

# Introduction to a Structured Study of *The Urantia Book*

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*This introduction—or conceptual framework—is intended for those who are already somewhat familiar with The Urantia Book and would like to organize their insights into a structure that facilitates further conceptual development.*

In the final analysis, *The Urantia Book* is a book about Jesus, providing a theological and cosmological expansion of the meanings and values repercussing from his mission on earth.

*The Urantia Book* contains more than enough material to fuel a robust lifetime of personal growth and intellectual expansion. This article suggests an approach to organizing *The Urantia Book* conceptually into a frame of reference conducive to more meaningful study. This is a very broad stroke outline but it may help provide a productive conceptual orientation to the text as a whole.

Spiritual and intellectual growth are separate challenges but highly integrated and inter-related. We optimize our growth when we develop them both in parallel. That is, the discovery of new meanings leads to the grasp of new values. As new values are incorporated into our behaviors we are enabled then to discern deeper meanings. The quality of our daily experience in life thus continues to be enhanced as does our ability to serve, effectively powering the religion of personal spiritual experience.

*The Urantia Book* is structured in the form of a classical systematic theology—just as a piece of music may be structured in a sonata form or a piece of poetry in a quatrain form. These are formal architectures within which content is structured.

A systematic theology has four primary parts.

- 1. Theology: A theory of God or Deity
- 2. Cosmology: A theory of the universe including human destiny and "the end times," life after death.

- 3. Anthropology: A theory of man; the study of humanity, its origin and nature. Here we may find a philosophy of history, writings about God's action in human history, doctrines of original sin, and discussions about the nature of evil and suffering in the world.
- 4. Christology; a theory of Jesus, his nature and mission. Here we find doctrines of atonement and salvation as well as discussions about the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Christology normally forms the centerpiece of a systematic theology with the other three divisions providing theological context and philosophic support for the view of Jesus being presented by the author.

The four sections of *The Urantia Book* are structured in the form of a basic systematic theology. At the core of the text is its Christology—Part 4, The Life and Teachings of Jesus. The other three sections of the text provide background information relative to the story of Jesus of Nazareth, including an in-depth perspective on the planetary and cosmological context within which his mission to our world took place.

### **Arranging Topics in *The Urantia Book* for Easier Understanding**

"If the incarnated life of Michael is taken as the background of the revelation of God to man, we may attempt to put in human word symbols certain ideas and ideals concerning the divine nature which may possibly contribute to a further illumination and unification of the human concept of the nature and the character of the personality of the Universal Father." [2:0.2]

According to the revelators, the life of Jesus and his revelation of the character of the Universal Father is the central idea in *The Urantia Book*, relative to which the rest of the book's theological exposition is to be understood.

Every paper in Parts 1 and 2 contain references to Jesus or Michael with the exception of Paper 44 on the Celestial Artisans. In addition, Part 4 contains references to every significant topic covered in the first three parts of the text. We know that the revelators are relying on our understanding of the religious life of Jesus as a foundation from which they can attempt to present an enlarged revelation about the nature of deity.

Implicit in this understanding of the conceptual foundation used by the revelators in their construction of the text is the key to organizing its contents for simpler and more meaningful study.

We can start by giving the book a subtitle: "The Scope and Dynamics of the Kingdom of Heaven in the Present Universe Age – An Introduction to Cosmic Citizenship."

*The Urantia Book* presents a comprehensive overview of the Kingdom of Heaven, its internal architectural processes in its present state of development, its origins in the unfathomable depths of the Absolutes, its destiny in the embrace of the Universal Father, and the nature of the spiritual agencies and processes of Paradise origin by which this evolution is being managed.

There have been five revelations of epochal import provided to our world. Each one has built upon and expanded the foundations upon which humanity might discover and participate in the establishment of the "kingdom of heaven."

### **Core Teachings of the Five Epochal Revelations**

- 1. Hap's Moral Law—"The Father's Way." [66:7.8]
- 2. The civil codes of the golden rule promulgated in the Garden schools. [74:7.12]
- 3. The seven commandments of Melchizedek. [93:4.6]
- 4. Jesus' teaching about the kingdom and the "great commandment." .
- 5. *The Urantia Book* disclosure about the nature of the Supreme and experiential deity. These constitute a sequence of expanding revelations related to spiritualized personality integration, the development of cosmic citizenship, and the recognition of the nature of the kingdom of heaven.

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Reviewing these one can quickly see that the primary purpose of epochal revelation is the orientation of personality to the challenges of living in a universe containing other personalities. What is the ordering principle by which personalities can productively live together in a common environment? How can we get along with each other well while attempting to actualize our own faintly-discerned potentials?

