

"SUPERnatural"

"More Than Meets The Eye"

Week 1 - Acts 11:19-30

"The Great Adventure" So Far...

Fall '09 -Season 1 -

"EVERYTHING Changes" - It's all about learning of, living out and leading others to Jesus & the best possible way of life in His Kingdom.

Spring '10 -Season 2 -

"WHATEVER it Takes" - Living in the Kingdom requires that we understand that all we have, all we are & all we hope to be must be surrendered to further His Kingdom.

Fall '10 -Season 3 -

"EVERYONE'S Invited" - The Kingdom invites everyone who would but surrender their trust solely in Jesus for their righteousness and ability to enjoy eternal, abundant life vs reliance on one's ethnicity, religious affiliation &/or personal accomplishments.

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TODAY WE LAUNCH...Spring '11 -Season 4 -

Are you ready?---Are you sure?---It's Red Bill, Blue Pill time ---QUE "Morpheus & Neo Pill Scene" from "The Matrix"

"SUPERnatural" - The Kingdom, though undetectable by our tactile senses is nonetheless right here...right now. The best possible life is enabled therefore when we embrace a moment-by-moment awareness that we live and move within an unseen spiritual dimension that is ruled by God.

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AND NOW...Week 1 of "Supernatural" - "More Than Meets the Eye"

ACTS 11:19-30...

¹⁹ Meanwhile, the believers who had been scattered during the persecution after Stephen's death traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch of Syria. They preached the word of God, but only to Jews. ²⁰ However, some of the believers who went to Antioch from Cyprus and Cyrene began preaching to the Gentiles about the Lord Jesus. ²¹ **The power of the Lord was with them**, and a large number of these Gentiles believed and turned to the Lord.

²² When the church at Jerusalem heard what had happened, they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he arrived and saw this evidence of God's blessing, he was filled with joy, and he encouraged the believers to stay true to the Lord. ²⁴ Barnabas was a good man, **full of the Holy Spirit** and strong in faith. And many people were brought to the Lord.

²⁵ Then Barnabas went on to Tarsus to look for Saul. ²⁶ When he found him, he brought him back to Antioch. Both of them stayed there with the church for a full year, teaching large crowds of people. (It was at Antioch that the believers were first called Christians.)

²⁷ During this time some prophets traveled from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ One of them named Agabus stood up in one of the meetings and **predicted by the Spirit** that a great famine was coming upon the entire Roman world. (This was fulfilled during the reign of Claudius.) ²⁹ So the believers in Antioch decided to send relief to the brothers and sisters in Judea, everyone giving as much as they could. ³⁰ This they did, entrusting their gifts to Barnabas and Saul to take to the elders of the church in Jerusalem.

1) WITH

Like the Christians in Antioch, we should minister with the “**Power of the Lord**”.

-I can still remember the moment in all its detail. It was Catalyst '07 and a guy I had never heard of took the stage. Within minutes of his teaching I remember sensing something extraordinary in the air. I don't know quite how to explain it but I felt it here last Sunday when Mindi led us in “Take My Life” for the first time. It's more than emotion, more than adrenaline (though both tend to be engaged). There is literally something unmistakable “in the air”.

-BTW...I can feel the same “6th sense” of things in circumstances when something that is NOT from Lord is present. Again, “red pill” or “blue pill”? Are you sure you want to hear this??? Of course, as it was with Neo, its your choice but once you truly “get this”...you can't claim ignorance or naïveté any longer.

-However, if you are ready for this, really ready--- it will unlock an entirely different view of life. And most excitingly, it will allow you to be prepared to not only confront those things brought to light by your new awareness...you can be assured of certain victory!!!

Ephesians 6:10-

¹⁰ A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. ¹² **For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.**

¹³ Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. ¹⁴ Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. ¹⁵ For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. ¹⁶ In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. ¹⁷ Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

2) IN

Like Barnabas, we are to be “**filled with the Holy Spirit**”.

Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:16, 22-23

¹⁸ Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, **be filled with the Holy Spirit,**

¹⁶ So I say, **let the Holy Spirit guide your lives.** Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves... ²² But the **Holy Spirit produces** this kind of fruit in our lives: **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,** ²³ **gentleness, and self-control.**

3) THROUGH

Like Agabus, we are to be “**in tune**” with the Holy Spirit & the GIFTS He's given.

Romans 12:6

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to **prophecy**, speak out with as much faith as God has given you.

LIVE WELL POINT--- “The most exciting life (most exciting ministry, marriage, etc.) is one that is supernaturally anointed by none other than God Himself.”

Are we living in a moment by moment awareness of His presence and are we seeking a moment by moment empowerment as we live and move through life?... If not?...why not? If this is available by simply submitting, surrendering and syncing our lives to Him what could possibly keep us from this kind of life? I will also point out that we should take care to not fool ourselves into assuming any life or ministry, including of course our own, is blessed simply because there is the presentation of numerical or financial growth. As Francis Chan put it... “Anyone with a knack for leadership can throw together a good team and draw a crowd...I woke up and realized that I was drawing one bigger than Jesus would have been if He’d been pastoring elsewhere in my town”

DIVE DEEPER MATERIALS...

Our appreciation goes out to David Guzik and enduringword.com for their comprehensive yet pragmatic online commentary.

B. The Church in Antioch.

1. (19-21) The church in Antioch grows as Gentiles turn to the Lord.

Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.

a. **Preaching the word to no one by the Jews only:** At first, Christians scattered over the Roman Empire preached only to Jews. But they eventually began to preach Jesus Christ to Gentiles as well.

b. **Some of them were from Cyprus and Cyrene . . . spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus:** These unnamed disciples from Cyprus and Cyrene are genuine heroes. They began the first mentioned “mission to the Gentiles” (here called **Hellenists**) in Antioch.

i. In Antioch, we have the first example of Christians deliberately targeting Gentiles for evangelism, and this effort had great results.

c. **When they had come to Antioch:** Antioch was founded about 300 BC by Seleucus I, one of the inheritors of Alexander the Great’s empire. He had a thing about founding cities and naming them after his father, Antioch, and he did this about fifteen times. This city of Antioch was called “Syrian Antioch” or “Antioch on the Orantes.” Back then it was a city of more than half a million; today it is a Turkish city with a population of about 3,500.

i. Antioch was considered by many the third greatest city in the Empire, behind Rome and Alexandria. The city of Antioch was known for its sophistication and culture, but also for its immorality.

ii. “The city’s reputation for moral laxity was enhanced by the cult of Artemis and Apollo at Daphne, five miles distant, where the ancient Syrian worship of Astarte and her consort, with its ritual prostitution, was

carried on.” (Bruce)

d. **And the hand of the Lord was with them:** Because God was with them, their ministry was blessed and multiplied, the result was that **a great number believed and turned to the Lord.**

i. A ministry can't turn people to the Lord unless **the hand of the Lord** is with them. You can turn people to a personality without **the hand of the Lord**; you can turn people to a social club without **the hand of the Lord**; you can turn people to a church or an institution without **the hand of the Lord**. But you can't turn people **to the Lord** without **the hand of the Lord**.

2. (22-24) The ministry of Barnabas in Antioch.

Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

a. **They sent out Barnabas:** The church in Jerusalem sends an able man in Barnabas, previously known for his generosity (Acts 4:36-37) and his warm acceptance of Saul of Tarsus after he was converted (Acts 9:26-28).

b. **When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad:** At the church in Antioch, when Barnabas **had seen the grace of God, he was glad**. Can people see **the grace of God** at our church? Or do they see a legal relationship with God?

c. **Encouraged them with all purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord:** Barnabas rightly focuses on his main job as a leader of the congregation. He strengthened the church family itself, with the result that **a great many people were added to the Lord.**

i. This is the plan for church growth spoken of in Ephesians 4:11-16. Leaders in the church dedicate themselves to building strong, healthy Christians. As the saints are equipped for the work of the ministry, they grow into maturity, and do their ministry, and it *causes growth of the body*.

3. (25-26) Barnabas and Saul work together in Antioch.

Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

a. **Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul:** Barnabas remembers this precious brother Saul, and how he had been sent out to Tarsus for his own protection (Acts 9:28-30). Now Barnabas goes and finds him.

i. **To seek Saul** is more literally *to hunt him up*; Barnabas had to do some looking. MacArthur says the original word “suggests a laborious

search on Barnabas' part.”

b. **So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people.** Together, Barnabas and Saul **taught a great many people**, making the church in Antioch strong.

i. Saul had spent some twelve years in Tarsus since we last met him; these years were not “wasted” or “lost,” but spent in quiet ministry and preparation for future service.

c. **The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch:** How did the name *Christian* ever become associated with the followers of Jesus?

i. The ending *ian* meant “the party of.” A *Christ-ian* was “of the party of Jesus.” **Christians** is sort of like saying “Jesus-ites,” or “Jesus People,” those of the group associated with Jesus Christ.

ii. Also, soldiers under particular generals in the Roman army would identify themselves by their general’s name by adding *ian* to the end. A soldier under Caesar would call himself a *Caesarian*. Soldiers under Jesus Christ could be called **Christians**.

iii. In Antioch, they probably first used the term **Christians** to mock the followers of Jesus. “Antioch was famous for its readiness to jeer and call names; it was known by its witty epigrams.” (Gaebelein) But as the people of Antioch called the followers of Jesus the “Jesus People,” the believers appreciated the title so much that it stuck.

iv. Christians must be willing to take the title “Jesus People,” and must also be worthy of the name. Instead of claiming any other title – Roman Catholic, Protestant, charismatic, whatever - we should be just plain **Christians**.

v. Eusebius, the famous early church historian, describes a believer named Sanctus from Lyons, France, who was tortured for Jesus. As they tortured him cruelly, they hoped to get him to say something evil or blasphemous. They asked his name, and he would only reply, “I am a Christian.” “What nation do you belong to?” He would answer, “I am a Christian.” “What city do you live in?” “I am a Christian.” His questioners began to get angry: “Are you a slave or a free man?” “I am a Christian” was the only reply. No matter what they asked about him, he would only answer, “I am a Christian.” This made his torturers all the more determined to break him, but they could not, and he died with the words “I am a Christian” on his lips. (Eusebius, *Church History*)

4. (27-30) A prophetic word announces a famine.

And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

a. **Showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar:** We don't know exactly how Agabus **showed by the Spirit** this famine was on the way. But the Christians took the word seriously, and generously begin preparations to meet the needs.

i. "We know from other sources that Claudius's principate was marked by a succession of bad harvests and consequent scarcity in various parts of the empire - in Rome, Greece, and Egypt as well as in Judaea." (Bruce)

b. You can tell these are truly **disciples** and *Christians*, because they gave generously to meet the need. They gave, **each according to his ability**.

i. We also see they **determined** to give. If a person does not *determine* to give, they often never do.

c. **Sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul:** The high regard that Barnabas and Saul had among all is evident by the fact that they were trusted with the relief fund.