working with what they knew at the time. This wasn't much, but they

definitely needed to stay in charge, to keep the tribe believing in them, and that definitely would push them to come up with some pretty elaborate rituals and practices.

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Sarah 03:08

So how'd they do it? What were these ancient performances like? Was it all smoke and mirrors, crazy costumes, stuff like that?

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John 03:16

Think less Vegas magic show and more like using the power of suggestion. The Urantia Book talks about how they would use chanting, drumming, even maybe early forms of hypnotism, to put themselves in a trance. And remember, these people live so close to nature. They believe that spirits lived in everything, trees, rivers, you name it. So these performances have been unbelievably powerful. It's like they were tapping into something primal, something that resonated with their deepest fears and desires. It's

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Sarah 03:42

like getting a glimpse into a totally different reality. It's hard to even imagine, but it makes you wonder, if we forget all the theatrics for a second, were they really all that different from us?

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John 03:52

That's the question, isn't it. Were they just taking advantage of the situation to get power, or were they really trying to make sense of this crazy world with the little bit of knowledge they had, the line between what's real and what's fake, even today, it could be pretty blurry.

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Sarah 04:09

And speaking of blurry lines, I'm curious about this whole healer thing. I mean, they couldn't exactly order an x ray or do blood work back then, so how did they deal with sickness? Well,

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John 04:18

let's just say they had a very different idea of how the human body worked. Imagine a world where getting sick wasn't because of some tiny germs you can't see, but because spirits could steal your soul. Hard to imagine, right?

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Sarah 04:30

It really is. So if someone got sick, it wasn't just like, oh, I have a cold. It was a whole spiritual emergency. Totally.



John 04:36

The Urantia Book actually lays out some of the things they believed, and one of the Wilder ones is this idea that spirits could literally pull your soul out of your body, and that's what made you sick or even killed you.



Sarah 04:50

Yikes. Talk about your stress levels going through the roof with that hanging over your head. So how did they try to fix someone who was sick then did they like try to make deals? These spirits to get the soul back. You



John 05:02

could say that they came up with all kinds of rituals and things to deal with. Like the book talks about these really elaborate burial rituals to try to keep the spirits of the dead happy, offering sacrifices, all about keeping things balanced spiritually. You know,



Sarah 05:16

it sounds pretty intense, but I guess when you don't have anything like modern medicine, you just try to find a way to control what you can right



John 05:25

exactly, and that need to be in control. It goes way back. Don't you think, even now, with all our fancy technology, we still want to feel like we're calling the shots, especially when the world feels so unpredictable, for sure,



Sarah 05:38

but even if they didn't really get how medicine worked like we do now, I'm guessing they had to stumble onto some stuff that actually worked eventually,



John 05:46

right? That's a really good point, and it shows how adaptable shamanism could be. The book actually mentions that as time went on, they started using more practical methods too, like paying attention to natural remedies, trying out plant based treatments, even early forms of surgery. So



Sarah 06:00

they were kind of like the original hippies, doing the whole holistic medicine thing, trial and error, but with a little spiritual help on the side, exactly.



John 06:07

And remember, to them, the mind, body and spirit were all connected. It was all one thing. So even if those herbal remedies weren't always legit, just believing they worked that connection to something bigger, it might have actually helped them feel better. It's



Sarah 06:21

funny how we're seeing that same idea come back today, mindfulness, the whole mind, body connection in medicine, it's like we forgot about that for a while. Got too focused on just the physical stuff, and now we're realizing how important that connection really is,



John 06:34

absolutely and it makes you wonder, what else can we learn from these ancient ways of doing things? What did we lose sight of while we were busy trying to be all scientific and advanced, good



Sarah 06:44

question. But speaking of advancements, how do we go from these individual shamans, these almost mythical figures, to organized religion like we have today? Was it just a natural evolution? Well,



John 06:55

think about it. Back then, people craved consistency, predictability. Life was unpredictable enough, right? So as these shamanic practices became more established, they naturally evolved into more formal rituals.



Sarah 07:09

So instead of every shaman doing their own thing, there started to be like a standard way of doing things, a set of rules to follow to keep the spirits happy and keep things running smoothly, exactly.



John 07:18

And these rituals were serious business. The Urantia Book says that they believed getting every little detail right was super important, like One wrong word or gesture could be the difference between success and failure, between pleasing the gods or really ticking them off. Talk

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Sarah 07:33

about pressure, it's like stage fight, but with eternal consequences. No wonder they took those rituals so seriously,

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John 07:40

absolutely. And it goes back to that basic human need for control. When so much of life felt out of their hands. These rituals were a way to create some order, a way to try and influence the things they couldn't control. If they could just perform the ritual perfectly, appease the right spirits, maybe, just maybe, they could have a good harvest, avoid getting sick, have a safe trip.

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Sarah 08:01

Very human, right? Trying to find order in all the chaos, to find some meaning, some sense of control when the world can feel so random and uncaring, makes you wonder if that need, that deep down desire, is just part of who we are.

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John 08:13

It's a fascinating thought, isn't it, and it makes you wonder, have we really moved past those ancient fears, those primal anxieties, or are they still there, just hidden under the surface, shaping how we think and act, even when we don't realize it? Those

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Sarah 08:25

are some deep thoughts, for sure. But speaking of things that stick around, those rituals we were just talking about, did they just kind of fade away, or did they change as these more structured belief systems came along? It's kind of like they say, right out with the old, in with the slightly more organized old, I guess. So those rituals just became part of the new religions.

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John 08:46

It's a good way to put it. Remember the shamans whole thing was talking to the spirit world, understanding the signs, keeping those forces happy. As societies got bigger, more complicated, their spiritual needs changed too. The Urantia Book really highlights this, how that one shaman, that lone linked to the great unknown, well, they became the priest, a big deal in a much more structured system of beliefs and practices. Okay, so

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Sarah 09:10

those rituals trying to influence the spirits, they were still around, just more organized, like they had a rule book now, or something,

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John 09:16

you got it. And here's the thing, the Urantia Book points out that a lot of shamanism, it's still around today in modern religions. Think about it, sacred language, the power of prayer and singing, connecting to something bigger than ourselves. Those are all echoes of those old shamanic traditions. Wow.

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Sarah 09:34

It's wild how those things survive, even if we don't always know where they came from. It's like we're still carrying those old anxieties, those desires. Makes you think, are we really that different from those early humans huddled around a fire looking for answers in the flames?

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John 09:47

It is a humbling thought, isn't it? Yeah, we might have ditched the animal skins for designer suits, yeah, but that human need, that desire for meaning, for connection, for something that makes sense in this crazy universe. Verse that hasn't gone anywhere. It really

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Sarah 10:02

hasn't. We've gone from those first shamans figuring out the world around them, to the rise of organized religion, to those ancient beliefs popping up in our world today, it's pretty clear that the shamans influence, even if people didn't always get it, has shaped not just our religions, but what it means to be human.

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John 10:18

And who knows, maybe those shamans stumbled onto some truths that we're only now starting to understand again, that connection between our minds and bodies, the importance of rituals and traditions that need for something more. Those ideas still speak to us today.

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Sarah 10:32

They really do. So next time you light a candle for good luck, or you find yourself drawn to some charismatic leader, remember the shamans. They were there, first asking the big questions, searching for answers in the dark, and they paved the way for us to keep wrestling with those mysteries. That's all the time we have for this deep dive into the amazing world of shamanism. Until next time, keep asking those questions, keep exploring and keep diving deep.

