

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

MAKING THE SUPERNATURAL NORMAL:
MOBILIZING THE LOCAL CHURCH
TO MOVE IN THE POWER OF GOD
OUTSIDE ITS DOORS

A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE
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ABSTRACT

Many modern Western believers still practice supernatural ministry in strange ways that alienate unbelievers and too often only practice them inside their churches. Others have chosen not to engage with God's supernatural power, so God's miraculous works have become rare. The developing world, however, sees remarkable growth in converts and in supernatural ministry. Western believers need a new model for engaging in supernatural ministry.

This project examines the model of Jesus and the first Christians for supernatural ministry. Then it synthesizes the modern literature from those who practice supernatural ministry in similar ways to Jesus and the first Christians. Finally, it examines the field test results for supernatural ministry in the model of Jesus and the first Christians for the local church. Jesus and the first Christians' model for supernatural ministry produces non-clergy believers who consistently see the supernatural works of God, who see those results outside the church, and who are received positively by nonbelievers because they approach them with compassion. For these believers, the supernatural has become normal.

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Finally, Jesus, You are my model and friend. Holy Spirit, thank You for mentoring me and gently nudging me toward Your supernatural goals in Your world. Father, Your grace and mercy is more than sufficient to me, and I will need it again and again.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Context

As the lead pastor at Journey Life Church in Holt, Michigan, I serve as the chief vision engineer and champion for the church. Prior to joining Journey Life, I had served as children's pastor at South Hills Assembly in Bethel Park, Pennsylvania. I prepare and communicate Sunday messages; lead the staff, board, and teaching and creative teams; write a weekly blog/email; minister to individuals and families in our church; develop relationships with community and other church leaders; and endeavor to model love to our neighbors. I came to Journey Life Church nearly two years ago, following the founding pastor of this ten-year-old church, which has numerous young families and a thriving children's ministry.

Although this Assemblies of God congregation believes in God's supernatural power, the church was not regularly seeing miracles or spiritual encounters with God. Some in the church had seen the supernatural done in questionable ways, while others had simply never observed it. Despite these challenges, God has begun to stir a hunger in people for the authentic power of God. When I initially interviewed with the board, staff, and congregation during town hall meetings for the position of lead pastor, I told them if they wanted to see God work supernaturally, then they wanted me. If they didn't want Him to work in this way, then they did not want me. The church unanimously voted to hire us. My wife and I moved to Holt to begin pastoring the church in September 2015.

Since that time, we have endeavored to introduce our church to the supernatural works of God.

Problem

Pentecostal churches in America need a new model for engaging in the authentic supernatural power of the living God. The traditional Pentecostal ways of experiencing the supernatural have calcified over the years and now turn away lost people rather than attract them to Jesus. These hardened methods have become weird expressions of individual personalities rather than loving expressions of the Spirit of God. Many of the expressions remain interruptive, startling, or completely unintelligible, leaving these manifestations inexplicable to people far from God. For example, shouting out in tongues in the middle of a quiet worship moment has become typical in Pentecostal gatherings, yet few contexts exist in which such an expression proves helpful to bring people close to God who do not understand. Another example, “falling under the power” seems a wonderful experience with God, but it has become a mere form—so much so that some Pentecostals do not believe God has moved unless people are falling down. At the same time, most unbelievers find falling down strange and off-putting. Such expressions are neither safe onramps to bringing individuals from the fringes of faith into God’s fullness, nor were the onramps Jesus and the apostles used. These expressions of the supernatural have jaded many young Pentecostals toward the supernatural work of the Spirit, some of whom have abandoned it altogether.

By contrast, Jesus's approach to supernatural ministry proved different than such calcified methods. Perhaps it remains possible to act in evangelism in normal¹ ways and the only strange item of interaction be a healing, a word of knowledge, or a prophetic encouragement itself. The way Pentecostals engage those outside the church could serve as the template for how they model and teach about God's supernatural power inside the church. Such an approach could yield different, maybe better, results than previous—now ineffective—methods.

For instance, I could walk to the park behind my house, begin talking with my neighbor and pray for them for healing or tell them a detail that I heard from God or encourage them prophetically about how God sees them in completely normal ways. The verbiage I use with an unchurched individual remains extremely different than the verbiage used in many Pentecostal churches in supernatural manifestations. If I say, "Thus saith the Lord," the person will immediately discount everything that comes afterward. However, if I say, "I'm practicing hearing God's voice. I feel like He said this about you. Does that mean anything to you?" Then a humble and loving dialogue has been started. When the church operates in similar ways, with language and love that the world understands, the church services render less off-putting results with unbelievers and the supernatural becomes normal. Pentecostals must engage others in the authentic supernatural power of God in a way that actually testifies to Jesus's resurrection and has the magnetic attraction of the miracles that Jesus did.

¹ "Normal" here meaning where the supernatural seems more commonplace, more regular with a daily rhythm to it, less "weird" to people. Both in method and approach, achieving normal for the supernatural would entail changing people's attitudes and expectations about the supernatural.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to train and mobilize the local church in effective ways to make the supernatural normal—consistent occurrences that are not weird to an outsider—and following Jesus’s pattern of doing the supernatural primarily outside the church.

Definition of Terms

Calcified² Methods—methods of practicing the supernatural that, over the course of decades, have become formulaic. Some Christians remain closely tied to one way of experiencing the supernatural and cannot imagine God moving in any other way. These ways of encountering God have become so stuck and hardened over time that they have become counterproductive. In many cases, God is no longer involved, and it is merely an expression of personal charisma that marks a way in which God once moved. I am not advocating that God cannot use these methods in the future, because He has and will. However, I am advocating that more biblical approaches to the supernatural power of God be engaged. For instance, Jesus is not noted as speaking in tongues, and the apostles only did it on the Day of Pentecost unless it was in a believers only meeting. Jesus, however, continually moved in the gifts of word of knowledge, prophecy and healing. He did these with people who were unlearned and outside the church. When believers are consistently seeing these kinds of authentic manifestations of the Spirit, there is little need to seek the other methods that are interruptive and jarring to nonbelievers.

² This term connotes descriptively the state of many Pentecostals and Charismatics with regard to supernatural manifestations. The word “calcify” is defined in this context as, “to make or become rigid or inflexible, as in an intellectual position.” See “Calcify,” The Free Dictionary, accessed July 20, 2017, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/calcify>.

*Calling Out the Gold*³—refers to New Testament personal prophecy, which exists for encouragement, exhortation, and comfort.

*Flipping the Script*⁴—when a believer hears or sees pictures from God that are negative. Then they seek God for the opposite of that word or picture or impression and declare that positive prophetic word or picture over the person.

*Lowering the Bar*⁵—remaining available to hear God’s voice by the Spirit’s training, even when believers feel unsure about the accuracy of what they hear. Lowering the bar helps move believers away from the myth that a prophetic word must hold the same authority and accuracy as Scripture. This myth may cause believers to tune out God’s voice, ignore His overtures, and lack discernment. Lowering the bar means becoming sensitive to even the smallest brush of the Spirit, knowing He can speak in many ways. The phrase “lower the bar” can mean “to lower the standards of quality that are expected of or required for something.”⁶ However, the term can also take the connotation of, “If people change the standards required to make things easier, they lower

³ “Calling out the gold” has been used in teaching by Bill Johnson at Bethel Church in Redding, California, and can be heard in his teaching here: “Bethel Church, Redding,” Facebook, accessed July 20, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/bethel.church.redding/videos/vb.156375031823/10154347300201824/?type=2&theater>.

⁴ “Flip the script” according to Oxford Living Dictionaries means, “reverse the usual or existing positions in a situation; do something unexpected or revolutionary.” “Flip the Script,” Oxford Living Dictionaries, accessed July 20, 2017, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/flip_the_script.

⁵ I heard the term in this context first from an evangelist friend named JonMark Baker.

⁶ “Lower the Bar,” The Free Dictionary, accessed July 20, 2017, <http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/lower+the+bar>.

the bar.”⁷ This second definition contains the sense in which the idiom will serve this project.

*Making the Supernatural Normal*⁸—the act of seeking God’s supernatural moves in a normal and consistent way, without weird elements, with a primary focus on these moves occurring outside the church. The approach should feel natural, and only the supernatural event itself should be weird. The normal approach is the way believers should minister outside the church, just as Jesus did. What believers do in the church needs to look, feel, and come across as it would anywhere else.

*Marching Orders*⁹—when God gives directions to a believer, His latest word will supersede the previous one. Like marching orders in the military, the last command is valid until a new command is issued. Many people get stuck on a previous word from God, when God has already moved on, so they are trying to obey something that is no longer breathing life into their souls.

⁷ “Lower the Bar,” Using English.com, accessed July 20, 2017, <https://www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/lower+the+bar.html>.

⁸ See Aliss Cresswell’s book with a similar title, *The Normal Supernatural Christian Life* (Chester, Cheshire, UK: FiftyFive Eleven Limited, 1st ed. 2012). Also, Todd White says that the supernatural is “normal Christianity” in his message here, Todd White, “Normal Christianity,” Youtube, accessed July 20, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0z51ZCYJQUQ>.

⁹ The phrase will be used in the sense of “military orders to begin a march or other troop movement.” See “Military Orders,” Dictionary.com, accessed July 20, 2017, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/marching-orders>.

*Playing the Long Game*¹⁰—a golfing analogy that describes how reaching out to people with power evangelism is worthy of investment over a long period of time rather than simply a quick prayer for salvation.

*Power Evangelism*¹¹—refers to using the supernatural works of God as a means of seeing people commit to being followers of Jesus. Using the power of God for witnessing is the purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) and was the primary model of evangelism for the New Testament Church.

*Raising the Tide*¹²—when God begins to move in a local church, the tide of faith rises. Every time that community speaks about what God has done and continues to do, faith rises like the tide. In deeper waters of faith, the possibility of more remarkable things from God increases.

*The First World*¹³ *Myth*—refers to the myth that the greatest miracles only happen in underdeveloped countries and needy environments because people in first world countries can reason their way into faith.

¹⁰ The phrase traces its origin to golf. “The aspect of golf considered in relation to the ability of a player to hit shots, especially drives, for distance.” See “Playing the Long Game,” Dictionary.com, accessed July 20, 2017, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/long-game>.

¹¹ This phrase was most likely coined by John Wimber. See John Wimber, *Power Evangelism*, 2nd rev. upd. ed. (Ada, MI: Chosen Books, 2009).

¹² The similar phrase “a rising tide lifts all boats” has been misattributed to John F. Kennedy, although he did a lot to popularize the phrase starting in 1963. An early account of this phrase in print is found in the missionary writings of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1910 where *The Christian Advocate* credits the saying to Commissioner McFarland, “Never Paralleled in New York,” *The Christian Advocate*, January 20, 1910, (5) 85. <https://books.google.com/books?id=-S0xQAAMAAJ&pg=PA85&dq=%22rising+tide+lifts%22&hl=en&sa=X&ei=I9vuVOjUFcX9oQSI5oCwDg&ved=0CEkQ6AEwBTgK#v=onepage&q=%22rising%20tide%20lifts%22&f=false>.

¹³ “First World” refers to “the highly developed industrialized nations often considered the westernized countries of the world.” See “First World,” Merriam-Webster.com, accessed July 20, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/first%20world>.

*The Prophetic Telescope*¹⁴—refers to the fact time remains fluid in the prophetic, both when interpreting biblical and present-day prophecies. Interpreting prophecies is like looking through a telescope, objects may appear closer or farther than they are. In addition, different planes of fulfillment exist, depending on how one focuses the view.

*Thinking in Mosaics*¹⁵—when people hear from God, they receive a beautiful puzzle piece that requires them to seek God for the other pieces that surround it in order to provide the full picture.

Description of the Proposed Project

Scope of the Project

The goal of making the supernatural normal will be implemented and analyzed at Journey Life Church in Holt, Michigan. The project implementation will entail four parts: (1) a sermon series, (2) trainings, and (3) practical outreaches to teach, model, and mobilize the local church to make the supernatural a normal occurrence.

First, I will preach a four-week series on the supernatural called *Do What Jesus Did* that will further the understanding of Journey Life Church. The messages will remain directed at a general audience, including new believers and curious nonbelievers. That

¹⁴ “The Prophetic Telescope” was used by H. J. Tedder in a book by the same name. See H. J. Tedder, *The Prophetic Telescope* (n.p.: H. J. Tedder, 1928). This concept was also written about in 1882. See “Fourth Sunday in Advent: Gospel,” *The Homiletical Library*, vol. 1, ed. Canon H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Excell (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1882), 142, accessed July 22, 2017, https://books.google.com/books?id=V-8GAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA142&lpg=PA142&dq=the+prophetic+telescope&source=bl&ots=U7eFcNVqTG&sig=n7_5WUfMSzFGezv9DEJer6t1Yxo&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwivkt2iu4rVAhUj8IMKHeAmABgQ6AEITDAK#v=onepage&q=the%20prophetic%20telescope&f=false.

¹⁵ A mosaic is “a picture or pattern produced by arranging together small colored pieces of hard material, such as stone, tile, or glass,” according to <https://www.google.com/#safe=strict&q=mosaic+definition>. The phrase “thinking in mosaics” contains a picture of leaning into and discerning God’s voice through multiple interactions with Him.

series will take place from September 9 to September 30, 2018. At the beginning of the sermon series, I will administer a pretest to determine benchmarks relative to attitudes and understanding. At the end of the series, I will conduct a posttest to assess any changes and to evaluate the series for effectiveness.

Second, I will offer four trainings about making the supernatural normal. This training will provide practical insight into healing prayer, tools for speaking prophetically, and tools for giving words of knowledge to believers and nonbelievers. The training will provide insight and tips as to how to approach the subject, so believers can take advantage of opportunities for the supernatural without being weird. These trainings will also give hands-on scenarios and opportunities for participants to practice what they learned. The trainings will begin with a presurvey and end with a postsurvey to research effectiveness.

Finally, as a part of these trainings, I will conduct specific outreaches to the community to enable congregants to take their next steps in the supernatural. Some events will consist of prayer time, when people seek God for clues about whom they should pray for. Other times, they will find people who may be sick and ask them if they can pray for healing. Each outreach will end with a debriefing to solidify the learning.

Because this project will focus on supernatural evangelism, it will briefly address the gifts of the Spirit and their operation in the church, including some discussion of healing, prophecy, and words of knowledge as they pertain to evangelism. I will consult resources from current ministries engaged in this type of ministry (Bethel Church, Power and Love, Global Awakening, Iris International, etc.), as well as Pentecostal scholars (Craig Keener, Gordon Fee, etc.).

The project will also establish the biblical basis for supernatural ministry outside the church. Outside the church means engaging in the supernatural work of God with neighbors and family members, and in workplaces, restaurants, grocery stores, and parks—basically, anywhere not within the confines of a local church service. Such ministry can even take place on church property as long as it is not part of a service. Those good practices for practicing the supernatural outside the church will be used as the model for supernatural practice inside the church. In other words, church services, trainings, worship environments, and prayer meetings serve to effectively train believers for supernatural ministry outside the church.

This project will not analyze what God does in other churches, nor will it draw conclusions on the movement of God throughout the Church or the world. The scope will be limited to what God does in Journey Life Church in Holt, Michigan.

Phases of the Project

This project will have five phases of development: research, planning, implementation, evaluation, and writing. The research and writing of the biblical-theological and general literature reviews will occur prior to the field project to inform the development of the project.

Research

The first phase of this project involved research into the general literature about supernatural evangelism for chapter three. I started with the general literature review of chapter three because the process of reading and synthesizing the 119 sources on the topic looked daunting and I have more experience writing biblical theology. The next

phase of research will examine the biblical-theological basis for supernatural ministry outside the church.

General Literature Review

The general literature review will analyze approaches to supernatural ministry from scholars, ministers, and believers. It will examine books, articles, and dissertations by sociologists, theologians, pastors, evangelists, and lay ministers. The research for the general literature will take place from July through December 2017.

Biblical-Theological Literature Review

The research for chapter 2 will focus on Mark 2:1-12 and then telescope throughout the entire biblical text, focusing on pericopes with redemptive supernatural occurrences. Therefore, the original Greek, along with commentaries, Bible dictionaries, articles, and scholarly books will be examined. The focus on Mark's story of Jesus healing the paralytic will provide a starting point for all further discussion. This passage contains all three of the focal points for this project: prophecy, healing, and word of knowledge. The research for the biblical-theological review will occur from June to July 2018.

Planning

After writing chapters 2 and 3, I will plan the sermon series *Do What Jesus Did* and the *Supernatural Trainings* for Journey Life Church in Holt, Michigan. I will work with the teaching team at Journey Life Church to develop the sermons for *Do What Jesus Did* and work with other church staff to pick content, activities, and outreaches for the *Supernatural Trainings*. Additionally, the planning phase will involve consulting with my

project coordinator and statistical specialist to craft the pretests and posttests for the sermon series and the trainings. I will cast vision for the series, prepare the staff with marketing and implementation assignments, and secure rooms and food for the trainings and outreach. The preparation for the implementation phase will take place in August and September 2018.

Implementation

The implementation phase will involve administering the presurvey for the sermon series, preaching the sermon series, and administering the postsurvey for the sermon series. The sermon series will occur in September 2018. Next, in October 2018, I will run the *Supernatural Trainings* and outreaches. Before the trainings and outreaches I will administer a presurvey, then do a postsurvey at the conclusion.

Evaluation

I will start to evaluate the field project by entering the results from the surveys. Next, the results will be tallied and analyzed along with the help of a statistical expert. After evaluating the presurvey and postsurvey results for the *Do What Jesus Did* series and the *Supernatural Trainings*, I will conduct an evaluation of the overall project process, from research to assessment in preparation for writing the project summary. The evaluation process will occur October 2018.

Writing

Each phase of writing this project has its own timetable, since they are tied to the research. The general literature review (chapter 3) will be written from January through March 2018. Next, the biblical-theological review (chapter 2) will be written in August

2018. After the conclusion of the field project, the description of field project (chapter 4) and the project assessment will be written in October 2018.

CHAPTER 2: BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The authors of Scripture reveal the importance they place on the supernatural works of God by weaving these stories throughout their writings. They carefully make God the hero of their stories, which naturally leads them to emphasize the works that show God's activity, power, and love. Supernatural events in the world point to God and show new aspects of His character. Therefore, all over the world, new believers have begun to read the Bible for the first time and when they see miracles, expect them to happen in their life. The authors of Scripture intended for their readers to seek God in His fullness, including His supernatural works. The supernatural works of God declare most obviously to nonbelievers that God lives and loves them. The supernatural manifestations of God's Spirit are a primary and, most often, necessary tool for evangelism.

This biblical-theological review will show the biblical basis for making the supernatural normal—normal, meaning regular and consistent in occurrence, not weird, occurring outside the church, and taking place as a primary and necessary tool for evangelism. The centerpiece for this study will show Jesus, the quintessential example of making the supernatural normal, prophesying, using a word of knowledge, and healing a paralyzed man in Mark 2:1-12. In one story Jesus uses the three gateway manifestations of the Spirit on which chapter 3 of this project will focus. This present chapter, however, spends the majority of time analyzing the story of Jesus and the paralyzed man because it

exists as a springboard for the discussion of how Jesus and the first Christians made the supernatural normal.

Next, the biblical-theological review will show that from creation to the coronation of Christ the King in a new heaven and earth, the Scripture shows the normalcy of believers as people engaging in His supernatural works to evangelize His world. The methodology of Jesus and other believers throughout the Scripture will serve to instruct modern believers about effective evangelism empowered by the Spirit of God.

The final section of this review will focus on redemptive supernatural events in the Bible. Some supernatural events in Scripture simply show the glory of God but do not have a specific connection to redemption, rescue, or the conversion of unbelievers. Only supernatural narratives that have direct redemptive implications will be discussed. Although the Old Testament supernatural narratives foreshadow much of what is available in the New Testament, the supernatural stories of the New Covenant represent a distinct progression into grace, compassion, the priesthood of all believers, and the availability of redemption for all people. Mark 2:1-12 also incorporates these themes.

Jesus Makes the Supernatural Normal in Mark 2:1-12

Mark wrote a famously short account of Jesus's life and ministry, yet he included great detail about the healing of the paralyzed man. Both Matthew (Matt 9:1-8) and Luke (Luke 5:15-26) include the story, but with significantly less detail than Mark. The detail in Mark gives clues to the purpose and method of Jesus's supernatural ministry. Mark 2:1-12 will serve as a prominent example of making the supernatural normal.

This section will begin with an original translation from the Greek text of Mark 2:1-12. Then the literature involving the historical context of the pericope with comment

on author, dating, and audience will be discussed. The immediate literary context of the Book of Mark will then be examined, including where in Jesus's life and ministry the healing of the paralyzed man occurs. The lexical context section will examine significant Greek words in the passage, observing scholarly discussion about these words. This section will also seek to prove the authority of Jesus is the central theme of this pericope. Finally, the biblical-theological context for the narrative will be reviewed in great detail with specific application to making the supernatural normal.

Translation of Mark 2:1-12

Mark 2:1 Also Jesus returned to Capernaum after some time, and it was heard that he had come home. 2 So they gathered in such large numbers that there was no longer room, not even at the door, and he was preaching the word to them. 3 There were even those who came to him carrying a paralytic, lifted by four of them. 4 And lacking the power to get him to Jesus through the crowd, they unroofed the roof where he was, by digging through. They lowered the mat where the paralytic was lying. 5 And seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 But some of the scribes were sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, 7 "How is this person speaking like this? Blasphemy! Who has power to forgive sins except God alone?" 8 And immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that they were thinking these things, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, pick up your mat and walk?' 10 But in order that you would know the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on the earth," he said to the paralytic, 11 "I tell you, Get up, pick up your mat and go to your home." 12 And he got up, and immediately picked up his mat and walked out in front of everyone, so that all were amazed and praised God, saying that, "This, we've never seen!"¹

Historical Context for Mark 2:1-12

The historical context for the Book of Mark has received much attention from biblical scholars in the past one hundred years, since many have adopted the theory of

¹ All Scripture quotations in the Mark 2:1-12 section are my own translation unless otherwise noted.

Marcan priority.² The emphasis on this theory has shined a new light on the Book of Mark, including its theological themes and details. Marcan priority does not even need to be correct for this emphasis to have produced valuable insights for this review.

Particularly, scholars have realized the Book of Mark includes less dialogue, but many times more detail in its narratives.³ These extra narrative details specifically help the study of Mark 2:1-12.

A majority of liberal scholars and all conservative scholars have concluded that Jon Mark⁴ authored the Book of Mark. Mark traveled with Paul and Barnabas, then later with only Barnabas after his dispute with Paul. Many Early Church Fathers believe Mark traveled with Peter after his time with Barnabas and wrote his Gospel as the memoirs of Peter.⁵ Very young in his earliest assignment with Paul and Barnabas, Mark presumably

² Marcan priority is the theory that Mark was the first of the four Gospels written and that Luke and Matthew used Mark as a source in writing their Gospels. Marcan priority is generally held by R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: a Commentary On the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 44. Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, Black's New Testament Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 15. William Barclay, *The Gospel of Mark*, The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), 2. James Edwards states, "The theory of Marcan priority, although not uncontested, continues to be held by a majority of scholars today, the present author included." James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 2.

³ Edwards states, "The stories Mark includes, however, are as a rule narrated in fuller fashion than are the same stories in the other Gospels." Edwards, *Mark*, 10. R. T. France agrees, "Mark is more vividly descriptive, while Matthew goes straight to the heart of the story. Notable examples include the digging of a hole in the roof in 2:4 (ignored by Matthew)." R. T. France, *Mark*, 17.

⁴ Jon Mark, or John, also called Mark, is mentioned in Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37, 39; Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11; Phil 1:24; and 1 Pet 5:13.

⁵ William L. Lane states that "the content of Mark's Gospel is viewed as derived substantially from Peter." William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: the English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 8.

got homesick and left, leading to Paul's mistrust of him. Colossians 4:10, however, likely shows Paul and Mark, who was the cousin of Barnabas, were later reconciled.

Most of what the Bible reveals about Mark can be found in his own words in the Book of Mark. Mark had great passion for the gospel of Jesus (Mark 1:1). Mark emphasized the immediacy and speed of the mission of Jesus.⁶ With less emphasis on Jesus's parables, Mark presented him as a powerful miracle worker. Mark quoted many stories where Jesus used Daniel's title "Son of Man,"⁷ which was both messianic and veiled⁸ and bears special significance in Mark 2:1-12.

Coupled with the theory of Marcan priority, many scholars believe Mark was written as early as between 60 AD, many preferring 65-68 AD.⁹ This dating is based on an assumption Mark wrote during the time of Nero, who reigned from 54-68 AD, but before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. This early dating would make Mark a middle-aged man, who was a young eyewitness of some of the events in Judea, but a contemporary of the other living main players. This would have given the believing

⁶ Edwards comments on the quick pacing of Mark, saying that "he maintains a vigorous tempo by ubiquitously beginning sentences with "and" (Gk. *kai*), as well as by linking coordinate clauses by *kai* rather than by the use of participles or subordinate clauses; by the equally ubiquitous use of the 'historical present tense' of Greek verbs; and by frequent use of words like 'immediately' (Gk. *Euthys*), 'again' (Gk. *Palin*), and many words for astonishment and amazement." Edwards, *Mark*, 11.

⁷ The title Son of Man is mentioned here to show Mark's emphases and it is discussed in further detail in the context of Mark 2:1-12 on pages 29-30.

⁸ Rodney J. Decker gives analysis of the title "Son of Man" in Mark. "Jesus' favorite self-designation ('Son of Man') occurs fourteen times in Mark. The phrase is probably best explained by reference to Dan 7:13 as a Messianic term, though not as explicitly were Jesus to have claimed the title Μεσσίας or Χριστός directly." Rodney J. Decker, *Mark 1-8: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 52-53.

⁹ Craig S. Keener provides a synthesis of scholars' views on dating Mark in stating "the most common suggestions are that Mark wrote his Gospel to Roman Christians during the time of the great persecution in Rome about A.D. 64." Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014), 126.

community a little time to develop oral traditions, which inevitably many followers of Jesus would have committed to memory. Each of these stories would have been told and passed around to Christian communities throughout the Middle East, but Mark would have researched thoroughly with the eyewitnesses, especially Peter.

Mark wrote likely during a brief time of reprieve from persecution of the Early Church. This opportunity for the early Christian community to catch their breath afforded Mark the time to write, but the previous persecution and the knowledge that more could come provided the motivation. He had the foresight to provide a detailed written account of the life and ministry of Jesus so it could be verified, copied, and passed around to every community of believers, which was especially important for the new generation of people who had not witnessed the events. Jesus's legacy was already changing the world and now, carried along by the Holy Spirit, Mark sought to preserve that legacy.

Literary Context for Mark 2:1-12

Mark chapter 2 picks up at one of the early high points of Jesus's ministry. Chapter 1 begins with John the Baptist, Jesus's baptism and temptation, and the calling of a couple of the disciples, and then dives straight into Jesus's ministry of casting out demons, healing, and prophesying. His popularity is on the rise and crowds have started to force Him into lonely places. This is where the messianic secret comes into play. Jesus tells the demon to be quiet and the leper to keep a secret. But they do not keep the secret, so Jesus cannot travel publicly.

Chapter 2 then marks one of the first times after this that Jesus ministers publicly, rather than in lonely places. That, of course, leads to the power struggles with His critics in the beginning of chapter 2. Chapter 2 is not the climax of Jesus's ministry, but His

popularity has gotten unmanageable just the same. This is the first of many power struggles with Jesus's critics Mark records.

After this story, Jesus goes right back to calling disciples and has more power struggles with His critics. These power struggles sometimes involve the supernatural. When the supernatural is involved, it settles the matter decisively, but also angers His critics even more. The critics cannot argue with the power and authority of Jesus's supernatural works effectively, even though they try (Mark 3:22).

Lexical Context for Mark 2:1-12

Mark writes in a descriptive yet efficient form of Koine Greek. He uses more adjectives in his narratives than Matthew or Luke, but has a smaller total vocabulary,¹⁰ because he omits much of the teaching of Jesus and some of the unique stories like Luke's birth narratives. A few of these special descriptive words are found in Mark 2:1-12.

Παραλυτικον (paralytikon)

παραλυτικον (*paralytikon*) shows up in Mark 2:3, 4, 5, 9 as a term for the paralytic who was bedridden and needed to be carried to Jesus. Timothy Friberg adds these descriptive words for *παραλυτικον*, "unable to walk, disabled; substantively in the NT *paralyzed person, paralytic*."¹¹ Timothy Friberg showcases the etymological roots of

¹⁰ Edwards comments on Mark's vocabulary saying, "Mark composes his Gospel in a total of 1,270 different Greek words, excluding proper names. This is a relatively modest vocabulary range." Edwards, *Mark*, 10.

¹¹ Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, "*παραλυτικός*," *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), BibleWorks, v.10.

the word παραλῶν (*paraluo*) that refers to weakness or disability in general. Moises Silva dives further back into the root word λῶν to show that the “loosen, let go”¹² sense of that word then morphed toward weaken or disable with παραλῶν, as if the man let go of himself in order to get in that position. The cultural implication was that this man’s weakness affected everyone’s perception of him. He was viewed culturally as a weak person, as unfair as that may be. Jesus needed to change that perception.

Despite the man’s disability, he obviously had a great sense of adventure or at least desperation to approve of his friends carrying him up to the roof, digging through it, and lowering him down on ropes to Jesus. Mark saw the men’s risky desperation and called it faith. Jesus saw the man’s faith and called him forgiven. Modern believers get the opportunity to recognize how God sees people and declare that in encouraging ways. Modern culture might see people as disabled and weak, but believers can prophetically declare the possibilities for their future.

δυναμενοι (dynamenoi)

The Greek word for power, δυναμενοι, appears twice in Mark 2:1-12 (vv. 4 and 7). It carries the connotation of ability, possibility and even authority, as Frederick Danker states, “to possess capability (whether because of personal or external factors) for experiencing or doing something, *can, am able, be capable*.”¹³ The contrasting inability of the four friends of the paralytic with the ability of Jesus makes the amazement at Jesus

¹² Moises Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 190.

¹³ Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University Press, 2000), 262.

even bigger. The fact that δυνάμενοι often has the sense of supernatural power¹⁴ makes Jesus's supernatural healing of the man all the more appropriate. Where believers find themselves unable, Jesus has ability, because His power, authority, and agency far surpass that of humans.

πιστιν (pistin)

The faith of the men who came to Jesus was visible. “Jesus saw their faith” (Mark 2:5). The word πίστιν can imply an unseen reality (Heb. 11:1). But in this pericope, Mark infuses the word with a tangible quality,¹⁵ stemming from the decisive action of men who would not be denied access to Jesus because of their great belief in Him. Danker says about the Mark 2:5 usage of πίστιν that it refers to “belief and trust in the Lord’s help in physical and spiritual distress; oft. in the synoptic gospels.”¹⁶ Faith for the supernatural is visible and provable faith, which makes it very effective for evangelism, and also risky. Jesus used this visible miracle to prove an unseen aspect of faith, forgiveness, and ultimately His authority. Modern believers must take visible and provable risks to provide opportunities for God’s work to break through.

¹⁴ Gerhard Kittel makes the relationship between δυνάμενοι and miracles very clear: “the general synoptic usage ... describes the miracles of Jesus as δυνάμειj, acts of power.” Gerhard Kittel and G. W. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. 2* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 301. See also Mark 1:40; 3:23; 5:3; 6:5; 9:3, 22, 23, 28, 29, 39; 15:31 as he expresses δυνάμενοι as supernatural power.

¹⁵ Kenneth Wuest describes this concept: “Their actions were the visible evidence of their faith.” Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies From the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: 1966), 47.

¹⁶ Danker, *BDAG*, 819.

αφίενται (aphientai)

The debate on forgiveness energizes the narrative in Mark 2:1-12. Jesus offered the prophetic encouragement τέκνον, ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, “Son, your sins are forgiven” (Mark 2:5). This sends the scribes into a theological maelstrom. The scribes debate in their own minds and hearts about Jesus’s claim toward forgiveness (Mark 2:7). Then Jesus answers their thoughts. Jesus never makes a clear implication that He believes sin caused this man’s illness. However, He operated within the cultural construct of forgiveness that thought sickness was caused always by sin. Because of that, the paralytic needed set free from the social stigma of being a sinner on top of his illness. Thus, Jesus needed to “relieve, lighten ... release the soul”¹⁷ of this man. Modern believers can also relieve and lighten the soul of people when they prophetically declare forgiveness of sin in Jesus’s name.

Jesus’s response, “Which is easier ...” (Mark 2:9), recognizes that declaring forgiveness is easy, because it is not provable. However, the authority to command a lame man to walk will prove that claim. Jesus demonstrates His spiritual authority in forgiveness by showing His authority over infirmity. The two kinds of authority are related. Forgiven becomes the status of the former sinner and former paralytic. Jesus’s healing confirms His authority and prophetic word of forgiveness. Modern believers do not claim authority on earth to forgive sins against God. However, they can declare Jesus’s forgiveness over people as they also demonstrate provable signs (i.e. word of knowledge and healing).

¹⁷ Silva, *NIDNTT* 1, 444.

διαλογιζόμενοι (dialogizomenoi)

The scribes were concerned and confused in Mark 2:6. Their comfort, sense of religious propriety, and even ethical balance were thrown off by the entry of five men digging through the roof (v. 4). Then they see Jesus reacting favorably to this scene and hear Him say something that made no sense at first, “Son, your sins are forgiven” (v. 5). They must have thought, *What did He just say? Did He mean ...? Certainly, I did not hear ...? He did. He said it* Then their anger came. *How is this person speaking like this? Blasphemy! Who has power to forgive sins except the only God?* (v. 7). The scene happened in seconds. They were reasoning in their hearts and then all of sudden Jesus answered their thoughts!

διαλογιζόμενοι ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις, “reasoning in their hearts” (Mark 2:6, 8) describes an inner dialogue that engages “in a mental process involving back and forth movement of ideas, a kind of mental ping-ponging, in NT esp. in ref. to questioning someone’s activity or expression.”¹⁸ Danker portrays this as the epitome of intellectual confusion, which Mark most certainly meant in verses 6 and 8. The reasoning of these men was interrupted by the authority of the Son of Man, and the implication of His divinity.

ἐπιγνους (epignous)

Jesus’s knowledge of the scribes’ reasonings was supernatural. Mark located Jesus’s knowledge τῷ πνεύματι αὐτοῦ “in His spirit” (Mark 2:8), which indicates the place in all humans where spiritual and supernatural revelation happens. Friberg explains that ἐπιγνους can carry supernatural significance, “especially in relation to higher and

¹⁸ Frederick W. Danker, “διαλογίζομαι” *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University Press, 2000), BibleWorks. v. 10.

spiritual knowledge received through revelation.”¹⁹ Mark describes in functional terms what Paul names a λόγος γνώσεως, a “word of knowledge” in 1 Corinthians 12:8. This word of knowledge changed the impact of this story from being a simple healing wrapped in love and faith to being an establishment of the authority of Jesus to prophecy, heal, and forgive.

εγειρε (egeire)

In Mark 2:9 Jesus effectively rehearses what He will say to heal the paralytic, *ἔγειρε καὶ ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει*, “Get up, pick up your mat, and walk.” A rehearsal of miracles can be seen with Moses and Aaron (Exod 7-12), but their rehearsal was because of insecurity. Instead, Jesus rehearses what He will say to the paralytic to prove authority on the spot in front of His accusers. This mock command certainly was unnecessary for the physical healing of the paralytic, but it would have raised the level of anticipation and faith for the man. The paralytic knew, *Oh, that command is coming to me next, I’m getting ready*. Again, Jesus’s word of knowledge and then rehearsal of His command here were not necessary to the man’s physical healing, but these statements had to be made to remove the social and cultural stigma of being labeled a sinner because of his affliction. Jesus raised the tide of faith for the whole room with the word *εγειρε*, the same word Jesus uses to talk about resurrection (Matt 10:9; John 2:19).²⁰ How great a new, resurrected life this man would have.

¹⁹ Friberg, *Greek Lexicon*, “ἐπιγινώσκω,” Bibleworks.

²⁰ Friberg, *Greek Lexicon*, “ἐγείρομαι,” Bibleworks.

ἐξουσίαν (exousia)

The authority of Jesus rises as the central theme of this pericope. Friberg recognizes that ἐξουσία often deals with supernatural authority, giving the word the basic meaning “authority, right, power; (1) as denoting the power of decision making, especially as the unlimited possibility of action proper to God.”²¹ God incarnate, Jesus Christ, has an unlimited possibility for His actions. Jeremiah the prophet would agree, as he declared to God, “Nothing is too hard for you” (Jer 32:17). So when Jesus said ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, “that you would know the Son of Man has authority” (Mark 2:10), and then turns directly to the paralytic, no one in the room was breathing and some hearts were beating out of their chests. The scribes were sitting in stunned anger, hoping beyond hope this man would not get up. The friends had wide eyes full of compassion and anticipation for what was possible. The onlookers were seeing the climax of a showdown and were not sure if there would be an execution or a celebration afterward (eventually they got both). The paralytic was simply holding fast to the thread that maybe Jesus was not bluffing when He rehearsed His command, maybe it was his turn for redemption.

But one person in the room had no anxiety, insecurity, doubt, or restless musings in this moment: Jesus. Jesus had spent eternities past with His Father and the Holy Spirit. He was the Word that created the world and sustains it. Jesus created all authorities and powers. Jesus did not second-guess for a millisecond whether or not He had the authority to heal this wonderful man in front of Him. Jesus walked in authority. Authority bowed

²¹ Friberg, *Greek Lexicon*, “ἐξουσίαν,” Bibleworks.

to His name, and so would sin, knowledge, sickness, and righteousness. Jesus demonstrated His authority to prophesy forgiveness and sonship over this man by supernatural knowledge and healing. Jesus said to the seventy-two, “I have given you authority” (Luke 10:19). Because of Jesus’s exercise of His authority, the onlookers were “amazed and praised God, saying that, ‘This, we’ve never seen!’” (Mark 2:12). The authority to move in the supernatural and declare the reign of Jesus and the kingdom of God belongs to all believers. The next section will show the biblical-theological context for Mark 2:1-12.

Biblical Theological Context for Mark 2:1-12

Mark 2:1-12 represents a quintessential look at the supernatural and redemptive daily ministry of Jesus. This passage contains all three of the major gifts of the Spirit that Jesus uses most often in His ministry: prophecy, word of knowledge, and healing. This section will trace Mark’s rhythm and purposes; prophecy, word of knowledge, and healing in Mark 2:1-12; and then Jesus’s method and purpose.

Mark’s Rhythm and Purposes in Mark 2:1-12

Mark wrote a shorter Gospel than the other three Gospel writers did, but this story is expanded in profound ways. Mark includes a vivid description of the men’s desperation and faith that Matthew and Luke do not, the “sort of thing an eyewitness might have been likely to remember, such as the ‘digging out’ of the roof.”²² These details point to Mark’s themes and theological purposes in writing his book. Mark’s emphasis on ἐὺθὺς “immediate” (Mark 2:8) transitions, dramatic changes (like his turn to

²² France, *Mark*, 17.

the paralytic in verses 10-11), and sandwiched stories²³ (like the word of knowledge about scribes thoughts on forgiveness in the middle of a healing story) creates a fast paced, exciting telling of Jesus's life and ministry that paints vivid pictures in the mind of the reader. The theme in Mark 2:1-12 is the authority of Jesus to prophesy, give words of knowledge, forgive sin, and heal.

The popularity of Jesus caused His home²⁴ in Capernaum to be overrun with people wanting to see Him (Mark 2:1-3). Jesus displayed throughout His ministry an approachable quality to the point that people would press on Him (Mark 5:24; Luke 14:25) and force Him into a boat to teach (Matt 13:1-2; Luke 5:3), and He would need to escape to pray (Luke 5:16). The people at this home were jammed in and standing outside the door, straining to listen, longing to see Jesus. Jesus was not on a platform with a microphone and a security guard on either side. Jesus simply dealt with the pressures of anyone and everyone getting in His space (Matt 19:13). Jesus showed a poise, comfort, and ease with people in these environments, a quality that invited the cultural outcasts to stay with him (Matt 9:11; Mark 2:15; Luke 5:30). Jesus's approach to supernatural ministry was normal.

Mark 2:4 shows five people extremely desperate to see the authentic power of God. The picture of the four of them as they ἀπεστέγασαν τὴν στέγην (Mark 2:4 BGT) “unroofed the roof” (Mark 2:4) is vivid and even humorous.²⁵ They had “showered

²³ Edwards gives clarity about sandwiched stories: “[The] Second Gospel frequently interrupts a story or pericope by inserting a second, seemingly unrelated, story into it.” Edwards, *Mark*, 11.

²⁴ Edwards rightly observes that this was “presumably Peter’s house of 1:29.” Edwards, *Mark*, 74.

²⁵ Kelly R. Iverson, “Incongruity, Humor, and Mark: Performance and the Use of Laughter in the Second Gospel,” *New Testament Studies* 59, Iss. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 9.

disrespect as well as dirt on the guests below,”²⁶ including Jesus. Jesus did not even rebuke the men for destroying property. He could have rebuked them. Instead, He acknowledged the faith, not the sin of the men.

Jesus spoke kindly and with encouragement to the paralytic. Jesus called out the gold in him, “Son, your sins are forgiven” (Mark 2:5). Hans-Otto Reling comments about Jesus’s pronouncement of forgiveness, “It is not clear if the forgiveness addressed a particular sin or the general sinfulness of the paralytic.”²⁷ Without an indication of a particular sin by Jesus, it would lean toward being an address of general sinfulness. It is as if Jesus was saying, “You see yourself as an illegitimate child unacceptable to and unloved by God the Father because of your infirmity, but I see you as a son who is forgiven, accepted, and whole. I don’t have any illegitimate children. I could not image a world without you, so I created you. You are my son.” This prophetic declaration set in motion new possibilities of thinking for all who heard it.

Jesus focused so much on the men who carried the mat and their faith, and the man and his prophetic destiny, that He ignored the religious people in the room. Mark goes to great lengths to make sure his readers know these guys gave no physical indications about their opinions. They were “sitting there” and “reasoning in their hearts” (Mark 2:6). Mark, the narrator, shows that Jesus “immediately” knew “in his spirit” that they were “thinking these things” (verse 7). Jesus even states their thoughts happened “in their hearts” (verse 8). Mark wants readers to know Jesus has special supernatural insight

²⁶ Edwards, *Mark*, 75.

²⁷ Hans-Otto Reling, “The Composition of Tripolar Pronouncement Stories in the Gospel of Mark” (PhD diss., Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, MI, 1994), 66.

from God in this moment. Jesus did not have time to perceive and ascertain with human insight that kind of knowledge. He immediately knew because of a word of knowledge.

Jesus then makes faith-filled challenges and declarations to the scribes. “Which is easier ...” (Mark 2:9) and “in order that you would know” (v. 10). Jesus wanted them to know His authority. Jesus did not have to be convinced of His authority and neither would the paralyzed man in a few seconds, but the scribes did need convincing, and so did everyone else crammed into that house. This supernatural event would establish the Son of Man’s authority to prophesy, give words of knowledge, forgive sin, and heal.

Mark uses the title “Son of Man” fourteen times to talk about Jesus.²⁸ Jesus declared himself to be the Son of Man here, an obscure title but also known to some as the messianic figure in Daniel 7.²⁹ France believes “the title must be understood not primarily as identifying Jesus with the rest of humanity, but precisely as setting him apart.”³⁰ G. F. Maclear also shares a high view of the title Son of Man by declaring “the expression denotes that He who was the Son of God from all Eternity became the ‘Son of Man’ in time, the second Adam, the second Head of our race, the crown of our humanity.”³¹ The authority Jesus asserts throughout this passage by prophesying over the man, forgiving him, calling out the scribes’ thoughts, and healing the paralytic all show

²⁸ Mark 2:10, 28; 8:31; 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21 (twice), 41, 62.