### **Three Primary Conceptual Divisions of *The Urantia Book***

Everything in *The Urantia Book* may be placed into one of three categories derived from this understanding. These categories are:

- 1. The Kingdom of Heaven

- 2. The Religion of Jesus
- 3. Who is Jesus?

**Category 1. The Kingdom of Heaven**—A study of the means by which the Kingdom emerges from potentials contained within the Absolutes and stabilizes as an enduring universe phenomena as a result of the creative activities of God the Sevenfold, including a description of the cosmological sequence of achievement milestones marking its actualization.

The Kingdom consists of potential realities which are actualized as the religion of Jesus is lived. These potentials are derived from the infinite reservoir of the Absolutes. Orchestrated by processes ordained by the Architects of the Master Universe, they emerge into actuality through mechanisms related to the evolution of experiential deity. But the values which are the building blocks of these realities have to be chosen by a personality and integrated into personal patterns of interaction in order to become a permanent feature of actualized reality.

*The Urantia Book* discussion of the Supreme Being is a conceptual expansion of Jesus' gospel of the kingdom."

The first step in this approach to organizing the cosmological and theological content of the text is to appreciate that *The Urantia Book* discussion of the Supreme Being is an expansion and theological development of Jesus' gospel of the Kingdom. An illustration helpful in an attempt to more fully understand the Supreme is to substitute the word "Supreme" for the phrase "kingdom of heaven" in the parables of Jesus. Doing this we end up with parables which read,

- "The Supreme is like a man who sowed good seed in his field..."
- "The Supreme is like a merchant seeking goodly pearls..."
- "The Supreme is like a sweep net which was cast into the sea..."
- etc.

But the revelators note that:

"The Supreme Being cannot be fully appreciated without taking into consideration source, function, and destiny: relationship to the originating Trinity, the universe of activity, and the Trinity Ultimate of immediate destiny." [115:7.7]

This quote describes the full scope of the revelation and its conceptual boundaries. In other words, subsequent to the teachings of Jesus, the next step in revelation about the basic nature of the kingdom is a fuller revelation of the kingdom as the universe domain of God the Supreme. But an understanding of the Supreme requires a revelation of these other levels of experiential

deity – and this is what we have in *The Urantia Book*; a fleshing out of the theological and cosmological implications of Jesus' gospel of the kingdom.

In this category we study the following topics (listed in sequence of study and increasing complexity):

- 1. Personal Spiritual Experience (Important note: This does not refer to subjective experience -- it refers to experience with other personalities, experience and insight acquired in a context of interpersonal relationships.)
- 2. The Indwelling Adjuster
- 3. Meanings and Values
- 4. The Spirit of Truth
- 5. Ministering Spirits
- 6. Ascension Scheme
- 7. Actualization of the Supreme
- 8. Actuals and Potentials
- 9. Eventuation of the Ultimate
- 10. First Experiential Trinity
- 11. Quest for God the Absolute
- 12. Second Experiential Trinity
- 13. The Trinity of Trinities

**Category 2: The Religion of Jesus**—The religion of Jesus is all about how to participate creatively and productively in the actualization of experiential deity—participation in the creation of the cosmos--and the appearance of the kingdom.

In this category we study the following topics (listed in sequence of study and increasing complexity):

- 1. Personality in the Universe

- 2. The Universal Father
- 3. Worship and Service
- 4. The Father's Will
- 5. The Great Commandment
- 6. The Evangelical Imperative
- 7. Cosmic Citizenship
- 8. The Quest for Perfection
- 9. Service in Eternity

**Category 3: Who is Jesus?**—Context and background information for understanding the life and nature of our Creator, Michael of Nebadon and his bestowal upon our world as Jesus of Nazareth.

In this category we study the following topics (listed in sequence of study and increasing complexity):

- 1. Jesus of Nazareth
- 2. Planetary Evolution, Epochal Revelation and Planetary Dispensations
- 3. Michael of Nebadon
- 4. The Local Universe
- 5. The Sevenfold Bestowal Career
- 6. The Universe of Universes
- 7. God the Sevenfold
- 8. The Paradise Trinity
- 9. Existential and Experiential Deity
- 10. The Seven Absolutes of Infinity

- 11. The Sevenfold Nature of the I AM
- 12. The Universal Father

This schema provides a sequence of study in each of the three categories which gradually increases in conceptual complexity. The study provides a natural review process as each new step expands what was studied in the previous steps. In addition, the material in Category 2—The Religion of Jesus—may be presented in the context of many different religious perspectives and while it is presented here relative to Urantia Book studies, there is a great deal of room for flexibility in the evangelical presentation of this material.

With this schema one can establish an approach relative to the depth of study desired. That is, a basic study might consist of items 1 and 2 in each category. It is also suggested that one's study develop each category at the same time--study item 1 in each category and then go to item 2 in each category, and so on.

"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." <sup>John</sup>  
21:25