

A Special Introduction to The Life and Teachings of Jesus | Preston Thomas

The Life and Teachings of Jesus is a restatement of Jesus' life and teachings created by putting together verses from the New Testament Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These verses are arranged in a chronological format inspired by Part IV of The Urantia Book, and the translations used for particular verses were chosen with an eye toward their harmony with the wording of the Urantia Papers. In general only those teachings that are verified by the new revelation are included, while erroneous passages are simply left out. The effort is to provide a simple, comprehensive, and true statement of Jesus' life and teachings that will be readily accepted by most people, especially those with a Christian background. Through a clearer and truer statement of Jesus' life and gospel it is hoped that this work can contribute to the expansion of his kingdom—the rule of God in the hearts of his earth children.

Believers in the Urantia revelation may find that this book has other special uses:

First, it provides a much needed *tool of ministry* for followers of the new revelation. These gospel verses furnish us with all the true teachings of Jesus that are readily available and accepted by the great mass of humanity. It provides a way for Urantia Book believers to minister the truth they have found without requiring that the other person read a 2000 page book and make a faith commitment to its truth. It provides us with a collection of teachings and truths that parallel The Urantia Book that we can give to others in an effort to share and minister the truth we have found.

Second, this book *harmonizes the teachings of the Bible with the teachings of the Urantia Papers*. It is a demonstration of the deep harmony that exists between the teachings of the gospels and the new revelation. The realization of this harmony should lead students of The Urantia Book to gain new respect for followers of the Bible, and lead devotees of the Bible to grow in respect for believers in The Urantia Book.

Third, this collection of teachings provides a *language of intercommunication*—a language that is common to both sets of believers. This book lists in detail all the teachings that are common to both Christians and believers in The Urantia Book—teachings not requiring the acceptance of a new source of truth. We may use this shared common ground to relate to Christians in a most positive way, and as a basis for imparting new understanding and truth.

Fourth, this book provides *the cream of the gospels* relatively purified of the human errors that became a part of the early Christian teachings. The words of Jesus and the gospel records are our common religious heritage; they naturally evoke religious feelings, and in this organized and purified form we may more readily enjoy them and be inspired by them.

Finally, this book provides *a means for believers in The Urantia Book to go forward now in the direction projected by the Urantia revelation itself, the return to Jesus and his true teachings*. It is important to realize that The Urantia Book does not point to itself; it directs us to Jesus and his gospel of the kingdom. For example, on page 1866 (170:5.19), in discussing the next stage of our religious evolution, it states: *There must come a revival of the actual teachings of Jesus, such a restatement as will undo the work of his early followers....* And on page 2090 (196:1.2) it expresses this hope: *What a transcendent service if, through this revelation, the Son of Man should be recovered from the tomb of traditional theology and be presented as the living Jesus to the church that bears his name, and to all other religions!*

What are the prospects for such a revival? On page 2090 (196:1.2) The Urantia Book states: *The time is ripe to witness the figurative resurrection of the human Jesus from his burial tomb amidst the theological traditions and the religious dogmas of nineteen centuries.* And on page 2082 (195:9.1) it promises that *when the present superstition revolt is over, the truths of Jesus' gospel will persist gloriously to illuminate a new and better way.* Finally, on that same page it prophesies that, *A new and fuller revelation of the religion of Jesus is destined to conquer an empire of materialistic secularism and overcome a world sway of mechanistic naturalism.*

It is also important to realize that the Urantia revelation speaks to us *now* in late 20th century earth when it states, *The hour is striking for a new discovery of the true and original foundations of present day distorted and compromised Christianity—the real life and teachings of Jesus* (my emphasis. 2083; 195:9.5) And on page 2084 (195.10.1) it provides those who believe and follow this revelation with clear direction: *Modern culture must become spiritually baptized with a new revelation of Jesus' life and illuminated with a new understanding of his gospel of eternal salvation.*

This then should be the principle focus of believers and followers of the Urantia revelation, the expansion of the religion of Jesus. The Urantia Papers inspire us forward in this great work: *Religion does need new leaders, spiritual men and women who will dare to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings.... And then will these spirit-born souls quickly supply the leadership and inspiration requisite for the social, moral, economic, and political reorganization of the world.* (2082; 195:9.4) *The call to the adventure of building a new and*

transformed human society by means of the spiritual rebirth of Jesus' brotherhood of the kingdom should thrill all who believe in him as men have not been stirred since the days when they walked on earth as his companions in the flesh. (2084; 195:10.6)

Let us then go forward, inspired and energized by the knowledge that, *The great hope of Urantia lies in the possibility of a new revelation of Jesus with a new and enlarged presentation of his saving message which would spiritually unite in loving service the numerous families of his present day professed followers. (2086; 195.10.16)*

My hope and prayer is that this restatement should contribute to this return to Jesus and his true teachings.

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