²⁹ David E. Garland talks about the term “Son of Man” and Jesus being able to shape it: “The obscurity of the term made it nearly free of any preconceived notions that Jesus’ generation may have entertained. Consequently, it is a title that Jesus can fill with his own meaning.” David E. Garland, *Mark: from Biblical Text ... to Contemporary Life*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 96.

³⁰ France, *Mark*, 128.

³¹ G. F. Maclear, *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges: Mark* (Cambridge, UK: University Press, 1893).

Jesus did not use this title to declare His humanity, but rather that He was “given authority, glory, and sovereign power ... His dominion is an everlasting dominion” (Dan 7:14). The reference to Daniel, although obscure, pushed the knowledgeable into a place of decision about Jesus: either He had the authority He claimed or He needed to die. Modern believers know that both were true, thus the brilliance of Jesus’s use of this title.

Jesus asked the man to act in faith, “Get up, take your mat and go home” (Mark 2:11). Jesus commands healing throughout Scripture, as will be traced in the rest of this chapter. Mark focuses on the “visible demonstration”³² of God’s power as the man “walked out in front of everyone” (v. 12). The people also focus on this visible demonstration of God’s power. “This, we’ve never seen!” (Mark 2:12). They were amazed and praised God, which is the normal response to a miracle. Jesus dared people to believe based on what they saw. “Do not believe me unless I do the works of my Father. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father” (John 10:37, NIV). Believers have been given authority from Jesus to demonstrate His power and love to the world and dare people to believe in Him.

Many scholars focus on forgiveness as the central theme of Mark 2:1-12.³³ However, forgiveness serves along with everything else in this story to establish the

³² Martina E. Martin, “It’s My Prerogative: Jesus’ Authority to Grant Forgiveness and Healing on Earth,” *Journal of Religious Thought* 59/60 (Washington, WA: Howard University, 2007), 72.

³³ These scholars believe forgiveness is the central theme of the passage. C. S. Mann, *Mark: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986), 223. Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, Baker Exegetical Commentary On the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 115. Larry W. Hurtado, *New International Biblical Commentary*, vol. 2, *Mark* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989), 36.

authority of Jesus. Mark established the authority of Jesus in this passage to recognize faith, to prophesy and forgive, receive supernatural knowledge from God, heal and ultimately to be the Messianic aspects of the title “Son of Man,” and so be followed by many as they gave glory to God. The authority to recognize faith, to prophesy, proclaim God’s forgiveness, receive supernatural knowledge from God, heal the sick and give glory to God so that people would follow Jesus was also transferred to every believer. That transfer creates the space for evangelism by the supernatural power of God, now termed power evangelism. Prophecy, word of knowledge, and healing fuel the evangelism in Mark 2:1-12.

Prophecy in Mark 2:1-12

Jesus’s first words in this pericope are, “Son, your sins are forgiven” (Mark 2:5). Jesus is calling out the gold³⁴ in the man. This is not simply a nice way to address someone.³⁵ Instead, Jesus was calling the man up into greater things. This statement was not true of the paralyzed man at this moment. Jesus is stating something about the truth of how God sees him, about who God created him to be—that this man is not an orphan, but a son. God created him to be a son is his place in heaven and his identity with God, if he was willing to walk in it. Jesus is calling this person to be who God the Father has called

³⁴ “Calling out the gold” refers to New Testament personal prophecy, which exists for encouragement, exhortation, and comfort. The phrase has been used in teaching by Bill Johnson at Bethel Church in Redding, California, and can be heard in his teaching here: “Bethel Church, Redding,” Facebook, accessed July 20, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/bethel.church.redding/videos/vb.156375031823/10154347300201824/?type=2&theater>.

³⁵ Brooks says that “‘Son’ or ‘child’ is a term of endearment and says nothing about the person’s age.” Brooks, *Mark*, 58.

him to be and to live in the truth of that heavenly reality, rather than the hurt of his past labels.

With the phrase “your sins are forgiven,” Jesus addresses the hurt of this man’s past. Jesus prophetically wipes away the hurt of the past with this statement. People believed that his sin had caused him to be paralyzed.³⁶ In one statement, Jesus is reframing the paralyzed man’s life. His paralysis is not God’s doing and it’s not punishment for sin. This man can look completely clean in God’s sight. His contemporaries viewed the paralyzed man as an enemy of God. Jesus declares he is right with God. The past is not as important as his future. That is the heart of the New Testament prophetic ministry.

Jesus has the prophetic ability to forgive sins. This “prophetic power”³⁷ shows in Jesus’s ability to declare future events (Matt 24-25), interpret the Scriptures (Luke 24:19), and declare to this paralytic man how God sees him. Believers have the same prophetic power. These prophetic encouragements have a fairly low chance of being effective in the man’s life if they are not coupled with what follows, the word of knowledge and healing.

Word of Knowledge in Mark 2:1-12

Mark shows a clear understanding of Jesus’s supernatural ability to receive knowledge from God about people and situations by saying that “immediately Jesus knew in His spirit that they were thinking these things” (Mark 2:8). Because Jesus’s

³⁶ Mark Allan Powell and Barry L. Bandstra, “Disease,” *The Harper Collins Bible Dictionary* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2011), 199.

³⁷ Kittle, *TDNT* 2, 300.

knowledge existed in the realm of the spirit, this was knowledge unattainable through human observation or insight. Commentator James A. Brooks believes this was simply human knowledge: “Any person with insight could have surmised the thoughts of the scribes on this occasion.”³⁸ However, that statement reflects an anti-supernaturalism bias and does not represent the intention of the author or the context. As Garland declares, “Proof that Jesus speaks for God comes in his response to these teachers’ unexpressed censure. He knows in his spirit that they question thus in their hearts. Knowing their hearts does not mean that he only reads the concern on their faces. God is the one who knows hearts, and Jesus does as well.”³⁹ Donahue and Harrington agree, recognizing the shift Jesus makes on the scribes: “The narrative here shifts. The scribes have questioned Jesus in their hearts; he now questions them publicly.”⁴⁰ Mark leaves no doubt about his intentions with multiple phrases indicating supernatural knowledge: the scribes were “reasoning in their hearts” (v. 6); the instantaneous quality of the knowledge, “immediately Jesus knew” (v. 8); the place in which the knowledge came, “in His spirit” (v. 8); the reiteration that their musings were immaterial, “thinking these things” (v. 8); and Jesus’s own words confirming Mark’s narrative, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?” (v. 8). Jesus spoke a word of knowledge revealed to Him by the Spirit of God about the thoughts in the scribes’ hearts.

³⁸ James A. Brooks, *Mark*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1991), 59. C. S. Mann also agrees with Brooks, stating “the thoughts of the scribes were visible, presumably in their expressions.” Mann, *Mark*, 224.

³⁹ Garland, *Mark*, 94.

⁴⁰ John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2002), 95.

Jesus's word of knowledge about the scribes' musings exists as a confirmable demonstration of the supernatural power of God in His life. If the scribes were not thinking these things in their hearts, certainly they would have said, "No, that is not at all what we were thinking, Jesus. Why would you accuse us of such a thing?" However, no such statement was offered. Jesus was precisely correct with this knowledge. Everyone listening now had simple evidence that God speaks to Jesus. The word of knowledge serves to confirm the validity of believers so other things they say or do that are not as easily confirmed may be trusted. For instance, in this case, the paralytic can trust Jesus's prophetic encouragement, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5), because Jesus had correctly called the scribes on their reasonings. The pairing of a confirmable manifestation of the Spirit (for example, word of knowledge or healing) with a prophetic encouragement significantly increases the effectiveness of prophecy.

Mark may or may not have known Paul's list of manifestations of the Holy Spirit from his first letter to the church in Corinth (1 Cor 12:7-11). However, his declaration of Jesus's supernatural ability here correlates perfectly with what Paul calls a word of knowledge. The context for the manifestations of the Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12 reveals they should be used in gatherings of believers and toward unbelievers (1 Cor 14:16, 22-25). The application of these manifestations is toward specific people and circumstances, versus applying them to interpreting the Scripture. The Holy Spirit obviously may freely manifest himself by supernatural knowledge to interpret Scripture if He wants, but that is not the context for these manifestations, which particularly applies to a word of knowledge. Paul implies that a word of knowledge manifests itself in the way described by Mark. So whether Mark used Paul's writing as a source, or Paul used

Mark, or both wrote independently, the two authors harmonize perfectly to describe one of the gateway manifestations of the Holy Spirit that was continually present in Jesus's life and ministry and is available to all believers. A word of knowledge⁴¹ and the manifestation of physical healing are both instantly verifiable and allow onlookers to accept the person as God's messenger.

Healing in Mark 2:1-12

Besides His word of knowledge, Jesus heals the paralytic as a demonstration of the man's sonship and status of being forgiven. Jesus then follows up His word of knowledge with the statement, "Which is easier, to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, pick up your mat and walk?'" (Mark 2:9). Multiple scholars rightly observe that forgiveness is not easier in its significance, but rather in its provability. Edwards states about the provability of forgiveness: "From a human perspective it is safe to pronounce the forgiveness of sins, since that statement cannot be falsified. Jesus, however, will provide evidence for the former by healing the paralytic, which can be verified by all ... the authority to heal and the authority to forgive are the same authority."⁴² This decisive factor of proving Jesus's authority makes physical healing one of the most obviously useful tools in evangelism for believers of all generations.

⁴¹ These narratives also include supernatural knowledge of specific information about a person or group: Gen 4:10; 6:13; 7:1; 8:16-17; 12:1, 7; 18:14; 21:1-3; Exod 4:27; 14:3; Judg 4:14; 1 Sam 9:17, 20; 10:22; 2 Sam 5:22-25; 12:1-13; 1 Kgs 17:2-6; 18:44-46; Dan 2; Matt 9:4; 11:25; 12:25; 21:1-9; 26:17-20; Mark 2:8; 8:17; 11:1-10; 12:15; 14:12-17; Luke 1:36; 4:23; 5:22; 6:8; 7:39-40; 9:47; 19:5, 28-40; 22:7-14; John 1:48; 4:16-19; 6:61; 12:12-19; 16:19; Acts 5:3, 9; 8:23, 26; 9:11-16; 10:4-6, 19-20; 13:11; 14:9.

⁴² Edwards, *Mark*, 79. Hooker also agrees that "the scribes can hardly reply that it is easier to say 'Get up and walk', since that will be to acknowledge that Jesus has already done the more difficult thing." Hooker, *Mark*, 87.

Jesus makes a statement about His own authority: “But in order that you would know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on the earth” (Mark 2:10). He seemingly cuts himself off in the middle of his own sentence, which many scholars have observed.⁴³ This sudden change of person adds dramatic emphasis to Mark’s story, shocking Jesus’s audience and Mark’s readers into the realization of just how serious Jesus was about this man’s prophetic destiny and status of being forgiven.

Jesus’s prayer for healing strikes a modern reader as peculiar as it likely did the original audience, “Get up, pick up your mat and walk.” Jesus talked to God about sickness the same way a Son who has spent eternities past with His Father, learning His every desire and will would talk about sickness: He did not talk to God about sickness. He knew His Father’s will on sickness and so He commanded sickness to change. Jesus did not need permission to heal sickness. God had given Him authority over sickness just like He has given every believer authority. To religious people, Jesus’s prayer for healing may have seemed odd, but to the irreligious it made all the sense in the world. Religious people could expect a poetic, Psalm-like prayer from Jesus, but instead they saw language that depicted a familial relationship. Irreligious people could think, *Jesus commanded with authority over sickness. He talks like a son to His Father and if I get to know Him, I’ll get to know God the Father too.* The message was obvious to first-century people: get to know Jesus, and you’ll get to know His Father. He does His Father’s deeds (John 5:19-20; 8:28), He speaks His Father’s words (v. 28; 12:49). They were thinking, *Let’s get close enough to Jesus to find out if He’s the exact representation of the Father*

⁴³ Brooks, *Mark*, 60. France, *Mark*, 129. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 88-89. Lane, *Mark*, 97.

(Heb 1:3). The attractiveness of Jesus's method of prayer for healing made way for the good news of the Kingdom.

Throughout His life Jesus prayed in what may have seemed to some to be an odd way,⁴⁴ like a son, not a hired man. Then He adopted all believers into His family, and they prayed like sons and daughters too, in His name.⁴⁵ Believers have the spiritual inheritance to pray with authority too, just like Jesus, commanding sickness and watching it leave in Jesus's name. God the Father does not need to ask permission to heal. Neither did His Son Jesus. And neither do believers in Jesus. Jesus's method of healing tied very closely to His purposes on the earth and His method for all of the supernatural.

Jesus's Method and Purpose

This section will contain an explanation of Jesus's method for doing supernatural ministry in Mark 2 and how that relates to modern believers. Starting with the setting and the atmosphere, this section will also analyze Jesus's attitude and His approach. Jesus's method is also shown in the things He did not do as He prepared to heal the paralytic. Then the section will apply Jesus's purpose in the passage to modern believers.

Mark 2:1-12 contains a situation in Jesus's ministry with some parallels to a modern church gathering. A crowd of people gathered in a building to hear Jesus talk; feels like a church gathering. However, a few notable differences are found between the gathering in Mark and a modern church service. First, they gathered in a house, not a religious space. They were not far from the temple and most villages had a synagogue

⁴⁴ Matt 8:4, 13; 9:6, 29; 12:13; Mark 2:9; 3:5; 5:34, 41; 10:52; Luke 5:24; 6:10; 7:14; 8:48, 54; 13:12; 17:19; 18:42; John 4:50; 5:8; 9:7; 11:43.

⁴⁵ Acts 3:6; 9:17, 40; 13:11; 14:10; 20:10.

(Matt 4:23), especially Capernaum where the miracle happened (Mark 1:21). They could have assembled in a religious space, but they did not.

Second, no religious aspects of the assembly are mentioned: singing, praying, or the public reading of Scripture, all of which were a regular part of religious gatherings for the first-century Jew.⁴⁶ The only possibly religious aspect of the gathering is the teaching of Jesus. Judging by the samples of Jesus's teaching we have throughout the New Testament, it did not sound much like the religious gatherings of their day ("a new teaching and with authority" Mark 1:27). Jesus's teachings were incomprehensible to many crowds (Matt 13:13, Mark 4:13, 9:32, Luke 8:10, John 3:10, 8:27, 10:6). Jesus attracted non-religious people constantly to hear Him teach (Matt 9:10, Mark 2:15, Luke 5:29). Therefore, this gathering felt much more like a house party than a religious assembly, with people crowded outside the door (Mark 2:2), others clawing through the roof (v. 4), and religious people taking offense (vv. 6-7).

Religious gathering or not, Jesus's life, ministry, and teaching were extremely attractive to the irreligious. Jesus was just as effective at teaching outside a religious gathering as He was in one. That principle lays the groundwork for making the supernatural normal outside the church. Also, the way believers minister in the supernatural inside a church gathering should be the same as outside of one. The authentic supernatural work of God should be attractive and comfortable to the irreligious and the nonbeliever.

⁴⁶ G. W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 1123-4.

Absent from Jesus's approach to the supernatural was a flashy suit, keyboard music, all the onlookers praying and pulling on the anointing, Jesus telling everyone to speak in tongues, or instructions to strike up a chorus of "How Great Thou Art." Jesus offered no fanfare, pretense, religious pomp, or arrogance. Jesus made the supernatural normal, so people flocked to Him. His supernatural works impacted people for eternity. In Mark 2 Jesus had a different perspective than most modern believers in His approach to the supernatural.

Jesus's actions revealed His perspective. Jesus, the Son of Man, was aware of sin, but He fixated on God's prophetic possibilities. He was aware of sickness, but He fixated on faith and God's healing power. He was aware of angry critics, but He fixated on God's amazing forgiveness. Jesus just had a different agenda than the religious people in Mark 2. Jesus simply fixated on better matters. These attitudes make supernatural evangelism possible. It's this change of perspective that allows room for God to receive praise, so that unbelievers take notice.

Then when unbelievers stand in amazement, believers get to say, "Only Jesus could do this! Jesus is alive and He loves you so much that it is not okay with Him that you are sick today. He thinks you are so amazing, and He wants relationship with you." Although that call through the supernatural is not irresistible, it is unmistakable and extremely hard to resist. The call to follow Jesus after a physical healing or word of knowledge paves the way for the greatest miracle of the Holy Spirit taking residence in

the spirit of a human. Jesus's example of making the supernatural normal serves as the quintessential version of a thread that exists in the rest of the Bible.⁴⁷

Making the Supernatural Normal from Jesus's Incarnation to the New Creation

In the New Testament, Jesus came as the exact representation of God the Father (Heb 1:3). In fifty-seven percent of the New Testament narratives the supernatural is involved.⁴⁸ The Gospel writers detailed four different accounts of Jesus's life and ministry. Therefore, like stories from the four Gospels will be combined. Narratives

⁴⁷ See Appendix A, "Making the Supernatural Normal in the Old Testament," to trace the supernatural through the Old Testament with specific attention given to healing, prophecy, word of knowledge, and evangelism in Old Testament narratives.

⁴⁸ There are 189 New Testament narrative pericopes that specifically involve the supernatural: Matt 1:18-25; 2:1-12, 13-18, 19-23; 3:11-17; 4:1-11, 23-25; 8:1-4, 5-13, 14-17, 23-27, 28-34; 9:1-7, 14-26, 27-34, 35-38; 10:1-42; 11:1-30; 12:1-14, 15-21, 22-37; 13:53-58; 14:13-21, 22-35; 15:21-28, 29-39; 17:1-13, 14-23, 24-27; 19:1-15; 20:29-34; 21:1-11, 12-17, 18-22; 22:1-23:39; 24:1-25:46; 26:17-35; 27:45-56; 28:1-10, 16-20; Mark 1:9-12, 21-28, 29-34, 35-39, 40-45; 2:1-12; 3:1-6, 7-12; 4:35-41; 5:1-20, 21-43; 6:1-6, 7-13, 30-44, 45-56; 7:24-30, 31-37; 8:1-13, 22-26; 9:2-13, 14-32, 38-50; 10:46-52; 11:1-11, 12-25; 13:1-37; 14:12-26, 27-31, 66-72; 15:33-41; 16:1-8, 9-20; Luke 1:5-25, 26-38, 39-56, 57-80; 2:1-7, 8-20, 21-24, 25-40; 3:21-37; 4:1-13, 14-15, 16-30, 31-37, 38-44; 5:1-11, 12-16, 17-26; 6:1-11, 17-49; 7:1-10, 11-17, 18-35, 36-50; 8:1-21, 22-25, 26-39, 40-56; 9:1-9, 10-17, 28-36, 37-45; 10:1-24; 11:14-28; 13:10-21; 14:1-24; 17:11-19; 18:31-34, 35-43; 19:1-9, 28-44; 21:5-38; 22:7-38, 39-46, 47-53, 54-62; 23:26-43, 44-49; 24:1-12, 13-35, 36-49, 50-53; John 1:29-34, 43-51; 2:1-11, 12-25; 3:1-21; 4:1-38, 43-54; 5:1-15; 6:1-15, 16-24; 8:48-59; 9:1-12, 13-10-21; 11:1-16, 17-37, 38-44; 12:20-36, 37-50; 13:18-30, 31-17:26; 18:1-14; 20:1-9, 10-18, 19-20, 24-31; 21:1-14; Acts 1:1-8, 9-11; 2:1-13, 14-41, 42-47; 3:1-26, 4:23-31, 32-37; 5:1-11, 12-16, 17-42; 6:8-11, 12-15; 7:1-60; 8:4-8, 9-13, 14-25, 26-40; 9:1-19, 32-43; 10:1-8, 9-23, 24-48; 11:19-30; 12:1-18, 19-25; 13:4-12; 14:1-7, 8-20; 16:6-10, 16-40; 19:1-7, 8-22; 20:7-12; 21:1-16; 25:23-26:32; 27:1-12, 13-26, 27-44; 28:1-10.

There are 142 New Testament narrative pericopes that do not specifically mention the supernatural: Matt 3:1-10; 4:12-21; 5:1-7:28; 8:18-22; 9:9-13; 12:38-50; 13:1-35, 36-52; 14:1-12; 15:1-20; 16:1-4, 5-12, 13-20, 21-28; 18:1-20, 21-35; 19:16-20:16; 20:17-19, 20-28; 21:23-46; 26:1-5, 6-13, 14-16, 36-46, 47-56, 57-68, 69-75; 27:1-10, 11-26, 27-44, 57-66; 28:11-15; Mark 1:1-8, 12-20; 2:13-17, 18-22, 23-28; 3:13-19, 20-35; 4:1-34; 6:14-29; 7:1-23; 8:14-21, 8:27-9:1; 9:33-37; 10:16, 17-31, 32-34, 35-45; 11:27-12:44; 14:1-11, 32-42, 43-52, 53-65; 15:1-15, 16-20, 21-32, 42-47; Luke 2:41-52; 3:1-20; 5:27-32, 33-39; 6:12-16; 9:18-27, 46-50, 51-56, 57-62; 10:25-37, 38-42; 11:1-13, 29-36, 37-54; 12:1-13:9; 13:22-35; 14:25-35, 15:1-17:10; 17:20-37; 18:1-17, 18-30; 19:11-27, 45-48; 20:1-47; 21:1-4; 22:1-6, 63-65; 22:66-23:25; 23:50-56; John 1:19-28, 35-42; 3:22-36; 4:39-42; 5:16-47; 6:25-71; 7:1-13, 14-24; 7:25-8:11; 8:12-30, 31-48; 10:22-42; 11:45-57; 12:1-11, 12-19; 13:1-17; 18:15-18, 19-24, 25-27, 28-40; 19:1-16, 17-27, 28-37, 38-42; 20:21-23; 21:15-25; Acts 1:12-26; 4:1-22; 6:1-7; 8:1-3; 9:20-31; 11:1-18; 13:1-3, 13-52; 14:21-28; 15:1-35, 36-41; 16:1-5, 11-15; 17:1-9, 10-15, 16-34; 18:1-17, 18-28; 19:23-41; 20:1-6, 13-38; 21:17-26; 21:27-22:29; 22:30-23:11; 23:12-35; 24:1-27; 25:1-12, 13-22; 28:11-16, 17-31.

where Jesus drives out demons will only be included if prophecy, word of knowledge, or healing are also attached.

Jesus made the supernatural normal. Even before His incarnation, everything that surrounded His life was infused with God's power.⁴⁹ The main description of Jesus's method and ministry in Galilee and Judea⁵⁰ centered on His supernatural works (Matt 4:23; 9:35; 19:2). Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection were also full of God's redemptive supernatural works.⁵¹ After walking through these and their application to modern ministry, this section will showcase Jesus's connection between compassion and the supernatural, and Jesus's commission of all believers at His ascension.⁵² For simplicity, the following section will focus on the supernatural narratives during Jesus's Galilean ministry.

The Supernatural in Jesus's Galilean Ministry

Jesus's Galilean ministry comprised the majority of the teaching and narratives in the Gospels.⁵³ Therefore, this section contains many miracles and their applications to modern believers. In preparation for ministry, His miracles and the call of the disciples,

⁴⁹ See "Appendix B: The Supernatural around the Incarnation" for a detailed description of the supernatural in the Jesus's birth narratives.

⁵⁰ See "Appendix C: The Supernatural in Jesus's Judean Ministry and in the Crucifixion and Resurrection" for an account of the supernatural in Jesus's Judean Ministry.

⁵¹ See "Appendix D: The Supernatural in Jesus's Judean Ministry and in the Crucifixion and Resurrection" for an account of the supernatural around Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection.

⁵² See "Appendix B: The Supernatural around the Incarnation," for a detailed account of the supernatural around the birth narratives and how that relates to ministry.

⁵³ Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, The IVP Bible Dictionary Series, vol. 6 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 253. Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: an Introduction and Survey* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1997), 232. Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago: Moody, 1964), 387.

Jesus experienced the supernatural. Jesus also showed a continual willingness to heal, even as He dealt with misconceptions about His supernatural ministry. The ministry of Jesus in Galilee showed remarkable wonders and God's power through physical touch. He emphasized faith and even used weird methods. Jesus capped His Galilean ministry by showing power over nature, answering the why question for the disciples, and commissioning many to supernatural ministry.

In Preparation for Ministry

As Jesus began to launch into ministry, two supernatural events served as signs: His baptism and temptation. At the baptism of Jesus (Matt 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34), onlookers saw heaven open, the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and God speaking in prophetic affirmation of His Son. Besides the example of Jesus in baptism, this event served to show God the Father and the Holy Spirit would be supernaturally involved in Jesus's life. Believers can expect God the Father and the Holy Spirit to work in their lives through the power of Jesus.

During the temptation of Jesus (Matt 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13), Satan attempts to lure Jesus to use his divine nature and supernatural power to feed himself (Matt 4:3), to protect himself in thrill seeking and unwise risk (vv. 5-6), and to gain power for himself (vv. 8-9). Angels then came to minister to Jesus (v. 11). Satan will still tempt believers to use the supernatural for selfish and useless purposes, but God desires for the supernatural to be redemptive for other people (Acts 1:8).

Miracles in Cana and Calling of Disciples

Bolstered by God's affirmation and purpose, Jesus began ministering supernaturally to people, beginning at the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11). He changed

water to wine (v. 9) and “revealed his glory” (v. 11). Then Jesus encountered a Samaritan woman at a well (4:1-42). Jesus’s word of knowledge (vv. 16-19) and prophecy to her (vv. 23-26) paved the way for many Samaritans to believe (vv. 29-42). Back in Cana, Jesus sent His word, “Go ... your son will live” (v. 50) to heal a man’s son who was dying (v. 51), leading to belief from his whole household (v. 52). All of these various supernatural works of God bring people to faith early in Jesus’s ministry. Jesus normally utilized the supernatural for evangelism.

Each of these supernatural narratives in the first part of John illustrates clearly how normal and approachable Jesus was. His mother imposed on Him at a wedding to get involved in supernatural ways. After some banter, Jesus utilized some servants and revealed His glory (John 2:3-9). Mary knew how approachable her son was, and their interaction represents a very normal mother and son conversation. Yet His action revealed His glory. At the well, a Samaritan woman approaches Jesus and He proceeds to have a normal conversation with her (4:7-16). The conversation turns when Jesus gives her a word of knowledge (vv. 17-18). From that point, the woman opens up and begins to talk to Him like He has authority. Back in Cana, the official approaches and begs Jesus to heal his son (v. 47). Instead of coming with him and making a big show with grandiose gestures, Jesus sends the word. This humble and approachable Messiah saw the whole household come to faith (vv. 50-53). Jesus’s manner of living invited people to Him. He was not pretentious or showy, but walked in bold and confident authority. Believers who minister in the supernatural must not be pretentious or showy, but rather approachable, normal, walking in a bold authority, and confident of the Holy Spirit’s power inside them.

The evangelistic purpose of the supernatural in Jesus's ministry continued. Jesus prophetically called His disciples to "fish for people" (Matt 4:19). When He called Nathaniel, Jesus gave him the word of knowledge, "I saw you ... under the fig tree" (John 1:48), convincing Nathaniel that Jesus is "the Son of God" (v. 49). Even Jesus's reading of Scripture at Nazareth carried prophetic overtones and resulted in His walking supernaturally through the crowd who tried to kill Him (Luke 4:16-30). The supernatural works and words of God push people to a point of decision either for or against Jesus.

Jesus's Willingness

God's supernatural works drew great crowds to Him. Matthew, Mark, and Luke each describe a time in Jesus's early ministry in Galilee marked by crowds and God's supernatural works (Matt 4:23-25; Mark 1:39; Luke 4:40-44). The Gospel writers each give specific miracle pericopes during this time. All three Synoptic writers include the cleansing of the leper (Matt 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16) with Jesus saying, "I am willing ... be clean" (Matt 8:3; Mark 1:41; Luke 5:13). Jesus's willingness to heal reflects God the Father's will for complete health "on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10). In fact, Jesus never denied physical healing to someone who wanted it.⁵⁴ The Bible never records Jesus making a statement about how God used sickness to teach a lesson.⁵⁵ Instead, Jesus consistently shows a willingness to command physical healing for humans.

⁵⁴ Even when Matthew records that "he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith" (Matt. 13:58), the emphasis is on the lack of faith and desire of the people, not on Jesus's willingness or His ability.

⁵⁵ Contrary to that, John 9 records Jesus speaking about the man born blind. "'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him'" (v. 3). Jesus uses the same wording in the Lazarus narrative. "It is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it" (11:4).

The central story for this chapter, Mark's narrative of the healing of the paralytic,⁵⁶ takes place during the early Galilee portion of Jesus's ministry, when His popularity was rising. Also, Jesus calls out healing of the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath during this time (Matt 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11). The healing of multitudes by the sea caps this section (Matt 12:15-16; 15:29-31; Mark 3:7-12; Luke 6:17-19). Both Matthew and Luke record Jesus was healing "all" (Matt 12:15; Luke 6:19). Jesus's willingness to heal is only limited by people's desire to receive healing. Believers also can step out in that same faith and confidence, knowing Jesus will heal anyone.

Jesus Deals with Misconceptions

Jesus's supernatural ministry in Galilee then deals with other misconceptions. First, the healing of the centurion's servant (Matt 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10) shows Jesus will heal Gentiles as well as Jews. The story also illustrates again that healing can happen from a distance through simply saying "the word" (v. 7). Then Jesus stopped a funeral procession to raise the widow's son in Nain (vv. 11-17). This shows Jesus does not discriminate between rich and poor and has power over death, and that faith is not necessary for healing. The healing of Peter's mother-in-law from a fever (Matt 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-32; Luke 4:38-40) shows nothing is too small for God to use for His glory. That minor miracle sparked a revival in every telling of the story (Matt 8:16; Mark 1:32; Luke 4:40). Modern believers must understand that every prayer for healing, no matter

⁵⁶ Matthew 9:1-8 and Luke 2:1-12 also contain the healing of the paralytic narrative. John 5 contains another healing of a paralytic at the pool of Bethesda.

how seemingly insignificant, represents an opportunity for God to get glory and can spark a revival.

Matthew's comment in 8:14-17 bears special mention, because of his tie between healing and the atoning work of Jesus. He says about Jesus's large scale healing ministry, "This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: 'He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases'" (Matt 8:17). Significantly, Matthew pulls this line directly from Isaiah's suffering servant prophecy (Isaiah 53). New Testament authors refer to Isaiah 53 seven times, twice to refer to Jesus's healing ministry (Matt 8:14-17; John 12:37-42), once to refer only to Jesus's suffering and death on the cross (Luke 22:35-38), and three times that are broad enough to include both Jesus's healing ministry and His sacrifice on the cross (Acts 8:26-35; Rom 10:11-21; 1 Pet 2:19-25). This provides further evidence the authors of Scripture intended believers to understand physical healing is possible through the atoning work of Jesus's suffering and death on the cross.

More Remarkable Miracles and Physical Touch

Jesus's ministry in Galilee continues with even more remarkable miracles (Matt 11:4-6; Luke 7:22-23). In one narrative Jesus raises a little girl from the dead and heals a woman's hemorrhage (Matt 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56). The woman tried to receive healing of her hemorrhage quietly, but Jesus declared her faith to the crowd and prophetically called her "daughter" (Matt 9:22; Mark 5:34; Luke 8:48). Jesus sent all but the parents and three disciples out of the room for the raising of Jairus's daughter (Matt 9:25; Mark 5:40-43). Whether in private or in public, faith is the common denominator that must be present for the supernatural to occur.

Although physical touch is not necessary for healing, physical touch and healing correlate in Scripture. In the healings of many at Gennesaret, people begged to just touch Jesus. Those who did were healed (Matt 14:34-36; Mark 6:53-56). The correlation between physical touch and healing occurs consistently in other narratives as well (Mark 6:5; 7:32; 8:22-25; 16:18; Luke 4:40; 13:13; 14:6; John 9:6; Acts 28:8). Believers can use the tool of laying hands on sick people to see them recover, just like Jesus and the early believers did.

Jesus Emphasizes Faith and Uses Strange Methods

When Jesus healed multiple blind men, He again emphasized faith (Matt 9:27-31; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43). Jesus's question is remarkable, "What do you want me to do for you?" (Matt 20:32; Mark 10:51; Luke 18:41). It would be obvious to everyone else they wanted to see, but Jesus still asked, like He did to the paralytic at Bethesda, "Do you want to get well?" (John 5:6). There are times when people remain comfortable in their sickness and it has become part of their identity. This question serves to clarify their desire and raise faith in their hearts. Jesus followed the question in each case by commanding healing.

Jesus healed people in some strange ways as well. In the healing of a man who was deaf and could not talk, Jesus put His fingers in the man's ears, spit in His hand, then touched his tongue (Mark 7:31-37). Finally, Jesus commanded, "Be opened" (v. 34). For the man born blind, Jesus made mud with His spit and put it on the man's eyes (John 9:6). The man washed and could see (v. 7). Afterward, the man was not angry about the method at all, but was grateful he could see, and he believed (vv. 10-17, 24-25, 30-33, 35-38). Jesus healed another blind man by spitting on his eyes and touching him (Mark

8:22-26). After Jesus touched and questioning him twice, the man could see fully. Just like the strange methods of Elijah and Elisha, Jesus often had a creativity to moving in the supernatural. However, people who are desperate and filled with faith do not care if the means of their healing is strange; they simply are grateful and believe. That does not give license to the believer to be weird, but rather to obediently respond in normal ways to the creative nudges of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Has Power over Nature, Answers Why, and Commissions Many

Jesus also performed supernatural signs over nature. Jesus calmed the storm (Matt 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25). He walked on water and so does Peter (Matt 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-21). He directed miraculous catches of fish (Luke 5:1-11; John 21:4-11). He got money from a fish's mouth (Matt 17:24-27). He multiplied food (Matt 14:13-21; 15:32-39; Mark 6:30-44; 8:1-13; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15). In many of these narratives Jesus explicitly shows He expects the disciples to be able to do the miracles themselves (Matt 8:26; 14:16, 29; Mark 4:40; 6:37; Luke 8:25; 9:13). These men were not apostles yet, showed great immaturity, and still had a thief and betrayer among them. Apparently, Jesus believed God will use anyone to show His glory in supernatural ways.

The disciples had prayed for a boy possessed by a spirit who was mute and had seizures as a result (Matt 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43). The boy's father brought him to Jesus because the disciples couldn't drive out the demon. Jesus drove out the demon and healed the boy. The disciples came to Jesus with a wonderful question, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" (Matt 17:19; Mark 9:28). All believers who pray for the sick have likely experienced the disappointment of not seeing healing. Jesus does not

give some cosmic, philosophical reasoning to why the demon did not come out and the healing did not occur. Jesus did not say the demon needed to stay in a while longer to teach everyone patience. Instead, Jesus offered a simple, methodological explanation, “This kind can come out only by prayer and fasting” (Matt 17:21; Mark 9:29).⁵⁷

Interestingly, Jesus did not have time to pray or fast before He commanded the demon to leave, “You deaf and mute spirit ... I command you, come out of him and never enter him again” (Mark 9:25). Jesus was not suggesting believers go on a hunger strike every time they encounter sickness or disease, but that a lifestyle of consistent prayer is required to walk in the authority to see certain kinds of supernatural breakthroughs. Ultimately, when believers do not see the healing they believe for, going into the quiet place with God and asking why is always appropriate. Blaming God or coming up with human reasoning for why does not help. God is not scared of questions and He will give supernatural insight.

Jesus gave supernatural insight when He commissioned the twelve disciples (Matt 10; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6) and seventy-two other people (Luke 10:1-24) to represent Him during His ministry. To the twelve disciples, Jesus said, “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons, freely you have received; freely give” (Matt 10:8). Jesus gave similar instructions to the seventy-two, “Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you’” (Luke 10:9). Both groups came back having successfully healed and preached (Mark 6:13; Luke 9:6; 10:17-24). Jesus fully intended for every believer to see the supernatural. He even said,

⁵⁷ Some manuscripts do not include “and fasting.” It does not make a major difference.

“Believe on the evidence of the miracles ... anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father” (John 14:11-13). Jesus gave license for all believers to seek and explore the supernatural works of God. Jesus continued to see supernatural things when He traveled to Judea and during the crucifixion and resurrection narratives.⁵⁸ The next section will focus on one of the key biblical pairings that will prepare believers for supernatural ministry: compassion and the power of God.

Compassion and Love’s Connection to the Power of God

Throughout His ministry, Jesus demonstrated great compassion for hurting people, a compassion that often drove Him to do supernatural works. Matthew makes a narrative commentary about Jesus’s life in ministry: “Jesus went through all the towns and villages ... healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them” (Matt 9:35-36). Matthew also shows Jesus’s compassion in specific actions. “When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick” (14:14). Jesus’s compassion drove Him to multiply food for four thousand people (15:30-39; Mark 8:1-9). When two blind men came to Him, “Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him” (Matt 20:34). Jesus’s compassion was demonstrated very clearly at the death of Lazarus; when “deeply moved in spirit and troubled,” He wept (John 11:33).

⁵⁸ See “Appendix C, “The Supernatural in Jesus’s Judean Ministry and in the Crucifixion and Resurrection,” for how these narratives contribute to the modern believers understanding of God’s work.

“Then the Jews said, ‘See how he loved him!’” (v. 36). Jesus expressed His compassion for His friends who were mourning and then He raised Lazarus from the dead.

Compassion and love connect to the power of God in other New Testament writings also. Ephesians 3:14-21⁵⁹ makes the connection explicit: “I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ” (vv. 17-18). Paul definitely refers to the supernatural power of God here⁶⁰ that must be bathed in love. Modern believers will be the answer to Paul’s prayer here by operating in the love and power of God.

Paul’s letter to the young pastor Timothy reads, “For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline ... join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God” (1 Tim 1:6-8). Paul refers again to supernatural manifestations⁶¹ through Timothy that have love at their core. Power without love will turn abusive. Love without power remains impotent to produce life transformation. Believers must operate in both love and power.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul starts talking to the Corinthian church about spiritual gifts in chapter 12, follows that with chapter 13 on love, and immediately delves back into the powerful manifestations of Holy Spirit in chapter 14—this is not an accident. The chapter

⁵⁹ Ephesians 3:14-21 mentions power words six times and love words four times, and they alternate back and forth.

⁶⁰ Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 695.

⁶¹ Ibid., 786-88.

markings were not in Paul's original letter. In fact, 1 Corinthians 12-14 is one section of Scripture and it's all about the power manifestations of Holy Spirit, which must have love at the center. Paul makes the love and power connection a propositional command, "Follow the way of love and eagerly desire manifestations of the Spirit" (14:1). Paul's command to love and desire the manifestations of the Spirit still rings true. Jesus's life and ministry were characterized by love and power. He gave that ministry to those who followed Him.

The Supernatural in Acts

Peter and over one hundred other followers of Jesus found themselves in a room together. For ten days this group continued to pray. Jesus's command to wait in Jerusalem likely felt like a life sentence, until the Holy Spirit showed up with power. This section will trace the supernatural through the Book of Acts, starting with those one hundred and twenty faithful prayer warriors who stayed in the upper room until the Day of Pentecost came.

The Supernatural During the Time of Peter

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost came with fire, the infilling with the Holy Spirit, and speaking in other tongues (Acts 2:1-4). One hundred and twenty people all talking, and probably shouting over each other, in different languages from a roof unsurprisingly drew a crowd of curious and skeptical onlookers (vv. 5-13). The onlookers became extraordinarily interested, when each of them realized that these unschooled Galileans were praising God in their native languages. The supernatural sign of tongues that could be interpreted invited Peter's preaching. After preaching, nearly three thousand people joined the fellowship of believers that day (v.

41). The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost opened the door for the supernatural to be normal in the lives of all believers.

Luke records a community that regularly experienced the supernatural works of God. Luke describes the atmosphere for supernatural works in the infant church.

“Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles” (Acts 2:43), which produced effective evangelism as “the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (v. 47). The link between God’s supernatural works and conversion permeates the Scripture.⁶²

The first healing narrative in Acts shows many similarities to the ministry of Jesus. First, this man had an incurable affliction from birth (Acts 3:2). Second, Peter and John converse with the man (vv. 4-6). Then they give the man (or infirmity) a prophetic command, “Walk” (v. 6), and touch him (v. 7). After healing, the man immediately praises God and the people are curious and interested (vv. 8-11). These similarities show these early Jesus followers had paid attention during His life and ministry and were doing a great Jesus impression.

The story also displays some notable differences from Jesus’s miracles as well. First, their command for healing contains the phrase, “in the name of Jesus Christ of

⁶² In 86 percent of the conversion narratives in the New Testament, the supernatural is at work. Conversions in the Gospels occur mostly before the resurrection of Jesus and are therefore not quite the same as those that follow the Resurrection. However, the changing of one’s mind and expression of faith in Jesus will also be considered a conversion for the sake of this study. Fifty-one conversion pericopes explicitly contain the supernatural: Matt 8:10-13; 9:2, 22, 29; 15:28; Mark 2:5; 5:34, 36-43; 10:52; Luke 1:45; 5:20; 7:9, 50; 8:48, 52-56; 17:19; 18:42; 24:8, 31, 45-52; John 1:50; 2:11, 22, 23; 4:29, 42, 53; 7:31; 9:38; 10:41-42; 11:45; 12:37-42; 20:8, 28; Acts 2:37; 3:16; 4:4; 5:12-16; 8:12-13, 36; 9:18, 34-35, 41-42; 10:44; 13:12; 14:1-3; 16:30; 19:5-6, 11-20; 28:6-10.

Eight conversion pericopes do not explicitly contain the supernatural: Acts 11:20-24; 13:48; 16:14; 17:4, 12, 34; 18:8, 26.

Nazareth” (Acts 3:6). Jesus never had to command healing or miracles in His own name, but He taught His disciples to pray that way. Second, the miracles did not give glory to the miracle workers and so there needed to be explanation. “Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?” (v. 12). Jesus’s miracles gave Him glory, and the miracle of Jesus’s followers need to constantly give Him glory. A witness to the resurrected Jesus should immediately follow miracles.

Through this early narrative of the miracle of Peter and John, Luke shows that the supernatural thrives around faith-filled expectation. Peter raised the man’s expectation by saying, “Look at us!” (Acts 3:4). Jesus made similar statements to raise the level of faith in people before prayer.⁶³ Peter had been expecting miracles in his life and ministry to the point that he’s astounded that the crowd did not expect them. “Why does this surprise you?” (v. 12). Believers who create an atmosphere of faith in their own spirits, where they consistently expect people to get well in Jesus’s name, where the impossible seems like the most probable option, are those who will consistently see miracles.

The healing of the lame man and the preaching that follows bring many to Christ (Acts 4:4). The priests take notice. They imprison Peter and John, question them, and then threaten them not to evangelize. Their enemies even saw the signs that these men had been with Jesus (v. 13), because the supernatural works of God provide specific evidence to everyone that believers have been with Jesus. Peter and John return to the other believers, who pray for miracles and continued boldness, until God shakes the place

⁶³ “What do you want me to do for you?” (Mark 10:51, Luke 18:41)) “Do you want to get well?” (John 5:6) “So that you may know that ...” (Mark 2:10, Matt 9:6, Luke 5:24) “Bring them here to me” (Matt 14:18) “I haven’t seen such great faith ...” (Luke 7:9, Matt 8:10)

where they are meeting (vv. 23-31). After being refilled with the Holy Spirit, these believers continue to see miracles as they witness about Jesus (vv. 31-33). This fulfills the primary purpose of the supernatural as Jesus stated, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses” (1:8). The supernatural power of the Holy Spirit is for the purpose of witnessing to the lordship of Jesus. Modern believers can expect that the power of the Holy Spirit through them will invite many into relationship with Jesus.

Acts 5 contains a remarkably negative supernatural event involving Ananias and Sapphira. Peter has a word of knowledge from the Holy Spirit that they lied about the money (v. 3). They died for lying to the Holy Spirit (vv. 5-10) and the fear of the Lord seized the whole community inside and outside the church (v. 11). Remarkable signs and wonders followed that scene, including some things Jesus had never done (vv. 12-16) in fulfillment of Jesus’s prophecy believers would do “even greater things” (John 14:12) than Jesus himself had done. The miraculous can inspire a holy fear of God and that will create an atmosphere for even greater things among believers.

Because of the popularity of these miracle-working believers, the high priest gets jealous and puts them in jail. An angel breaks them out of jail and they continue preaching (Acts 5:19-21). The authentic power of God will often inspire legitimate insecurity and opposition from the enemy. Persecution of this nature should only drive believers deeper into God’s workings. God will even use supernatural means to protect people of faith.

God never guarantees the protection of believers though, as shown by the story of Stephen. Stephen was never called an apostle, yet he was full of God’s power. He

“performed great wonders and signs among the people” (Acts 6:8). Stephen receives persecution. Before the Sanhedrin he had supernatural approval as his face was like “the face of an angel” (v. 15). He then experienced a vision of heaven in front of them as they rush and stone him (7:55-60). God will show up in supernatural ways to show himself loving and powerful, even when believers face martyrdom.

Philip, who was also not one of the apostles, also saw joyful miracles in his ministry in Samaria (Acts 8:4-14). These miracles cause crowds to pay “close attention to what he said” (v. 6) and follow Jesus. Simon gives up his sorcery to follow Jesus (v. 13). The new believers receive the Holy Spirit as Peter and John lay hands on them (vv. 14-25). God still uses the laying on of hands to perform supernatural works. Also, in a power encounter between Satan and the kingdom of God, believers walk in the confidence that God’s kingdom in them is supremely more powerful.

God can even supernaturally forego modern modes of transportation when it’s helpful for witness. God wanted to reach an Ethiopian eunuch so much with His message that He gave Philip a word of knowledge to travel to a certain road (Acts 8:26). Philip obeyed and preached prophetically about Jesus. Then God translated Philip to Azotus, up to thirty miles away⁶⁴ so Philip could preach to others sooner. This translation certainly witnessed powerfully to the eunuch, increased Philip’s faith, and helped all the towns from Azotus to Caesarea.

When Saul traveled to Damascus to persecute believers, God stopped his journey supernaturally, spoke to him audibly, blinded him, gave Ananias a word of knowledge

⁶⁴ Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2012), 1596.

about him, and subsequently healed and filled him with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:1-19).

Saul's conversion was a sovereign, supernatural interruption of his life. The adventure of life with the Spirit can even be filled with supernatural journeys.⁶⁵ These supernatural journeys will also serve God's purposes for evangelism and redemption.

At Lydda and Joppa, remarkable revivals followed remarkable miracles. First, God healed the paralytic Aeneas with a typical command from Peter, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat" (Acts 9:34). The two towns of Lydda and Sharon turn entirely to Jesus (v. 35). In Joppa, Peter raised a believer named Tabitha who had died back to life (v. 40). Joppa then became a place with many believers (v. 42). Peter follows Jesus's methods in the supernatural very closely and the consistency of miracles and conversions follows. Believers must set an atmosphere for faith and pray, expecting supernatural results.

A Roman centurion named Cornelius had a vision and word of knowledge about Peter (Acts 10:1-8), while Peter has a corresponding vision and word of knowledge (vv. 9-23). When they come together, the Holy Spirit is poured out on the Gentiles and they speak in tongues (vv. 24-48). That supernatural and visible sign of God's favor convinces Peter to accept Gentile believers into the community of faith. So God speaks to a pre-Christian and again the supernatural has direct redemptive and reconciliatory purposes.

Even when Agabus prophesies a famine will come, the people of God use this knowledge to rise up in redemptive generosity (Acts 11:27-30). Then an angel breaks a delirious Peter out of prison, who returns to an unsuspecting prayer meeting (12:1-17).

⁶⁵ Another translation story appears in John 6:16-21.

Even though Peter died as a martyr later in life,⁶⁶ God used this supernatural means to save him from persecution and keep him in active ministry. God will use His supernatural power to warn of calamity, so God's people can act redemptively in it. He will even rescue from death for the purposes of evangelism and mission. These early believers were learning to act like Jesus by being empowered by the Holy Spirit for supernatural witness. The supernatural ministry that started on the Day of Pentecost expanded as believers moved throughout the world.

The Supernatural During the Time of Paul

God's design for the gospel to go to the ends of the earth continued through the ministry of Paul, who was empowered by the Holy Spirit. The prophetic ministers at Antioch give word that Paul and Barnabas should be set apart for evangelistic mission (Acts 13:2). The proconsul in Paphos believes in Jesus after he sees Paul prophesy instant blindness on Elymas (vv. 4-12). At Iconium, God confirmed His message by empowering signs and wonders through Paul and Barnabas (14:3). Then in Lystra, the crowds call Paul and Barnabas Zeus and Hermes after the healing of a man who had never walked. (v. 10). Luke says that Paul "saw that he had faith to be healed" (v. 9) and commanded faith-filled risky action (v. 10). Just like Peter did, Paul and Barnabas do supernatural works in the same ways as Jesus.

God uses prompting and then a vision to direct Paul during his travels (Acts 16:6-10). When a fortune-teller shouts truth, but in the wrong spirit, Paul commands the spirit to come out of her, which leads to his persecution as he and Silas are thrown in jail (vv.

⁶⁶ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 806.

16-24). Paul and Silas worship in the jail and a supernatural earthquake releases them (vv. 25-26). Instead of running to get free, they stop for the jailer to save his life and bring his household to faith. Then Paul and Silas went back to jail (vv. 27-40). This illustrates so dramatically operating in the supernatural with the right spirit and heart. Paul knew the truth that the girl was shouting was less important than the spirit in which she shouted it and that her release from the spirit was more important than persecution. He also knew the jailer and his household were more valuable than his personal comfort or freedom. Paul valued people more than his safety and did not use the supernatural for personal gain, even when it was easy for him to do so. Temptation exists for believers to use the supernatural for personal gain, but following the example of Jesus and Paul, the supernatural must first value and love people.

At Ephesus, Paul encountered a whole different problem: powerless believers. He knew their witness would severely be lacking without the power of Jesus, so he laid hands on them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:1-7). In Ephesus, God built the church through extraordinary miracles (vv. 8-22). Just like with Peter, these were “greater things” (John 14:12) than Jesus did. Paul knows the truth believers must grasp: powerless believers do not look like Jesus. Believers must go after all Jesus has for them, seeking to do the works He did to see effective witness for Him.

Paul continues to minister in power in unique ways throughout his travels. Eutychus, bored by Paul’s long sermon, falls out of a window to his death, only to have Paul raise him to life (Acts 20:7-12). It’s as if Paul said, “Oh no, no one’s dying in my meeting!” Paul then receives correct prophetic words about getting arrested and taken to jail in Jerusalem (21:1-16). Paul acknowledges they are correct and proceeds to go there

anyway, knowing his mission involves jail time. These prophetic words would inform his mission rather than deter him from it. These strange reactions by Paul represent a heart for people, but most of all a determination to be obedient to God's calling.

After Paul does get arrested in Jerusalem, he travels as a prisoner and has the opportunity to see God work supernaturally even among his captors. Acts 27 describes Paul giving three prophetic warnings and then the fulfillment of them. Each of them testify to God's knowledge of the future and His heart for all people, even those who don't know Him. After the shipwreck on the island of Malta, a viper bites Paul and he doesn't die, even though the natives think he must be a murderer for receiving that bite. Ironically, Paul was a murderer and persecutor of Christians before He turned to faith. Even though Satan remembered Paul's past sin, God supernaturally washed over it and saved Paul's life. Then Paul prays for the father of Publius, the chief official of Malta, whose healing from dysentery sparks a healing revival on the island (28:8-10). Paul consistently ministered to people while in chains, for those chains cannot stop God's supernatural power. Believers must stop using their own circumstances—sickness, poverty, busyness, children, etc.—as excuses for being powerless and not on mission for God. God has a mission for believers in every circumstance, even prison, as the epistles clearly illustrate.⁶⁷

Conclusion

A wonderful day will come when special manifestations of the supernatural work of God will no longer be needed because the “dwelling of God is with men” (Rev 21:3).

⁶⁷ See Appendix D, “The Supernatural in the Epistles and the Apocalypse,” for a detailed treatment of the supernatural in the rest of the New Testament after the Book of Acts.

Until that day, God still will manifest himself through believers in supernatural ways, just as He has done since the beginning of creation. The chapter started with story of the paralyzed man (Mark 2:1-12) in which Jesus manifested the supernatural works of God through prophecy, word of knowledge, and healing. These three manifestations of the Spirit were traced throughout the Bible from creation to the new creation, showing God's purposes in the supernatural.

Through supernatural works, God shows believers that He's involved, unbelievers that He's real, and everyone that He longs for a loving and redemptive relationship with them. Supernatural works give witness and authenticity to the person of Jesus Christ. The gift of the Holy Spirit and His manifestations are for all people, "for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39). Believers cannot own the manifestations of the Spirit; the Spirit owns them (1 Cor 12:11). Therefore, spiritual pride must die. Believers remain responsible to seek the person of the Holy Spirit to manifest through them in any and every supernatural way (14:1). Therefore, believers must be expectant and available for God to use them.

Jesus declared about His miracles that "anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father" (John 14:12). The Holy Spirit longs for believers, whom He indwells, to walk in the fullness of His power. That's why He inspired Joel to prophesy: "I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions ... And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved" (Joel 2:28-29, 32). The supernatural connects to evangelism and salvation throughout the Bible. The people who effectively evangelized with the

supernatural were normal in their approach, saw God's works consistently in their lives, and regularly ministered outside of church gatherings. Modern believers who make the supernatural normal by being approachable, consistently seeking the Holy Spirit for His works, and praying boldly with people outside the church will see people coming to faith in Jesus through their witness.

CHAPTER 3: GENERAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Surveying the contemporary literature on the supernatural yields three camps of thought about the supernatural. The two that primarily concern this project include authors who believe in the supernatural but do not see it consistently in their lives and churches, and authors who believe in the supernatural and do see the it consistently in their lives and/or churches. This project will address both of those groups in depth, while briefly addressing in places the third group of authors, skeptics of the supernatural.

The group that believes in the supernatural but does not yet see it consistently will be encouraged to take a fresh look at the supernatural as it works in the church and hopefully be inspired to “eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit” (1 Cor 14:1).¹ The group that consistently sees the supernatural in their lives and/or churches will likely gain a fresh understanding and nuance by a broader comparison with so many authors who are seeing effective use of the manifestations of the Spirit through them. The third group, skeptics, will not necessarily be convinced of the supernatural, but may have reason to research further some of the authors used in this project. Ultimately, this chapter aims to provide a fresh understanding of how the manifestations of the Spirit are effectively at work in believers today, so the supernatural can become normal in the life of every believer.

¹ All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version.

Making the Supernatural Normal

For God the supernatural is normal. He created everything, and when He interjects new elements into His creation, it contains the same normal force that began the world. However, humans see breaks in the natural order of their world as strange, weird, and even impossible, and thus they have created the category of “the supernatural.” Jesus’s incarnation showed someone who through the course of His normal life continually did the supernatural works of God. He passed that power onto believers, giving them the authority and responsibility to show the world a God for whom anything is possible.

This section of the project will define the terms *supernatural* and *miracle* and will offer three ways in which the supernatural must become normal in the church. As a starting point for discussion, C. John Collins offers these definitions:

Natural: God made the universe from nothing and endowed the things that exist with “natural properties”; he preserves those properties, and he also confirms their interactions in a web of cause-and-effect relations. Supernatural: God is also free to “inject” special operations of his power into this web at any time, e.g., by adding objects, directly causing events, enabling an agent to do what its own natural properties would never have made it capable of, and by imposing organization, according to his purposes.²

Graham Twelftree explains that “the best understanding of miracle ... views the miraculous as a basic divine action that ‘contradicts any reasonable expectations about what is going to happen’ but is in need of no causal explanation vis-à-vis the natural order.”³ In this, Twelftree clearly shows the dichotomy between the natural and

² C. John Collins, *The God of Miracles: An Exegetical Examination of God’s Action in the World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000), 1,374, Kindle.

³ Graham H. Twelftree, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Miracles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2011), 31.

supernatural. The shattering of reasonable expectations produces the kind of wonder that points unbelievers to God.

For so many believers, miracles are only extraordinary—and rare. However, John G. Lake states, “The spiritual realm places man where communion with God is a normal experience. Miracles are then his native breath.”⁴ James Maloney adds, “Normal should be God in expression, glory, weightiness, power, signs, wonders, and miracles as a regular occurrence.”⁵ Randy Clark and Bill Johnson, who have both studied John G. Lake in depth, say it this way: “We have the distinct privilege of living on earth as a people indwelt by the Holy Spirit. As long as human flesh and the Spirit of God exist in this place of cohabitation, the unusual will continue to be commonplace.”⁶ These writers assert that the supernatural should not be rare, but normal.

Margaret Poloma details in her account of the origins of the Assemblies of God that “glossolalia, prophecy, healing, miracles of faith, and other paranormal experiences were declared normal for believing Pentecostals.”⁷ Even many Pentecostals have lost a fire for God’s supernatural expression of himself, but it is time to rekindle that fire and make the supernatural normal. Therefore, this study asserts that making the supernatural

⁴ John G. Lake and Roberts Liardon, *John G. Lake on Healing* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker, 2009), 150.

⁵ James Maloney, *The Panoramic Seer: Bringing the Prophetic into the Healing Anointing* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2012), 179.

⁶ Clark, *Essential Guide*, 157.

⁷ Margaret M. Poloma and John Clifford Green, *The Assemblies of God: Godly Love and the Revitalization of American Pentecostalism* (New York: New York University, 2010), 146.

normal means at least three things: the supernatural must be consistent in occurrence, the supernatural must not be weird, and the supernatural must move outside the church.

The Supernatural Must Be Consistent

The supernatural must become consistent for the Church to thrive. Ordinary believers should consistently throughout their weeks and lives experience the supernatural power of God. Gary Best's book *Naturally Supernatural* asserts that believers are "natural people who have been invited and called to an amazing supernatural task. We have the keys to the kingdom. We get to unlock the doors that can't be unlocked in any other than a supernatural way."⁸ Certain breakthroughs only happen through the supernatural. So many people become hardened to the message of the Kingdom when there is no demonstration of the Kingdom. Randy Clark makes a clear assertion of God's intent for the church "to fully operate as the empowered body of Jesus Christ in the earth. In order for this to be accomplished, believers must be activated in the gifts and anointing of the Holy Spirit."⁹ These writers and pastors realize that the supernatural must become normal. Any Pentecostal believer who has seen the authentic power of God on display longs at some level to live with God's supernatural works constantly.

John Wimber expresses a call for the supernatural to become normal this way:

Jesus commissioned the disciples to bring people fully under His reign into the kingdom of God. This is a "kingdom conversion" in which people come into a new reality—a reality in which the "supernatural" is quite natural. Thought of this

⁸ Gary Best, *Naturally Supernatural: Joining God in His Work* (Cape Town, South Africa: Vineyard International, 2005), 51.

⁹ Randy Clark, *Authority to Heal: Restoring the Lost Inheritance of God's Healing Power* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2016), 558, Kindle.

way, conversion involves both a change in the person (being “born again”) and a change of citizenship.¹⁰

Yonggi Cho and Wayde Goodall also state the reality: “A miracle to us is miraculous, but a miracle to God is normal.”¹¹ Intellectually, this truth is obvious. For most believers, however, actually living as if the miraculous is normal would represent a whole lifestyle shift.

A disconnect between the desire to make the supernatural normal and the effectiveness of supernatural witness remains. The disconnect is illustrated continually in pastors’ discussions in Facebook groups with hundreds of pastors and in personal discussions. Many Pentecostal pastors justify the lack of effective supernatural ministry with philosophical and theological arguments. They hide behind “if it’s God’s will” statements and others that overemphasize God’s sovereignty at the expense of the consistent witness of Scripture. This chapter does not address arguments relative to God’s sovereignty. However, the moment the supernatural becomes normal in the lives of believers and in their churches, all of those arguments will melt to nothing. Ché Ahn says that “if signs and wonders do not follow the Gospel we preach, then we are preaching only part of the Gospel. There is more to the Gospel than salvation from sin.”¹² Jesus declared the coming of the kingdom of God with signs and wonders accompanying, which included, but was not limited to, the salvation of souls.

¹⁰ John Wimber and Kevin Springer, *Power Evangelism* (South Bloomington, MN: Chosen, 2014), 86.

¹¹ Yonggi Cho and Wayde Goodall, *Faith: Believing in the God Who Works On Your Behalf* (Racine, WI: BroadStreet, 2017), 1,562, Kindle.

¹² Frank Decenso and Che Ahn, *When Heaven Comes Down: Experiencing God’s Glory in Your Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen, 2009), 93.

Benny Aker and Edgar R. Lee show the difference between professional and supernatural ministry, “A merely professional ministry, no matter how accomplished, is inadequate for the task, and for that reason the ministry of the Church must always be a supernatural one.”¹³ These authors believe the supernatural should happen consistently in the lives of believers. Believers must make the supernatural normal by allowing God to work through them consistently, which brings to attention the manner the supernatural is presented.

The Supernatural Must Not Be Weird

In helping the supernatural to be normal in Spirit-filled churches, it is important, in addition to the supernatural existing consistently, that the supernatural not come across as weird. In so many churches the price of entry into the church is to be weird, or at least willing to put up with a good bit of behavior or ideas that seem weird. So many evangelistic efforts have been confrontational and weird. Believers feel as though they need to work up a sweat to pray¹⁴ for healing or have sweet keyboard music playing to experience the work of God.¹⁵ However, those methods appear weird to outsiders. Since the supernatural is primarily for unbelievers (discussed in detail later in this chapter), leaders need to address these perceptions. Churches will experience the supernatural in normal ways as believers strive to look more like Jesus. Jesus approached people in

¹³ Benny Aker and Edgar R. Lee, “Naturally Supernatural,” in *Signs and Wonders in Ministry Today*, eds. Benny C. Aker and Gary B. McGee (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1996), 94.

¹⁴ Although this happens at times in Scripture, it is during private intercession times, not public meetings or evangelism. See Luke 22:44.

¹⁵ Bob Kauffin, “Why a Synthesizer Isn’t the Holy Spirit,” *Worship Matters* (March 12, 2016): 1, accessed February 9, 2018, <http://worshipmatters.com/2016/03/12/why-a-synthesizer-isnt-the-holy-spirit/>.

normal ways, gave them love in normal ways, and prayed simply and powerfully, and God broke through.

Robby Dawkins puts Jesus forth as the standard for normal: “Jesus came as the new normal.”¹⁶ Jesus was strikingly unreligious with His approach to people and the supernatural, as chapter 2 of this project has addressed. Jack Deere’s advice builds on this truth:

Strive to be as normal and unreligious as possible if you want your message to be received. That was the apostle Paul’s advice (see 1 Cor. 14:23-25). Do things decently and in order, for God is a God of peace (see 1 Cor. 14:33,40). If He wants to violate the peace, fine. But we should work to keep it.¹⁷

In other words, the supernatural should be accessible to unbelievers and peace-filled to believers. So many times in Pentecostal churches congregants find themselves cringing and even sometimes praying against a particular expression of the supernatural because it feels weird. For instance, in a quiet moment the Holy Spirit is infiltrating hearts in the sweetest way, then someone shouts incoherently in tongues as if he or she is possessed by something ungodly. Then there’s awkward silence and someone shouts a berating word that opposes the atmosphere of the whole room—and many times the work of the Spirit himself. Convincing arguments for a better way to approach prophesying and the supernatural in general will be conveyed in this project. The supernatural can and should be normal for all believers.

¹⁶ Robby Dawkins, *Do What Jesus Did: A Real-Life Field Guide to Healing the Sick, Routing Demons, and Changing Lives Forever* (Minneapolis, MN: Chosen, 2013), 86.

¹⁷ Jack Deere, *Beginners Guide to the Gift of Prophecy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 113.

The Supernatural Must Move Outside the Church

The supernatural being confined to church experiences, such as Holy Spirit “goose-bumps,”¹⁸ falling out under the power,¹⁹ or outbursts in tongues with sketchy interpretations is incomplete at best and harmful (as in the case of the Corinthian church, 1 Cor 14:2-19) at worst. When supernatural expressions of God’s Kingdom only happen at church services, they turn church into a “bless me” club²⁰ and do not look like Jesus or the Early Church.²¹ The supernatural should occur at church services, but when it only happens at church services, the supernatural becomes more and more ineffective, since it loses its original purpose.²²

When believers begin to pray for people outside the church for healing, to prophesy over them, or to give them knowledge from God, believers act as Jesus would to those who need to know Him. When believers act like Jesus, churches will grow. When churches grow in this way, the supernatural will be normal. What happens on the inside of churches must serve as a training ground to see supernatural works of God happen outside of churches. Believers should express the supernatural in ways inside

¹⁸ Francis Frangipane, “A Touch from God is ‘More than Goose Bumps and Tears,’” *Charisma Magazine* (October 12, 2013): 1, accessed February 9, 2018, <https://www.charismamag.com/spirit/spiritual-growth/18844-a-touch-from-god-more-than-goose-bumps-and-tears>.

¹⁹ Ron Phillips, “The Biblical Support for Falling Out in the Spirit,” *Charisma Magazine* (June 4, 2013): 1, accessed February 9, 2018, <https://www.charismamag.com/spirit/supernatural/17935-the-biblical-support-for-falling-out-in-the-spirit>.

²⁰ Apostle AT, “Bless Me Club,” accessed March 24, 2018, http://itsjesusanyhow.com/apostle_s_desk/view/704/_bless_me_club__.

²¹ Jesus’s use of the supernatural outside the church is discussed on pages 38-39.

²² This is talked about further on pages 78-80.

churches that look, feel, and are approached the same as at a store, with a neighbor, or at a coffee shop.

Mark Lau Branson describes coffee shops as the modern day “well.”²³ Believers, when entering a coffee shop, should feel just as at home to ask God if He will work through them as in the church. A conversation about the name on the side of the coffee cup can turn to, “I feel like God wants you to know” Just as a conversation about someone’s hand brace can easily turn into, “Hey, can I pray for your hand?” Similarly, a discussion about a neighbor’s kids can turn to, “Does one of your kids like to dance? ... I feel like God showed me they like to dance, and He loves that about them.” Conversation should happen in the same normal way inside the church also, with supernatural results. Thus, if believers are waiting for the keyboard player to play in order to feel Holy Spirit goose bumps or if they need to watch someone shake or sweat before they are ready to move in the supernatural, they will miss what God has for them and will not be trained to look like Jesus at their jobs or with their neighbors.

Missionary Denzil R. Miller, in a call to action for evangelizing with the supernatural power of God, says, “If we want to see New Testament results in our evangelism efforts today, we must employ New Testament methods. We must take hold of the same power that the early church had.”²⁴ This mandate now rests on the Western Church as well. The Church can continue down a path toward irrelevance or it can begin to emulate its leader Jesus and evangelize the way He did outside the church.

²³ Mark Lau Branson, *Starting Missional Churches: Life with God in the Neighborhood* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 109.

²⁴ Denzil Miller, *Power Encounter: Ministering in the Power and Anointing of the Holy Spirit* (Springfield: AIA, 2009), 14.

Believers must contend to make the supernatural normal. That means that the supernatural must not be weird; the supernatural must be consistent in occurrence, a regular part of the rhythm of the Christian life; and the supernatural must move outside the church. God's supernatural works are effective for evangelism when believers operate in normal ways outside the church. The next section will focus on the literature for mobilizing local churches to make the supernatural normal.

Making the Supernatural Normal in Churches

This section will survey the literature that relates modern approaches to making the supernatural normal in churches and for believers. In researching this topic, it became clear the case for making the supernatural normal in churches needed to be made. So, after clarifying parameters for this chapter, the chapter will consider how to perceive the supernatural, will address calcified methods, and will observe the rising tide of the literature, as well as the changing landscape relative to making the supernatural normal in churches.

As a centerpiece for making the supernatural normal in churches, many ministers have committed to activating lay people in supernatural ministry. Activating believers in supernatural ministry involves providing training exercises, teaching, and outreach opportunities with feedback in order for people to help them to regularly put their faith in action. Some of the hubs for this include Bethel's Schools of Supernatural Ministry,²⁵ the

²⁵ "Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry," Bethel Church, accessed March 24, 2018, <http://bssm.net/>.

Power & Love Conferences,²⁶ Lifestyle Christianity with Todd White,²⁷ Global Awakening with Randy Clark,²⁸ and John G. Lake Ministries with Curry Blake.²⁹ Each of these large ministries and so many other small ones have dedicated themselves to the proposition that everyone—not just vocational ministers or specially anointed men and women of God—can and should minister in the supernatural. These ministries believe that a “man of power for the hour”³⁰ syndrome has plagued the church for generations, robbing so many individuals within the body of Christ of their God-given potential.

Hubs of people who send believers to do supernatural ministry (Global Awakening, Randy Clark; Heidi Baker, Bay Revival; A. G. and Nathan Morris, Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry; Christ for the Nations, James Maloney; Christ for All Nations, Reinhard Bonnke) think like this: “The church is a lifeboat, not a pleasure boat. Entertainers are neither needed nor wanted. From the captain to the cook it is all hands on deck for soul-saving. The church that does not seek the lost is ‘lost’ itself.”³¹ Each

²⁶ “Power and Love Conference,” Power and Love, accessed March 24, 2018, <http://powerandlove.org/>.

²⁷ “Lifestyle Christianity University,” Lifestyle Christianity, accessed March 24, 2018, <https://lifestylechristianity.com/>.

²⁸ “Global Awakening,” Global Awakening, accessed March 24, 2018, <https://globalawakening.com/>.

²⁹ “John G. Lake Ministries,” John G. Lake Ministries, accessed March 24, 2018, <http://www.jglm.org/>.

³⁰ Larry Sparks, “New Book from Bethel Church Author Reveals the Key to Walking in God’s Healing Power,” accessed on March 24, 2018, <https://www.charismanews.com/component/content/article/2-uncategorised/42718-new-book-from-bethel-church-author-reveals-the-key-to-walking-in-god-s-healing-power>.

³¹ Reinhard Bonnke, *Evangelism by Fire* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma, 2011), 6.

believer has the privilege and responsibility of evangelizing the world with the supernatural power of God.

For one of these schools called the University Prayer Network, Gary Greig wrote about the Church's imperative to make the supernatural normal: "We must major, like Jesus, the apostles, and the Early Church, on training our students to hear God's voice, keep their spiritual eyes on Jesus, depend on the Holy Spirit, and to heal the sick and cast out demons effectively."³² Believers who have Jesus as their example will do supernatural works in a similar way to Jesus.

Many believers tend to complicate praying for the supernatural. But the simplest prayers are most effective. Heidi Baker agrees: "I do not know how to pray complicated things. I just say, 'Possess me, Holy Spirit! Let me love like Jesus today. Let me be His fragrance. Let me be His life. Let me carry what You have placed within me this day. I love You, Holy Spirit. I love You, Jesus. I love You, Daddy God!'"³³ Praying for the supernatural becomes more effective when believers focus on knowing Jesus and praying normal prayers. Making the supernatural normal in churches lights the fire for the power of God to reach unbelievers.

Parameters of this Chapter

In an effort to focus on mobilizing the local church to take the power of God outside its doors, this chapter observes parameters. The project will not address whether

³² Gary Greig and Catherine Greig, "Power Evangelism: Learning to Depend on the Holy Spirit, His Healing, His Gifts, and His Power To Follow the Pattern of Jesus' Kingdom Ministry," (n.p., University Prayer Network, 2003), 20.

³³ Heidi Baker, *Birthing the Miraculous* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma, 2014), 13.

or not miraculous gifts are for today—the landscape of Christianity has to a large degree changed on this already. Still more needs to be done, but the hard work at the scholarly and popular levels is winning. Craig Keener declares about the miracles reported in the Gospels, “The ancient sources about Jesus unanimously support these claims, and modern analogies allow us to treat this evidence as credible, in contrast to the more skeptical approach of scholars such as Strauss and Bultmann.”³⁴ Therefore, this truth is being established presently and will not be discussed in detail in this paper.

This chapter also does not address all nine supernatural gifts of the Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12. For the sake of focus and length, this paper will focus on healing, word of knowledge, and prophecy. In the context of taking the supernatural outside the doors of the local church, these three gifts are used most often both by modern authors and practitioners, and by Jesus and the apostles.³⁵

Casting out demons will not be addressed in this chapter, which is a powerful way to move in the supernatural and something Jesus did often and commanded His followers to do. It simply will not be in the purview of this study. Admittedly, that is a significant omission, given the frequency of Jesus’s movement in this way. However, in order to maintain focus, this project will leave that for other studies and books.

³⁴ Craig S. Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), 475, Kindle. For the liberal view on this, see Craig Blomberg. Although he is trying to call his view middle of the road, he says, “A parabolic approach to the miracles of Jesus provides exciting opportunities for returning to the interpretation that the gospel writers themselves seem to stress most.” Craig Blomberg, “New Testament Miracles and Higher Criticism,” *JETS* 27 no. 4 (December 1984): 426. Wayne Grudem has also presented an ample defense of the miracles in the Vineyard movement in his article. Wayne Grudem, “Vineyard Position Paper #4: Power & Truth, a Response to Power Religion” (n.p.: Association of Vineyard Churches, 1993), 1-62.

³⁵ As was shown in chapter 2.

The topic of speaking in tongues and the evidences of the baptism in the Holy Spirit will not be approached in this chapter. Speaking in tongues remains a helpful and integral gift of the Spirit, both as a prayer language and in church gatherings within the limitations of Paul's commands in 1 Corinthians 14. In this project, the baptism in the Holy Spirit rises as a central prerequisite to consistently witnessing miracles and will be assumed as such.

This chapter does not provide a comprehensive guide to discerning whether or not a supernatural gift comes from God. Those who need this established can refer to many other extensive discussions on the topic. This project recognizes the fact discernment remains paramount for anyone engaging in supernatural ministry, but will address Christians as Jesus did, under the premise, "My sheep know me" (John 10:14). This project means to encourage true believers to engage in the supernatural, rather than from the perspective of judging whether or not those who see the supernatural are true themselves. Rather than sitting in judgment on people, this project aims to build up those who legitimately connect to the living God already. Effective supernatural ministry by believers is grounded in biblical purpose.

Perceiving the Purpose of the Supernatural

The supernatural works of God do not happen in a vacuum. Instead, the Scripture ties the supernatural to transformational encounters for individuals and groups. God does not "show off," and He has nothing to prove, yet He longs to restore relationship to people. The supernatural emerges in the Bible as a primary engine for God's revelation and relationship: hence, the supernatural has purpose. Eric Eve rightly sets the tone for a discussion of the purpose of miracles in this way:

If the Tower of London were suddenly to turn into a block of green cheese or the Pentagon to launch itself into orbit for no apparent reason, we might well conclude that the laws of nature (in the second sense) had been breached, but if such events lacked any apparent significance they would be just bizarre events, not miracles.³⁶

Therefore, when talking about the miracles of Jesus and the supernatural in general, the question of purpose looms large. Without a clear driving purpose, miracles should be abandoned as unnecessary for the kingdom of God today.

C. S. Lewis relates purpose to miracles:

But in Christianity, the more we understand what God it is who is said to be present and the purpose for which He is said to have appeared, the more credible the miracles become. That is why we seldom find the Christian miracles denied except by those who have abandoned some part of the Christian doctrine. The mind which asks for a non-miraculous Christianity is a mind in process of relapsing from Christianity into mere “religion.”³⁷

Religion desires form without power. As Paul states, there are people who have a form of godliness but deny its power (2 Tim 3:5). Sincere believers bind themselves unwaveringly to the authentic power of God. Miracles establish God as powerful and involved in His world.

In Eric Metaxas’s didactic approach to miracles, he articulates the nature of miraculous signs:

Miracles are signs, and like all signs, they are never about themselves; they’re about whatever they are pointing toward. Miracles point to something *beyond* themselves. But to what? To God himself. That’s the point of miracles—to point us beyond our world to another world. They are clues that that other world is not in our imaginations but is actually out there.³⁸

³⁶ Eve, *The Healer from Nazareth*, xvi.

³⁷ C. S. Lewis, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2001), 217.

³⁸ Eric Metaxas, *Miracles: What They Are, Why They Happen, and How They Can Change Your Life* (New York: Dutton, 2014), 16.

As signs miracles declare that God does not stand far off, as an impersonal force, but cares enough to intervene.

Jesus himself stated the purpose of the supernatural works of God: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The power of the Holy Spirit enables effective witness for God. In the vernacular of this project, believers need to take the power of God outside the doors of their churches. Purpose-filled Christianity is not content with staying among believers. Instead, believers experience the power of the Holy Spirit in order to witness the acts of God everywhere they go. God’s power shows the world He’s alive and He’s love.

New Testament scholar Doug Oss expresses the purpose of the supernatural in stating that “experiences of the Spirit’s empowering presence have a purpose, which is to empower and renew God’s people to go into the marketplace and boldly witness to the gospel of Christ.”³⁹ If believers do not express God’s power in ways that the unbelieving world understands, then they miss the point of the supernatural. The Church at large has experienced diminishing levels of effectiveness in regard to the supernatural when it lost sight of its purpose. Certain methods of engaging nonbelievers with the power of God are completely ineffective. For instance, if a believer would ask their waiter to pray for them, and then proceed to pray in tongues for a while, this would most likely drive the person away from faith, as Paul said, “will they not say that you are out of your mind?” (1 Cor.

³⁹ Richard B. Gaffin, Wayne A. Grudem, Stanley Gundry, Sam Storms, and Doug Oss, *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 317.

14:23). Therefore, the establishment of the purpose of the supernatural directly affects the methodology of believers.

Jesus illustrated this purpose in compassion for those to whom He ministered. James Maloney relates compassion to miracles, saying that it is “the scout that seeks out the need. It is the focal point, square one, the start, to seeing the miraculous.”⁴⁰ This compassion develops out of relationship with God, as DeCenso illustrates:

Witnessing is not an event; it is a lifestyle. We wear our relationship with God for all to see. We are learning how to live like the Father, perceive as He does, act in line with His goodness, speak from His heart, and think in alignment with His kindness. How we perceive God is how we will live and act toward others.⁴¹

Jesus constantly expressed the supernatural through the lens of compassion and love for people, which enabled people to witness the works of God through Him. Compassion becomes a prerequisite for effective supernatural ministry. In writing about Carrie Judd Montgomery, one of the founders of modern Pentecostalism, Jennifer Miskov says Carrie encouraged others “to receive the Pentecostal Spirit baptism while at the same time making sure to emphasize love as its best result.”⁴² Supernatural works expressed through love and compassion reveal clearly a God who “is love” (1 John 4:8).

Miracles point beyond the person ministering, as Clark and Johnson observe: “Miracles do not confirm the messengers; they confirm the gospel.”⁴³ They also explain: “The message of Jesus and the kingdom of God move forward and explode when the

⁴⁰ Maloney, *The Panoramic Seer*, 156.

⁴¹ DeCenso and Ahn, *Heaven Comes Down*, 102.

⁴² Jennifer Miskov, “Carrie Judd Montgomery: A Passion for Healing and the Fullness of the Spirit,” *Assemblies of God Heritage* (2012): 10.

⁴³ Clark, *The Essential Guide*, 1,481.

supernatural occurs. The fact that there exists a measured few who use miracles for personal gain, does not deny this fact. The majority of believers who see miracles are poor and humble and moving God's work forward in obscurity."⁴⁴ Both Keener and secular sociologists Miller and Yamamori confirm the fact that the parts of the world where the Church is experiencing the most rapid growth is where the supernatural works of God drive the movement.⁴⁵ Allan Heaton Anderson echoes their observations: "Prayer for divine healing is perhaps the most universal characteristic of the many varieties of Pentecostalism and perhaps the main reason for its growth in the developing world."⁴⁶ The purpose of the supernatural is to drive people to a God who loves them and wants to be personally involved in their lives. That purpose makes power evangelism exciting, humbling and effective, as opposed to some calcified methods of engaging with the supernatural.

Addressing Calcified Methods

The Pentecostal and charismatic movements have endured long enough to operate with some patterns in regard to supernatural ministry. The patterns emerged from eras of effective usage, revivals, and impactful Spirit-filled gatherings. God moved through a group of evangelists and pastors in similar ways and the transformation in their lives and churches became a wonderful memory of their best days. From there, the experience with

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1,421.

⁴⁵ See Craig Keener's *Miracles* and Miller and Yamamori's *Global Pentecostalism* for a thorough treatment of the worldwide expansion of Pentecostalism through the supernatural.

⁴⁶ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (New York: Cambridge, 2014), 30.

God was sought over and over again, with similar results. Over time, some of those experiences became removed from their cultural moorings and stopped producing the same kind of fruit. Other experiences of the supernatural became abrasive to people seeking to know God authentically. This progression into calcified methods of engaging in the supernatural has been observed by many authors and church leaders.

Pastor and scholar Gary Tyra observed the futility of calcified methods of prophesying:

It is my habit to encourage church members to avoid using overly dogmatic language when engaging in prophetic activity. Instead of prefacing every instance of prophetic speech with a bold “Thus says the Lord,” all one has to say is “You know I could be wrong, but I have this strong impression that I am supposed to tell you something that I suspect might be from the Lord.”⁴⁷

The latter phrasing reflects a humility and care for the individual unavailable to the dogmatic approach. So much of the church has approached the supernatural with such a guarded posture that it looks fake to the world. When Jesus prophesied to an individual, His declarations were normal and accessible. Some examples of Jesus’s personal prophecies: “I will make you fishers of men,” (Matt 4:19), “It will be done just as you believed it would,” (8:13), “Take heart, son: your sins are forgiven,” (9:2), and “your faith has healed you” (9:22). These personal declarations of who people are becoming and what God intends for their lives and destiny provide a model for personal prophecy by modern believers.

Some of the manifestations of the Spirit of God that are common in churches today were uncommon in Scripture. For example, falling down as a sign of the power of

⁴⁷ Gary Tyra, *The Holy Spirit in Mission: Prophetic Speech and Action in Christian Witness* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2011), 170.

God can be common in Pentecostal and charismatic churches, but it has become more of a form of comfort for believers and not a witness to unbelievers. Therefore, falling in God's presence would fall into Paul's category of expressions of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 14 that are better reserved for meetings where unbelievers are not present.

In contrast, when Jesus and the apostles interacted with unbelievers, the supernatural expression of God's Spirit were understandable to them. Jesus's prophetic encouragements to individuals were the kinds of statements that would set them free to live how He described.

Another calcified method used in some Pentecostal and charismatic churches is interrupting a gathering to shout out a prophetic message or a message in tongues. Although this method can be effective when authentic and done with the right spirit, it has often become jarring and negative, even a source of disunity with the pastors and spiritual leaders. These methods often fall into disuse when a group of believers begins to see the undeniable power of God in the same ways and methods that Jesus and the apostles did. The method can still be effective at times when the fresh life of the normal pattern for the supernatural becomes consistent in a church again, as many authors have begun to point out. Calcified methods must be moved away from to effectively mobilize local churches to make the supernatural normal, and the next section will observe the rising tide of literature on mobilize the local church in the supernatural.

Observing the Rising Tide of Literature

The scholarly and popular literature about the supernatural works of God being normal in the Church and in the local church continues to grow. First Corinthians 4:20 states, "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power" (NIV 2011). Gordon

Fee recognizes the regularity of Paul's view of the supernatural in commenting on this verse:

... "for the kingdom of God is not a matter of λόγος but of δύναμις." ... This is one of the rare occurrences in Paul of a term that dominates the ministry and teaching of Jesus. But it's casual appearance here indicates that it was a regular part of his own understanding of the gospel ... The kingdom that has already been inaugurated by the resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Spirit is characterized by the *power* of the Spirit.⁴⁸

Paul's life and theology were marked by the regular occurrence of the supernatural power of the Spirit of God. Fee brings to the modern reader what would have been obvious to the original readers of Paul: Jesus and Paul agree that the kingdom of God needs the power of God.

The tide of literature on the supernatural was raised dramatically when two nonbelieving sociologists from UCLA traveled the globe to study Pentecostals for four years and observed the supernatural: "the result was viewed as supernatural intervention by God, accompanied by testimony that the doctors could not explain the individual's recovery. In India, in particular, healing was viewed as commonplace among the Christians we interviewed."⁴⁹ First, these sociologists reported facts without bias and simply observed the simple faith of these Christians. Second, the supernatural already is normal for anyone who is willing to believe and take risks the way Jesus did.

Miraculous stories in the Bible represent a battleground for skeptics. However, scholar Eric Eve still represents Jesus as a miracle worker:

⁴⁸ Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), 119-120.

⁴⁹ Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley: University of California, 2007), 152.

All four Gospels depict Jesus as a miracle-worker. In all four Gospels he heals some people and raises others from the dead ... For some people such deeds are central to who Jesus is, proof that he was the incarnate Son of God. For others, they are a stumbling-block, a clear indication that the Gospels are historically unreliable. For many they are a puzzle: did Jesus perform the marvelous deeds attributed to him? If so, what does that tell us about him?⁵⁰

Answering the question, “What do miracles tell us about Jesus?” points to the purpose of miracles and the breakthroughs available in witnessing, when believers make the supernatural normal. There exists a rising tide of scholars and authors who have interacted with Eve and other skeptical scholars, as well as the nonbelieving community. Among them are renowned New Testament scholar Craig Keener. Keener refutes the famous anti-supernaturalist philosopher David Hume:

The situation today is far different from when eighteenth-century philosopher David Hume claimed that miracles were contrary to human experience or even when modern reports resembling most miracle stories in the Gospels were unknown to most mid-twentieth-century Gospels scholars. The book’s primary thesis is simply that eyewitnesses do offer miracle claims, a thesis simple enough but one sometimes neglected when some scholars approach accounts in the Gospels. The secondary thesis is that supernatural explanations, while not suitable in every case, should be welcome on the scholarly table along with other explanations often discussed.⁵¹

Keener proves this thesis, undoubtedly establishing that the supernatural is already normal in the Church. Keener establishes clearly that millions of believers all over the world are making claims to have experienced the supernatural power of God, which drives the growth of the Church.

The question then arises, is the supernatural normal in the local church? More pointedly, is the supernatural normal in the lives of believers? If not, then what are the

⁵⁰ Eric Eve, *The Healer from Nazareth*, xiii.

⁵¹ Keener, *Miracles*, 2,077.

steps to making the supernatural normal in the local church and everyday lives of believers? This will be discussed in detail in chapter 4. Therefore, it is out of the scope of this research project to answer whether or not miracles are for today, since that question has been discussed in detail by so many. This project assumes Keener's thesis has been sufficiently proven, so is interested in the process of mobilizing the local church into making healing, words of knowledge, and prophecy normal.

At the popular level, Charisma House and Destiny Image produce many books and manuals on training in the supernatural. This project uses many of them in research and development. One of the popular authors, Guillermo Maldonado, and his church in Miami, report many amazing miracles. He proposes that "teaching the Word of God without a demonstration of miracles will neither excite people nor enable radical changes in their lives. However, when miracles, signs, and wonders are evident, people will experience change almost immediately."⁵² The work of so many scholars and authors on why the supernatural is for today has propelled this rising tide of writing and research on making the supernatural working of God normal. This chapter contributes a scholarly voice to that ensemble.

Understanding the Changing Landscape

The landscape of literature on the supernatural in the Church is changing greatly. A growing discontent exists even among many Pentecostals, charismatics, and their leaders about those who believe in the supernatural but have developed little interest in practicing the power. Other Pentecostal and charismatics comfort themselves in the fact

⁵² Guillermo Maldonado, *How to Walk in the Supernatural Power of God* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker, 2011), 767, Kindle.

they still practice the gifts of the Spirit, when, in fact, they have no effect on their primary target, people far from Jesus. A movement of authors⁵³ cry for a Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity that consistently works inside and outside the church, so if “an unbeliever or people who don’t understand these things come into your meeting ... their secret thoughts will be exposed, and they will fall on their knees and worship God declaring God is truly here among you” (1 Cor 14:24-25 NLT).

Randy Clark and Frank DeCenso have experience traveling and speaking to many groups of Spirit-filled believers and see that worship services have changed:

Like the Third Wave Movement, the Pentecostal Movement in the United States has also lost much, if not most, of its original emphasis on healing ... many Pentecostal churches have few Pentecostal experiences anymore and have become lukewarm, having lost the “fire of Pentecost.” Many of the Pentecostal churches have become seeker sensitive churches rather than healing churches ... There is little room for the Holy Spirit to take over the service, for the order to be surrendered to His order, for the worship to just continue for the whole service, during which sovereign healings occur. The people are no longer being trained in how to pray for the sick or cast out demons.⁵⁴

⁵³ Che Ahn, *Heaven Comes Down*. Heidi Baker, *Birthing*. Gary Best, *Naturally Supernatural*. Mike Bickle, *Growing in the Prophetic: A Practical Biblical Guide to Dreams Visions and Spiritual Gifts* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2008), Kindle., Shawn Bolz, *God Secrets: A Life Filled with Words of Knowledge* (Studio City, CA: Icreate, 2017), Kindle. Randy Clark, *The Essential Guide*. Robby Dawkins, *What Jesus Did*. Kevin Dedmon, *The Ultimate Treasure Hunt: A Guide to Supernatural Evangelism through Supernatural Encounters* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2007), Jack Deere, *Beginner’s Guide*. Bill Johnson, *When Heaven Invades Earth: A Practical Guide to a Life of Miracles* (Shippensburg, PA: Treasure House, 2003). Craig Keener, *Miracles*, Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*. Jim W. Goll and Michal Ann Goll, *God Encounters: The Prophetic Power of the Supernatural to Change Your Life* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2005), Banning Liebscher, *Jesus Culture: Calling a Generation to Revival* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2015). David Lim, *Spiritual Gifts: A Fresh Look* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1991). James Maloney, *The Panoramic Seer*. Rich Nathan and Ken Wilson, *Empowered Evangelicals: Bringing Together the Best of the Evangelical and Charismatic Worlds* (Boise, ID: Amelon, 2009). Chris Overstreet, *A Practical Guide to Evangelism—Supernaturally* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2011). Art Thomas, *The Word of Knowledge in Action: A Practical Guide for the Supernatural Church* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2011). Sean Smith, *Prophetic Evangelism: Empowering a Generation to Seize Their Day* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2004). Kris Vallotton, *Basic Training for the Prophetic Ministry*, exp. ed. (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2014).

⁵⁴ Randy Clark and Frank DeCenso, *The Great River of Healing* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2016), 410, Kindle.

Clark and DeCenso's observations are hardly in isolation. Robby Dawkins says that "because of the human tendency to abuse power, many have backed off from manifestations of God's presence in the Church. They mistrust movements that emphasize moving in the power of the Holy Spirit, yet Jesus walked in power."⁵⁵ The calling of all Christians to be like Jesus must involve doing the supernatural works that He did. Otherwise, churches exist as a form of religion but lack the power (2 Tim 3:5). Therefore, many authors signal the necessity for change. Guillermo Maldonado chimes in that "miracles should be everyday happenings, not isolated events."⁵⁶ Miracles everyday would revolutionize the life of any believer, and even more so if entire churches and cities of believers lived this way.

With regard to the changing landscape in churches expressions of the power of God, Kris Vallotton says this:

The Holy Spirit wants to move in the supernatural so desperately all over the earth today. He simply is not interested in doing it in the ways that He used to. The Holy Spirit has moved on—there are many Pentecostal believers and churches that are seeking His gifts but not the Giver. They're seeking specific well worn controllable manifestations of His power when those manifestations are not effective anymore. The Holy Spirit Himself is still moving—but He is a creative artist. He's doing new things. He's constantly circling back around to Biblical patterns ... The Holy Spirit then takes those Biblical patterns tied to the heart of God and expresses them in a new generation in a manner that is effective and calls out the heart of that generation ... So many of the manifestations that we might see as marking the moves of God in any given church gathering do not say the same thing to a new generation of people who desperately need to SEE the authentic move of God.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Dawkins, *Do What Jesus Did*, 55.

⁵⁶ Maldonado, *How to Walk*, 2,619, Kindle.

⁵⁷ Vallotton, *Basic Training for the Prophetic Ministry*, 31.

Valloton's observations are proved true in many churches where young people move toward disillusionment or away from God completely when they see well-worn patterns that do not produce life change. The supernatural work of Jesus must produce life change in order to be proven authentic. Young people are either moving away from the supernatural or from churches where the New Testament pattern remains undetectable.

The largest Pentecostal and charismatic group of churches, the Assemblies of God, is recognizing the need for change. As Terry Wong observes, "As a pastor and presbyter, Pentecostal churches, specifically AG, have frustrated me by claiming to be Pentecostal yet failing to practice Pentecostal beliefs."⁵⁸ The Assemblies of God must focus on the chasm between belief and effective practice in regard to the supernatural. Maria Khaleel, in her research on the changing tide of spiritual gifts, acknowledged the truthfulness of this reality: "Reversing the trend that has moved the Pentecostal church in North America away from the practice of these Pentecostal realities will not be easy."⁵⁹ This fact should disturb Pentecostal leaders in every denomination and church, and signal the need for changing the landscape.

With regard to prophecy, Randy Clark recognizes a broken paradigm: "One of the reasons that prophecy tends to be rejected today, and quickly branded as 'false,' is because many use an Old Testament paradigm to evaluate the New Testament prophetic

⁵⁸ Terry Wong, "The Place of Divine Healing in the Local Church: Implementing Healing as an Evangelistic Program in Hawaii" (D.Min. prospectus, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, 2017), 3.

⁵⁹ Maria Khaleel, "Equipping and Releasing Believers to Minister in the Gifts of the Spirit for Effective Ministry and Evangelism" (D.Min. proj., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, 2013), 146.

expression.”⁶⁰ The paradigm must change for prophecy to be effective again, just as so many thoughts about the supernatural in churches must change.

Normal church services in the United States do not come with the expectation of signs and wonders. Frank Macchia recalls an experience of being ruined for normal church:

I read the entire book of Acts without moving from my chair. I was awe struck ... I could feel the tears roll off of my cheeks. I remember thinking that I could not possibly be the kind of Christian who merely “played church.” That certainly was not how the Christians lived in the book of Acts. God was so real to them. They lived daily in the awareness of God’s presence and guidance. Life was an adventure in the Lord’s service and there were moments when God visited them with undeniable signs of divine favor and power.⁶¹

Macchia’s experience of the presence and fire of God finds its roots squarely in Scripture, a similar experience is available for all who long for the power of God.⁶²

Without the supernatural, the Bible lacks any insight or power to transform humans. The authors of Scripture are fixated on God’s supernatural works. God’s normal is supernatural. He used supernatural power to create the natural world and still reserves the right to interact with the natural world in supernatural ways. God exists in heavenly glory and yet longs to reveal himself to the world. Revelation of God to humans always

⁶⁰ The difference between Old and New Testament prophecy is explained in greater detail in the section, “Personal Prophecy and Its Relationship to Evangelism.” Randy Clark, *The Essential Guide to the Power of the Holy Spirit: God’s Miraculous Gifts at Work Today* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2015), 698, Kindle.

⁶¹ Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 145, Kindle.

⁶² Growing up in a pastor’s home, I had access to many great books on the supernatural, but rarely ventured into that area. Rare dramatic encounters with the power of God marked my early years, however, they were hardly normal. Those experiences with God fastened deep inside me a hunger for God’s miraculous power and ruined me to ever minister without a reliance on miracles. The longing to make the supernatural normal drove me to Oral Roberts University and introduced me to a few books, both scholarly and popular, that began to shape my thought about these encounters.

involves a break from the norm and a step into God's realm. The Scriptures and the longing of the human heart line up to drive toward a passion for the miraculous working of God in humans.

One of the greatest scholarly influences in the twentieth century and beyond is the American Pentecostal, Gordon Fee. Fee brought to the evangelical world's attention Jesus's main theme for His teaching ministry—the kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven.⁶³ Particularly, Fee illuminated the truth that the kingdom of heaven is not just a place, but a present reality that Jesus brought. With that reality came the signs of the kingdom—the supernatural works of God. In his book, *God's Empowering Presence*, Fee also shed light on the power of the Spirit, a power the Early Church constantly assumed and that was evidenced in the life of the Apostle Paul.

Fee's theological evidence for the supernatural has been preceded and followed by many liberal and skeptical scholars. Vern Poythress, who represents one of the most conservative edges of scholars skeptical of the miraculous at work today, states, "Jesus still commissions ministers in his name, who proclaim the gospel of the apostles. And Jesus still heals people today from the misery of sin. Jesus's ministry today still leads to the response of praising him and glorifying his name."⁶⁴ Poythress misses the opportunity to say Jesus still does miracles through His believers today. He represents many scholars and much of Western Christian evangelicals and mainline traditions with this omission. Healing "the misery of sin" acts as the primary purpose for Jesus's atoning work on the

⁶³ Gordon Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 120.

⁶⁴ Vern S. Poythress, *The Miracles of Jesus: How the Savior's Mighty Acts Serve as Signs of Redemption* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 2, 118, Kindle.

cross but does not comprise the entire coming of the kingdom of God—the theme of Jesus’s life and teaching. Fee’s work on the subject rings true here.

Popular writers, such as Bill Johnson and James Maloney, see the supernatural consistently in their churches and ministries. Johnson,⁶⁵ as well as Banning Liebscher⁶⁶ tell story after story of the supernatural happening outside churches through church attenders, not just through full-time ministers. Maloney illustrates a level of operating in the supernatural through the combination of accurate personal words of knowledge, healing, and prophesy that looked like and had power, authority, and effectiveness similar to Jesus and the apostles.⁶⁷ It became evident that the “greater works” (John 14:12) than Jesus are possible and necessary for evangelism. These miracles did not happen far away in medically unverifiable locations, but in developed nations with educated individuals.

It is glorious to observe the miracles happening in other nations that establish the reign of Jesus. At the same time, the realization that Jesus remains the same in the Western world and that the supernatural works of God are just as necessary for the gospel to break through there should fuel the passion of church leaders to make the supernatural normal. Frank DeCenso and Che Ahn assert, “The contemporary western Church’s primary evangelistic tools have been preaching and teaching. This starkly contrasts the early Church and the Church today in Africa, South America, and much of Asia. These

⁶⁵ Johnson, *Heaven Invades Earth*, 27-32, 95-108, 121-150.

⁶⁶ Liebscher, *Jesus Culture*, 58.

⁶⁷ Maloney, *The Panoramic Seer*, 89-96, 111-114, 133-136, 173-176.

groups utilized both the word (preaching) and the works of power by the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁸

The Word of God is empowered by the supernatural works of God. Churches in the Western world’s rediscovery of the supernatural will fuel revival fires.

John Wimber and Todd White represent two generations of ministers who have seen supernatural results in the Western world outside the church on a large scale. John Wimber writes that “everyone gets to play.”⁶⁹ In other words, all believers act as priests who have access to God and are children of the King with authority to do what Jesus did. Wimber also had a sweetness in his method that came off as normal to both believers and nonbelievers. He was authentic and believable, not showy or strange like so many Pentecostals and evangelists. This gives believers hope that the supernatural is not simply the domain of the weird evangelists and interruptive outbursts experienced so often. These latter expressions of God’s kingdom can often be unfruitful. However, Wimber shows that everything about the approach with someone could be normal—normal conversation in a normal environment with normal, even “secular” music playing—that the Holy Spirit is still more interested in blessing the individual than in the drama of the moment in a church gathering.

With the advent of video being available from any phone, Todd White and others like him began to pave the way for normal supernatural evangelism. Miracles in all places outside the church that result in conversions are shown to the world constantly, through monthly and sometimes weekly uploads of videos of people being healed in

⁶⁸ Frank DeCenso and Che Ahn, *God’s Supernatural Power in You* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2009), 91.

⁶⁹ John Wimber, *Everyone Gets to Play: John Wimber’s Writings and Teachings On Life Together in Christ* (Boise, ID: Ampelōn, 2008), 23, Kindle.

public secular environments.⁷⁰ Wimber's methods are now on display on the street with great fruit. Through live video and training, White demonstrates, mobilizes, and inspires many people to do the supernatural works Jesus did and see people come powerfully to Him.

When it comes to evangelism, Tim Attaway comments on the typical evangelism approach widespread among churches in America in the 1980s: "Suppose that you died tonight and found yourself standing before God. If he asked you, 'Why should I let you into my heaven,' how would you answer?"⁷¹ He goes on to say, "not to suggest that this sort of approach is contrary to Scripture. It is simply to state that it has no Scriptural precedent."⁷² Attaway illustrates the changing landscape in regard to evangelism very clearly and makes a call to power evangelism, which will be explained in detail later.

These authors illustrate a clearly changing landscape in regard to the supernatural. Each of them has experienced the supernatural. So many believe the supernatural should be a consistent occurrence in the life of a believer. But thematically they see large portions of the church stuck in calcified ways of experiencing God's work that are no longer effective. The landscape has already changed. The Holy Spirit still expresses himself. He has simply begun to do it more creatively than in the past.

⁷⁰ Todd White, "Todd White—Lifestyle Christianity," accessed March 22, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/user/ToddWhiteChannel>.

⁷¹ Tim Attaway, "Power Evangelism," *Tim Attaway's Blog*, 1998, 3, accessed June 13, 2017, <http://timattaway.com/WebLibrary/Church%20and%20Bible%20Study%20Resources/Misc%20Resources/Power%20Evangelism.pdf>.

⁷² Attaway, "Power Evangelism," 3.

In his book, *Prophetic Evangelism*, Sean Smith talks about the futility of having belief in the supernatural but taking no action:

When we choose to fight, to expand, we increase the “property value” of our faith. What you battle for becomes more prized in your eyes; as it is more prized by you, it will also be valued more by those who are watching you as well. No one takes a severely limited recluse seriously; the currency of their philosophy bottoms out and they become a contradiction to their message. A confined church loses validity. It has nothing to say to mainstream society or the community.⁷³

So many churches sit in that space, whether because of contentment, feeling stuck, or the desire to stay in the status quo. Smith contends powerless Christianity cannot stay acceptable. The church landscape in regard to the supernatural has changed. Church leaders and every believer must make the supernatural normal or fade into irrelevance in the world. The manifestations of the supernatural works of God must be sought in authentic and tangible ways.

Gateway Manifestations of the Supernatural

Throughout Jesus’s life and ministry, He undoubtedly had access to all of the manifestations of the Spirit of God. At the same time, He primarily and consistently used three manifestations of the Spirit with people outside the Church—physical healing, prophecy, and word of knowledge. This project views these three manifestations as the gateway manifestations of the Spirit of God in supernatural ways. They are accessible and perceptible to people who do not believe or who have never had an experience with God or the supernatural. Physical healing and word of knowledge are empirically provable. New Testament prophecy primarily should encourage and build up, therefore it

⁷³ Smith, *Prophetic Evangelism*, 433.

is a welcome addition to many normal conversations. The rest of this chapter will address the topic of these gateway manifestations of the supernatural.

Physical Healing and Its Relationship to Evangelism

The initial step to physical healing is seeing the needs of others—compassion. F. F. Bosworth reveals that in the compassion of Jesus, “We have a complete revelation of the Lord’s willingness to heal.”⁷⁴ Jesus’s compassion for the sick and power to heal the sick were conjoined throughout the Gospels. For believers, love for people and the power of God must work together. If believers have power without compassion, they are arrogant hotheads who tear down the body of Christ by using the supernatural to feed their own appetites and greed.⁷⁵

If believers have compassion without the power of God, they are impotent lovers, shouting to the world that Jesus loves them while no one listens or cares. Rich Nathan shows the striking combination of God’s love and power:

More than God’s power, physical healing often communicates a message of God’s love and concern. We have seen several nonbelievers turn to Christ for salvation after being physically healed because they realized that if God loved them enough to heal them, he must love them enough to save them.⁷⁶

The combination of compassion and the healing power of God makes the presentation of the gospel effective.

⁷⁴ F. F. Bosworth, *Christ the Healer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2008), 73.

⁷⁵ Jesus’s second temptation was precisely this: to use the power of God to feed himself.

⁷⁶ Nathan and Wilson, *Empowered Evangelicals*, 960.

The healing of someone's body when tied with godly compassion becomes a vehicle to realize the kingdom of God, as Clark and Johnson observe. "The subject of supernatural healing is not simply a matter of people experiencing wholeness or being cured of malady, but it is a question of whether or not we are witnessing the full demonstration of the gospel of the Kingdom as Jesus intended."⁷⁷ Healing affects the world purposefully when Jesus receives glory from it. Healing was a sign of God's approval in the Old Testament⁷⁸ and has its full expression in the person of Jesus Christ, and through His body, the Church.

Jesus expressed the Kingdom with prayers for healing that would sound abnormal in many modern churches. Many authors express the need to pray differently in order to see miracles result. Maldonado articulates concerning the prayers of Jesus:

Miracles exist in the now, not in time. Jesus never prayed for a sick person, but He did declare the Word in the present, with power and authority. He would say, "Be healed," or "Be free," because He realized that the kingdom of God had already come. Jesus essentially said, "Your miracle is now!" He continually broke the laws of time, space, and matter.⁷⁹

So many believers pray, "Not my will, but Yours" prayers for healing, when Jesus never did.⁸⁰ Jesus spoke to the person and to the sickness, but rarely did He talk to God about the miracle. Jesus knew God's will on the matter was already established and it was the sickness that needed to be moved, not the heart of God. It is arrogant for humans to

⁷⁷ Clark, *Power of the Holy Spirit*, Loc. 1,326.

⁷⁸ See Appendix A, "Making the Supernatural Normal in the Old Testament" for a discussion of healing in the Old Testament.

⁷⁹ Maldonado, *How to Walk*, 2,668, Kindle.

⁸⁰ Jesus's prayers for healing are discussed on pages 36-37.

assume they have more compassion for a sick person than God does, that somehow God would need convinced to act. God's will on the matter is established. Believers get the privilege of enforcing God's will. Jesus prayed for sick people as a son enforcing the will of His Father, not as a beggar asking for bread.

With respect to praying for physical healing, believers should pray for healing multiple times. Christ Overstreet instructs believers on what to do when praying for someone and the person notices a change but not a complete healing: "Ask them if you can pray again. Thank the Lord for the healing that is occurring and then command all remaining pain to go."⁸¹ Jesus did this (Mark 8:22-26). Elijah did this (1 Kings 17:20-21; 18:41-19:8). Believers need to be willing to do the same. Many believers tend to give up and assume God is uninterested in healing a person if believers have a faulty view of God's will about healing. Instead, when they pray for healing again, they humbly contend and press in for God's purposes and His Kingdom to be established on the earth. It is humbling to ask to pray a second time for someone, but strangers or friends alike will rarely say no to this request, especially when they have already seen some change in their pain. Many believers need to relearn how to pray for the sick in order to follow the models in Scripture, which requires practice.

The church needs to be a safe place to practice praying for healing. John Wimber has a guiding principle: "I am more interested in ministry than neatness, so I provide a place in which people know they are accepted and helped even when they fail."⁸² This

⁸¹ Overstreet, *Practical Guide to Evangelism*, 79.

⁸² Wimber and Springer, *Power Evangelism*, 176.

principle must be at work in the development of people who prophecy and people who give accurate words of knowledge, as the next sections of this project will demonstrate. When using the same methodology to offer prayer for healing within the church as outside the church, then the church becomes a training ground for witnessing that affects the world for generations in the future.

In commenting on the future of healing ministry, Kimberly Ervin Alexander and Thomas K. Matthew express: “There will be a wider acknowledgement that although faith is required for divine healing, the burden of faith is not on the patient; it is on the community of faith.”⁸³ To add to their point, zero faith is required on the part of the dead person who gets raised. It is more about the community of faith and the person praying. Therefore, many believers need a perspective change and to stop trying to place blame when someone is not healed. Blaming someone’s lack of faith when healing does not occur is an excuse that violates the law of love and produces arrogance for the person who thinks he or she has more faith.⁸⁴ Individual believers who pray for the sick operate with faith to see them made whole.

⁸³ Kimberly Ervin Alexander and Thomas K. Matthew, “The Future of Healing Ministries,” in *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Vinson Synan (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2011), 332-333.

⁸⁴ As an aside, blaming God when healing does not occur is also faulty. God’s compassion for the sick has been settled when He allowed stripes to be placed on Jesus’s back for physical healing. Physical sickness is the result of the fall of humanity into sin in general. God gave humankind authority in the Garden of Eden. Humans gave it to Satan and now the world has sin, sickness and death—which affects every human in similar ways. The Bible does not offer an explanation for why some people do not get healed. The closest discussion of the topic is in Matthew 17:19-21, and Jesus offers that they (the ones praying) had little faith because they weren’t praying and fasting. Incidentally, Jesus did not fast before He drove that demon out, which points to a lifestyle of fasting that increases authority in this area. To try to explain why people are not healed demotivates believers from the primary call to pursue healing the sick. Therefore, the Bible does not explain why some people are not healed, and simply encourages believers with stories of when healing does happen.

Kate Bowler wrote a widely acclaimed history of American prosperity gospel. Her view of prosperity teaching might sound similar to the following discussion of faith without examining fact: “In the everyday healing practices of the prosperity movement, faith operated as a spiritual guarantee, drawing health and finances into the lives of people willing to suspend naturalistic explanations in favor of supernatural, Holy Spirit causality.”⁸⁵ Although some parts of the modern healing movement would ask people to suspend naturalistic explanations, such a suspension offers zero help for evangelism. On the street, no one will fake a healing, but instead will look for every reason to question his or her relief from symptoms. Healing in an evangelism setting offers a purer test for legitimacy.

Faith for physical healing is available for every believer, as Alexander and Matthew give evidence: “The democratization of healing ministry, which, according to Maragaret Poloma, has been advanced by John Wimber and the lay-led healing ministry of the Vineyard churches and the Healing Room movement, may reduce the need for ‘super personalities’ of healing ministry.”⁸⁶ Jesus gave His healing ministry to every believer, and not just to super personalities. Churches should inspire and equip more individuals to exercise gifts of healing, thus expanding the kingdom of God’s influence, and that requires risk.

⁸⁵ Kate Bowler, *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel* (Oxford: University Press, 2013), 3302, Kindle.

⁸⁶ Bowler, 333.

Faith and risk go together, as Wimber famously stated: “Faith is spelled R-I-S-K.”⁸⁷ Maldonado explains that principle in other words: “Sometimes, Christians try to seek neutral ground on which they can continue to believe in God without having to risk taking a step of faith. They fail to see that this makes them useless to God and unable to bless other people.”⁸⁸ Risk is required in faith. If believers are hedging their prayers, trying to save face rather than boldly declaring God’s best, they are not aligning themselves with the purpose or methodology of God on the matter.

That kind of bold faith needs to move outside the church, as Praying Medic reports:

God is doing something special with the topic of healing the sick. And it’s been clear that God is taking His Church out of the buildings and into the streets. The result is that God has been performing a great many miracles of healing in shopping malls, on sidewalks, in the workplace, and yes, even in the back of ambulances.⁸⁹

The power of God to heal in the back of an ambulance is ironic and a story that a formerly infirm person will never forget. In tandem with that thought, Randy Clark relates his experience:

I could tell many more stories of people healed in the Kroger stores. No one ever refused my offer to pray for healing, and almost every person I prayed for was not attending church. Most were not Christians, yet I was amazed by how receptive they were to prayer. It was a different situation in the home meetings and Sunday celebration meetings of the church. Some people were healed, but many were not. I struggled with this odd situation. I felt as though something were wrong with

⁸⁷ “Quotes from John Wimber,” Vineyard USA, accessed July 24, 2018, <https://vineyardusa.org/library/quotes-from-john-wimber/>.

⁸⁸ Maldonado, *How to Walk*, 3,032, Kindle.

⁸⁹ Praying Medic, *Divine Healing Made Simple* (Gilbert, AZ: Inkity, 2013), 125, Kindle.

this picture. Why was it easier to see healing among the “believing unbelievers” than among the “unbelieving believers”?⁹⁰

Clark’s experience illustrates clearly why the landscape is changing and the mandate to make the supernatural normal is so clear. Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful” (Matt 9:37), yet believers are stuck inside their churches afraid of rejection. With ample reports like Clark’s that the people outside the church are more receptive to prayer than those inside the church, Christians should begin to believe Jesus’s call to the harvest and act on it like He did. So many unbelievers need one supernatural encounter with God to experience complete transformation, through a prayer for healing or a timely prophetic word.

Personal Prophecy and Its Relationship to Evangelism

Paul said to eagerly desire spiritual manifestations,⁹¹ especially prophecy (1 Cor 14:1), yet prophecy has recently been divisive in American Christianity. The Church has suffered for it. American scholar David Moore states, “Unfortunately, prophetic sensitivity has not been a sufficient priority for many American pastors, both Pentecostal and Evangelical.”⁹² Many churches forbid prophecy—in direct conflict with Scripture. A disconnect exists between the American church and the biblical model.

⁹⁰ Bill Johnson and Randy Clark, *The Essential Guide to Healing: Equipping All Christians to Pray for the Sick* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen, 2011), 32.

⁹¹ For a detailed discussion of why “spiritual manifestation” is preferable wording to “spiritual gifts,” see Howard M. Ervin, *Spirit Baptism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 85-96.

⁹² David Moore, “Empowered for Witness,” in *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Vinson Synan (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2011), 541.

Mike Bickle gives some insight into why many pastors have backed away from prophecy: “When rejected prophets clash with insecure pastors in an uninformed congregation, then so many negatives occur. The combination of this causes churches to decide that it is just easier and better to avoid the prophetic ministry altogether.”⁹³ Bickle presents three groups of people who often come together in toxic ways. Pastors must be open and available themselves for God to speak prophetically through them. Leaders must teach their congregations about the practical uses of the prophetic. This should be easy for pastors, since such a high percentage of the Bible is prophecy or fulfillment of prophecy. Those two factors will lead to prophets being rejected less and committing to a body of believers for accountability and character growth.

Jack Deere also illustrates how the prophetic can get weird. “Not all crazy people are in asylums. Some are running around loose, imitating prophets. Often they get away with it because some of the real prophets seem just borderline sane.”⁹⁴ Obviously, his jest carries weight because many pastors act in alignment with the thought.

In spite of these truths, many leaders are finding ways to make the prophetic normal and helpful to the body of Christ. Michael Brodeur gives a picture of normal and healthy prophetic ministry in the church: “A prophet is God’s confidant who speaks on His behalf and trains others to do the same. They promote intimacy with God through worship, dialogue with God in prayer, direction from God in prophecy, and the

⁹³ Bickle, *Growing in the Prophetic*, 1,586.

⁹⁴ Deere, *Beginner’s Guide*, 101.

demonstration of God through the supernatural.”⁹⁵ In his list of attributes of healthy prophetic ministry, Bordeur does not include being overly dramatic, talking in sixteenth-century English, jarringly interrupting services, moving from church to church with no accountability, or predicting the day of Jesus’s return. Healthy prophetic ministry is also immersed in love just as prayer for healing must be.⁹⁶

Gold, as an analogy for the spiritual and character qualities that God has placed and refines inside people, appears in Job 23:10, Zechariah 13:9, Malachi 3:2-3, 1 Peter 1:7, and Revelation 3:8. Prophecy can be look at as calling out the gold in people. This means that when the prophet sees or hears from God about the good God has put inside a person, the prophet shares that with the person in ways that would build the individual up. Kris Vallotton mentions a similar concept:

The gift of prophecy is not simply patting people on the back, telling them nice things about themselves, and pretending that there is nothing negative in their lives. Instead, prophetic words are so supernaturally powerful that they can actually unearth the gold in the hearts of people—gold that is hidden under the dirt of their lives.⁹⁷

In other words, the New Testament prophet is not primarily tasked with searching for sin or upcoming disaster, but instead with searching for gold—the good things God infuses into people.

Cho illustrates this heart in prophecy when he states, “As I looked into the eyes of the people in this small church, I saw only suffering, hunger, sickness, and helplessness.

⁹⁵ Michael Brodeur, *Revival Culture: Prepare for the Next Great Awakening* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 3,775, Kindle.

⁹⁶ 1 Corinthians 12-14 teaches the connection between love and prophecy, clearly illustrated by 1 Corinthians 14 verse 1: “Follow the way of love, and eagerly desire ... prophecy.”

⁹⁷ Vallotton, *Basic Training for the Prophetic Ministry*, 14.

But in my thoughts, which I discovered were inspired by the Holy Spirit, I saw the people as healthy, successful, and beautiful.”⁹⁸ The New Testament prophet might see the negative, but then can speak to the beautiful possibilities of how God has designed people uniquely, and when they walk in God’s design, who they are capable of becoming. In his dissertation on prophecy, Chieme Iwe says, “The prophets of Israel showed the *extreme* virtues of justice, unalloyed love, and humility before God.”⁹⁹ Humility and love rise in importance even more with New Testament prophecy.

So many modern prophetic types try to reflect the Old Testament in their tone, instead of the New Testament. This evoking of wrath and judgment does not produce the “edification, exhortation and comfort” (1 Cor 14:3) that New Testament prophetic ministry requires. Many prophets still hear bad news from God about a person or situation. James Goll gives insight into the New Testament mindset on bad news, seeing it as “information received concerning the enemy’s evil plans. God gives these insights to enlighten and forewarn us, so we can either prepare or eliminate it through intercession.”¹⁰⁰ Therefore, the New Testament prophet sees and declares the prophetic opposite of the negative insight into the secrets of people’s hearts (1 Cor 14:25). That will cast vision and set the trajectory for breakthrough in the person’s life.

Proper guidelines will govern the right usage of prophetic ministry in churches. Bickle gives insight into boundaries:

⁹⁸ Cho and Goodall, *Faith*, 2,141.

⁹⁹ Ephraim Chieme Iwe, *The Role of Contemporary Prophecy in the Lives of Members of Pentecostal Churches in Africa* (D.Min. proj., Azusa Pacific University, 2016), 95.

¹⁰⁰ Goll and Goll, *God Encounters*, 216.

Simple prophecy is meant to give encouragement and comfort, not give specific new direction to one's domestic life. Examples of domestic areas in which we should avoid giving or receiving prophetic direction include choosing a spouse, having babies, investing money, changing jobs, moving to a new city, buying or selling a house, going on ministry trips, joining a church, choosing a college, and so forth.

God must be able to speak into these major decisions prophetically. However, God does not use shortcuts in the process of learning and decision-making in order to expedite a decision. Instead, the words from God should promote the process of decision-making in the context of daily relationship with God and the practice of hearing His voice. Believers must be wary of a word from God that leads someone away from the continual rhythm of relationship with God. Also, if that word from God does not promote the individual hearing from God, it often proves unhelpful. These skills in prophecy deserve practice.

The local church must be a safe place for prophets to practice, make mistakes, receive correction, make changes, and get back on track. Without that feedback loop, New Testament prophecy does not thrive. In the Old Testament, God tasked the Israelites with judging (and punishing) prophets (Deut 13:1-5; 18:22). In the New Testament, a church judges the prophetic word (1 Cor 14:29) and protects the heart of the prophet. Bickle advises, "If pastors do not govern the prophetic ministry in their midst, the congregation eventually despises it and the prophetic people stop prophesying because of the feeling of being rejected by the congregation. If pastors do not lead, the prophetic ministry stops."¹⁰¹ This requires a community of prophets and a community where prophecy is normal. A prophetic community will help guide in correct interpretation techniques.

¹⁰¹ Bickle, *Growing in the Prophetic*, 1,572.

Interpreting prophetic words or visions requires discernment and revelation. Prophetic people and groups can think in mosaics. A mosaic is “a picture or decoration made of small, usually colored pieces of inlaid stone, glass, etc.”¹⁰² Many times people receive words from God that they do not understand. The word seems disconnected from the situations in their lives and unhelpful in determining what action to take. So they could take that word from God as a beautiful little picture in its own right, write it down, and picture it as a tiny piece of a larger mosaic picture that represents their lives and the decisions that concern them. Then they must lean into God’s heart¹⁰³ and seek Him for the next piece. That next piece may seem unconnected, so put it on the mosaic and ask God, “How do the dots connect? Please show me the next piece of the mosaic.” This leads people to deeper and more consistent relationship with God as well as helping them to become the weighty decision makers God wants to build them into long term.

Finally, believers are given a mandate to prophesy (Num 11:29; Acts 2:17-18; 1 Cor 14:1, 39; Rev 19:10). Bickle phrases this beautifully: “Every day is an opportunity where we might prophesy or release God’s power to somebody. As we learn to open our heart with real expectancy, anything may happen at any time whether we are in the marketplace, a restaurant, a park, or while homeschooling our children.”¹⁰⁴ When

¹⁰² “Mosaic,” Dictionary.com database, accessed January 1, 2018, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/mosaic/>.

¹⁰³ “Lean into God’s heart” means “to know and be known in the most intimate way. God’s love envelops us.” Fran Rossi Szpylczy, “Leaning into the Heart of God,” accessed on April 12, 2018, <https://breadhere.wordpress.com/2010/03/31/leaning-into-the-heart-of-god-a-reflection-on-john-13/>.

¹⁰⁴ Bickle, *Growing in the Prophetic*, 2,118.

believers make prophecy normal, it builds up individuals and the body of Christ. The word of knowledge should often work in tandem with prophecy effectively.

Word of Knowledge and Its Relationship to Evangelism

Word of knowledge appears only once in Scripture (1 Cor 12:8) in Paul's powerful listing of the Spirit's manifestations. In his dissertation on spiritual gifts, Mark Stewart says that the word of knowledge is "the supernaturally empowered ability God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to search, systematize, and summarize the Word of God."¹⁰⁵ That is a common misconception. The word of knowledge does not have to do with interpreting the Word of God. Instead, word of knowledge was demonstrated in the lives of Jesus and the first Christians many times when they knew specific information God told them about a person or group.¹⁰⁶ While some may see a word of knowledge as a teaching gift, an abundance of Scripture relates it to individual needs and circumstances. Believers can use this gift powerfully in evangelism.

Words of knowledge propel the message of Jesus forward. Art Thomas and Loren Sanford state, "Sometimes all the words in the world seem to fall on deaf ears when we're trying to share the Gospel. That's when power-encounters like healing, prophecy, and the Word of Knowledge come in handy."¹⁰⁷ Churches today do not operate in word

¹⁰⁵ Mark Allan Stewart, "The Supernatural Power of Spiritual Gifts" (D.Min. proj., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1996), 119.

¹⁰⁶ These narratives include supernatural knowledge of specific information about a person or group: Gen. 4:10; 6:13; 7:1; 8:16-17; 12:1, 7; 18:14; 21:1-3; Exo. 4:27; 14:3; Judg. 4:14; 1 Sam. 9:17, 20; 10:22; 2 Sam. 5:22-25; 12:1-13; 1 Kings 17:2-6; 1 Kings 18:44-46; Dan. 2; Matt. 9:4; 11:25; 12:25; 21:1-9; 26:17-20; Mark 2:8; 8:17; 11:1-10; 12:15; 14:12-17; Luke 1:36; 5:22; 6:8; 7:39-40; 9:47; 19:5, 28-40; 22:7-14; John 1:48; 4:16-19; 6:61; 12:12-19; 16:19; Acts 5:3, 9; 8:23, 26; 9:11-16; 10:4-6, 19-20; 13:11; 14:9.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas, *Word of Knowledge in Action*, 136.

of knowledge to the degree Jesus and the first Christians did and therefore have lost that edge of effectiveness in their witness. The church has stumbled over some hindrances to receiving words of knowledge from the Spirit.

So many believers fixate on trying to receive Scripture level words from God,¹⁰⁸ instead of testing the impressions they do get. In order to grow in this, churches must lower the bar of expectations and add continuous action, as Thomas and Sanford instruct: “As you actively listen for the slightest inkling of a Word of Knowledge, take action on whatever you sense. Like rescue workers trudging through rubble, listen for the faintest voice and go for it!”¹⁰⁹ The only way to grow in words of knowledge is to know whether they are from God, and the way to confirm a particular word of knowledge lines up with Scripture and is from God is to act on the word. Acting on words of knowledge based upon scriptural principles produces normal supernatural Christianity.

Acting on words of knowledge requires a safe place to practice. Just like with healing and prophecy, no one will grow in this gift without practicing. Churches must provide a safe environment to practice words of knowledge and grow in this gift. Thomas and Sanford speak to the heart of the matter:

If you receive a Word of Knowledge, don’t act on it until you have clarity about how God wants you to act. Ask Him for His heart on the matter and wait until you can see the person and the situation through the lenses of His perspective. You’ll

¹⁰⁸ “Scripture level” word from God means that people believe that a prophetic word should carry a similarly intense weight as Scripture itself. People try to hold themselves and others to unreasonable standards like, not making any mistakes in how they phrase something. Other standards might be speaking in King James English when prophesying. If the word from God does not sound exactly like an Old Testament woe prophecy, then it can’t be true. People who expect these kinds of words tend to pass judgment on prophets who express themselves like, “I feel like God wants you to know ...”

¹⁰⁹ Thomas, *Word of Knowledge in Action*, 182.

know you've got it when you feel overwhelmed with love for the person. Never act on a Word of Knowledge without love.

As believers act on words of knowledge with love inside the church, they will see this gift grow in prominence again in the body of Christ. Shawn Bolz agrees, saying that words of knowledge “ground you in the truth that God knows you, and He loves you.”¹¹⁰ Words of knowledge need to come from a place of love. They also express love to the individuals receiving the word, knowing that God knows them more than they do, even the secrets of their hearts, and still loves them greatly. With love as the aim, people should be trained to receive words of knowledge.

Randy Clark believes that “the two most common ways of receiving a word of knowledge are feeling them, and thinking them.”¹¹¹ In order to develop in words of knowledge, Shawn Bolz says, “God wants us to major on taking risks with the prophetic and our words because they help people feel fully known and connected to God.”¹¹² All people are fully known by God. Believers demonstrate that truth to the world with words of knowledge. The body of Christ must stop neglecting this gift and beginning practicing

¹¹⁰ Bolz, *God Secrets*, 276.

¹¹¹ Randy Clark, *Words of Knowledge* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Global Awakening, 2011), 425, Kindle. My experiences confirm Randy's observations. Once, as I led worship for our Sunday evening gathering, I had a seizing pain in my left lung. I knew it was not from singing, because that would affect both lungs. Neither was it affecting my singing. So I sang on, then the pain subsided. The next Sunday night as the worship set was almost over, my left lung seized again. I asked God what it was, kind of annoyed. I felt as though He replied, “Call it out.” So using the microphone I stated, “I believe there is someone in the room who has a problem with their left lung, and God is healing it right now.” No one stirred; no one raised a hand. The worship set ended. I thought I had missed it. Then my drummer caught me. He told about his motorcycle accident from two years earlier in which his left lung had completely detached. Now the extensive scar tissue caused him pain every breath. He took my hand and put it on his rib cage. The scar tissue was gone! His pain was completely gone! He took a pain free breath for the first time in two years! That's when I realized God speaks through physical sensations.

¹¹² Bolz, *God Secrets*, 438.

it as Jesus and the first Christians did in order for churches to look normal, like Jesus intended.

Bringing Healing, Prophecy and Word of Knowledge Together with Power Evangelism

Many parts of the Christian world have adopted the term “power evangelism” that John Wimber coined, even if they use it differently than he did.¹¹³ Power evangelism means that believers seek the supernatural power of God outside the church in order to point people to the gospel of the resurrected Jesus and the kingdom of God. Many conversion narratives in Scripture contain one or all of the gateway manifestations of the Holy Spirit of healing, prophecy, and word of knowledge.

Renowned scholar Gerhard Kittel declares that the proclamation of the gospel encompasses more than words in his comments about the Greek word εὐαγγελίζεσθαι (evangelize):

εὐαγγελίζεσθαι is not just speaking and preaching: it is proclamation with full authority and power. Signs and wonders accompany the evangelical message. They belong together, for the Word is powerful and effective. The proclamation of the age of grace, of the rule of God, creates a healthy state in every respect. Bodily disorders are healed and man’s relation to God is set right.¹¹⁴

Evangelism at its best is rooted in the power of God. The Bible demonstrates this truth in nearly every conversion story. Therefore, a biblical Christian declares the good news of Jesus with a powerful demonstration of the Kingdom.

¹¹³ Rodney Howard Browne and the River Church use the term in their normal evangelism packet simply to talk about evangelism. Although Howard-Brown’s church believes in the supernatural, there is no indication that miracles are expected as a gateway to evangelism. Rodney Howard Browne and Adonica Howard-Browne, “The Great Awakening: Power Evangelism Manual,” accessed November 18, 2017, http://pub.revival.com/publications/evangelism_packet_web.pdf, 9.

¹¹⁴ Gerhard Kittel and G. W. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. 2* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 720.

Allan Heaton Anderson states, “Prayer for divine healing is perhaps the most universal characteristic of the many varieties of Pentecostalism and perhaps the main reason for its growth in the developing world.”¹¹⁵ He develops this point further, “One of the reasons for the rapid growth of Pentecostalism is because it has always had a strong emphasis on mission and evangelism.”¹¹⁶ Anderson makes the connection between the growth of Pentecostalism and both the supernatural power of God and evangelism. The combination of the power of God with evangelism produces growth in the modern church just as it did in the first church.

Fifty-seven percent of the narratives in the New Testament have the supernatural involved.¹¹⁷ In 86 percent of the conversion narratives in the New Testament, the

¹¹⁵ Anderson, 30.

¹¹⁶ Anderson, 198.

¹¹⁷ There are 189 New Testament narrative pericopes that specifically involve the supernatural: Matt. 1:18-25, 2:1-12, 13-18, 19-23, 3:11-17, 4:1-11, 23-25, 8:1-4, 5-13, 14-17, 23-27, 28-34, 9:1-7, 14-26, 27-34, 35-38, 10:1-42, 11:1-30, 12:1-14, 15-21, 22-37, 13:53-58, 14:13-21, 22-35, 15:21-28, 29-39, 17:1-13, 14-23, 24-27, 19:1-15, 20:29-34, 21:1-11, 12-17, 18-22, 22:1-23:39, 24:1-25:46, 26:17-35, 27:45-56, 28:1-10, 16-20 Mark 1:9-12, 21-28, 29-34, 35-39, 40-45, 2:1-12, 3:1-6, 7-12, 4:35-41, 5:1-20, 21-43, 6:1-6, 7-13, 6:30-44, 45-56, 7:24-30, 31-37, 8:1-13, 22-26, 9:2-13, 14-32, 38-50, 10:46-52, 11:1-11, 12-25, 13:1-37, 14:12-26, 27-31, 66-72, 15:33-41, 16:1-8, 9-20, Luke 1:5-25, 26-38, 39-56, 57-80, 2:1-7, 8-20, 21-24, 25-40, 3:21-37, 4:1-13, 14-15, 16-30, 31-37, 38-44, 5:1-11, 12-16, 17-26, 6:1-11, 17-49, 7:1-10, 11-17, 18-35, 36-50, 8:1-21, 22-25, 26-39, 40-56, 9:1-9, 10-17, 28-36, 37-45, 10:1-24, 11:14-28, 13:10-21, 14:1-24, 17:11-19, 18:31-34, 35-43, 19:1-9, 28-44, 21:5-38, 22:7-38, 39-46, 47-53, 54-62, 23:26-43, 44-49, 24:1-12, 13-35, 36-49, 50-53, John 1:29-34, 43-51, 2:1-11, 12-25, 3:1-21, 4:1-38, 43-54, 5:1-15, 6:1-15, 16-24, 8:48-59, 9:1-12, 9:13-10-21, 11:1-16, 17-37, 38-44, 12:20-36, 37-50, 13:18-30, 13:31-17:26, 18:1-14, 20:1-9, 10-18, 19-20, 24-31, 21:1-14, Acts 1:18, 9-11, 2:1-13, 14-41, 42-47, 3:1-26, 4:23-31, 32-37, 5:1-11, 12-16, 17-42, 6:8-11, 12-15, 7:1-60, 8:4-8, 9-13, 14-25, 26-40, 9:1-19, 32-43, 10:1-8, 9-23, 24-48, 11:19-30, 12:1-18, 19-25, 13:4-12, 14:1-7, 8-20, 16:6-10, 16-40, 19:1-7, 8-22, 20:7-12, 21:1-16, 25:23-26:32, 27:1-12, 13-26, 27-44, 28:1-10,

There are 142 New Testament narrative pericopes that do not specifically mention the supernatural: Matt. 3:1-10, 4:12-21, 5:1-7:28, 8:18-22, 9:9-13, 12:38-50, 13:1-35, 36-52, 14:1-12, 15:1-20, 16:1-4, 5-12, 13-20, 21-28, 18:1-20, 21-35, 19:16-20:16, 20:17-19, 20:20-28, 21:23-46, 26:1-5, 26:6-13, 14-16, 36-46, 47-56, 57-68, 69-75, 27:1-10, 11-26, 27-44, 57-66, 28:11-15 Mark 1:1-8, 12-20, 2:13-17, 18-22, 23-28, 3:13-19, 20-35, 4:1-34, 6:14-29, 7:1-23, 8:14-21, 8:27-9:1, 9:33-37, 10:16, 17-31, 32-34, 35-45, 11:27-12:44, 14:1-11, 14:32-42, 43-52, 53-65, 15:1-15, 16-20, 21-32, 42-47 Luke 2:41-52, 3:1-20, 5:27-32, 33-39, 6:12-16, 9:18-27, 46-50, 51-56, 57-62, 10:25-37, 38-42, 11:1-13, 29-36, 37-54, 12:1-13:9, 13:22-35, 14-25-35, 15:1-17:10, 17:20-37, 18:1-17, 18-30, 19:11-27, 45-48, 20:1-47, 21:1-4, 22:1-6, 63-65, 22:66-23:25, 23:50-56, John 1:19-28, 35-42, 3:22-36, 4:39-42, 5:16-47, 6:25-71, 7:1-13, 14-24, 7:25-8:11, 12-30,

supernatural is at work.¹¹⁸ David Moore talks about the Bible's emphasis: "The Book of Acts puts emphasis on God's supernatural initiative and the Holy Spirit's pivotal role in directing the church's mission and evangelistic work ... It is the Holy Spirit who gifts the infant church with missionary and evangelistic power."¹¹⁹ Modern believers cannot ignore this overwhelming emphasis in the text.

James Maloney describes power evangelism in global contexts: "I only believe in power evangelism. It's a very clear-cut concept: stand up, proclaim there is only one God named Jesus, all other gods (insert whichever false deity you're combating here) are bogus, and to prove it to you, bring up your sick and He'll heal them. Simple. Effective."¹²⁰ Christians use this particular method all over the world and present Jesus with extraordinarily positive results.

Craig Keener gives a scholarly approach to global miracles, sharing the remarkable results of one miracle story:

None of these people, Shelley emphasized, were yet Christians, although before the night was over some five hundred people committed themselves to become

31-48, 10:22-42, 11:45-57, 12:1-11, 12-19, 13:1-17, 18:15-18, 19-24, 25-27, 28-40, 19:1-16, 17-27, 28-37, 38-42, 20:21-23, 21:15-25, Acts 1:12-26, 4:1-22, 6:1-7, 8:1-3, 9:20-31, 11:1-18, 13:1-3, 13:13-52, 14:21-28, 15:1-35, 36-41, 16:1-5, 11-15, 17:1-9, 10-15, 16-34, 18:1-17, 18-28, 19:23-41, 20:1-6, 13-38, 21:17-26, 21:27-22:29, 22:30-23:11, 12-35, 24:1-27, 25:1-12, 13-22, 28:11-16, 17-31

¹¹⁸ Conversions in the Gospels occur mostly before the resurrection of Jesus and are therefore not quite the same as those that follow the Resurrection. However, the changing of one's mind and expression of faith in Jesus will also be considered a conversion for the sake of this study. Fifty-one conversion pericopes explicitly contain the supernatural: Matt 8:10-13, 9:2, 22, 29, 15:28, Mark 2:5, 5:34, 36-43, 10:52, Luke 1:45, 5:20, 7:9, 50, 8:48, 52-56, 17:19, 18:42, 24:8, 31, 45-52, John 1:50, 2:11, 22, 23, 4:29, 42, 53, 7:31, 9:38, 10:41-42, 11:45, 12:37-42, 20:8, 28, Acts 2:37, 3:16, 4:4, 5:12-16, 8:12, 13, 8:36, 9:18, 34-35, 41-42, 10:44, 13:12, 14:1-3, 16:30, 19:5-6, 11-20, 28:6-10.

Eight conversion pericopes do not explicitly contain the supernatural: Acts 11:20-24, 13:48, 16:14, 17:4, 17:12, 17:34, 18:8, 26.

¹¹⁹ Moore, "Empowered for Witness," 534.

¹²⁰ Maloney, *The Panoramic Seer*, 134.

followers of Christ, and a church was started the next day. Presumably the locals who knew those who were cured believed that something dramatic had happened. The probability of an alternative explanation seems abysmally low: Would a village, though already committed to a particular religion, fake all these healings and then contribute so many members to a permanent new church, just to fool some visiting Christians?¹²¹

His question seems ridiculous, as it is of course rhetorical. These people's whole world changed in one day, because of encounters with the power of God. Power evangelism remains the greatest effective method of evangelism for believers.

Nathan and Wilson make the connection between salvation and the supernatural by saying that "the pathway to the big miracle of conversion is often lined with less significant demonstrations of power."¹²² The greatest miracle of all remains the salvation of someone's soul and the Spirit of Christ taking up residence in a human being (Rom 8:9). That said, so many people will have their best opportunity to receive Jesus in the context of seeing and experiencing the supernatural power of Jesus.

There exists a belief in Western Christianity that miracles should be rare. Writing before even the healing revivals of the 1900s, Christians philosopher and author C. S. Lewis reflected this viewpoint:

You are probably quite right in thinking that you will never see a miracle done ... God does not shake miracles into Nature at random as if from a pepper-caster. They come on great occasions: they are found at the great ganglions of ... spiritual history ... If your own life does not happen to be near one of those great ganglions, how should you expect to see one? If we were heroic missionaries, apostles, or martyrs, it would be a different matter. But why you or I?¹²³

¹²¹ Keener, *Miracles*, 6,884.

¹²² Nathan and Wilson, *Empowered Evangelicals*, 1443.

¹²³ Lewis, *Miracles* 274.

Lewis represents the view to one degree or another of many believers who have not dedicated themselves to seeing the miraculous works of God in their world. There must be some logical workaround to allow people to live the lives they're already living—or should there be? What if every believer is meant to make the supernatural normal in his or her world? Saying the supernatural is only for the super-spiritual, or only at the great epochs of history, or only when God wills, rings hollow beside the example of the first century Christians. Many modern believers around the world agree.

Warren D. Bullock gives responsibility for seeing the supernatural occur to all believers by stating that “the potential for all of the supernatural gifts is resident within the believer, because the Holy Spirit lives there.”¹²⁴ Even believers who have not been baptized in the Holy Spirit are responsible for seeking His baptism and power (Acts 2:38-39). Especially in the Western world, evangelism will become effective when infused by the power of God.

Normal Christianity sees the power of God; powerless Christianity is not normal. In *Say No to Powerless Christianity*, Che Ahn declares, “It is time for the Church to declare war on unbelief and believe God for the miraculous. It is time to believe for the sake of those who suffer, but even more so for the sake of those who are lost. Miracles, signs, and wonders are one of God’s most potent tools to reach the lost.”¹²⁵ Those potent tools normally make converts. Maldonado agrees. “In some churches, miracles take place

¹²⁴ Warren D. Bullock, *When the Spirit Speaks: Making Sense of Tongues, Interpretation and Prophecy* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2009), 40.

¹²⁵ Ché Ahn, *Say Goodbye to Powerless Christianity: Walking in Supernatural Surrender and Significance* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2009), 71.

only when a famous evangelist visits the city ... Every believer has received a mandate from God, along with His *dynamis* power and *exusia* authority, to heal the sick, perform miracles.”¹²⁶ Clark echo this sentiment, “If you have ever wondered why people are leaving the Church—particularly young people—and searching elsewhere for spiritual power, it is because they have encountered a false, powerless gospel.”¹²⁷ Local churches and individual believers should be more scared of powerlessness than excessive or incorrect uses of God’s power.

All of the spiritual manifestations and gifts are profitable for evangelism. David Lim’s extensive work *Spiritual Gifts* echoes the sentiments of the other authors:

Gifts have been considered optional to ministry. They have been relegated to super-spiritual Christians and, as in the Old Testament, charismatically endowed leaders. The genius of the New Testament church was not in its leadership but in the vitality and ministry gifts of every believer.¹²⁸

The supernatural works of God have now been given to believers. The ability of churches to inspire, train, and equip believers for the supernatural will determine effectiveness in transformational evangelism.

Christy Wimber gave insight into her husband’s method of training people for supernatural ministry: “John not only spoke about everyone getting to play, but he lived it. Time and time again people will tell you how John would take them along, and lovingly encourage, and oftentimes push them into taking risk for God!”¹²⁹ This concept

¹²⁶ Maldonado, *How to Walk*, 2,619, Kindle.

¹²⁷ Clark, *Authority to Heal*, 481.

¹²⁸ Lim, *Spiritual Gifts*, 46-47.

¹²⁹ Wimber, *Everyone Gets to Play*, 23.

that everyone should be experiencing God's supernatural works consistently remains surprisingly absent from so many Western Pentecostal and charismatic churches. Donald Kammer's article on John Wimber states, "One of the most distinctive aspects of the Wimber episode was the training of significant numbers of people to release the healing power of God themselves."¹³⁰ Making the supernatural normal means every believer must start taking the risks that allow God's supernatural works to develop in them.

Frank DeCenso gives a strong voice to lay ministers being equipped for the supernatural: "If we want a vibrant, spiritually mature Church, we must minister according to Jesus' pattern: everyone must be equipped and released to minister."¹³¹ Even Gordon Fee harmonizes with them, saying about the supernatural, "Leaders would do well to provide a setting and atmosphere in which people can practice."¹³² When what happens inside churches looks and feels like what can happen with unbelievers, then churches will begin to take new ground for the Kingdom.

Here's where these principles come to life. Praying Medic describes the results of power evangelism:

It was after I decided to be more intentional in allowing Jesus to live through me on a daily basis that I noticed changes in the lives of people around me. Those who were never interested in my religion were very interested in the healing they began to hear about. Those who never cared about Bible study were interested in learning what God was saying to them through dreams. The further I walked into

¹³⁰ Donald Kammer, "The Perplexing Power of John Wimber's Power Encounters," *Churchman* (Spring 1992): 54.

¹³¹ DeCenso and Ahn, *God's Supernatural Power*, 14.

¹³² Fee, *Paul, the Spirit*, 190.

the kingdom, the more people were attracted to Jesus. And my opportunities to disciple them increased dramatically.¹³³

Praying Medic reflects the experience of so many others. Kevin Dedmon trains in a particular model of power evangelism called the “Ultimate Treasure Hunt.”¹³⁴ In short, you ask God for physical clues about the person you will minister to (i.e., what the person looks like or where to find that person). Then you go and look for the person, love that person, and pray for the individual, allowing them to encounter Jesus in a supernatural way. The treasure hunting method is now in use all over the world with great effectiveness. Dedmon teaches constantly showing love throughout these interactions. “The Ultimate Treasure is the people who are just waiting to be discovered. They are those who desperately, and often secretly, need a real encounter with God in order to meet the overwhelming needs of their lives and the unfulfilled desires of their hearts. They are everywhere.”¹³⁵ People are the treasure; salvation is the greatest miracle; and the supernatural power of God unites people with that miracle.

Chris Overstreet articulates his confidence in power evangelism: “I know that when I walk into a room, I change the atmosphere because of the Holy Spirit who lives in me. I have the unlimited resources of Heaven to give away to anyone, in any place, at any time.”¹³⁶ The Holy Spirit knows exactly how to break through with the person directly in front of a believer all the time, even when the believer does not have a clue. However,

¹³³ Medic, 2948.

¹³⁴ Dedmon, *Ultimate Treasure Hunt*, 22.

¹³⁵ Dedmon, *Ultimate Treasure Hunt*, 27.

¹³⁶ Overstreet, *A Practical Guide*, 62.

that requires the believer be sensitive to His leading and power. Bickle talks about prophetic evangelism this way: “Remember, you do not have to say ‘thus says the Lord’ when you prophesy. You can talk to an unbeliever without ever telling them that you are prophesying. I call it prophesying in a ‘supernaturally natural way.’”¹³⁷ These interactions open the door for overtly talking about Jesus as the person will see the effectiveness of the supernatural at work and be ready for God’s love.¹³⁸

Power evangelism will be effective for activating believers in the supernatural and for growing the kingdom of God. This is true all over the world. Vernon J. Sterk’s research confirms this: “A healing ministry that evolves from a people’s worldview and flows naturally into the church is a key factor in the growth of the church in hostile environments.”¹³⁹ Others are concluding the same in the Western world. Robert Sawvelle, a pastor in Texas, wrote a doctor of ministry project calling power evangelism “encounter evangelism.” He concluded, “Based on the evidence explained, this is God’s primary and most effective evangelism model to reach the lost with the good news of

¹³⁷ Bickle, *Growing in the Prophetic*, 2,014.

¹³⁸ God’s love and power work together beautiful in this experience I had in May 2016: as I drove to a meeting one day, I called a friend to tell her not to come in to volunteer at the church since I wouldn’t be there. In the middle of our brief conversation, I had a sharp pain in the left side of my rib cage. That’s when I asked her, “Do you have pain in the left side of your rib cage?” She related how she had an abusive boyfriend who body slammed her into concrete. It had broken her rib cage, and she had daily pain. She had a migraine at that moment from the referred pain. We prayed, and the migraine left. Later that week I got to pray for her again, and the pain left. Even the scar tissue was gone! In that moment, I got to tell her that Jesus loved her so much He wanted to heal her body and her heart from the abuse of the past. He took the scar tissue because He was making it as if the abuse never happened! Great healing took place in her heart that day. The word of knowledge from a physical sensation in me opened the door for physical healing, which led to the prophetic declaration that her emotional pain was healed as well!

¹³⁹ Vernon J. Sterk, “Evangelism with Power,” *Missiology: An International Review* 20, no. 3 (July 1992): 383.

God's kingdom.”¹⁴⁰ In a conference on power evangelism, Lori Pireson recognized, “The proven hypothesis tested that the School of Power and Love would result in self-reported increased activation of the spiritual gifts in participants.”¹⁴¹ Ways exist to activate the supernatural power of God in people.

Joseph Zichterman wrote a detailed description of John Wimber's theology and concluded, “Wimber unified Third Wave adherents around the use of all the miraculous gifts (gracelets) by all believers, primarily for the purpose of outreach (viz., power evangelism).”¹⁴² Therefore, these authors are continually emphasizing the scriptural imperative to see the power of God in evangelism. Churches must take the power of God outside their doors and make the supernatural normal.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter the literature on making the supernatural normal in churches through the gateway manifestations of the Spirit was addressed. When God expresses himself through believers in supernatural ways, His reality and His love is on display in life changing ways. This chapter has reviewed the literature of those who have recounted the effectiveness of power evangelism—that through God's supernatural work, people are coming to know Jesus. Those who do see the supernatural consistently in their

¹⁴⁰ Robert Sawvelle, “Encounter Evangelism” (D.Min. proj., United Theological Seminary, 2013), 203.

¹⁴¹ Lori A. Pierson, “Evaluating a Programmatic Model that Creates Increased Activation of Spiritual Gifts among School of Power and Love Participants” (DMin. proj., United Theological Seminary, 2015), 98.

¹⁴² Joseph T. Zichterman, “The Distinctives of John Wimber's Theology” (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2011), 278.

lives and churches should be encouraged to seek God more often. There are even more breakthroughs available as they “eagerly desire πνευματικά” (1 Cor 14:1, BGT).¹⁴³

Those who believe in the supernatural but do not see it consistently in their lives or churches should be challenged to persevere in praying as Jesus did for the sick outside the church. Miracles have the purpose of witnessing to the power of Jesus. God honors the risks of faith believers take to pray for people outside the church. So many of these authors expressed that they did not experience a breakthrough until after they had prayed for hundreds of people, so persevere. Skeptics should find many resources for further study in this project and be encouraged to doubt their doubts. God will get even more glory through His church when the supernatural is made normal.

¹⁴³ “Spirituals” or “Spiritual manifestations.”

CHAPTER 4: DESCRIPTION OF FIELD PROJECT

Introduction

This chapter describes the field project of making the supernatural normal at Journey Life Church in Holt, Michigan through two key implementation steps: a four-week sermon series (September 9, 16, 23, and 30, 2018), and a four-week series of *Supernatural Trainings* (September 30 to October 21, 2018). This chapter shows the process of mobilizing the people of Journey Life Church to take the power of God outside its doors through four sections: (1) the preparation of the project, (2) the execution of the project, (3) the results of the project, and (4) the project's contribution to ministry.

Preparation of the Project

Personal Preparation

Preparation for this project began for me early in life, as I saw God's power on display in many dramatic ways. As a five-year-old, I watched my brother's leg grow (he was born with one leg shorter) in a prayer meeting led by a nine-year-old. As a fourteen-year-old, I watched food multiply at a Mexican migrant worker camp (we had enough to feed one hundred kids, and we fed seven hundred); many came to Christ as a result. Many other stories like these could be told that created in me a drive to see the supernatural become normal in my life and then in my church.

The disconnect for me was that I prayed for hundreds of people, with little demonstrative supernatural results. Because of a lack of success within the church, I was gun-shy to take the power of God outside the doors of the church like Jesus did, much less to train other believers to do so. My personal turning point came when my son Jaren was diagnosed in the womb with bilateral cleft lip and palette and duodenal atresia. His conditions forced our family into weekly prayer meetings, and me into deep intercession. Major complications should have been deadly to Jaren three times, but the gift of faith rose up, and Jaren was healed. After that time, my drive for the power of God was insatiable, and I knew the tool Jesus and the apostles used to evangelize must be key to evangelism today.

Pastoral Preparation

When I proposed this project topic, I had been the lead pastor at Journey Life Church in Holt, Michigan, for almost two years. I had already taught extensively on making the supernatural normal, but the church people needed to take the next steps in implementing these principles so the power of God would be present in their neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, and everywhere they went. Therefore, the field project was designed to motivate individuals who had knowledge about the topic to take action to see the power of God outside the doors of the church.

Research Preparation

In preparation for the project's action steps, I laid a research foundation by way of the project's biblical-theological review (chapter 2) and the general literature review (chapter 3). The research for the biblical-theological review started by examining many commentaries and Bible dictionaries on Mark 2:1-12 as the central passage. Next, I

researched deeply the scholarly literature on healing, prophecy, and word of knowledge, including Bible dictionaries, dissertations, articles, and scholarly books. For the general literature review I studied scholarly and popular literature, especially compiling books, dissertations and articles on supernatural evangelism from the last 15 years. Both reviews demonstrate that the supernatural power of God is effective for a personal witness about Jesus. They also demonstrate the mandate Jesus gave believers to utilize the power of the Holy Spirit in witnessing.

Do What Jesus Did Sermon Series Preparation

The four-week sermon series, *Do What Jesus Did*, drew some general inspiration from the book *Do What Jesus Did* by Robby Dawkins—a book I found useful to my research for the general literature review. Dawkins wrote the book so the average believer would have the tools and inspiration to make the supernatural normal.¹

The sermons were developed with a team-teaching approach, so Journey Life Church staff members Blake Kane, Dustin Taylor, Ben Schartow, and Jessica Stepp also had creative and content input into the series even though the primary responsibility for preparing and teaching the sermons was mine. Journey Life Church's Discipleship Director, Dustin Taylor, assisted me in developing the first sermon of the series, *Matthew 10-Jesus Sends Out His Life Group*. Creative Arts Director, Blake Kane, helped me develop the week 4 sermon, *John 14-The Holy Spirit*. I developed the other two sermons of the series myself, *Mark 2-The Big Three* and *Mark 9-How to Fail Boldly*.

¹ We also used Dawkins's *Do What Jesus Did* small group curriculum for all the church's small groups to develop this topic simultaneously, even though this was outside the scope of the formal D.Min. project.

Also in preparation for the sermon series, I developed a *Do What Jesus Did* pre-sermon series survey to assess both the knowledge and praxis of making the supernatural normal outside the church. Dr. Lois Olena, D.Min. project coordinator at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, and Dr. Jeff Fulks, professor of organizational research and evaluation at Evangel University, helped me formulate questions that would be valuable for a pre-sermon series survey and a post-sermon series survey tool. Since the surveys were going to be administered to all the in the main church gatherings, I purposefully kept them short. Table 1 shows the *Do What Jesus Did* pre-sermon series survey questions.²

Table 1. *Do What Jesus Did* pre-sermon series survey

Question 1*	What are the last four digits of your social security number?
Question 2	Rate your own compassion meter. ³
Question 3	Do you see a major connection between compassion and the supernatural power of God in the Scripture?
Question 4	How often do you hear from God (“hear” means God communicates specially to you aside from regular Bible study)?
Question 5	How important is hearing from God to your spiritual health?
Question 6	How many times have you prayed with someone outside the church in the last month?
Question 7	How helpful is the miraculous supernatural work of God to the effectiveness of your personal witness about Jesus?

*This question was used only to correlate results.

Table 2 shows the *Do What Jesus Did* post-sermon series survey questions.⁴

Table 2. *Do What Jesus Did* post-sermon series survey

Question 1*	What are the last four digits of your social security number?
Question 2	Rate your own compassion meter.

² See Appendix E, “Surveys for Sermon Series and Trainings.”

³ Participants rated their own compassion meter on a scale of 0: I see someone possibly in pain and never think, “What’s going on in their life?” to 5: I see someone possibly in pain and I wonder, “What’s going on in their life?” to 10: I see someone possibly in pain and I immediately think, “What’s going on in their life?” and pray for a supernatural opportunity to give them something amazing from God.

⁴ See Appendix E, “Surveys for Sermon Series and Trainings.”

Question 3	Do you see a major connection between compassion and the supernatural power of God in the Scripture?
Question 4	How often do you hear from God (“hear” means God communicates specially to you aside from regular Bible study)?
Question 5	How important is hearing from God to your spiritual health?
Question 6	How many times have you prayed with someone outside the church in the last month?
Question 7	How helpful is the miraculous supernatural work of God to the effectiveness of your personal witness about Jesus?
Question 8	How many of the “Do What Jesus Did” series gatherings (Sept 9, 16, 23, 30) did you attend, including today?

Some questions were designed to test information, and others were to gauge levels of action in regard to the supernatural. The surveys were prepared in paper form and on Qualtrics.com.

Supernatural Trainings Preparation

In addition to the four-week sermon series for the whole church, the project also included a series of *Supernatural Trainings* at Journey Life Church for a smaller group that wanted more hands-on training. Part of the preparation for the trainings took inspiration and content from the Power & Love Conference⁵ I attended with twelve others from the church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 13 to 16, 2018. While at the conference, Abby Warner, Jessica Stepp, and I discussed the plan for the *Supernatural Trainings* at Journey Life Church. We designed the trainings not to add more conceptual content about the supernatural to a group of people that were already rich with this content but rather to contain about fifteen minutes of teaching during our planned *Supernatural Trainings* lunches in September and October with the congregation in which certain activities would happen. Each activity was meant to activate either

⁵ “Power and Love Conference,” Power and Love, accessed March 24, 2018, <http://powerandlove.org/>.

prophecy, healing, word of knowledge, or evangelism in those gathered. Therefore, the primary preparation for the *Supernatural Trainings* was in formulating and deciding which activities for our later *Supernatural Trainings* at Journey Life Church would challenge, inspire, and propel people forward to do supernatural works like Jesus did them.

An additional part of the preparation for the *Supernatural Trainings* was to design an eleven-question pre-training survey and post-training survey similar to the *Do What Jesus Did* survey instrument (on Qualtrics.com and in paper form). This instrument was designed to track the progress of people doing supernatural evangelism. These questions tested almost exclusively the level of action that participants took to make the supernatural normal in their world. They were almost entirely about the actions of engaging with people in supernatural ministry outside the church, instead of testing informational acumen.

Table 3 shows the questions that evaluated the attendees' engagements in the supernatural prior to the training.

Table 3. Supernatural Trainings pre-training survey

Question 1*	What are the last four digits of your social security number?
Question 2	Have you ever been to a supernatural training similar to this before (i.e., Power & Love)?
Question 3	Rate your own faith for the supernatural meter (choose one)
Question 4	How often do you hear from God ("hear" means God communicates specially to you aside from regular Bible study)?
Question 5	How many times have you prayed face-to-face for someone outside the church in the last month?
Question 6	How many times would you estimate you've witnessed to someone (shared something that pointed them to faith in Jesus) outside the church in the last month?
Question 7	How many times have you prayed face-to-face for someone to be healed outside the church in the last month?
Question 8	How many times have you prayed for someone and seen them healed in the last month?
Question 9	How many times have you prayed for someone and received knowledge from God about them in the last month?
Question 10	How many times have you prophesied over someone in the last month?

*This question was used only to correlate results.

Table 4 shows the questions that evaluated the attendees' engagements in the supernatural following the training.

Table 4. Supernatural Trainings post-training survey

Question 1*	What are the last four digits of your social security number?
Question 2	Have you ever been to a supernatural training similar to this before (i.e., Power & Love)?
Question 3	Rate your own faith for the supernatural meter (choose one)
Question 4	How often do you hear from God ("hear" means God communicates specially to you aside from regular Bible study)?
Question 5	How many times have you prayed face-to-face for someone outside the church in the last month?
Question 6	How many times would you estimate you've witnessed to someone (shared something that pointed them to faith in Jesus) outside the church in the last month?
Question 7	How many times have you prayed face-to-face for someone to be healed outside the church in the last month?
Question 8	How many times have you prayed for someone and seen them healed in the last month?
Question 9	How many times have you prayed for someone and received knowledge from God about them in the last month?
Question 10	How many times have you prophesied over someone in the last month?
Question 11	How many of these <i>Supernatural Trainings</i> have you attended (Sept. 30, Oct. 7, 14, 21) including today?

*This question was used only to correlate results.

Execution of the Project

Do What Jesus Did Sermon Series

The *Do What Jesus Did* sermon series took place on September 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2018, during both the 9 and 11 a.m. gatherings.⁶ The series was marketed internally through announcements and emails, and externally in the Holt and Lansing, Michigan, communities on Facebook with advertisements, and with coaster-sized invite cards.⁷

⁶ Videos for the 11 a.m. service of all four Sundays can be found at <https://www.journeylifechurch.com/live-stream-1>.

⁷ See Appendix F, "Marketing for the *Do What Jesus Did* Series."

The *Do What Jesus Did* sermon series was designed to take people into specific life situations of Jesus that would inspire them to do what He did. Before the first sermon on September 9, those sitting in the gathering were asked to take the pre-sermon survey and were given about five minutes to do so. Of those sitting in the sanctuary during both gatherings combined, 112 of the 186 people completed the survey.

Sermon Series - Week One

Worship for week one included a prophetic word about rest. Dustin Taylor and I preached the sermon that first week about Matthew's version of Jesus sending out the twelve disciples to show that any believer can be commissioned by Jesus and see God do supernatural works through them.⁸ The sermon also demonstrated Jesus's compassion that drove Him to minister supernaturally. Dustin and I both told stories of our journeys into seeing more of the supernatural works of God. During the response time, I led the congregation to pray like Jesus did for everyone in the room who needed healing. Three people were completely healed while people were praying for each other, including a woman in excruciating pain with a severe kidney condition; God healed of her pain. We finished by praying that God would increase our faith and our desire to step out and take risks for Him.

Sermon Series - Week Two

Worship for week two of the series included a prophetic word from Alexandria Kane about fear bowing to Jesus's name and prayer at the altar for those who needed a miracle. The sermon for this week taught the primary passage for the biblical-literature

⁸ See Appendix G, "Do What Jesus Did Sermon Notes."

review, Mark 2:1-12, in which Jesus prophesies, gives supernatural knowledge, and heals a paralyzed man. I also shared testimonies of two people in the church who had prayed and seen healing outside the church that week. The sermon had a salvation call. Twelve people committed to Christ during the two gatherings. In response to the sermon, I also asked people to write answers to these questions, “Whose mat am I carrying? How can I help carry someone’s mat?” and challenged them to declare healing and prophecy with the authority Jesus gave.

Sermon Series - Week Three

During the sermon for week three of the series, I gave two more testimonies of people who had prayed for others outside the church. The sermon titled *How to Fail Boldly* was from Mark 9:14-28, where the disciples failed to drive out a demon. The sermon was built to help believers learn how to fail well and grow through the failures that will inevitably come when praying for the supernatural. In response, I led people to think about a time their prayers failed, and ask Jesus two questions: “Were you with me then? How do you want to grow me through this?” Then I led people to pray for each other for healing and two more people received healing from God.

Sermon Series - Week Four

The worship time for week four of the series contained a prophetic word that God is hungry for the affection of believers. Before the sermon, I administered the *Do What Jesus Did* post-sermon series survey, and 99 people of the 185 in the sanctuary completed it. Blake Kane and I presented a sermon from John 14:8-18 that emphasized the presence and person of the Holy Spirit as integral to supernatural mission. We showed a video filmed at Menards in which Blake and another man from the church were shopping. They

stopped to pray for a man with a boot on because of severe heel pain who was healed. For the response time, we asked two questions for people to write down God's response to, "How can I sense Your presence more in my life? What are the greater things in my life?" Then we invited people to be prophesied over. We had six people prophesying in each gathering. We all had a line of people, and each of us prophesied over people for at least twenty-five minutes after the sermon ended.

Supernatural Trainings

The *Supernatural Trainings* took place on Sunday afternoons on September 30, October 7, 14 and 21, 2018, with lunch at 1 p.m. The *Supernatural Trainings* were only marketed internally through announcements, emails, and personal invites.⁹

As the sermon series ended we built on that foundation by beginning the *Supernatural Trainings* for those who were interested. Each training started at 1 p.m. with lunch and included fifteen to twenty minutes of teaching. Then we did activities designed to provide opportunity for the Spirit to move among us through prophecy, healing, word of knowledge, and evangelism. After each activity, we debriefed by getting feedback from the participants about their experiences. We answered questions and took time to teach, give tips, and make observations.

Trainings - Week One

Week one, on September 30, we focused on prophecy. The teachings were done by way of selected video clips by Todd White and Tom Ruotolo from the Power & Love Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan. For the first exercise I asked people to write

⁹ See Appendix H, "Marketing for the *Supernatural Trainings*."

down what they felt God was speaking over them. For the second activity people wrote their names on pieces of cardstock, then turned them to the blank side and handed them to me. I shuffled them and laid them out blank side up across the front of the room. Then everyone prayed and asked God for a word of prophecy for the person represented by that sheet of paper, without knowing who it was. This exercise was designed to help people not to question whether they were having God's thoughts or their own. Afterward, many received powerful confirming words of prophecy.

For the third prophetic exercise we had half the people stand while the others stayed seated. The seated half closed their eyes and those standing moved silently to someone seated, sat in front of them and tapped them on the shoulder. The seated person then asked God for a word for that person without opening their eyes. After they shared, they opened their eyes and encouraged each other. Then we switched so those who had not prophesied yet got a chance to do so. In the final prophetic exercise, we had them get into two groups of ten, then in each group five people stood in a circle facing out, and the other five faced them. Those in the inside of the circle prophesied over those on the outside and were given thirty seconds to do so. "Rotate" was called and the outer circle rotated. Those in the inner circle prophesied over the next person. Then the circles switched places so everyone was able to prophesy. Many people were deeply and powerfully affected by the words from God given to them that day. Also, their confidence was built to hear from God and prophesy. At the end of the training, I gave the presurvey and twelve of the twenty-two people in attendance took the survey. Some had to leave early.

Trainings - Week Two

For week two's training I showed teaching from Todd White and Robby Dawkins on healing. Next, we did a role-play activity, where the twenty-four people in the room partnered up and picked an environment outside the church (mall, park, workplace, restaurant, etc.). The shorter person was the believer in the first role play and the taller person was the stranger. They were to act out approaching the person and asking him or her to pray for healing. Then they picked a different environment and switched roles. The second activity we did was to pray for anyone in the room who had any physical problem they wanted prayer for. During the prayer time, six people received complete healing and three received partial healing. Finally, I had them all sit and write notes to people in their lives who were not in the room who needed healing. They were to then deliver those notes to the people they prayed for.

Trainings - Week Three

Week three focused on word of knowledge, and the teaching during lunch was done by myself and campus missionary and special speaker JonMark Baker. JonMark and I then gave a few words of knowledge to people and God began to raise people's level of faith tremendously. Next, we had the twenty-six people partner up with people they didn't know well and ask God for a word of knowledge for the other person. The shorter person went first and then they switched. God spoke in powerful and emotional ways to many in the room. Finally, they asked God to give them a word of knowledge or prophecy for a stranger they would approach later that day. They wrote these notes and then asked God for clues as to who to give the note to. Then we sent them out to give their notes away.

Trainings - Week Four

During the final week of *Supernatural Trainings*, we went out to evangelize. I started by administer the postsurvey and eighteen of the twenty people completed it. Our outreach director Abby Warner and I taught them about *The Ultimate Treasure Hunt*,¹⁰ the book by Kevin Dedmon that shows a method of approaching supernatural evangelism. People outside the church are the treasure. We taught people to ask God for clues (location, clothing, facial features, name, etc.) about who to talk to. Then we paired everyone up and sent them out for thirty-five minutes (including drive time) to witness to someone with the power of God. The testimonies were amazing! Nineteen of the twenty people were able to pray for someone. Some prayed for healing. Others found people looking for a church and invited them. Others had people crying and hugging them. There were only a couple minor negative responses. Everyone was encouraged that they were hearing from God and could do supernatural evangelism.

Results of the Project

The results for this project primarily showed through action and testimony. The sermon series surveys and supernatural training surveys indicated little change to the knowledge base of those involved, which was predictable since I had been teaching on these subjects for three years. Journey Life Church people had a good knowledge base for making the supernatural normal; they simply needed to grow in practice.

¹⁰ Kevin Dedmon, *The Ultimate Treasure Hunt: A Guide to Supernatural Evangelism through Supernatural Encounters* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2007).

Do What Jesus Did Sermon Series
Results (Quantitative)

For the *Do What Jesus Did* sermon series, the pre-sermon survey and post-sermon survey involved a variety of question types.¹¹ The first question asked for the last four digits of the social security number to correlate data. Five of the next six questions had custom zero to ten ratings, while one question asked for a free numerical response. The final question asked how many of the services people attended—one, two, three or four; and was only included on the post-sermon series survey. Table 5 below includes the pre-sermon survey and post-sermon survey, showing significant results in bold type. Out of the 112 people who took the pre-sermon series survey and the 99 who took the post-sermon series survey, Dr. Fulks and I were able to correlate 44 results. Table 5 reflects the same forty-four people in both surveys.¹²

Table 5. *Do What Jesus Did* all church sermon series survey correlated results

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
Q2 - Rate your own compassion meter				
Q2Pre	6.93	44	1.576	.238
Q2Post	7.48	44	1.338	.202
Q3 - Do you see a major connection between compassion and the supernatural power of God in the Scripture?				
Q3Pre	8.05	44	1.493	.225
Q3Post	8.02	44	1.635	.247
Q4 - How often do you hear from God (“hear” means God communicates specially to you aside from regular Bible study)?				
Q4Pre	4.07	44	1.873	.282

¹¹ See Appendix E, “Surveys for Sermon Series and Trainings.”

¹² See Appendix I, “Do What Jesus Did Sermon Series Pre- and Post-Survey Results Statistical Comparison.”

Q4Post	5.70	44	2.483	.374
Q5 - How important is hearing from God to your spiritual health?				
Q5Pre	8.89	44	1.498	.226
Q5Post	8.95	44	1.569	.237
Q6 - How many times have you prayed with someone outside the church in the last month?				
Q6Pre	2.72	43	3.011	.459
Q6Post	3.74	43	4.376	.667
Q7 - How helpful is the miraculous supernatural work of God to the effectiveness of your personal witness about Jesus?				
Q7Pre	7.45	44	1.970	.297
Q7Post	7.43	44	1.897	.286

The statistics reflect significant change on questions two, four and six; but no significant change for questions three, five, and seven. Questions 2, 4, and 6 all deal with the practice of making the supernatural normal, while 3, 5, and 7 deal with attitudes and knowledge about the subject. The significant change on the praxis of mobilizing the people of Journey Life Church to take the power of God outside the church is particularly the expected result from this project. Since I have been teaching on the subject at the church for three years, the scores were already high, and there was not much room for growth in attitudes and knowledge. However, I would expect that if the same project were done with a new group of people who were less exposed to teaching on the supernatural, then the survey would have reflected changes in attitudes and knowledge as well.

Of the forty-four people whose results correlated, their compassion meter (Question 2) rose by more than half a point (.55), which means that they reported as a group that they would be more likely to see someone possibly in pain and immediately have compassion on them, looking for a supernatural opportunity to give them something

amazing from God. As the biblical-theological and general literature reviews demonstrated, compassion and the supernatural must be connected to produce results in supernatural evangelism.

Question 4 showed that these people reported hearing from God at a rate 1.63 points higher than the pre-sermon series survey. These results indicate that simply through sitting in the church services and hearing sermons about prophecy, healing, and word of knowledge, people crossed the threshold from hearing God less than daily to more than once per day. This increase in sensitivity to God's voice represents a huge breakthrough for our church and will set up the possibility for the supernatural in people's lives.

For Question 6 people were asked to estimate how many times they prayed with someone outside the church in the last month. Those forty-three people reported praying for 1.02 more people outside the church this month than the previous month. That means that our church prayed for at least forty-four more people outside the church this month simply by emphasizing prayer for the supernatural in our gatherings! That considerably increases the reach of our local church. I believe God's Kingdom is expanding as a result. I believe that will become the new normal for our church, so every month we are seeing more people prayed for and supernatural results will follow.

Supernatural Trainings Results (Quantitative)

The *Supernatural Trainings* results were less correlated, since only thirteen of the twenty-two people who were at the first training took the pre-training survey. Also, they took the survey *after* the first training, which skewed the data for some of the questions. The survey should have been administered *before* the training. At the beginning of the

training, the Spirit of God moved in the gathering as we prophesied over people. As a result, the training was started thirty-five minutes late, and in the bustle I forgot to administer the pre-training survey first.

Participants took the post-training survey *before* the final training, which also skewed the data slightly. I administered it prior to the training to ensure that people did not leave before taking it. Table 6 shows the uncorrelated results from the two surveys.¹³

Table 6. *Supernatural Trainings* surveys uncorrelated results

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
Q3 - Rate your own faith for the supernatural meter				
Q3Pre	6.62	13	1.938	.537
Q3Post	7.28	18	1.638	.386
Q4 - How often do you hear from God (“hear” means God communicates specially to you aside from regular Bible study)?				
Q4Pre	4.85	13	2.672	.741
Q4Post	6.22	18	2.290	.539
Q5 - How many times have you prayed face to face for someone outside the church in the last month?				
Q5Pre	1.62	13	1.325	.368
Q5Post	4.44	18	5.227	1.231
Q6 - How many times would you estimate you’ve witnessed to someone (shared something that pointed them to faith in Jesus) outside the church in the last month?				
Q6Pre	2.70	13	3.351	.929
Q6Post	3.00	18	4.899	1.154
Q7 - How many times have you prayed face-to-face for someone to be healed outside the church in the last month?				
Q7Pre	0.77	13	1.013	.281
Q7Post	2.56	18	4.540	1.070
Q8 - How many times have you prayed for someone and seen them healed in the last month?				
Q8Pre	1.46	13	2.847	.789

¹³ See Appendix J, “*Supernatural Trainings* Pre- and Post-Survey Results Statistical Comparison.”

Q8Post	1.11	18	1.278	.301
Q9 - How many times have you prayed for someone and received knowledge from God about them in the last month?				
Q9Pre	0.46	13	0.776	.215
Q9Post	2.17	18	4.076	.960
Q10 - How many times have you prophesied over someone in the last month?				
Q10Pre	0.77	13	1.091	.302
Q10Post	2.06	18	4.151	.978

The results from the *Supernatural Trainings* are less reliable since they are uncorrelated. However, they all still show the positive trends in a similar fashion to the sermon series results. Notably in question 5, respondents reported to have prayed for 2.82 more people face-to-face outside the church this month than the previous month. However, after the survey, nineteen of the twenty attenders prayed for at least one person, while some prayed for as many as three. Also, their faith for the supernatural increased (+0.66), hearing from God increased (+1.37), praying for healing increased (+1.79), words of knowledge increased (+1.71), and prophesying increased (+1.29). All of these results combine to show that the *Supernatural Trainings* had a significant positive impact on the willingness of individuals to take risks in faith.

Sermon Series and Supernatural Trainings Results (Qualitative)

As for qualitative research, the *Do What Jesus Did* sermon series and *Supernatural Trainings* yielded remarkable results. I personally fielded significantly more personal testimonies about the supernatural during this time period, plus we had

more come in through our *Share a Win* cards,¹⁴ and on Facebook. I have compiled some of the testimonies together, and all of them happened during the time of the series or training. Table 7 reflects only verified testimonies of people who experienced the supernatural inside the church during the series.

Table 7. Testimonies of the supernatural inside the church from 9-9-18 to 10-21-18

<i>Who</i>	<i>Brief synopsis of the supernatural</i>	<i>Occasion</i>
Lily Nunez	Healed from lower back pain	Supernatural Training 10-7
John Wilson	Healed from neck pain and headache	Supernatural Training 10-7
Courtney Gamboa	Back pain was healed, tingling in her back manifested	Supernatural Training 10-7
Brittany Fitzsimons	Healed from shoulder pain	Supernatural Training 10-7
Diane Kilpatrick	Healed from pain in her trapezius muscle into her neck	Supernatural Training 10-7
Rick Harr	Hearing improved in left ear by 60%	Supernatural Training 10-7
Alisha Henley	Healing of a severe stomach ulcer, has not had to take meds for two weeks	Do What Jesus Did 9-9
Jana Sharick	Plantar Fasciitis foot pain went down 90%	Do What Jesus Did 9-23
Andy Bailey	Tonsils swelling healed	Do What Jesus Did 9-23
~45 people	Received prophetic ministry	Do What Jesus Did 9-30
22 people	Prophesied over each other	Supernatural Training 9-30
26 people	Gave words of knowledge over each other	Supernatural Training 10-14

Besides the vocational ministers who participated in some of the supernatural training exercises, vocational ministers did not pray for those who received healing and were prophesied. Believers in the congregation simply practiced the supernatural work of God.

Outside the church people experienced remarkable results as well. Table 8 outlines some of the results reported about God working in supernatural ways outside the church during this season.

Table 8. Testimonies of the supernatural outside the church from 9-9-18 to 10-21-18

<i>Who</i>	<i>Brief synopsis of the supernatural</i>	<i>Location</i>
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¹⁴ *Share a Win* cards are a place for people to write the story of something good that God has done in their life. They could also be called testimony cards

Joe Small	Prayed for a coworker for healing from a cold and they received healing	At a General Motors factory
Ben Schartow	Prayed for Holt High School star running back for a twisted ankle. He went right back into the game and got a big play.	Holt Public High School football game
Dustin Taylor	Prayed for a man paralyzed from a car accident, do not see immediate result	On a street corner
Victoria Wilson	Prayed for fellow student with pain who was healed.	At Meijer
Gage Oliver	Nine-year-old who prayed for healing for his own severe headache	At home
Alexis Ewen	Prayed for five-year-old daughter with infected finger that had gotten worse for three months. One night they prayed and the infection was gone in the morning.	At home
Maureen Harr	Prayed with a cashier and told him about Jesus	At Kroger
George Zerka	Prayed for many people at work.	At Sparrow Hospital
Juliana Stepp	Ten-year-old who prayed for a young lady for her brother and mom because she was fearful.	At McDonalds
Jared Stepp	Daughter Juliana healed of back pain as her leg grew out one inch.	At home
Diane Kilpatrick	Had word of knowledge about upper respiratory pain for her aunt who was healed after a phone call and prayer	From home
Juliana Stepp and Victoria Wilson	Ten-year-old and seventeen-year-old girls prayed for another young lady who was visibly affected by the presence of God.	At Meijer
Abby Warner	Received prayer for injured and painful finger, the pain, swelling, and discoloration left immediately.	At community children's event
Kris Christensen	Prayed for friend who was healed of cancer	At MSU Federal Credit Union

This list does not even include the twenty-six people who were prayed for by the twenty who attended the final supernatural training. One of them received healing. Most received prophetic words. Some cried and almost all offered heartfelt thanks. Again, this table only reflects verified testimonies, though many others were reported during this time.

The growth of the people of Journey Life Church in the supernatural power of God during this series and training were verified through quantitative and qualitative analysis. This shows that when the people of God endeavor to do the work of God in the same way Jesus and the apostles did, the Holy Spirit will honor these risks in faith and pour himself out in powerful ways. I personally witnessed many of these individuals taking steps to minister boldly and effectively in supernatural ways. The people of

Journey Life Church undeniably grew in making the supernatural normal, being mobilized to take the power of God outside the doors of the church.

The Project's Contribution to Ministry

The project addressed the desire of many pastors, believers, and churches to move the supernatural from being fearful, ambiguous, strange, or just a distant memory. Instead, through engaging in the supernatural the way Jesus and the apostles did, the supernatural becomes exciting, accessible, normal, and consistent. Journey Life Church congregants who leaned into the supernatural works of God consistently experienced miracles and healings outside of church gatherings. They had encounters that attracted people to faith in Jesus and to the church. This project resulted in the growth of the church and excitement for the supernatural.

Calcified methods of doing the supernatural prove irrelevant when congregants begin seeing authentic works of God in the people around them. The church has embraced using healing, prophecy and word of knowledge in the services as the first impression for unbelievers. It is common in Journey Life Church services for congregants to pray for each other for healing, to prophesy over each other, and give words of knowledge. Sometimes, they will come to me, and I will give them a mic to prophesy or give a word of knowledge; however, we have moved away from prescriptive and interruptive methods of supernatural ministry. This provides a natural onramp for unbelievers into encounters with the authentic power of God.

Other churches can use this model to make the transition away from calcified methods or no supernatural activity toward an environment that demonstrates the power of God continually. In order for unbelievers to be introduced to a supernatural God who

miraculously takes up residence inside them by His Spirit, the supernatural must become normal for believers. Churches who engage in the supernatural in a normal way will see authentic transformational growth.

CHAPTER 5: PROJECT SUMMARY

Introduction

This chapter evaluates the project's effectiveness for making the supernatural normal by mobilizing the local church to take the power of God outside its doors. The evaluation will observe keys to the project's effectiveness, keys to the project's improvement, implications of the project, recommendations for local churches to make the supernatural normal, and recommendations for further study.

Evaluation of the Project

This project sought to make the supernatural a normal practice in the everyday life of Journey Life Church and to serve as a template for other local churches to take the power of God outside their doors. I operated with the hypothesis that utilizing the method and attitudes of Jesus about supernatural ministry would lead to greater frequency and effectiveness of the supernatural work of God in people's lives.

The biblical-theological literature review portion of the project pointed strongly to specific implementation strategies: (1) utilize prophecy, healing, and word of knowledge with unbelievers; (2) pray for healing with authority; (3) keep in mind that compassion and the supernatural must be paired together; (4) proceed on the basis that the supernatural affects eternal change outside the church; and (5) teach that every believer can move in supernatural ministry. The general literature review portion of the project confirmed and deepened these observations as scholars and pastors alike have rediscovered empowering their people in supernatural ministry. The Church has seen a

large shift in scholarship and pulpits with regard to thinking about the supernatural in the last thirty years, especially as church leaders realize that the growing edges of Christianity around the world embrace supernatural ministry wholeheartedly.

The *Do What Jesus Did* sermon series and *Supernatural Trainings* along with both sets of surveys revealed effective and ineffective ways to train the local church to engage in supernatural ministry.

Keys to Project Effectiveness

This project was successful on at least three fronts. One key to effectiveness was the strong foundation of the literature reviews that provided the guidelines for the project, that prophecy, healing and word of knowledge work effectively with unbelievers inside and outside the church. Second, during the project, God manifested himself supernaturally in the Gatherings and through individual believers outside the church. Third, the project raised the level of excitement and practice of the supernatural at Journey Life Church.

The field project validated the conclusion from the literature reviews that prophecy, healing, and word of knowledge work effectively with unbelievers inside and outside the church. It also demonstrated the effectiveness of believers praying with authority, commanding sickness to leave. So many of these believers had never or very rarely seen people healed when they prayed, yet they did during this project. Next, the pairing of compassion and the power of God led to an overwhelmingly positive reception of nonbelievers to prayer. Finally, this project showed definitively that all believers—whether young and old in the faith, introverts and extroverts, specially gifted or not—can move in supernatural ministry outside the church.

The second key to the project's effectiveness was God's manifest presence to heal, give encouraging prophecies and correct words of knowledge in the gatherings at church and through individual believers outside the church. This project and Journey Life Church is fully dependent on the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit to empower believers supernaturally. The project demonstrates that Holy Spirit desires to act supernaturally in his church and through his church to his world. The prayer of Journey Life Church was answered, "Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus," (Acts 4:31)¹ just like the first Christians experienced.

The third key to the project's effectiveness was the enthusiasm and excitement with which the people received and embraced the message. It helped significantly that I had preached on the topic at various times for three years, warming up the church people so they were aware and excited about the supernatural. I would do a sermon series like this again, maybe even *Do What Jesus Did: Part 2* next year. In the series we barely scratched the surface of all the stories and principles that were observed through the supernatural lives and ministry of Jesus and the apostles. I could do a sermon series like this every year and not even maximize the potential of this topic. I would also do the *Supernatural Trainings* again next year, which would be the third year in a row. The short teaching, long activities format of the *Supernatural Trainings* served the people superbly. They did not need more teaching directly after a sermon, but they did need to

¹ All Scripture quotations in the chapter are taken from the NIV unless otherwise noted.

act and practice taking risks in faith every week to build up the confidence and consistency to step out on their own.

Keys to Project Improvement

The project's effectiveness would have improved with at least two tweaks, and the project showed at least one weakness. First, if I were to repeat this project in another location, I would make the *Do What Jesus Did* small group study that we conducted (only as an extra component) a part of the scope of the formal project and implement it ahead of the series to prepare people even more so we could hit the ground running with the series and the trainings. As a church staff, we decided to launch everything together because it was more effective for marketing. However, especially for churches that have not talked about the supernatural much in recent memory, at least six weeks of preparation in small group study would greatly benefit the results of the whole project.

Second, another key to improving the project would be if we had done the *Supernatural Trainings* simultaneously with the *Do What Jesus Did* series to increase potency and effectiveness. I made the decision to stagger the series and the trainings because of other major church calendar conflicts. However, ideally putting those two together would capitalize on the excitement of the series.

Third, the timing of the administration of the surveys could have been improved. During the sermon series, the post-survey was administered before the last sermon, and did not reap the benefits of the sermon. Also, during the *Supernatural Trainings* the pre-survey was administered at the end of the first session, and the post-survey at the beginning of the last session. Since the survey was focused on people's behavior throughout the month, these tweaks would only have minimal affect on the results,

however, the results would have been even more positive with better timing of the surveys.

Finally, I would like to have seen more salvations in witnessing outside the church during this field project. As it stands, the field project did not effectively confirm the conclusion from the biblical-theological and general literature review that making the supernatural normal will be effective for conversions. Even so, about twenty-five salvations happened in the *Do What Jesus Did* church gatherings. Therefore, these methods of engaging with the supernatural will definitely not hinder salvation. I believe individuals leading others to salvation through supernatural evangelism is the next step for Journey Life Church. First, the people needed to get used to taking risks regularly and praying for people outside the church, which the project facilitated.

Implications of the Project

At least three implications arose throughout this project. First, the people of Journey Life Church were hungry to make the supernatural normal in their world. By extension, I believe any church hungry for God's supernatural works will benefit from similar steps into Jesus's method of supernatural ministry. Three years ago, Journey Life Church talked about the supernatural very little and practiced the supernatural even less. As an Assemblies of God church, many people believed in God's ability to do miracles. However, most people did not think God wanted to do miracles in their lives. Very few of them had seen God do something undeniably supernatural in recent memory. Many Pentecostal and Charismatic churches will find similar attitudes about the supernatural in their churches. God has completely transformed Journey Life Church in its understanding of, attitude toward, and practice of the supernatural. God has made the supernatural

normal in our church, and now we have begun to see the supernatural become normal outside the church. I believe God wants to do a similar transformation in any willing church.

Second, this project demonstrates that the method of doing supernatural ministry used by Jesus and the first Christians still affects life change today. Although few people experienced salvation directly through our supernatural ministry outside the church, many received Christ indirectly through invites into a supernatural environment. Also, many people were healed, blessed, and encouraged outside the church. Journey Life Church people grew in compassion for people in supernatural ministry just like Jesus did, therefore people were more receptive. We engaged unbelievers in prophecy, healing, and words of knowledge like Jesus did, and it proved effective. The people of God did the works of Jesus and God's kingdom grew because of it.

Third, this project takes away so many excuses for not engaging in supernatural ministry. The excuse that only a select few ministers can do supernatural ministry was disproven. The idea that supernatural ministry proves more effective and more necessary in the developing world where they do not have modern medicine was weakened significantly by this project. This project also showed that those who engage in supernatural ministry do not need to act weird. Normal believers can and should allow the Holy Spirit to do supernatural works through them. Finally, this project illustrates clearly that supernatural ministry is very effective outside the church. The local church should send supernaturally empowered Christians into the world.

Recommendations for Journey Life Church and Other Local Churches to Make the Supernatural Normal

This project has produced recommendations for Journey Life Church and for other local churches and pastors who would like to make the supernatural normal. First for Journey Life Church is to complete the *Do What Jesus Did* small group study. This ten-week study will produce ongoing growth in this area, in a format conducive to supernatural growth: small groups. Next, Journey Life Church people must make the ceiling we broke through in praying for people outside the church the new normal, so we build on that momentum.

Now Journey Life Church people can capitalize on the momentum and enthusiasm for praying for people outside the church by encouraging and training people to take the next step in leading people to Christ. I believe that next year these same people will start to see individuals coming to salvation through their supernatural witness. I believe this is the natural progression toward doing the supernatural how Jesus did. This demonstrates that making the supernatural normal in the local church is not a shortcut to rapid church growth. This process will take time. After three years God has done some amazing things and the church has grown. But God still wants to grow the people of Journey Life Church in this area.

Next, this project provides the foundation of the practical theology that makes the supernatural occur in churches. It also shows many of the major scholarly and practical resources to engage successfully in the topic. If I were to do this in another church or context, I would recommend also having multiple teachers and facilitators for the series and trainings. Specifically, since the goal is to democratize the use of supernatural gifts

throughout the church, showing the social proof of many credible people who engage in the supernatural in the same way would prove effective.

For local churches and pastors who would like to grow in supernatural ministry outside the church, I would recommend patience in a step-by-step process. They may have already begun some of these steps, so they need to go on to apply all that are appropriate. First, they should begin the transition to teach Jesus's model and method of supernatural ministry. Pastors can model Jesus's way of praying for miracles and begin to take risks of faith themselves. Next, they can model and teach Jesus's compassion in the supernatural. Compassion must be tied to supernatural ministry for there to be significant fruit for God's Kingdom.

After pastors begin to model and teach these things, they must empower their church people to practice supernatural ministry inside the church in normal ways, while continuing to cast vision for supernatural ministry outside the church. For example, they all should pray for each other for healing, rather than the pastor praying for everyone. Pastors should coach people through times of praying for healing for each other in services. Then they should coach them through hearing God's voice and prophesying over someone. Additionally, I recommend that pastors give their people opportunities to see if the Spirit has a word of knowledge for them to give to another person. I would also recommend hosting trainings for those who are hungry. Pastors should focus on providing opportunities for many different ways of hearing from God and remain open to the Spirit's leading to prophesy, pray for healing, and give words of knowledge. Also, I recommend that pastors give role play opportunities to practice doing those things inside the church, similar to when Moses practiced the supernatural in Exodus 4.

Once believers have gained some confidence in supernatural ministry inside the church, I recommend church leaders give them specific opportunities to go outside the church to take risks of faith. Pastors can send them out in groups of two with an assignment like Jesus did, then coach them through the results of what happened. Pastors can encourage and inspire them to engage with God in supernatural ministry everywhere they go as a lifestyle. Allowing God to move through their lives everywhere they go remains the ultimate goal of this process. Finally, I recommend that local churches use testimonies liberally throughout all steps of this process. If you only have one story, tell it again until you have more.

As a bonus, pastors should be encouraged that doing the supernatural the way Jesus did will naturally discourage calcified methods of engaging with the supernatural. Church leaders probably will not need to fight church culture wars about methods that produce little fruit with unbelievers when believers are empowered to manifest the power and presence of God effectively outside the church. However, pastors do not need to sacrifice the primary methods of Jesus and the apostles for doing supernatural ministry for those that are not as useful in gatherings or witness. One final thought, the process of leaning into supernatural ministry in the church is so worth it. Church leaders should be encouraged that God wants to move powerfully in and through the people of their church.

Recommendations for Future Study

The research phase of this project yielded some enriching resources for those who would like to study making the supernatural normal. The most important resources, of course, remain the Bible and prayer. When believers immerse themselves in the methods of Jesus and the first Christians for supernatural ministry and God will begin to show

them how His compassion and power work best through their personality. Without this as the foundation, none of the other resources matter.

The limitations to the project demand that there remain further areas for study in the supernatural work of God. The body of Christ will be served well if a scholar would address the non-redemptive supernatural events in the Bible, such as the earth swallowing Korah and his followers (Num 16), and the death of Ananias and Saphira (Acts 5). These events remain difficult for some in the body of Christ to gain meaning from, and would benefit from further study.

Also, this project addressed three of the nine gifts of the Spirit listed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12, and the others should be addressed as well. The word of wisdom, faith, miracles, discerning of spirits, speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues all deserve treatment within their biblical contexts and their practical application to the church. Many correlate strongly with healing, prophecy and word of knowledge that were detailed in this project.

Also I recommend that further study be dedicated to establishing biblical guidelines for discerning whether prophecy is from God or not inside and outside the church. I see clearly that prophecy must operate within biblical guidelines, however, this study did not have the scope to address these guidelines adequately.

I also recommend casting out demons as an area for future study. Casting out demons undoubtedly marked the ministry of Jesus and the apostles. Therefore, the biblical method and pattern for casting out demons should be investigated to reveal the practical implications for modern ministry. Particularly, the Western church would benefit from a biblically balanced emphasis on the exorcism of demons.

A further area of study also exists in the realm of evangelism. Although, evangelism in the New Testament continually connects to the supernatural, that is only one aspect of bringing people into right relationship with Christ. It would be worthy to examine the biblical and practical implications of the message used in evangelism, how dialogue and questions can contribute, contextualizing the gospel for various cultures, and bringing true and lasting commitment from converts.

Conclusion

Supernatural ministry does not have to be rare, weird, or stuck inside the church. The supernatural ministry of Jesus and the first Christians was a normal part of daily life. Prophecy, healing, and words of knowledge will be common in the life of every believer who persists in taking risks in faith. Pastors and ministry leaders should dare to believe that their church and they themselves will see God make the supernatural normal.

APPENDIX A: MAKING THE SUPERNATURAL NORMAL
IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

**Making the Supernatural Normal
from Creation to Abraham**

God's progressive revelation of himself to humans includes many supernatural events. Through these supernatural interventions, God showed aspects of His character, His desire to utilize humans, and His plan for redemption. Many of the redemptive supernatural events in the Bible are related to personal prophecy, words of knowledge, and physical healing. Specific attention will be given to personal prophecy, word of knowledge, and physical healing to show their part in the redemptive unfolding of God's plan. This section will trace God's progressive revelation of himself through redemptive supernatural events and how that developed into the ability New Testament believers to make the supernatural normal as a means of evangelism. The section will trace the supernatural before Adam, the supernatural from Adam to Noah, and the supernatural from Noah to the tower of Babel.

The Supernatural Before Adam

Creation was a supernatural event, yet it's the epitome of natural. God made the supernatural and the natural. From God's point of view, all of it is normal. He merely spoke, and everything came into existence (Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24). The Creator God longed for a natural relationship with humanity. He made that possible through the event of creation. This event is patently supernatural from a human point of view. None

of the created universe exists without the miraculous and imaginative intervention of the “I AM” (Exod 3:14).

The Supernatural from Adam to Noah

After speaking the universe into existence, God formed Adam from the dust, breathing life into him (Gen 2:7)—a supernatural event from a human perspective. Then God formed Eve out of Adam (vv. 21-22). God loved humans so much He imagined a world with them in it and changed His own natural rules to give them life. The supernatural event of the divine creation and the breathing of life into humans established God as the author of life, as someone willing to change His own rules to have relationship with His creation.

The ruin of Adam and Eve’s perfect relationship with God came with a single act of disobedience (Gen 3:6). That act produced a curse of sin with the promise of sickness and death, and thus the need for physical healing. Before sin, physical healing was unnecessary and not helpful to reveal God. However, after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, God could show His original plan for humanity in changing the course toward sickness and death with physical healings. The curse ended with a prophecy of redemption: the offspring of Eve would crush the serpent’s head (v. 15). Even the first prophecy, in the worst of circumstances, declared the hope of redemption.

Humanity’s drive into sin and sickness continued when Cain killed his brother Abel (Gen 4:7). God speaks a word of knowledge to Cain, “Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground” (v. 10), a foretoken of Cain’s prophetic punishment (vv. 11-12). Even in the midst of punishment, God revealed His mercy by prophesying protection

for this murderer (v. 15). God's desired redemption for humanity even at the very points of rejection, and He would use supernatural means to bring redemption.

Genesis 5 tells a short story of a man named Enoch who "walked faithfully with God" (v. 22). The same verb for walk (*halak*) used here is used in Genesis 3:8 of the LORD God "walking." This shows Enoch had the relationship with God that God wanted from Adam. Even though Adam was removed from God's presence, God still waited for someone who would have a supernatural relationship with Him. When He found Enoch, He took him (Gen 5:24). God still longs for a supernatural communing relationship with humans and He's willing to go to great lengths to establish it.

The Supernatural from Noah to the Tower of Babel

The human race continued toward evil and the narrator of Genesis observes that "every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time" (Gen 6:5). So, God sought out a man named Noah who would listen to His voice and believe His prophecies (v. 13). The word of knowledge God gave to Noah (vv. 13, 17-18) provided supernatural knowledge about God's future plans. The purpose of the word of knowledge was to establish a prophetic covenant with Noah's family (v. 18) and redeem them and animal life from the destruction of the flood (v. 19). God then gave Noah a second word of knowledge about the exact time to enter the ark (7:1). If Noah had not listened, all God's efforts would have gone for nothing. A third word of knowledge gave Noah specific insight into the timing of leaving the ark (8:16-17). God revealed through these supernatural events in Noah's life that He longs to protect humans and wills to make covenant with those who will listen and obey (9:9-17).

God's supernatural intervention to confuse languages at the tower of Babel did not seem to have a particularly redemptive end (Gen 11:7-8). However, the destruction of humanism during that time paved the way for a people who longed for relationship with God (Acts 17:26-27). Therefore, God pointed humanity toward relationship with Him even at the tower of Babel. God will continue to search for a person and a people willing to stay in relationship with Him. Throughout the time of the patriarchs He used supernatural means to establish relationship with a covenant people.

Making the Supernatural Normal from Abraham to Moses

During the life of the patriarch Abraham, God began to reveal himself in normal supernatural ways that foreshadowed what would be available to New Testament believers. Isaac's supernatural wealth, Jacob's supernatural revelations and blessing, and Joseph's prophetic dreams continue a family legacy of personal relationship with the God who has authentic power. God revealed He loves to prophesy, heal, and give words of knowledge during this time in history.

Abraham's Supernatural Life

During the time of the patriarchs, starting with Abram, some supernatural intervention did not have a specifically redemptive end and this section will focus on redemptive miracles only. Genesis 12 begins with God speaking to Abram and prophesying blessing over him (vv. 1-3). That prophecy set a redemptive course for Abram's life, where he develops relationship and trust with God as he follows in obedience. The prophecy requires that Abram get a word of knowledge in the future, "go

to the land I will show you”¹ (v. 1). God uses multiple supernatural encounters because of His great purposes for Abram and His descendants.

In Genesis 12:7, God appears to Abram with the word of knowledge that He would give the land of the Canaanites to his descendants. This word of knowledge directs the course of Israel’s future many generations later under Joshua. The diseases inflicted on Pharaoh’s household (v. 17) served to redeem his wife Sarah and preserve the promise of Abram’s descendants. God will go to great lengths to preserve His word.

In Genesis 15, God’s promises and covenant with Abram are confirmed with a supernatural sign (v. 17). Abram continues to learn he can trust God and His words. Then Hagar receives supernatural direction from the angel and the prophetic promise of descendants (16:7-13). God’s revelation of himself to Hagar sets her on a survival course. When Abram receives another visitation from God at ninety-nine years old, God’s command for Abram to be blameless implies God’s supernatural knowledge of Abram’s sin with Hagar (17:1). God would speak to and take care of Hagar and Ishmael again in Genesis 21:17-19. God delights to take care of those willing to listen to Him.

God seeks to restore relationship and covenant with Abram through giving him a prophetic name, Abraham, the “father of many nations” (Gen 17:5). Sarai’s name becomes Sarah to indicate she is the “mother of nations” (v. 16); news so unnatural and abnormal that Abraham laughs. In the life of Abraham, as throughout the Bible, these supernatural stories consistently show God as the hero and reveal His character and purposes on the earth.

¹ All Scripture quotations from here on in this appendix will be from the NIV unless otherwise noted.

Then three angelic visitors come with the specific word of knowledge that Sarah will have a son within a year, alongside of the famous statement of God's supernatural power, "Is anything too hard for the LORD?" (Gen 18:14). The angels reveal God's omnipotent power to Abraham, and thus to humanity. The supernatural provides the confidence and the hope that God can do anything.

God's appearance in a dream to the king of the Philistines, Abimelek, serves to save him and his people from death (Gen 20:3-7), so he seeks the favor of the man of God, Abraham. Abraham's prayer for Abimelek and his household results in their physical healing (vv. 17-18). Thus, God brings healing through a human for the first time in Scripture, foreshadowing that possibility for all men and women of God. God's revelation of His ability and willingness to heal supernaturally has just begun.

God's prophetic promise to Abraham and Sarah, along with the timing word of knowledge from the angels, culminates in the miraculous birth of Isaac (Gen 21:1-3). In this story, prophecy, word of knowledge, and a physical miracle combine to give God glory, declaring His goodness and power definitively to Abraham, Sarah, and their descendants. God sets the stage for the supernatural to be normal for future believers in prophecy, word of knowledge, and physical healing.

In Genesis 22, God's command to Abraham tested him (vv. 1-2). Abraham must trust God will still keep His promise in spite of a confusing command. The angel's supernatural intervention halts in the most dramatic way a horrifying scene (v. 11). Then God miraculously provided a ram for the sacrifice (vv. 13-14). The redemption of Abraham's son gave insight into God's heart and foreshadowed His own sacrifice of His Son Jesus. God will provide even supernaturally to reveal His character to humans. In

Genesis 24:1, God's supernatural financial blessing of Abraham that had been prophesied was confirmed. God then gave supernatural insight and confirmation to Abraham's servant to find Rebekah as a wife for Isaac (vv. 12-19). Abraham lived a supernatural life marked with fulfilled prophecy and confirmed words of knowledge, and even physical healing.

The story of Job requires special mention. Although, it is impossible to date the writing, the events of Job likely took place around the time of Abraham.² Job's narrative gives insight into the spiritual realm, with Satan and the angels appearing before God (Job 1:6-2:7). The discussion that ensues provides insight into faulty reasoning from Job and his companions about the correlation between sin and sickness. Eliphaz, Job, and Elihu blamed God for sickness (5:17; 9:15; 33:19) when Satan actually caused Job's sickness (2:7). This narrative laid the groundwork for Jesus's declaration, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). Therefore, modern believers should not expect sin and sickness to always correlate. Instead, sickness occurs because of the fall of man (Gen 3) and Satan, and now affects everyone regardless of sin's involvement. Therefore, believers should pray for healing even if sin is suspected. Abraham and Job's legacy was a foretaste of God's desire to bless His people supernaturally, which continued for Isaac and Israel.

² Tremper Longman and David E. Garland, *1 Chronicles – Job*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 685-688. See also Bromiley, *ISBE* 2, 1066.

Isaac and Israel

The patriarchs Isaac and Israel also had redemptive encounters with God's supernatural power. Rebekah's prayer life had prophetic results (Gen 25:23), which proved true for her sons. Her husband Isaac listened to God's voice as well to stay in Canaan during a famine (26:1). His crops "reaped a hundredfold, because the LORD blessed him" (v. 12)! God assured him of blessing and directed him and his immense wealth to a new well (vv. 24-25). Isaac received supernatural wealth from God in fulfillment of prophetic promises. God will keep His promises in many ways, even to provide supernatural wealth for His people.

Jacob stole Esau's blessing and Isaac's prophetic words becomes effective in his life (Gen 27:27-29). Even Isaac's prophetic words spoken over Esau were remarkably accurate (vv. 39-40). Jacob then receives a supernatural dream that reiterates God's promise to Abraham and Isaac (28:12-15). God's confirmation of His word serves as a reminder that prophetic words should be tested and proven correct.

Jacob then receives prophetic direction from God (Gen 31:3). Jacob recounts a supernatural dream where God showed him how to gain wealth (v. 13). As Jacob left Laban, God spoke to Laban not to harm him (v. 29). In Genesis 32:1, Jacob meets angels again. Jacob wrestles with God in Genesis 32:24-30 and receives supernatural blessing from Him, including the name change to Israel. In Genesis 35:9-15, God spoke to Jacob again, reiterating his name change and the promises of Abraham. Jacob received multiple confirmations of God's word to Him. God loves to reassure His people in supernatural ways so they can walk confidently in Him.

Joseph

Joseph had supernatural dreams (Gen 37:5-10) that prepared him prophetically for the future. Genesis 39:2-5 shows Joseph's supernatural favor and blessing from God. Next Joseph ministers supernatural interpretations to the cupbearer and baker while in prison, which happened as Joseph said (40:8-23). That paves the way for Joseph to interpret the dream of the Pharaoh (41:1-57), come to power under Pharaoh, and save many from starvation. Joseph's supernatural rise to power allows Israel to survive. God loves to keep His covenant in surprising and supernatural ways. Joseph sees God's supernatural direction and protection even in his brothers' betrayal (45:7).

God speaks to elderly Jacob again in Genesis 46:2-4 helping him to be unafraid to live in Egypt. Finally, Jacob prophesies blessing over his sons in Genesis 48-49, all were later confirmed with significant accuracy. Jacob and the other patriarchs consistently saw the supernatural power of God. They allowed God to speak and move in them in ways that were normal and serve as an example for modern believers. The patriarchs set an example in the supernatural that Moses built upon.

Making the Supernatural Normal from Moses to David

Through Moses, Joshua, and the judges, God reveals that humans will respond in awe and worship when He shows himself in supernatural ways. The purpose of the supernatural is to reveal God to people so they will commit to faith in Him. This period of history even foreshadows healing through Jesus's atoning death on the cross and that all believers will have access to the supernatural works of God. Joshua and Judges show how God can still bring redemption supernaturally even in a time of war.

The Supernatural for Moses

The Bible records Moses's first experience with the supernatural work of God at the burning bush in Exodus 3. The bush that burned without being consumed got Moses's attention (vv. 2-3). The Bible says that the angel got Moses's attention, but then God was the One who spoke from the bush (v. 4). The supernatural manifestation of God's presence made the place holy and demanded a human response (v. 5). The dialogue that ensues includes prophetic instructions, assurance from God, and the revelation of the divine name Yahweh (v. 4-22). God speaks into Moses's personal identity supernaturally (from a human perspective) (v. 11-12). God promises supernatural signs and wonders would verify His words through Moses (v. 20). At eighty years old, Moses embarks on a supernatural journey that would transform a nation and reveal God's redemptive purpose for humankind in greater ways.

Moses's conversation with God continues as God gives Moses supernatural signs to show Israel that he is the chosen leader (Exod 4:1-9). Moses continues to hear from God and his brother Aaron receives a word of knowledge to meet Moses in the desert (v. 27). When Moses and Aaron did signs before the people of Israel, they worshipped God (vv. 29-31). That normal response to God's supernatural intervention would follow many of the miraculous signs in the rest of the Scripture. God receives praise when people see Him do impossible works. This human response to the supernatural makes way for full commitment to Christ in the New Testament age.

The delivery of God's prophetic words and supernatural signs through Moses received a negative response from Pharaoh over and over again (Exod 5:1-4; 7:8-11:10) and even from the people of Israel (6:9-12). However, the supernatural plagues, Moses's

continual prayers for healing (8:8-14, 28-31; 9:27-33; 10:16-19), and the Passover of the Israelites (12:1-29) paved the way for Pharaoh to respond (vv. 31-32), the Egyptians to give gifts (vv. 33-36), and the Israelites hearts to be saved (vv. 31-41). Moses's heart reflected the heart of God, since he wanted both Israel and Egypt to know God, as he said to Pharaoh, "so that you may know there is no one like the LORD our God" (8:10). God's heart longed for the Egyptians to know Him also. However, the timing was not right for every Egyptian to know God. This points forward to the purpose of the supernatural that people would know and commit to the living God who loves them and desires to be active in their lives.

After leaving Egypt, the people of Israel experienced ongoing redemptive miracles. God guided them with the cloud by day and fire by night through the desert (Exod 13:21-22). The constant leading of God through these means foreshadowed the constant leadership of the Holy Spirit in the life of the New Testament believer (Rom 8:14). The constant leadership of the Holy Spirit gives access to His supernatural manifestations and will be good for people (1 Cor 12:7).

God's prophetic direction to Moses in Exodus 14 seems to trap the Israelites. Moses receives the word of knowledge that Pharaoh will think they are wandering and so pursue them (Exod 14:3-4). Moses then declares God's prophetic salvation boldly to the Israelites, "The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still" (vv. 13-14). The angel and cloud protect Israel (v. 20), and the Lord pushed the sea apart through Moses's obedience to God's prophetic instruction (v. 21). God confused the Egyptian army and the sea covered the army (vv. 25-28). All of these supernatural and prophetic events were for redemptive purposes: to save Israel and

that they would fear God and put their trust in Him and Moses (vv. 30-31). God specializes in redemptive purposes through His supernatural works. Supernatural intervention simultaneously glorifies Him and promotes a man or woman of God who walks in obedience.

God further showed His interest in physical healing when He healed the water of Marah through Moses (Exod 15:22-25), declared His desire to keep the Israelites healthy, and showed them a part of His character, “I am the LORD, who heals you” (v. 26). God’s provision for physical needs continued with His prophetic instructions to Moses, and by sending bread from heaven and quail (16:4-36), and water from a rock (17:1-7; 20:1-13). Moses’s continual obedience led to God’s provision for the physical bodies of the Israelites.

God reveals himself to the Israelites in supernatural ways throughout their time in the desert. In Exodus 17:8-15, God provides victory for Israel’s army through the lifting of Moses’s hands. At Mount Sinai, God declared His desire for Israel to be “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (19:6). The scene at Mount Sinai included the sign of dense cloud with thunder, lightning, a loud trumpet, fire, and a shaking mountain with God himself descending to speak to Moses (vv. 16-20) “so that the people will hear me speaking with you and will always put their trust in you” (v. 9). Miracles and signs approved Moses’s prophetic leadership, just like the apostles and prophets in the New Testament. The revelation of the Law and more of God’s character at Sinai accompanied these great signs.

In the story of God’s supernatural provision of quail for Israel (Num 11:4-34), multiple revelations of God arise. First, God provides meat despite the people’s insolence

and His anger. Second, Moses anointed seventy other people to lead. God said, “I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them” (v. 17). The Spirit of God rested on these people powerfully and they all prophesied (vv. 25-26). This served as a foretaste of the Spirit of God being poured out on all people (Acts 2). Finally, Moses prophesied that future event with the words, “I wish that all the LORD’s people were prophets and the LORD would put his Spirit on them” (Num 11:29). Even though the Israelites were not ready at this time, Moses’s heart aligned with God’s, that prophecy would flow from all God’s people. Now, in the New Testament age, prophecy is available to all God’s people and believers must learn to listen to God and speak His words.

God affirmed both Moses (Num 12, 16) and Aaron (Num 17) in supernatural ways. In the first confirmation of Moses’s leadership, Miriam receives leprosy and Moses begs God for healing, “O God, please heal her!” (11:13). Miriam receives healing after seven days. In Numbers 16, after Dathan, Abiram and their followers die, the people rebelled against Moses and Aaron again. Aaron stopped the plague by offering incense in the middle of the camp, standing “between the living and the dead” (16:48). When Aaron’s staff budded to confirm his priesthood, Moses put the staff in front of the ark to keep the people from dying (17:10-11). Even in the middle of judgment, God has a heart to heal people. These narratives inform of God’s healing power and foreshadow healing on a larger scale.

When the Israelites grumbled against God again, venomous snakes began to kill them, and Moses prayed (Num 21:4-6). God gave Moses prophetic instructions to make a bronze snake that people could look at to receive healing (vv. 8-9). Jesus cites this passage as a prophetic picture of himself, “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the

wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up” (John 3:14). Again, the foreshadowing is clear: Jesus’s sacrifice on the cross provides the way for physical healing and eternal life.

During the time of Moses, Balaam the prophet receives instructions from God (Num 22:10-12, 20). However, God opposes Balaam through an angel and his donkey (vv. 21-35). In Numbers 23 and 24, Balaam speaks blessing on Israel and against their enemies. The Spirit of God came on Balaam for these moments (Num. 24:2), which prefigures the Spirit of God infilling believers (Acts 2:1-4), even though the New Testament version is not momentary. Throughout Moses’s life, God spoke clearly through Him and others, and did wondrous supernatural things for the people of Israel. God would continue to build on that supernatural foundation through Joshua and many others, paving the way for Jesus to send the Holy Spirit on all people.

Joshua

Joshua’s command of Israel began immediately with God’s prophetic encouragement and direction (Josh 1:1-9). Then God shows himself through prophetic direction to Joshua and the supernatural sign of the Jordan’s waters dividing (3:9-17) so that “you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites” (v. 10). The assurance of God’s presence and His power comes with His supernatural intervention in the lives of humans.

Joshua then encounters the captain of the Lord’s host, who give him a message of direction to defeat the fortress city of Jericho (Josh 5:13-6:5). When Israel obeys God’s prophetic direction, the city walls fall and the Israelites win the battle (6:12-21). Then, in

the battle against the Amorites, Joshua prophetically declared that the sun would stand still and it did for a full day, enabling Israel to win (10:12-14). The people served God during the time of Joshua, because they “had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel” (Judg 2:7). God’s supernatural intervention extends to everything that concerns His people including battle. Such inventions give God glory. This story, along with many others in the coming books, serve as a precursor for the spiritual battles that will be won in supernatural ways for New Testament believers.

Judges and Samuel

The narratives in the Book of Judges show God’s power in a savage time of warfare to keep the nation of Israel from extinction. In Judges 3:10-11, the Spirit of the Lord came on Othniel to defeat Aram and bring peace. God’s goal in empowering for war often ties salvation of His people and ultimately peace. Deborah, the judge and prophetess, prophesies to Barak of victory over the Canaanite commander Sisera (4:6-7) and gives a word of knowledge about the exact time to fight (v. 14). God brings victory (v. 23). God shows His power to bring victory, but also to give prophetic directions and supernatural knowledge to humans.

The angel of the Lord³ conversed with Gideon in Judges 6:11-40. Gideon doubted so much that even after he sees a sign (vv. 20-24), he asked for two more (vv. 26-40). God mightily uses Gideon to lead three hundred men to defeat a huge Midianite army (7:1-24). God continues to speak to Gideon, giving him prophetic direction and words of

³ This is likely a theophany—God appearing in physical form—since the angel of the Lord and Yahweh are used interchangeably.

knowledge (vv. 2-11). God will even use supernatural means to crush doubt and insecurities, making the way for complete trust and obedience.

Samson's story starts with God's supernatural intervention. His father Manoah hears from God and consecrates Samson to the Lord (Judg 13:2-24). In Judges 14:5-6, the Spirit of God came on Samson for a moment to defeat a lion. God shows His power progressively to Samson, training Him in the supernatural, just like He has shown himself progressively to all humanity. Then the Spirit of the LORD came on him to defeat a thousand Philistines, and at Lehi God gave Samson water (15:14-19). Finally, Samson's life ended when God gave him strength to collapse a temple on the Philistines and their rulers (16:27-31). Even though Samson was unfaithful to God, God used Him in supernatural power for His own purposes. Samson foreshadows the New Testament possibility of misusing the supernatural (Matt 7:21-23) but shows that God will still get glory.

As the time of the judges was ending, God responded to Hannah's prayers, including a prophetic statement from Eli, and Samuel was born (1 Sam 1:9-20). God gave Hannah more children in response to prophetic prayer (2:18-21). Samuel hears God's voice in 1 Samuel 3:2-10, which shows God will even speak to children, training them up in His ways. Just like Samson, God reveals himself progressively to Samuel. Children do not receive any less of the Holy Spirit than adults do, and God will use them supernaturally. Samuel's prophetic direction leads to the time of Israel's kings.

God speaks to Samuel throughout his life and gives him prophetic direction for himself and Israel. God speaks to Samuel about Saul (1 Sam 9:15-16), giving him a word of knowledge about who he is (v. 17) and about his donkeys (v. 20). Samuel prophesies

kingship over Saul and gives him multiple detailed words of knowledge (10:1-8). All these signs were fulfilled, including Saul prophesying (vv. 9-16), which momentarily happened later in his life also (19:22-24). During Saul's coronation, Samuel receives a word of knowledge to find him (10:22). At Samuel's farewell speech, he calls for a miracle of rain that gives glory to God and confirms Samuel to the Israelites (12:16-17). In 1 Samuel 13, Samuel prophesies the end of Saul's rule and the transfer of power to a "man after [God's] own heart" (vv. 13-14). Samuel bridges the gap between the time of the judges and the time of the kings, showing God continually wants to have supernatural input into believers' lives.

Making the Supernatural Normal from David to the Exile

The time of the kings shows that God will involve himself in human political struggles with supernatural direction and insight. Saul, David, and Solomon all experienced God in supernatural ways, culminating with the manifestations of God's presence at the consecration of the temple. Elijah and Elisha ministered God's supernatural works personally to many in Israel, especially the gifts of prophecy, word of knowledge, and healing. Other prophets prepared Israel and all believers for future events.

The Early Kings of Israel

The time of the kings continues with Samuel anointing David to be the king of Israel through God's prophetic instructions (1 Sam 15:1-13). God shows himself through His direct supernatural involvement in the establishment and deposition of kings. This trend continues throughout the Bible, revealing that God rules over politics and will reveal himself in that way so people will know Him.

Before he became king, David began to play the harp for Saul and supernatural relief would come to him (1 Sam 16:23). David prophesied victory over Goliath and the Philistines (17:46-47). During his run from Saul, David received supernatural knowledge from God for victory over some Philistines (23:1-6), for safety from Saul (vv. 9-12), for recovering his family (30:6-8), and for where to go at Saul's death (2 Sam 2:1). David showed his heart for God through constantly listening to God's supernatural direction.

After he became king, David continued to ask for direction from God in battle against the Philistines and God gave him a word of knowledge about how to win the battle (2 Sam 5:22-25). During David's reign, God's supernatural blessing rested on the house of Obed-Edom because of the ark of the covenant (6:11). Then the prophet Nathan visited David with a prophetic destiny that would not just shape his life, but the monarchy of Judah and eventually the whole world through the coming of the Messiah (7:5-17). Nathan's next visit to David was with a word of knowledge about David's sin and a prophecy of judgment (12:1-13). The prophet Gad came to King David after he numbered the fighting men to pronounce judgment and then provide direction on how to receive God's mercy (24:11-25). David's experiences with the supernatural were as varied as his life, with both negatives and positives. God will use supernatural means for everything that affects human life, revealing himself to His world through judgment, redemption, and blessing.

King David's son Solomon experienced God's supernatural revelation at Gibeah (1 Kgs 3:5-28). Solomon conversed with God and asked for wisdom. In the dream, God granted Solomon wisdom and prophesied into his future. This prophecy was dramatically fulfilled in Solomon's life through wisdom and blessing (4:29-34).

Under Solomon, the nation of Israel saw the power of God through the cloud of His glory at the dedication of the temple (1 Kgs 8:10-11; 2 Chron 5:14; 7:1-3). God appeared to Solomon again, promising blessing that was contingent on obedience (1 Kgs 9:1-9). Blessing marked Solomon's life as long as he walked in obedience. And true to the prophecies, when he strayed from God, he led Israel into sin and division. God proved His word, which became a testimony to future generations. God's fulfillment of His word produced eternal results.

During Jeroboam's rule, a man of God comes from Judah and prophesies against the idol worship. When Jeroboam points at the man of God to seize him, his hand shrivels. After prayer from the man of God, Jeroboam's hand receives healing (1 Kgs 13:1-6). The kings of Israel and Judah experienced the supernatural mainly through mighty men and women of God called prophets, and some of the most remarkable prophets were Elijah and Elisha.

Elijah

Elijah the prophet served God during one of the most wicked periods of Israel's history. God did supernatural works through him, showing He's still pursuing a rebellious people. After escaping from King Ahab, Elijah receives a word of knowledge from God and supernatural food from ravens (1 Kgs 17:2-6). God then gives Elijah prophetic direction to find food and water (vv. 7-9). When Elijah realized the widow cannot provide bread and water, he spoke God's prophetic word about a miracle of provision to her, and she, her son, and Elijah survive (vv. 10-16). Later, her son dies and she thinks it is because of her sin (v. 18). Elijah takes the boy upstairs, stretches himself on the boy three times and prays at least twice, and the boy rises from the dead (vv. 19-21).

Four major principles arise from these early miracle stories in Elijah's ministry. First, the boy rose from the dead despite the widow's admitted sin, hinting that sin and sickness do not always correlate. Second, Elijah takes the boy away from someone who doubts, something that Jesus also does (Mark 5:40). Third, Elijah prays at least twice, meaning that modern believers have permission to persist in prayer, rather than expect instantaneous results every time. Finally, all of these stories show God will use supernatural means to protect and provide for people who remain faithful to Him, even in the middle of a rebellious nation. These principles receive confirmation in the rest of the Bible and help modern believers to not give up.

Elijah's showdown with the prophets of Baal begins with Elijah receiving a prophetic command to see King Ahab (1 Kgs 18:1). Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal to see if their god or God will answer supernaturally by fire. This seems to be an advantage for the prophets of Baal since Baal should command lightning.⁴ This supernatural showdown will authenticate Baal or Yahweh (vv. 21, 24, 36-37). When the fire of God fell (v. 38), the people fell before God and shouted, "Yahweh, he is God! Yahweh, He is God!" (v. 39, LEB). The rebellious Israelites who witnessed this event confessed Yahweh as the only true God at the sight of one miracle. Although, the nationwide revival Elijah hoped for did not occur, the people who saw this were indelibly transformed by God's supernatural activity. Scenes like this show dramatically the effectiveness of the supernatural for evangelism.

⁴ D. J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Nottingham: Intervarsity, 2008), 181. J. D. Douglas and N Hillyer, *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, vol. 1 (Leicester, England: Intervarsity, 1980), 153.

In the ensuing story, Elijah tells his servant seven times, “Go and look toward the sea” (1 Kgs 18:43). Elijah had already prophesied rain (v. 41) and he’s in a position of prayer (v. 42). A cloud appears, and Elijah has the word of knowledge to run. So, he runs supernaturally fast for about 15 miles⁵ to Jezreel (vv. 44-46). Later, an angel brings supernatural food to strengthen Elijah, so he makes it all the way to Mount Horeb and safety (19:5-8).

Elijah’s command of an action in faith to go and check for rain seven times shows three major principles for modern believers. First, believers can command the natural world to act supernaturally; this principle especially applies to physical healing. Second, believers should act in faith to check God’s supernatural involvement—many times, if needed. Finally, believers must pray again, persisting until there’s breakthrough. Also, God can send angels to give supernatural strength, when a supernatural experience overwhelms a human’s bodies.⁶ Believers may need to pray for supernatural strength when ministering the Spirit’s manifestations to others.

God then speaks to Elijah through a still, small voice, prophetically declaring the rule of Hazael in Aram, of Jehu in Israel, and that Elisha is to succeed him as prophet (1 Kgs 19:9-18). Many other prophets were active in Elijah’s day (20:13-43; 22:1-28), but none of them have the redemptive qualities of Elijah’s ministry. When God takes Elijah into heaven, Elisha receives a double portion of Elijah’s spirit (2 Kgs 2:9). This shows that an anointing for supernatural ministry by God’s Spirit can be imparted to another,

⁵ Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings*, 183.

⁶ An angel gives Daniel supernatural strength in Daniel 10:18. Angels minister to Jesus after the temptation (Matt 4:11, Mark 1:13) and after His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43).

foreshadowing Jesus's giving of the Holy Spirit and power to all believers (Acts 1:8).

Elisha continued Elijah's powerful prophetic ministry.

Elisha

Immediately after Elijah is taken into heaven, Elisha begins to see God work through him in supernatural ways. He parts the Jordan (2 Kgs 2:13-14), then throws salt into the drinking water, declaring healing of the water (vv. 19-22). Elisha gets pulled into a military conflict and gives prophetic direction that paves the way for God's supernatural victory (3:12-25). These early demonstrations of God's power through Elisha reveal that he grows in the supernatural. Over time, modern believers are also able to grow in hearing God's voice and seeing miracles.

Just like Elijah, Elisha ministers God's supernatural provision to a widow (2 Kgs 4:1-7). He prophesies a miraculous baby to a wealthy Shunamite woman (vv. 8-17). When the boy dies, Elisha prays, stretches himself on the boy twice, and the boy comes back to life (vv. 18-37). In a similar fashion to Elijah, Elisha went to a room, removing doubt from the situation. Elisha's praying multiple times and acting in faith provides room for God to do the miracle. Modern believers should pray multiple times and act in faith. Elisha's ministry here also does not show partiality to poor or rich. Wherever there is need, God gets glory when the believer takes a risk in faith to see the supernatural.

During a famine, Elisha heals soup for a group of prophets (2 Kgs 4:38-41). God multiplies food for a group of a hundred men at Elisha's prophetic direction (vv. 42-44). News of these miracles spreads, even bringing Aram's commander Naaman to Elisha (5:1-14). Naaman receives healing of leprosy after obeying Elisha's prophetic instructions to wash seven times in the Jordan River. Modern believers must observe the

principle of progressive healing, pray multiple times for healing, and take risky actions in faith toward healing.

God did various supernatural works through Elisha in the later part of his life. As his school of prophets builds a new place to learn, one loses an axe head in a river, and God makes it float (2 Kgs 6:5-7). Elisha gives the king of Israel many words of knowledge about the plans of the king of Aram. It is said, “Elisha ... tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom” (v. 12). When Aram’s army surrounds Elisha’s city to end his visions, Elisha sees a vision of an angelic army around them and prays for his servant to also see (vv. 16-17). God strikes the army with blindness at Elisha’s prayer (v. 18), so Elisha leads them to Samaria and prays for their eyes to be opened (v. 20). God’s supernatural works provide peace between the two nations for a time (v. 23). These miracles show that believers can expect God to act supernaturally in both the small and great events of life, and that word of knowledge can protect people from danger.

Later, Aram besieges Samaria and the people are starving. Elisha prophesies a complete economic reversal, which is precisely what happens (2 Kgs 6:24-7:20). Elisha anoints Hazael as king of Aram (8:7-13) and Jehu as king of Israel (9:1-10), fulfilling Elijah’s prophecies. These kings would rule after Elijah and Elisha died. Also, after Elisha’s death, God raises a man from the dead just for touching Elisha’s bones (13:20-21). These events show the generational and ultimately eternal value of God’s supernatural work in people’s lives. Besides Elijah and Elisha’s ministries, the time of the kings had a few other supernatural elements as well.

Other Supernatural Elements during the Time of the Kings

The prophet Isaiah, well known for his extensive visions and words about the future, also saw immediate fulfillment in ministering to King Hezekiah. Second Kings and the Book of Isaiah both show Isaiah's correct prophecy to Hezekiah of the defeat of the Assyrian King Sennacherib and his army (2 Kgs 18:17-19:37; Isa 36-37). Isaiah also tells Hezekiah of his coming death, and then of God's healing when Hezekiah humbles himself (2 Kgs 20:1-11; Isa 38). Remarkably, Isaiah ministered effectively as a seer and prophet of far future events, and in the present through words of knowledge, personal prophecy, and physical healing.

The prophets presented God's words and visions to the nations of Israel and Judah. Before the exile of Israel, Amos, Hosea, and Jonah prophesied. Before the exile of Judah, Isaiah, Joel, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah prophesied. The prophetic ministries of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel continued even after the exile of Judah. Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi prophesied entirely after the exile. Their prophetic words provided warning, instruction, calls for repentance, encouragement, and preparation for future events.⁷ Modern believers are encouraged to continue to speak forth God's words and visions with a focus on "strengthening, encouraging and comfort" (1 Cor 14:3).

The prophets declared God's plan for physical healing during this time. King David prophesied about physical healing through God's power: "Praise the LORD, O my

⁷ T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Leicester, England: Intervarsity, 2000), 704-5. I. Howard Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, and D. J. Wiseman, *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Leicester, England: Intervarsity, 1996), 964-66. Merrill C. Tenney and J. D. Douglas, *The New International Dictionary of the Bible*, pictorial ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 824-25.

soul, and forget not all his benefits—who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases ... who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (Ps 103:2-5). Another psalmist declared, “He sent His Word, and healed them” (107:20). Isaiah also prophesied about physical healing through the sacrifice of the suffering servant: “Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him ... afflicted. But he was pierced ... he was crushed ... and by his wounds we are healed” (Isa 53:4-5). James Johnston makes a connection between Isaiah 57:14-21 and Mark 2:1-17, stating: “Isa 57:14-21 presents a paradox of Yahweh’s simultaneous transcendence and immanence for the purpose of healing ... This paradox is precisely the central point of Mark 2:1-12, that Jesus wills and acts on earth with the personal authority of Yahweh himself to forgive and heal.”⁸ God intended to make physical healing widespread through Jesus and spoke about it through the prophets generations earlier. Modern believers must understand that physical healing was part of God’s prophetic plan for humanity for a long time.

Joel declared the outpouring God’s Spirit with supernatural manifestations at the Day of the Lord: “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days ... and everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved” (Joel 2:28-32). Jesus referenced this passage (Matt 24:29), as did Peter on the day of the outpouring of God’s Spirit (Acts 2:16-21), John (Rev 6:12-14) and Paul as well (Rom 10:13). Joel gave

⁸ James A. Johnston, “Mark 2:1-3:6 and the Sequence of Isaiah’s New Exodus in Isaiah 57:14-58:14” (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2008), 215.

believers the picture of a time when God's Spirit and His powerful manifestations would be available to everyone more than eight hundred years before this took place. No matter how long it takes, God will fulfill His prophetic word for believers.

Also before the exile (2 Kgs 14:25), the prophet Jonah supernaturally ended up in the belly of a fish, only to be miraculously delivered from the fish (Jonah 1-2). The people of Nineveh repented over their wickedness at Jonah's prophecy, and God preserved them (Jonah 3). Then God spoke to Jonah about his concern for all people on the earth (Jonah 4). Modern prophetic ministry reflects the heart of God and speaks on behalf of all people in the world, declaring the possibility of salvation and empowering by the Holy Spirit to all (Acts 2:38-39). This next section will explore how the prophets continued to receive supernatural revelation after the exile.

Making the Supernatural Normal from the Exile to Jesus's Incarnation

During Daniel's ministry in the early days after the exile, God revealed himself to rulers, bringing some to faith through supernatural means. God also gave Daniel insight into the angelic and spiritual realm to help believers to persevere in prayer despite delays. Daniel and Zechariah both have many angelic encounters and give believers an understanding of how to interact with those servants of God. Daniel, Zechariah, and Malachi all look forward to days when physical healing and the power of God will manifest in greater ways.

The Supernatural in Postexilic Narrative

The Bible contains very little narrative in the years after the exile and before Jesus. However, the Book of Daniel chronicles many supernatural events during the early

years of the exile. Daniel had supernatural favor with the official in charge of his care (Dan 1:9). God also gave Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah supernatural understanding even of visions and dreams (v. 17). Daniel's extensive word of knowledge about King Nebuchadnezzar's dream saves his life and the lives of all the wisemen in Babylon (Dan 2). Notably, King Nebuchadnezzar encountered God and praised Him (vv. 46-47), also appointing Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah to high positions (vv. 48-49). Nebuchadnezzar did not commit his life to Yahweh at this point, but the experience laid the groundwork for a subsequent conversion (Dan 4). Word of knowledge will sometimes save lives, and often plant a clear seed of faith for people.

Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are their Babylonian names) take their own stand for God in Daniel 3. God supernaturally protects them in a fiery furnace with what many believe to be an appearance of the Son of God, or Jesus himself. Jesus involves himself directly in the saving of souls and the present healing ministry, as Peter said to Aeneas, "Jesus Christ heals you" (Acts 9:34). Modern believers get the privilege of allowing Jesus to work through them and alongside them in every supernatural experience.

King Nebuchadnezzar writes Daniel 4 as a testimony of God's supernatural work in his life.⁹ Daniel interprets the king's dream, which sees fulfillment a year later when the king goes insane (vv. 1-34). Nebuchadnezzar's sanity was restored when he praised God for all rule and authority (vv. 34-37). The king's testimony gives insight into the

⁹ Daniel probably served as Nebuchadnezzar's scribe.

kind of transformative work that is possible when a nonbeliever encounters the supernatural power of God.

When God writes on the wall in Daniel 5, Daniel comes out of retirement and Belshazzar thrusts him into power, which God uses to help shape history for the next empire under Darius and Cyrus (5:29-6:3). That element makes this a redemptive story as well. Under Darius, jealous leaders plot against Daniel to get him thrown in the lions' den. But the angel of God comes and shuts the mouths of the lions supernaturally (6:16-23). Darius sees Daniel's salvation and gives God praise throughout his kingdom (vv. 25-27). Unbelievers consistently respond favorably when facing the supernatural power of God.

Ezra and Nehemiah record the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah in specific detail about the rebuilding of the temple and the wall of Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1). Ezra states that God "moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia" (Ezra 1:1). God's supernatural activity to move the heart of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes makes the fulfillment to the date of Jeremiah's prophecies possible. God also moved the heart of the Israelites who returned and risked everything to rebuild the temple in a hostile environment (v. 5). God's faithful fulfillment of all the prophecies in the Bible at their appointed time makes God's words verifiable for unbelievers, proving Him trustworthy. The prophetic section of the postexilic writings also contains supernatural elements.

The Supernatural in Postexilic Prophecy

Daniel's prophecies contain a noteworthy time of confession and repentance in Daniel 9. Gabriel, the angel, interrupts Daniel's prayer of repentance to give him understanding of a vision (v. 21). A glimpse into the spiritual realm comes at Gabriel's

words: “As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given” (v. 23). A similar revelation occurs when an angel comes to give Daniel strength and answer him (Dan 10:10-12:13). This angel explains that he was detained from answering for twenty-one days in warfare against the “prince of Persia” (10:13), which is a demonic spiritual power.¹⁰ These spiritual realm delays provide insight into why persisting in prayer is so important for the believer who wants supernatural results.

Throughout the first six chapters of Zechariah’s book of prophecy angels guide him through many visions. They give Zechariah understanding and constantly point him to God.¹¹ The angel then makes a statement that helps inform modern believers who seek to give God glory: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD Almighty” (Zech 4:6). This statement is echoed in the words of Paul, “My message and my preaching were ... with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power” (1 Cor 2:4-5). The angel sowed seed for a gospel that rests on God’s supernatural power. Malachi makes another prophetic declaration about the supernatural, saying that “the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings” (Mal 4:2). Physical healing and the power of God marked Jesus’s ministry on the earth.

¹⁰ Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1994), 285-286.

¹¹ Angels are mentioned seventeen times in the first six chapters and referred to many more times.

APPENDIX B: THE SUPERNATURAL AROUND THE INCARNATION

God's supernatural work in the life of Jesus began long before conception with prophecies about His birth (Isa 7:14; 9:6, Mic 5:2). Also prior to Jesus's birth, an angel declared the coming of His prophetic predecessor John the Baptist, prophesying details about his life and ministry and muting his father Zechariah (Luke 1:5-25). John leaped in the womb at Mary's greeting, because he was filled with the Holy Spirit (v. 41). John's birth included the releasing of Zechariah's mouth to prophesy (vv. 64-79). These prophecies serve as confirmation for believers and signs for unbelievers, since they speak of John's life, death, and ministry with accuracy.

God also prepared Jesus's earthly parents for Jesus's coming. The angel Gabriel foretold Jesus's birth to Mary (Luke 1:26-38). As evidence for this miraculous birth, Gabriel gave Mary this word of knowledge: "Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age" (v. 36). Joseph needed supernatural convincing from an angel to take Mary as his wife and raise Jesus as his earthly son (Matt 1:20-24). These specific preparations point to God's willingness to use the supernatural even against human insecurities and fears.

The joy of having a baby was hardly Mary and Joseph's with the social pressures of not being married. So God provided supernatural joy. At Jesus's conception, the Bible describes the miracle: "She was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit" (Matt 1:18). Jesus's birth included angels who appeared to shepherds, prophesied and praised

God (Luke 2:9-18). At the temple for Jesus's dedication, both Simeon and Anna have words of knowledge about Jesus and prophesied about His miraculous life (vv. 25-40). God's supernatural confirmations of Jesus's miraculous conception and birth make an otherwise fearful time for Joseph and Mary joyful and awe inspiring. The supernatural will transform any season into joyful and amazing for modern believers and transformative for unbelievers.

God ensured that Jesus would stay safe during this time with prophetic visitors and warnings. Sometime after that, wisemen followed a supernatural star, while bringing prophetic gifts. God warned them in a dream to evade Herod (Matt 2:1-12). An angel warned Joseph to go to Egypt (vv. 13-18). In a dream, another angel told Joseph he could return to Israel (vv. 19-23). These warnings show that God knows the future and can download it to those who will listen to protect and guide them.

The supernatural works of God permeated the birth narratives of Jesus, appropriate for One who is fully God and fully human. John's poetic description of Jesus's incarnation includes the supernatural truth that Jesus is the word of God who created the world and became flesh among humans (John 1:1-14). Everything about Jesus's birth, life, death, and resurrection is supernatural to humans since He is God incarnate. Jesus's birth was unique; believers must follow His life and ministry.

APPENDIX C: THE SUPERNATURAL IN JESUS'S
JUDEAN MINISTRY, CRUCIFIXION, AND RESURRECTION

The Supernatural in Jesus's Judean Ministry

Jesus's journey to Judea brought Him to other people like Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. They had seen Him in Galilee and His profound impact on their lives had sparked a friendship. John's narrative about Lazarus' resurrection contains some exceptional elements (John 11). First, the people there believed Jesus could heal a sick man, but not raise a dead one (vv. 16, 21, 32, 37). Second, Jesus's prayer is very impious sounding, strange, and not about the dead man at all (v. 41-42). Third, Jesus commands Lazarus to come out and he does (vv. 43-44). Finally, the Jews were trying to kill Lazarus to silence this obvious miracle (12:9-11). The obvious reason to kill Lazarus is that many people were "going over to Jesus and believing in him" (v. 11). All of these factors contribute to the fact that when the supernatural is consistent, people come to Jesus.

During Jesus's Judean ministry, He did other various supernatural works. He healed large crowds (Matt 19:2). He healed two blind men (20:29-34) and healed the blind and lame at the temple (21:14). Then in preparation for the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, Jesus gave the disciples a detailed word of knowledge, which also fulfilled prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 (Matt 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-19). He also gave a specific word of knowledge to prepare for the Last Supper (Matt 26:17-20; Mark 14:12-17; Luke 22:7-14). These words of knowledge might seem trivial, but

anything that requires and proves God's activity cannot be unimportant, which is why the Gospel writers detail them. God's provable involvement alone infuses any everyday event with awe and wonder, having the power to bring people to an authentic encounter with Jesus in their spirit.

All four Gospels tell the story of a woman at Bethany who breaks open expensive perfume to wash Jesus's feet with it (Matt 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 7:36-50; John 12:1-8). Jesus has a word of knowledge about the homeowner Simon's thoughts, so He corrects them (Luke 7:39-47). Simon saw this woman as a sinner, far from God, not worthy of being touched, and shameful. Jesus prophetically declared that she is forgiven, lavish in her love for God, a person of faith, at peace with God. Jesus gave her an honored place in history. Mary of Bethany (John 12:3) may have been a sinful woman at one time (Luke 7:37), but Jesus flipped the script of her life through prophecy. Some people are one love-filled, Spirit-inspired prophetic word away from complete transformation.

Jesus also made prophecies about His death (Matt 16:4, 21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19; Mark 8:31-38; 9:30-32; 10:33-34; Luke 9:22-27, 44; 18:33; 20:13-15; John 3:14; 8:28; 10:17-18), resurrection (Matt 12:39-40; 16:4, 21; 21:42; 26:61; 27:62-64; Mark 8:31; 14:58; Luke 9:22; 18:33; John 2:18-22; 10:17-18), Peter's denial (Matt 26:31-35; Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-34; John 13:36-38), and the end of time, especially during His Judean ministry (Matt 24-25; Mark 13; Luke 21:5-36). The end time prophecies have varied levels of fulfillment just like all eschatological prophecy does. It is important to note they will be unverifiable until the end of time. The reliability of biblical prophecy

has been seen in great detail over time,¹ and Jesus's prophecies provide hope and motivation until their fulfillment. The eyewitnesses, even His enemies, verified Jesus's death and resurrection prophecies in the first century.

The Supernatural in Jesus's Crucifixion and Resurrection

Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection provided many more supernatural events. In Gethsemane, after an excruciating night of prayer, angels came to strengthen Jesus (Luke 22:43). Later that night, at His arrest, Jesus stated, "I am he" and the chief priest's soldiers fell backward (John 18:6). Jesus healed the high priest's servant's ear that had been cut off (Luke 22:50-51). Even in emotional distress Jesus operated in love and supernatural power toward people. The supernatural works of God do not require great physical or emotional strength. Modern believers do not need to feel it to allow the Holy Spirit to move powerfully through them and should not use that as an excuse for powerlessness.

At the crucifixion, supernatural darkness came in the middle of the day (Matt 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44). When Jesus died, the temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom (Matt 27:51; Luke 23:45), the earth shook, rocks split, tombs broke open, holy dead people went to Jerusalem to witness (Matt 27:51-53). All of this prompted belief from a Roman centurion (Matt 27:54; Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47). The

¹ Herbert Lockyer, *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary: an Authoritative One-Volume Reference Work On the Bible* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1986), 876-88.

supernatural signs pointed a man who had no prior reason to believe in Jesus to confess faith in that moment.

The resurrection gives even more reasons to believe (Matt 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18). On the Sunday morning of Jesus's resurrection, God brought an earthquake (Matt 28:2). Angels announced Jesus's resurrection to the women (Matt 28:2; Mark 16:5; Luke 24:5; John 20:12). Jesus himself came and spoke to them (Matt 28:9-10; John 20:13-17). Many people saw Jesus after His resurrection. He disguised himself to two people on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12-13; Luke 24:13-35), came through locked doors, ate with people, and appeared to more than 500 people at once over the course of forty days (Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-21:25; Acts 1:1-5; 1 Cor 15:6). These supernatural appearances of the resurrected Jesus turned the disciples from dysfunctional, unschooled, ordinary men (Acts 4:13) into bold miracle workers who changed the world (Mark 16:20; Acts 2:43; 5:12).

Before His ascension Jesus commissions His followers to receive the Holy Spirit, preach, baptize, and do miracles (Matt 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-20;² Luke 24:49; John 20:22; Acts 1:4-8). Then Jesus ascended into heaven in front of many witnesses (Luke 24:50; Acts 1:9-11). Jesus's ascension made the way for the Holy Spirit to come (John 16:7-15) and believers to operate with supernatural power (Acts 1:5-8). Modern believers are still expected to receive the Holy Spirit, preach, baptize, and do miracles, since the Holy Spirit is here to empower them (Eph 5:18), just like He was for the first Christians.

² The discussion of whether or not Mark's ending is in the earliest manuscripts is irrelevant to this paper, since what is said there is consistent with the rest of Scripture.

APPENDIX D: THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE EPISTLES
AND THE APOCALYPSE

The Supernatural in the Epistles

Paul talked about the Spirit and the power of God as a conjoined pair in his letters. Gordon Fee declared the connection between the Spirit and power by saying that Paul “regularly joins the terms in such a way that the presence of the Spirit means the presence of power ... Paul’s other references to the Spirit always imply the presence of power, but also that many of his reference to power imply the presence of the Spirit.”¹ Romans 1:4 illustrates Fee’s observation, speaking of Jesus as the one “who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead.” The Holy Spirit sets the believer free from the law of death (8:2), which implies that physical healing is available to believers. Paul clearly believes the Holy Spirit and power for the supernatural go together.

Paul spoke with matter of fact certainty about his ministry in the supernatural, as if everyone knew what he had done: “By the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God ... I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ” (Rom 15:19-20). He uses similar undisputable language in letters to the Corinthians, the Galatians, and the Thessalonians (1 Cor 2:4-5; 2 Cor 12:12; Gal 3:5; 1 Thess 1:4). In each case, Paul

¹ Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011) 35-36.

states these as known facts to his hearers, all of them saw God do miracles through Paul and nod in agreement to these statements that supported other arguments. Many Scriptures tie the supernatural to the proclamation of the gospel that “your faith might not rest on human wisdom but on God’s power” (1 Cor 2:4). No such thing as merely intellectual conversion is found in Scripture. Either an individual has an encounter with the person of Jesus so that the Holy Spirit takes up residence in them or salvation has not occurred (Rom 8:9). The greatest miracle of salvation is accompanied by a supernatural revelation of the person of Jesus, and that happens easily with healings, prophecy, and word of knowledge.

Healing, prophecy, and word of knowledge are named together one time in Scripture when Paul lists manifestations of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:7-11). These three stand out in Scripture as gateway manifestations of the Holy Spirit, accessible to unbelievers (14:23-24). Believers are encouraged to seek more of God’s supernatural manifestations. All of the manifestations of the Spirit can be useful for evangelism, but these three consistently appear in conversion stories both in Scripture and modern-day testimonies. Paul’s discussion of the manifestations of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14 elevates love as the preeminent factor that makes them all work, and also elevates prophecy as something to be desired (14:1). These manifestations also should add to a gathering of believers in a nonchaotic way (v. 40), so the church may be built up (v. 26). Prophets do not have to blurt out in an interruptive way but can wait their turn (vv. 29-33). The purpose of the supernatural manifestations are stated so clearly—an unbeliever

who has the secrets of his heart “become manifest”² will “fall down and worship God exclaiming, ‘God is really among you!’” (v. 25). When the supernatural becomes normal, God’s presence among believers is authenticated.

Paul commanded all believers to engage in the supernatural as if it was normal: “Eagerly desire spiritual manifestations” (1 Cor 14:1). “Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18). “Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power” (6:10). “Pray in the Spirit on all occasions” (v. 18). “Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt” (1 Thess 5:19-20). All believers should seek the power of the Spirit of God, or else Paul would not command it in this broad a format. These commands come through inspiration of the Holy Spirit to every generation of believers.

Paul also gives special commands to his friend, fellow pastor, and mentee Timothy. “Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you” (1 Tim 4:14). “Fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline” (2 Tim 1:6). God had supernatural gifts for this young minister. Paul reminds believers that these manifestations can be neglected, fanned back into flame, and given through the laying on of hands. Believers must normally and consistently stoke the flame of the supernatural works of God in their lives.

The writer of Hebrews made a clear connection between salvation and the supernatural when he said about salvation: “God also testified to it by signs, wonders and

² This translation is based off of the article “φανερὰ ” in Gerhard Kittel, *TDNT* 9, 2-3.

various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will” (Heb 2:4). James furthered the connection between physical healing and healing from sin (Jas 5:14-16). Although James does not mean that sin always causes sickness, he does believe that prayer and confession can bring physical healing (v. 16). John wanted believers to continue in physical health (3 John 1:2). Jude believed that faith and praying in the Holy Spirit would build believers up (Jude 1:20). Believers will see that God’s supernatural works connect to salvation, freedom from sin, and building them up,

The Bible also gives clear instruction about how to test and interpret prophecy. First, Peter shows that prophets speak the very words of God (2 Pet 1:20). Then John exhorts believers to “test the spirits to see if they are from God” (1 John 4:1). He uses the litmus test that the prophet must acknowledge that “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh” (v. 2). Therefore, prophecy must line up with Scripture, be tested, and acknowledge Jesus’s incarnation. False prophets will not fool believers who test prophecy. Prophecy plays a prominent role in the lives of New Testament believers, as it did to the authors of Scripture who wrote about the end times.

The Supernatural around the End Times

God’s supernatural works permeate the prophecies of the end times in the New Testament, showing that the supernatural will become more normal. Even when miracles are unnecessary because of the new heaven and earth, God will never cease to amaze His people. Jesus described a reality at the end of time of false miracles: “False messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Matt 24:24). Jesus wanted to make sure believers at the end of time knew that the sign of the Son of Man would be undeniable: “When they see the Son of Man

coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call” (Matt 24:30 NIV). Paul confirms Jesus’s arrival in his letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 4:16-17). In other words, if believers wonder whether or not a person is Jesus, then it is not Jesus. Jesus’s coming will be obvious and will not be marked just by normal miracles and signs. This means that believers can be sure that when someone does miracles, they are either a believer who is preaching Jesus, or they are false messiahs, because Jesus’s second coming will leave no doubt.

John’s revelation of the end times began with him being “in the spirit” (Rev 1:10) on the Lord’s day. Life in the Spirit often leads to the supernatural and to revelations from God. He echoes the words of Jesus and describes three times false signs and wonders performed by those who oppose Jesus (9:21; 13:13-14; 19:20-21).

Not all the supernatural things at the end of time are negative. The two witnesses to Jesus in Revelation will also perform signs and wonders, but they will not claim to be someone or try to seize power (Rev 11:3-6). God will raise them from the dead (v. 11). God will also fill the temple with the smoke of His glory (15:8), as He did at the tent of meeting with Moses, the dedication of Solomon’s temple, and in Isaiah’s vision of the temple (Exod 40:34-35; 2 Chron 5:14; Isa 6:4). Jesus will arrive the same way that Daniel, Matthew, and Paul described (Rev 19:11-16). He will rule the earth for one thousand years before judging all and setting up a new heaven and earth.

After Jesus arrives, everything about the supernatural changes. The special supernatural manifestations of healing will not be needed, because “there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain” (Rev 21:4). Without pain or death, physical healing will no longer be helpful to witness to God’s goodness. Instead there will be a

supernatural “river of the water of life” (22:1) that will sustain the faithful and a “tree of life ... for the healing of the nations” (v. 2). Words of knowledge will be unnecessary, because Paul says about that time, “Then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known” (1 Cor 13:12). The prophets will always glorify Jesus, because the “testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev 19:10). All of this points to the truth that believers must continually glorify Jesus with every supernatural manifestation that the Spirit of God does through them.

APPENDIX E: SURVEYS FOR SERMON

SERIES AND TRAININGS

Do What Jesus Did Presurvey

Sept 9, 2018

This survey is completely anonymous, because *it's only helpful if you're honest*. Don't answer what you think should be the correct answer, answer only what has been true of you to this point.

What are the last four digits of your social security number? (this is just a number you will remember to make the test anonymous and match your results up with the postsurvey) ____ ____ ____ ____

Rate your own compassion meter (circle one)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 – I see someone possibly in pain and never think, “What’s going on in their life?”

5 - I see someone possibly in pain and I wonder, “What’s going on in their life?”

10 - I see someone possibly in pain and I immediately think, “What’s going on in their life?” and pray for a supernatural opportunity to give them something amazing from God.

Do you see a major connection between compassion and the supernatural power of God in Scripture?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 – I do not see the connection between compassion and the power of God in Scripture.

5 – I have seen the connection sometimes.

10 – I see the connection between compassion and the power of God every time either compassion or power are mentioned in Scripture.

How often do you hear from God (“hear” means God communicates specially to you aside from regular Bible study)? (circle one)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 – Not in the last month

5 – Daily

10 – Every time I talk to Him/many times throughout my day

How important is hearing from God to your spiritual health?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 – not important at all

5 – important, but not essential

10 – absolutely essential

How many times would you estimate you've prayed with someone outside the church in the last month? _____

How helpful is the miraculous supernatural work of God to the effectiveness of your personal witness about Jesus?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 – not helpful at all

5 – very helpful

10 – If God doesn't show up supernaturally, nothing I do or say matters.

Do What Jesus Did Post-survey

Sept 30, 2018

This survey is completely anonymous, because *it's only helpful if you're honest*. Don't answer what you think should be the correct answer, answer only what has been true of you to this point.

What are the last four digits of your social security number? (this is just a number you will remember to make the test anonymous and match your results up with the presurvey)
 ____ _

Rate your own compassion meter (circle one)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 – I see someone possibly in pain and never think, "What's going on in their life?"

5 - I see someone possibly in pain and I wonder, "What's going on in their life?"

10 - I see someone possibly in pain and I immediately think, "What's going on in their life?" and pray for a supernatural opportunity to give them something amazing from God.

Do you see a major connection between compassion and the supernatural power of God in Scripture?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 – I do not see the connection between compassion and the power of God in Scripture.

5 – I have seen the connection sometimes.

10 – I see the connection between compassion and the power of God every time either compassion or power are mentioned in Scripture.

How often do you hear from God (“hear” means God communicates specially to you aside from regular Bible study)? (circle one)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 – Not in the last month

5 – Daily

10 – Every time I talk to Him/many times throughout my day

How important is hearing from God to your spiritual health?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 – not important at all

5 – important, but not essential

10 – absolutely essential

How many times would you estimate you’ve prayed with someone outside the church in the last month? _____

How helpful is the miraculous supernatural work of God to the effectiveness of your personal witness about Jesus?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 – not helpful at all

5 – very helpful

10 – If God doesn’t show up supernaturally, nothing I do or say matters.

How many of the “Do What Jesus Did” series gatherings (Sept. 9, 16, 23, 30) did you attend including today? (circle one)

1 2 3 4

Supernatural Trainings Presurvey

Sept. 30, 2018

This survey is completely anonymous, because *it’s only helpful if you’re honest*. Don’t answer what you think should be the correct answer, answer only what has been true of you to this point. This is separate from the survey you took for the sermon series.

What are the last four digits of your social security number? (this must be same number you used on the previous survey to match up results anonymously) ____ ____ ____ ____

Have you ever been to a supernatural training before? (circle) Yes or No

Rate your own faith for the supernatural meter (circle one)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 – I don't expect people to be healed when I pray for them.

5 – I pray with faith, but sometimes there's doubt too.

10 – I am 100% certain that the people I pray for will be healed.

How often do you hear from God ("hear" means God communicates specially to you aside from regular Bible study)? (circle one)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 – Not in the last month

5 – Daily

10 – Every time I talk to Him/many times throughout my day

How many times would you estimate you've prayed face-to-face for someone outside the church in the last month? _____

How many times would you estimate you've witnessed to someone (shared something that pointed them to faith in Jesus) outside the church in the last month?

How many times have you prayed face-to-face for someone to be healed outside the church in the last month? _____

How many times have you prayed for someone and seen them healed in the last month?

How many times have you prayed for someone and received knowledge from God about them in the last month? _____

How many times have you prophesied over someone in the last month?

Supernatural Trainings Post-survey

Oct. 21, 2018

This survey is completely anonymous, because *it's only helpful if you're honest*. Don't answer what you think should be the correct answer, answer only what has been true of you to this point. This is separate from the survey you took for the sermon series.

What are the last four digits of your social security number? (this must be same number you used on the previous survey to match up results anonymously) ____ ____ ____ ____

Have you ever been to a supernatural training before? (circle) Yes or No

Rate your own faith for the supernatural meter (circle one)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 – I don't expect people to be healed when I pray for them.

5 – I pray with faith, but sometimes there's doubt too.

10 – I am 100% certain that the people I pray for will be healed.

How often do you hear from God ("hear" means God communicates specially to you aside from regular Bible study)? (circle one)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 – Not in the last month

5 – Daily

10 – Every time I talk to Him/many times throughout my day

How many times would you estimate you've prayed face-to-face for someone outside the church in the last month? _____

How many times would you estimate you've witnessed to someone (shared something that pointed them to faith in Jesus) outside the church in the last month?

How many times have you prayed face-to-face for someone to be healed outside the church in the last month? _____

How many times have you prayed for someone and seen them healed in the last month?

How many times have you prayed for someone and received knowledge from God about them in the last month? _____

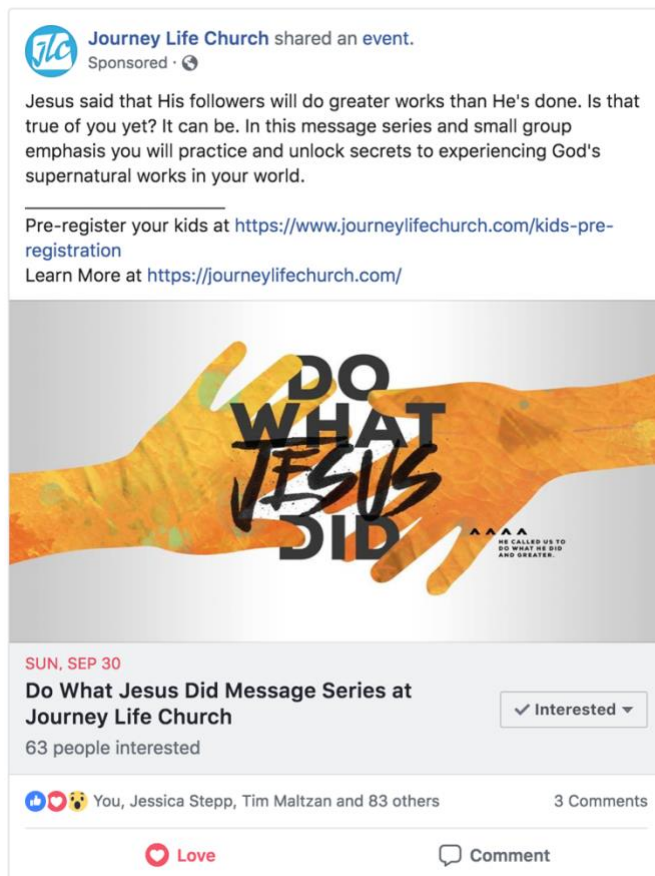
How many times have you prophesied over someone in the last month?

How many of these supernatural trainings have you attended (Sept. 30, Oct. 7, 14, 21) including today? (circle one)

1 2 3 4

APPENDIX F: MARKETING FOR THE DO WHAT JESUS DID SERIES


The *Do What Jesus Did* sermon series was marketed internally through announcements and emails, and externally in the Holt and Lansing, Michigan, communities on Facebook with advertisements, and with coaster-sized invite cards. The emails for the series began four weeks ahead of the first Sunday on September 9, while the announcements for the series began three weeks ahead. We did three Facebook advertisements as follows:



Journey Life Church
Sponsored · 🌐

Come check out our new series Do What Jesus Did! Jesus said that His followers will do greater works than He's done. Is that true of you yet? It can be. In this message series and small group emphasis you will practice and unlock secrets to experiencing God's supernatural works in your world.

Pre-register your kids at <https://www.journeylifechurch.com/kids-pre-registration>
Learn More at <https://journeylifechurch.com/>



[Send Message](#)

👍❤️😮 26 2 Comments 17 Shares 1.6K Views

Journey Life Church was live — 🥳 feeling fantastic.
Sponsored · 🌐

This week's Do What Jesus Did message - "How to Fail ... Boldly" - oh yeah, it's going to be so fun. Construction Day 3 update also 😊



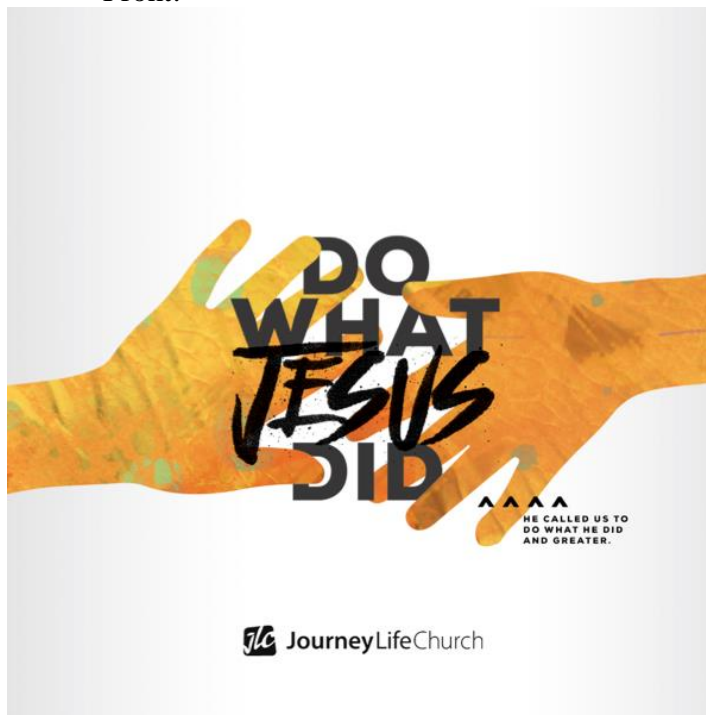
[Send Message](#)

👍❤️😮 16 4 Comments 3 Shares 855 Views

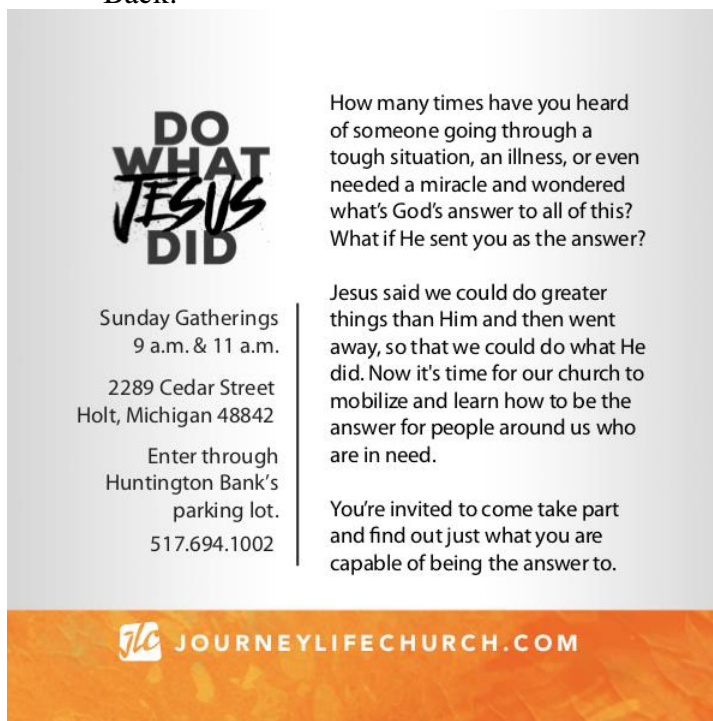
😮 Wow 💬 Comment ➦ Share

The coaster-sized invite cards were handed out at the door of the church by greeters two weeks prior to the first Sunday of the series and they looked like this:

Front:



Back:



APPENDIX G: DO WHAT JESUS DID SERMON NOTES

Do What Jesus Did – Matthew 10 - Jesus Sends out His Life Group

9-9-18

Pastor Jared Stepp and Dustin Taylor

Intro – [Jared] Let me take you back to **me from 8 years ago**. I was 28, been a Christian my whole life, in a pastor's home my whole life, believed in miracles my whole life. Yet, I'd **only seen miracles every once in a LONG while**.

I'd read **the Scripture**—saw Jesus's life, the lives of the first Christians, and I saw miracles as a **lifestyle**, the supernatural was a part of their **daily rhythm**. I never figured out how to reconcile the two. For them **the supernatural was normal**—normal as in consistent in occurrence—part of their regular rhythm. Normal as in, not weird. They weren't doing goofy interruptive things—just having normal conversations and allowing the power of God to work through them, and normal as in outside the church. That's the holy grail for supernatural ministry outside the church.

Then, we got reports about the **physical things that were wrong with my son in the womb**, and things got real for us . . . really real. I'm not going to tell that whole story, some of you have heard it before - you can check it out toward the end of my sermon **April 16th, 2017 - Week 2 of the Soundtrack of the Cross** series - that was before we had video, but you can catch the audio there. The bottom line is that without God's supernatural intervention, three different times my son would not be alive.

That sparked something in me as a young kid's pastor, and I started **praying for anyone and everyone** I could get my hands on for healing. And, I got to be honest, the **results weren't great** at first. Maybe 1% of the people I prayed for were healed (I prayed for 300-500 colds and snotty noses before I saw one healed), but I kept at it, because I was convinced that Jesus expected us to do what He did . . . it's actually quite obvious from the Scripture He expected that. And **just because my experience didn't line up with the Scripture at that point, it didn't mean that the Scripture was wrong**, it meant that my experience could change. It meant there was more for me - and that got me excited!!! Not discouraged . . . Look, if there's a disconnect between your experience and the Scripture, don't try to justify your experience and explain away the Scripture. Get excited, because that means **there's more for you**.

There's more for you, that's the good news. I'm not at 100% in praying for miracles like Jesus was, but that gets me excited still, because **there's more for me**. Fast-forward to me now – I've seen Jesus do . . . without even a little exaggeration . . . hundreds of miracles.

If you're not a Jesus follower yet, I hope that the talk about miracles and the supernatural makes you **curious** at the very least. **Hungry** for it or **angry** about it at the best - it doesn't even matter which, because either way means you're closer to experiencing the supernatural work than someone who doesn't care. "**But I don't believe in that stuff**" - that's cool. You have pain your body, Jesus still wants to heal, He doesn't need you to believe . . . yet . . . oh, this is going to be fun.

Turn to Matthew 9:35 - first book of the NT where we're going to see Jesus sending out His life group. One question - **what if the whole world were full of Christians who were going around doing what Jesus did?** Not what we think He might have done . . . what the Bible, secular historians of His day and even His enemies actually say that He did. We'd have even more martyrs than we do now - I know that - and a lot more believers.

Set the context at this time in Matthew 9:35 - Jesus's ministry had been going great, things were happening, popularity was up, **followers were up** - not Instagram followers!!! People who physically walked with Him where He was going. This verse in Matthew 9:35 represents a summary of sorts of Jesus's ministry at this point . . .

Matthew 9:35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, **teaching** in their synagogues, **proclaiming** the good news of the **kingdom** and **healing every disease and sickness** (NIV).

This is the outline of Jesus's ministry. This answers the question, what was Jesus doing? In the next story, Jesus, from His own mouth, gives this description of what He was doing "The blind receive **sight**, the lame **walk**, those who have leprosy are **cleansed**, the deaf **hear**, the dead are **raised**, and the good news is **proclaimed to the poor** (Matt 11:5, NIV).

So what was Jesus doing? He was saying that the kingdom of God is here, and then inviting any sick people to be prayed for, for healing. In other words, "The kingdom is here, but talk is cheap, **let me show you the Kingdom - God is real! and really . . . loves . . . you** - you have pain in your body - come and see how much." And Jesus prophesied too, basically saying if you have **pain in your soul** - God wants to heal that too. That's what the Kingdom means . . . for you.

That's what Jesus was doing - He was demonstrating His message that the kingdom of God is here. If the church was better at demonstrating the message, our message would be heard in this culture a lot louder. Now watch this - this is the key to supernatural ministry and you see it all throughout the Gospels - I have about fifteen pages of my dissertation written on the topic in this next verse. Verse 36 . . .

"When he saw the crowds, he had **compassion** on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt 9:36, NIV).

Jesus had compassion on them. **Compassion is key to all ministry, especially true supernatural ministry.** Here's the deal - compassion/love and power are paired together throughout Scripture. Why? Because **without love, power is just abuse, and without power, love is impotent** - no one cares. It's only in the marriage between love and power that God is shown to be authentic/real . . . and good. It's only in the marriage between them that either power or love are effective for people.

Jesus's compassion in Scripture was because of pain, hunger, loneliness, people who were harassed, powerless and confused.

Particularly, harassed, powerless, and confused in this verse.

Harassed - flayed, mangled, oppressed, plundered, treated with insolence
 Helpless - laid down, laid prostrate, bowed down - powerless
 Confused - leaderless - without a shepherd

When you see a crowd of people, do you immediately identify individual needs? I typically see a crowd and think, "Ah, it's going to take me longer to get where I'm going" inconvenience, delays. Honestly, that's what I think, but not when I'm thinking like Jesus. Jesus saw needs. **In order to Do what Jesus Did you'll have to see what Jesus sees.** See people with compassion. Verse 37 . . .

Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matt 9:37-38, NIV).

[Dustin] Talking with our Life Group leaders during one of our meetings preparing for this series, I discussed the balance between going over the content together and study and knowing where the people in the group are at spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.

Years ago, I was coleading a students' group with a friend and we got into a disagreement afterwards about why I threw away the questions to go over in groups. He loved to study and is very theological based in his relationship with Jesus, which is great.

This day, however, I said to him, "Did you not see the one kid who just found out his dad is going to prison and has to live with his mom and change schools? Did you not see the other kid who is living with his grandparents and struggling with his sister doing drugs and running away from home? Did you not see the one kid unwilling to show his face being socially awkward because his parents over protect him and call him odd?"

We talked about it more and how as good as knowledge is and helpful, it had no place this day. Compassion was needed. We didn't go over one question related to the message that day. Instead, we did the most important thing, love towards hurting hearts.

Jesus said "The workers are few... ." I think it makes a lot of sense why He brought this up to His followers.

I like how He uses this agricultural metaphor. It helps bring a visual context to His statement that seems confusing when you think of Him as the most powerful, awesome being ever.

Why would Jesus need help? Jesus says look at the harvest waiting, look at the scope of it and size of this project. “Do you think that I want to do this alone?”

It is no wonder that people are not running after this verse though; it is hard work. It is joyful work though. When you see the pain of these stories and realize it is not going to be fixed in one meeting or in one study, it would be easy to realize why the workers are few.

I think, however, Jesus told them to look... because He sees further than us. He was saying, “Lift your eyes and see why this is so awesome. The payoff of being compassionate and bringing miracles to others of freedom is amazing. Go and help and do greater things than I. Why and how?”

[Jared] Harvest and workers. **The key to revival is workers.** People are ready to hear and receive Jesus. It is Jesus’s dream that every person be someone who produces the Kingdom, and brings people into the Kingdom.

“Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and **gave them authority to drive out impure spirits** and to **heal** every disease and sickness” (Matt 10:1, NIV).

His life Group - the people He’s constantly doing life with. He gave them AUTHORITY - **Doing what Jesus did means realizing your authority.** Robby Dawkins says, “*God’s gift to us is ability, our gift to God is availability.*” Be opportunistic. Just be available. God wants to work through you. He gave them authority for what?

Drive out demons - in power encounters Jesus wins. Darkness has no authority over light.

Heal every disease and sickness - so **Isabel Shvarts was nine years old**, a kid who was in my kids’ ministry three years ago - bouncing on a bounce house she broke her shin bone at the knee cap - right through the growth plate - snap, just like that. I saw the x-rays. **She and her family prayed for healing** after the x-ray in the ER. They sent her to a specialist who took his own x-rays to reset the bone - and there was no break. Her pain was gone, and she was bouncing on the bounce houses again . . . **THE NEXT DAY!!!** Outside the church, talk about a testimony to doctors and to Shvarts family who all knew about it. That’s how it works; that’s amazing; that brings people to a point of decision.

Jim Elliot, the missionary who died at the hands of a cannibal tribe that are now all Christians, said, (it’s in the *Do What Jesus Did* book) “*Father, make me a crisis man. Bring those I contact to decision. Let me not be a milepost on a single road; make me a fork, that men must turn one way or another on facing Christ in me.*”

“These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him” (Matt 10:2-4, NIV).

The twelve. **Doing what Jesus did is personal.** He knows your name. Ordinary - no wealth, no special education, no social position.

Matthew and Simon the Zealot. Matthew specifically mentions details about these guys - himself/Matthew - tax collector. Simon - Zealot. **What if Jesus can unite even political opposites?** They were like Republicans and Democrats, if murdering families were the daily stakes. Tax collectors weren't even considered Jews by Jews, because they were traitors who helped the Romans who were raping their girls and enslaving their boys, while starving them with taxes. Zealots were the people who killed traitors for being traitors. They all longed for the Messiah—the tax collectors secretly and the Zealots in open and threatening military ways. Jesus possible being the Messiah in their minds was the only thing keeping Simon from killing Matthew, and Matthew from turning in Simon. But they came together.

This is how Life Groups can work. **Doing what Jesus did is personal.** See the person directly in front of you, know them ... and bring healing.

They had **eaten** together, **prayed** together, **encouraged** each other, **studied** together, **watched** Jesus **minister** together, **helped** Jesus minister together, watched **Jesus model life** together, **bickered** together, **reconciled** together. There was one major thing left to do - **minister** and **outreach on their own!**

Jesus gave His life group authority to heal . . . including Judas!!! Let that sink in for a second. They all came back with supernatural testimonies after this, ALL. God doesn't need you to be perfect or the person of power for the hour to use you for His glory. It's not about you, it's about Him deserving glory in and through you.

“These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: ‘Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel’” (Matt 10:5-6, NIV).

Specific instructions for specific results. Going where there is influence, building for the future of what God wants to do. This was just a limited strategy for specific results. They didn't have the time or the numbers to go to anyone but the Israelites. This was temporary marching orders, which Jesus would change about a year and a half later. Why a limited strategy? Back to what Jesus said at the end of chapter 9 - **THEY NEEDED MORE WORKERS!!!** But the point is this - **Doing what Jesus did means going where Jesus wants you to go.**

“As you go, proclaim this message: ‘**The kingdom of heaven** has come near.’ **Heal** the sick, **raise** the dead, **cleanse** those who have leprosy, **drive out** demons. **Freely you have received; freely give** (Matt 10:7-8, NIV).

You have authority to give Jesus away. You have authority to do what Jesus did. These are commands. You can talk to people until you’re blue in the face, but until you start doing what Jesus did, people aren’t going to respond. The life change will be difficult.

[Dustin] Because Jesus invited them into following Him and then personally did life with them, He was instructing them along the way in order to “certify” them. Authority to trust them. He gave specific instructions of where to go, and they learned to obey.

[Story of Oliver being "Crayon Certified"]

My son was in class in his first week of kindergarten. They have a model to help the kids learn to follow instructions and see where each student is with skills.

We were talking about it and he relayed that it was more a drill to learn how to listen and do what the teacher was asking. She would say to the students to grab a certain color crayon and then show which section of the picture to color.

After the drill, not every student was crayon certified he said. He showed me his medal that was given by being crayon certified, and was excited to practice being scissor certified. He said that the students that still needed to retest she showed his picture as the example of what to do because his came out exactly how it needed to be done. /

The disciples wanted to do what Jesus was doing. You could see it always in their desire to be great like Him. He was helping them along the way with words, sometimes to bring clarity to what He was asking them to do.

He would say, “Do you still not understand?” Not in a mean way, I don’t think, but in a challenging way of, “Don’t you want to move past your current level of engagement and see God fully move in, through and around you?”

If you want more, you have to give away what you have. You have to realize that you have it!!!

In the Gospels you see obviously that Jesus spent a lot more time doing the works of the Kingdom than talking. Fifty-seven percent of all stories in the New Testament have the supernatural in them. Eighty-six percent of all conversion stories have the supernatural in them. I did the research in my dissertation.

“Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts—no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep” (Matt 10:9-10, NIV).

Jesus is giving specific risks in faith. Like Elijah pouring water on the sacrifice. This is actually practice for them. We're going to be doing that in this study—practicing taking risks in faith and giving away the power of God.

Doing what Jesus did requires risk in faith, therefore, you have to practice. Risk in faith like, “God wants to heal you right now.” That’s a risk. What if He doesn’t heal them? He can take care of His reputation. You never see someone in Scripture saying, “Maybe God wants to heal you.” You can search the whole book—it’s not there. Declare what God wants to do.

“The one who has been forgiven much will love much” We could rephrase this as the one who is free inside, will move freely in relationship with others. Imagine being weighed down in life trying to do anything.

When I played football in high school, my coach said to me in practice once, “If someone tries to take you down, just keep digging in and move your feet!!”

This instruction came into play during a handoff at the 22 yard line. I got handed the ball being a half back. I ran through the middle, left of center.

On my way to the end zone, I was met by the linebacker who grabbed my shoulders. I kept moving my feet.

It slowed me down a bit, but I kept moving my feet. Another defense man jumped on him, I kept moving my feet. Now slower, but I kept moving my feet.

Another defense man jumped onto the second one, and I kept moving my feet. Barely any speed, but still moving forward and at the 9 yard line I kept moving my feet. I dragged 3 people into the end zone slowly and got the touchdown.

Now you may not be taking this analogy the right way, I am not saying to take the weight of those linemen off of me (that’s outside of myself, I can’t control that), I am saying to remove the weight of self-limiting beliefs off yourselves (that’s something you can control).

Hear the words of Jesus when He says to you, “Go do the work and keep your feet moving and bring people into the endzone and freedom you have.”

I had been given the instruction to not worry about the weight of others and be concerned about what happens. But to be free in myself and control my obedience to his words I was able to bring others with me into the end zone.

“Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some **worthy person** and stay at their house until you leave” (Matt 10:11, NIV).

[Jared] Look for where you have influence. Influence them for Jesus.

“As you enter the home, give it your **greeting**. If the home is deserving, let your **peace rest** on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you” (Matt 10:12-13, NIV).

Give peace away. 1. You have to **have your own peace** to give it away. 2. You have to be able to **give peace away**. How do you do that? (secret - it's the presence of God through the Holy Spirit) 3. If you can't give it away, and there's hostility, you have to be able to **get back to the place of peace**. How do you do that? (secret-it's the presence of God)

[Dustin] They still had to exercise it. (John Wimbur)

Over coffee, with a good friend of mine, we were discussing Joshua. Joshua had been given a similar message, one maybe as hard to hear and understand as us hearing Jesus say, “You will do greater things, because I go to be with the Father.”

Joshua found himself taking over for Moses. Amazing things had been done and he had a front row seat. When he was handed the mantle, God had to exalt him before the Israelites and show them that He was with Joshua the same as with Moses. You really should read Joshua 3-4. It really parallels a lot of this. They chose twelve. They saw miracles. God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Joshua told the people, “Get ready, for tomorrow you will see God do amazing things.”

Do you see yourself as exalted? Can you confidently say to others, “Get ready, for God is going to do amazing things here.” I know Jesus was trying to set us up to be this confident. I know He gave Holy Spirit to help us be “Crayon Certified.” We can do the work He has instructed us to do.

Do you know what work that is? It is the same work He was doing, the work the Father is always doing. Be about the Father's business. If you don't know what that is, then good thing you are here today. Find a group going through the book together and see what He has for you. But I warn you.... Get ready!! For God is going to do amazing things among you.

[Jared]

Response - Collect a Toll

If Satan's going to mess with me, he better know I'm going to set a bunch of other people free. Lead others to be free. Stress, anxiety, and physical healing for me. **Your prayer** in this series can be, “Lord, increase my faith.” He loves to answer that. “Lord, increase my risk” - let me step out and take risks in faith for You. “*You know what God did to your back, He wants to do with your entire life.*” - Robby Dawkins, after a back healing.

[Dustin] Life Group push.

Do What Jesus Did – Week 2 – The Big Three

9-16-18

Pastor Jared Stepp

Intro – What do you do when the roof literally falls in on you—and that’s not even the biggest problem you’re facing? Jesus was having an interesting day that turned CRAZY, then impossible, and then angry. What do you do with that? We’re going to see what Jesus did, and it’s a template for you and I to do what Jesus did. (DUH DUH DUH – cue dramatic music) This is going to be fun.

Turn in your Bible to Mark chapter 2 – second book of the New Testament. This one Scripture contains all three of the big three—the biggest and most common ways that Jesus moved in supernatural ministry. ALL THREE. What are they? Pay attention—they’re coming—because He’s given you authority to do them too.

If you’re not a full-time follower of Jesus yet, you’re going to see this morning that Jesus is real, He’s good, and He really wants relationship with you. You’re going to meet Him today. It’s going to change your life. You’re going to experience God today.

Now look at this, two foundational building blocks to dive into Mark 2.

Jesus dealt with people the same then as He does now. Jesus acts just the same. Jesus is the perfect representation of God the Father. Jesus is perfect theology. And Jesus is still in ministry. **The way Jesus dealt with people then is the way He deals with people now.**

Next. **The way Jesus dealt with people then is the way He expects you to deal with people now.** You are expected by Jesus to do what Jesus did. The question is, will you? Will you do what Jesus did? **The way Jesus dealt with people then is the way He expects you to deal with people now.**

Look, if you’re a believer, a full-time Jesus follower, He’s already placed supernatural things inside you. It’s my job **to pull it out of you**, to equip you to do the things that Jesus did. That’s what’s happening today! Are you ready?

One of the things that was very clear from the data of the survey last week that we took, which gets me excited, is that so many of you believe strongly in the importance of hearing God in your spiritual life. Yet many of you are not hearing God regularly. This gets me excited, because there’s more. God is going to grow you in that area. Everything that’s in this story today requires that Jesus is hearing from God for it to be possible.

Since last week’s message this is what you guys have been reporting. **Alisha Henley** wrote, “Just wanted to share a win I’ve experienced recently ☺ 2 Sunday’s ago Pastor Jared had people lay hands on those who were needing prayer for healing. I’ve been on meds for a stomach ulcer and would have searing pain in my gut toward the end of the day if I missed a dose. I’ve only had to take my meds twice since that day! I’m so thankful to be feeling better and to be almost 100% pain free ☺!! God is so good!!”

Mary Oliver said, “God healed Gage this morning!!!! He work up very congested this morning which caused him to have a bad headache that he said was very painful. He came into my room and told me about it and I told him I would put some oils on him in a minute. He went back into his room and put the blanket over his head and asked Jesus to heal him because he didn’t want to miss school and he didn’t want to be in pain. BOOM! He lifted his head up from his blanket and the headache was instantly GONE!! He came running back into my room with way more energy than the first time and told me all about!!!! No better way to start off your day than a healing!!! JESUS STILL HEALS! He’s the same yesterday, today and tomorrow!! 4 hearts”

Hollis is cancer free this week! Let’s go to Mark 2:1.

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was **no room left**, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an **opening in the roof** above Jesus by **digging through it** and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus **saw their faith**, (Mark 2:1-5, NIV).

So, the popularity of Jesus caused His home in Capernaum to be overrun with people wanting to see Him (Mark 2:1-3). Jesus displayed throughout His ministry an approachable quality to the point that people would press on Him (Mark 5:24; Luke 14:25), force Him into a boat to teach (Matt 4:1; Luke 5:3), or He would need to escape to pray (Luke 5:16). The people at this home were jammed in and standing outside the door, straining to listen, longing to see Jesus. Jesus was not on a platform, with a microphone, with a security guard on either side. Jesus simply dealt with the pressures of anyone and everyone getting in His space (Matt 19:13). Jesus showed a poise, comfort, and ease with people in these environments, a quality that invited the cultural outcasts to stay with him (Matt 9:11; Mark 2:15; Luke 5:30). **Jesus’s approach to supernatural ministry was normal.**

What if we could do this? What if your approach to life in general, to people, to prayer, was normal enough that people would come to you even though you talked about God? And when people are around, you’re not super spiritual sounding or strange—you’re simply giving them the supernatural power of God. Meeting needs and sharing the love of Jesus.

Verse 4 shows five people extremely desperate to see the authentic power of God.

The picture of the four of them, as they ἀπεστέγασαν τὴν στέγην (Mark 2:4 BGT) “unroofed the roof” (Mark 2:4) is vivid and even humorous. They had “showered disrespect as well as dirt on the guests below,” (James Edwards) including Jesus.

Question - How desperate are you to experience the authentic power of Jesus?

Misdemeanor desperate? These guys were. There were about 100 witnesses to what they had done. No one was getting away with anything!

How desperate are you to experience the authentic power of Jesus? Are you willing to risk looking silly in front of a neighbor or coworker in order to ask them if you can pray for them? Are you willing to get a “reputation”? Look, these men were so concerned about their friend, and so convinced that Jesus could meet His need, that they risked punishment. Gaining a reputation as the town bad boys.

Jesus did not even rebuke the men for destroying property, after they had done so. Some of you have this idea that Jesus is this judgmental killjoy, looking for ways to destroy your fun. Our entire culture has this false view of Jesus, don't believe me? Just look at the top things our culture is producing about Jesus right now . . . **01 I Saw that Jesus Meme - 02 Give it Back Jesus Meme - 03 Lord I'm drowning**



That is NOT who Jesus is. You see clearly in this text that Jesus had every right as the standing teacher in this room to rebuke these guys, turn them over to the authorities, get them banned from the synagogue, kick them out of the meeting - whatever. At the very least order them to fix the roof. But He does none of that, NONE . . . OF . . . THAT. What does He do, instead? He's sitting there speechless, amazed at their faith.

Jesus dealt with people the same then as He does now

and

The way Jesus dealt with people then is the way He expects you to deal with people now

This isn't saying that Jesus doesn't care about our sin, He does. That's just not what He sees first, and not what He deals with first in relationship with people. First, He sees faith, and then He sees need. So . . .

What do you see? What are you looking for in people? Are you looking for, I don't know if I can trust those people? Because if you're not willing to talk to them and learn their name, that's exactly what you're saying.

What do you see? What are you looking for in people? Are you seeing faith . . . **[Point out someone's faith in the Gathering]**

Listen, now see this . . . **Jesus has to heal your friend, but you might have to dig a hole.** Jesus is the one who does the supernatural work in people, but you might be required to take a risk in faith to get people to Jesus. **Do you believe that Jesus has the power to transform lives enough** to, with desperation and abandon, get people to Jesus? **Jesus has to heal your friend, but you might have to dig a hole.** Next . . .

What kind of friends do you have? Are they bringing you to Jesus? Is Jesus the destination of your relationships? What kind of friends do you have? Now . . .

What kind of friend are you? Who's mat are you carrying? Carrying mats is hard. Someone in your Life Group asks, "Will you pray for our marriage every day for three months?" That's hard. I'll feel guilty when I forget.

Guys, this wasn't the first time they'd carried his mat. These were his friends. They were carrying his mat a lot, maybe daily. It wasn't the first time . . . **BUT IT WOULD BE THE LAST** because they carried him to Jesus. What kind of friends do you have? Are they bringing you to Jesus? What kind of friend are you? Are you bringing people to Jesus?

So they broke up the roof . . . **Sometimes the only way to move forward is to break up what's already there.** That's what we're doing with Journey Forward, we're breaking up what already is there so that we can move forward. Sometimes you have to dig deeper. This is going to be fun.

This is **risky faith**. They didn't have a modern pulley system. These weren't climbing trained, climbing instructors with ropes that they knew could hold his weight. They didn't know if the bed would flip flop over. He came down feet first, feet dangling, broken and useless. Rope underneath his arms. This is risky faith.

Do you pray prayers so bold that they make the people around you nervous? "Aren't you afraid you're going to be disappointed?" No, because I believe in praying bold prayers. That's what these guys were going with. This should be a huge encouragement for anyone in the room who has recently taken a bold step of faith! Do you really think that's wise? Be encouraged, like the single mom—it's an all-out battle to get here on Sunday morning. But you believe that if your kids are in the house of God, they will be changed by Him. So you take that step of faith and you go. I believe that's God-honoring faith, and God sees that.

Some of you recently put your first tithe check in the offering. I'm doing it solely on the basis of I'm going to trust God. Some would call it naïve – but God calls it faith.

Some of you came for prayer recently for healing and help and hope.

Some of you stepped out this week to try to pray for someone outside the church. I know, I've heard the stories. Some of you were thinking about it, but didn't pull the trigger yet. Be encouraged, Jesus sees and rewards. Step out in love and pray for someone's specific need. Jesus sees your faith. He's cheering you on. "What are you gonna do, son? What are you gonna do, daughter? Do it. Do it. You got this."

"And seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven'" (Mark 2:5, JST).

This wasn't the response they were looking for! This was a bit disappointing as an initial reaction from Jesus. How many of you have had to wait in prayer that was disappointing? Some of you are in one right now. Be encouraged. Let your faith rise right now.

This is what it means. It means that there are a **barrel of needs that you're worried about and a barrel of needs that He's worried about** and until you get His needs on your agenda, your needs could have some delay. Disappointing? It shouldn't be, because His concerns are what you really need anyway.

Jesus spoke kindly and with encouragement to the paralytic. Jesus called out the gold in him, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5). No one had ever talked to this man that way. In that culture it was assumed that he had sinned—that's why he was paralyzed. They thought he was some big, fat sinner. And he was labeled "sinner."

It's as if Jesus was saying, "You see yourself as an illegitimate child, unacceptable and unloved to God the Father because of your infirmity. But I see you as a son—forgiven, accepted, and whole. I don't have any illegitimate children. I could not image a world without you, so I created you. You are My son." This prophetic declaration set in motion new possibilities of thinking for all who heard it.

Think about the new possibilities of thinking for your life. What are the things in your life that have made you feel unworthy? Jesus looks at you and says, "You're my daughter. You're my son. There's no such thing as illegitimate children. You might have had illegitimate parents, but you are here on purpose and your life matters and has significance, because I give you significance." He's calling you right now, calling out your faith, calling out your goodness, calling out your love—loving you as only the Creator can.

Now think about the people in your life who need to hear this. Jesus is saying, "I see you as a son or a daughter. You see yourself as wounded, but I see you as whole! You see yourself as a victim, but I see you as strong in my mighty power. That's who you're created to be."

Jesus's prophetic words over this man are **the first words in the Book of Mark that point to the cross**. Forgiveness requires sacrifice. Jesus knew that He'd be the sacrifice. In Him, is all true forgiveness, so He declared it for this man. Come into right relationship with Jesus, and He declares you forgiven and free from sin. He's so good.

"But some of the scribes were **sitting** there, and **reasoning in their hearts**, 'How is this person speaking like this? Blasphemy! Who has power to forgive sins except the only God?' And **immediately** Jesus knew **in His spirit** that they **were thinking** these things, and he said to them, 'Why are you **thinking** these things **in your hearts**?' (Mark 2:6-8, JST).

Have you ever said to your kids, or another driver, or a friend (in your head) – "What were you thinking?" It's normally not a good thing, but look at this . . . **God knows what you're thinking . . . and He still loves you.**

Jesus was focused so much on the men and their faith, and the man and his prophetic destiny, that He just **ignored the extra-religious people in the room**. Then, Mark the author goes to great lengths to make sure that his readers know that these guys gave no physical indications about their opinions. They were “sitting there” and “reasoning,” not just anywhere, but “in their hearts” (Mark 2:6). Mark, the narrator, shows that Jesus “immediately” knew “in his spirit” that they were “thinking these things” (Mark 2:7). Jesus even states that their thoughts happened “in their hearts” (Mark 2:8). Mark wants readers to know that **Jesus has special supernatural insight from God in this moment**. Jesus did not have time to perceive and ascertain with human insight that kind of knowledge. **He immediately knew because of a word of knowledge from God.**

This kind of knowledge is available to believers. What if the Holy Spirit is trying to get your attention with this kind of knowledge all the time? What if, instead of thinking, *Why's that person being such a jerk?* that random thought that floats through your head, *they were abused*, what if that's God speaking to you? And what if He's telling you that, so that you can be a source of healing for that person? “Hey, how are you doing today, really?” That question is so fun—it throws people off, “Jesus loves you.” Some of you need to care more, your compassion meter needs to go up. You said so on your surveys. That's good; there's more.

Jesus says,
 “Which is easier, to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, pick up your mat and walk?’ (Mark 2:9, JST).

It's obviously easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven.” No one can prove you did it. I can do that [pointing]: “Your sins are forgiven . . . Your sins are forgiven . . . I'm not sure about you . . . Your sins are forgiven.” Right. It means squat when I say it. I don't have the authority to claim such a thing in my own right, but it's easy to say. But to say, “Get up and walk,” that's more difficult—that's a risk in faith.

No one believes the deeper soul work unless the body work is available too. **Without the tangible power and presence of God, declaring the forgiveness of God just looks like a scam, a joke, a magic trick, a manipulation tool. We have to be people of the power and presence of God, then the love of God has an avenue.**

“But in order that you would know the Son of Man has **authority** to forgive sins on the earth,” he said to the paralytic, “I tell you, Get up, pick up your mat and go to your home” (Mark 2:10-11, JST).

Jesus interrupts himself, His own thought process and flow, with the demonstration of His authority. Look at this phrase, “In order that you would know the Son of Man has **AUTHORITY**.” Jesus's primary concern in the passage is the establishment of His own authority.

The Pharisees didn't care so much when they were hearing about miracles and healings only. “As long as He's doing them on His own time, and not on the Sabbath.” They

didn't care so much when He was teaching people. "As long as He doesn't have authority." But when the two things came together and Jesus is teaching and He's also demonstrating authority, that they had a problem with. And now He's invading their thoughts! "NO, this guy has to die!" It's one thing when Christians are just do-gooders—passing out sandwiches and cleaning up schools, blessing kids at Holt Hometown. It's one thing when you're teaching people, [sarcastic] "Well, no one will believe them anyway." But when power is matched with good works and teaching, and you start to invade people's personal space, knowing their thoughts, knowing the "secrets of their hearts" – now that could be war or life transforming. You pick!

Look, this is where evangelism gets interesting, it's **at the intersection of teaching and authority**. Jesus was NEVER satisfied with just teaching. He was only satisfied with being the authoritative ruler in their life. That's why He's invading these guys' thoughts. THAT'S why, get this, He gave that authority . . . TO . . . US – through the power of the Holy Spirit on us.

The major theme of Mark's passage is establishing **Jesus's AUTHORITY** – authority to **prophecy**, get **supernatural knowledge** from God of the secrets in people's hearts, **forgive** and **heal**. And here's the kicker for you and I—all of those have been **transferred to us**, with the tweak that we get to declare people forgiven by the power of Jesus. Jesus is the one who does the forgiving.

The result

"And he got up, and immediately picked up his mat and walked out in front of everyone, so that all were amazed and praised God, saying that, 'This, we've never seen!'" (Mark 2:12, JST).

Desperation was more readily available in first century Israel—no modern medicine, no wheel chairs, no pain pills. This guy's only hope was the goodness of passersby—and then Jesus. Desperation was more readily available in first century, but **amazement is just as available in modern America. Are you willing to live . . . in amazement constantly from Jesus?** That's what He's calling you to.

So, whose mat are you carrying? How can I help carry a mat? Take a minute to think . . .

Look, this is the first passage in the Book of Mark where the cross begins to loom large. Jesus declaring forgiveness of sins was prophetic foreshadowing that He would be the perfect sacrifice for sins. He's declaring it as if it's already done. Why? Because in the spirit realm it was as good as done. As soon as He declared this man forgiven—boom—the cross. **Salvation call**

Believing Christians get to declare the supernatural power of God, just like Jesus did. "Get up." "Pain, get out." "Satan's influence, be gone." "Jesus' forgiveness for you IS CERTAIN." So declare that in someone's life this week. Carry a mat, carry them to Jesus.

Look, those men broke up the roof, but who was the real ground breaker in this story? Jesus was. Look, these guys would have just been some misdemeanor level vandalizers had Jesus not truly broken up the ground through His supernatural power. And now who are they? People of great faith. That's us, with this ground breaking. So we're going to pray, and Jesus is going to make this amazing! Everyone, get your things, and come on outside with me.

Do What Jesus Did – Week 3 - How to Fail ... Boldly

9-23-18

Pastor Jared Stepp

Intro – Sermon Bumper #1 then immediately ***How to Fail Boldly*** **Sermon Bumper #2**

Famously Thomas Edison when failing to make the long-lasting light bulb 10,000 times said, *“I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.”* So this message is how to fail ... boldly or ...

How to fail up! Jesus never failed, but when you and I endeavor to do what Jesus did, **we inevitably will fail. The disciples** did ... for sure ... and it was funny sometimes and teachable other times too. Basketball fouls, football lineman.

If you're not a full-time follower of Jesus yet, we're talking about the **miracles and supernatural things** that Jesus did, and how He's empowered full-time followers of Him **to do the same**. You're going to see in this story, that **Christians are authentic people who fail**, and Jesus is awesome to us in the middle of it. And **if you get to know us**, you're going to see authentic people who fail ... **AND people who consistently have undeniably supernatural works** of God in their lives. God's been so good to us.

Here's a couple fun stories ...

Our 11-month-old baby was congested and wheezy last Sunday. This is nothing new to our family, so we got out our family friend, the nebulizer. On Monday morning, we made a doctor's appointment for her. She was very wheezy and I was completely expecting a diagnosis of bronchitis or pneumonia. I prayed several times that morning and all the way to the appointment. After the doctor listened to our baby's lungs, she said that her lungs sounded completely clear and that it was just a bad cold. By that evening, our baby sounded completely clear. We are not new to this as a family and I knew she was wheezy. For her lungs to be clear and her to be healed by that evening is a miracle! God is SO good!

Abby Warner - At Screen on the Green on Friday, I was making cotton candy for the first time. I didn't realize that in the center of the part that spins in the middle is a small leather strap that spins as well (very fast—so fast you can't even see it) as the cotton candy is made. I was starting to go around the edge of the machine to scoop up the floss as it gathered and even though I thought I was staying far away from the middle spinning mechanism, that strap hit my finger (probably dozens of time before I could pull my

finger away because it was spinning so fast). The pain was excruciating, and I was afraid to look at my finger because I thought it had been cut very badly. But after a few moments I looked and saw it wasn't cut. It was super red and very swollen. Ang thought I broke it. So, I put ice on it and tried to keep working. But it hurt very badly. Later that night Victoria Wilson asked if she could pray for my finger. By the end of the night the swelling and pain had completely gone away. The next day you would have never known anything had happened to my finger. There is zero pain, zero swelling, zero bruising! You can literally squeeze my finger and I can not tell where the pain was:) Yay God!

We're going to Mark chapter 9. Jesus had already given them authority. We saw that in week 1 in Mark 6. Now the application of what Jesus said was getting messy and icky for the disciples.

Robby Dawkins, who wrote the book *Do What Jesus Did*, was leaning into the supernatural early on, and God asked him, "Would you still pursue me and pray for people even if you didn't see any results?" Listen, until you've apologized to someone for a word of knowledge you've given them or prayed for someone to raise from the dead and nothing, you haven't failed as badly as I have at this! But when the miracle does happen it makes the failure worth it. Oh, this is going to be fun.

I love hearing the stories this week of many of you who prayed for people for healing and didn't get results. What I didn't hear in your stories was any person that you prayed for being angry or the interaction even being negative in any way. God was honored in huge ways this week, in every interaction, and you don't know what happened after you left. Some of the healing things that we pray for have no initial way to tell if it's better—you know, chronic pain, internal problems, problems that only come every once in a while. God's probably still at it.

My story of the girl at Holt Hometown . . . My list of failures in praying for the supernatural is larger than my list of successes, much larger. But I pray for so many people that both lists are very large. I've had the privilege of praying for people on their death bed where the doctors have given them days or weeks, with the family members of others who have died for a resurrection, with people who don't have a leg or a full arm, for incurable diseases and conditions of many kinds—with all levels of results.

So listen, arrogance and spiritual immaturity focuses more on results than relationship. God will take care of the results and He'll take care of His reputation in this. Let's watch the disciples fail. Mark 9:14 . . .

"When they came to the other disciples, they saw **a large crowd around them** and the teachers of the law **arguing** with them. As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and **ran to greet him**. 'What are you **arguing with them** about?' he asked" (Mark 9:14-16).

These guys . . . these disciples are like a dumpster fire in this story. It's bad. You're going to see how deep the dumpster fire is in a bit. But this first picture of them standing around

with this huge crowd arguing with a bunch of rabbis is hilarious. It's like Jesus passes right by them and throws out this question, What are you arguing with them about?

Failure # 1 – Caring about the wrong people's opinion

We all do this sometimes—caring about a **gossiping family member's** opinion, or a **loud-mouthed coworker**, or even our **imagined opinions** of our **friends** (random comments a friend makes that makes you feel self-conscious and insecure). **You are secure** in the hands of your Savior, of a God who loves you and who has great plans for your life. Listen to Jesus—care about His opinion and the others won't plague you.

Win - Care about Jesus' opinion; listen to Him

Now, this doesn't mean that you completely disregard people. It simply means that **you do not live in fear of people, paralyzed** by people, and **useless discussion**. Multiple times in Scripture we are encouraged to avoid “godless chatter,” “vain arguments,” and this one: “Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful” (2 Timothy 2:23-24).

Titus 3:9. “But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless” (Titus 3:9, NIV).

When they were keeping their **eyes on Jesus**, they were succeeding. **Win - Care about Jesus' opinion – listen to Him.**

So Jesus tosses a question at the disciples who barely hear Him in their argument. That's how we get sometimes—**tunnel visioned**, because that scrum, that argument continues. But this happens . . .

“A man in the crowd answered, ‘Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but **they could not**’” (Mark 9:17-18).

This **anguished** voice in the crowd answered Jesus, **wearied** by the daily stress of his son's condition, **disgusted** by the immaturity of the people having a power struggle over his son's condition. He answers Jesus with the simple truth of the situation—**my boy is tormented**.

See the torment in people. Not all torment is natural. Not all illnesses can be cured with medication. Learn the voice of the Lord so that you can discern what you're dealing with. There were some medical conditions described here—**deaf, mute, seizures**—but none of that was medically treatable because of the **spiritual condition** of the boy—foams at the mouth, gnashes, we see later shrieks (can't speak but can shriek), throws him specifically into water and fire over and over again—not medical. Listen, Halloween is coming up, and most of that stuff is just silly. But there's some that's real too—that you and I as full-time Jesus followers have complete authority over.

Failure # 2 – Miraculous results fail. The disciples could not drive out the demon, and so did not see the boy healed. We talked about this earlier. The only people who see 100% of those they pray for healed are those who never pray for anyone for healing. They also see 0% of the people they pray for healed—just saying.

Win – Fail boldly! Fail up! See growth through your wins or your failures. We're a culture of improvement at JLC, meaning we haven't arrived. You have permission to learn from wins AND failures. Watch what Jesus does to raise the tide of faith, going on in verse 19.

“‘You **unbelieving** generation,’ Jesus replied, ‘how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? **Bring** the boy to me.’ So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the boy’s father, ‘**How long has he been like this?**’ ‘From childhood,’ he answered” (Mark 9:19-21).

Compassion. **Jesus is expressing compassion.** He doesn't need to know this—and actually He probably already knows. He could just ask the Holy Spirit. But He's showing compassion for the father, having a normal conversation, and **establishing the severity** of the condition before He heals it. That's a method to raise the tide of faith that Jesus uses often. Establishing severity.

Now this may be a single dad, possibly the mom died in childbirth. That was common in those days. No mention of the mom. Jesus is showing compassion for this wearied man, who's been beaten down by the work of the enemy in his son's life.

This matters so much. **Dads, bring your children to Jesus.** Be the spiritual leader in your home. It's your responsibility. Bring your children to Jesus. There are studies on this. When dads are spiritual leaders of their homes and serving the Lord, one study says 86% of kids stay serving God their whole lives. When mom serves the Lord but not the dad, it goes down to 19% of kids serve the Lord their whole lives. Dads, lead the way in pursuing Jesus. Bring your kids to Jesus. So what if you fail sometimes, get back after it. Let today be the day.

And there's good news for everyone to be proactive. There are similar studies about church attendance. If you're keeping your kids in church at least weekly, there's a high percentage they're going to stay serving the Lord. Students in the room, go after God, stay connected to church. God will meet you here. You will have legitimate encounters with the living God here. Go after it.

“‘It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But **if you can do anything**, take pity on us and help us.’ “**If you can**”?’ said Jesus. ‘**Everything is possible** for one who believes’” (Mark 9:22-23).

Jesus takes exception to this statement from the man. Why? Because it's not from a place of faith. HE HAS to crush it! In the Greek it's not a question at the end of "if you can." It's an exclamation, "if you can!" If you can do anything is a beggar kind of statement. It's the kind of thing you ask your doctor, not Jesus. If you have any spare change. If you are able to help out. May I have some more soup.

Failure # 3 – Allowing doubt of Jesus

That "if you can!" sounds uncompassionate until you consider what Jesus is trying to do and what He says right after that. **In your prayers, in your conversations, allowing doubt-filled words to go uncontested doesn't work.** It wasn't Jesus's way or the early Christians' way.

Win - Raise the tide of faith. I find that we sometimes like to get stuck on our problems like a broken record, naturally because we've been stuck in it, and struggling and battling for so long. But **the place of faith and authority is simple.** It's not complicated—and it doesn't need to know medical history or the details of every symptom. It really just needs to know that "EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE!" How many things? How many things?

Everything. God can do it. Situation at **work**, that loved one who needs **saved, cancer, change that heart, finances**, break that **addiction**—God sees you where you're at and knows how to help you.

No qualifier—the **medicine** with all the **side effects**; the **loan services**, fine print, exceptions, exemptions. There's no fine print. If Jesus doesn't go into the fine print, if the Gospel writers don't go into the fine print, why are you creating it?

Just believe. It's simple. Why are the **kids** sometimes seeing greater miracles than we are? Because it's simple for them—just believe. Why are **new Christians** sometimes seeing greater miracles than seasoned believers? Because **we're too busy creating fine print.**

[critic voice] "Well, but it's not really true here because sometimes you can have this and this and this, and what about God's will—and other nonsense." Jesus said, "I will." Jesus said, "Everything is possible." There is no fine print. Stop creating it. Look at verse 24.

"Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, 'I do believe; **help me overcome my unbelief!**'" (Mark 9:24).

So ...

Failure # 3 – Wrong thinking

Win – Have a better thought

Win - Ask Jesus for help!

Believe that God CAN do something and having faith that God WILL do something are not the same. "Well I believe **God can do it**"—that's not faith. "Well **if God wanted to**, I know He could do it"—that's not faith. "Well, I think **if it's God's will** it'll happen"—

that's not faith, not the kind Jesus is talking about here. "Well, I'll just leave it **in God's hands**"—most of the time that's not faith. It's wrong thinking. Have a better thought.

Just because we believe that God can, does not mean that we have the **faith that He will**. If you're having wrong thinking, have a better thought. Ask the Holy Spirit to give a new thought, to renew your mind, and ask Jesus for help. The man's exclamation is right here, "Help me overcome my unbelief." Verse 25 ...

"When Jesus **saw that a crowd was running to the scene,**" (Mark 9:25).

Check this out. Jesus had removed himself and the father from the crowd. The disciples and the rabbis were STILL OVER THERE ARGUING, EVEN AFTER Jesus showed up. This is what we do. **Jesus shows up, He's speaking, trying to get our attention, trying to get our focus** and we're still wrapped up in **stupid religious arguments, or political arguments, or sports arguments, or marital arguments** or [insert whatever distracts you from keeping laser focused on Jesus and what He's doing]. **Jesus is ready to heal this boy, but He's got to get him away from the distractions** in order for the tide of faith to rise.

The **demon recognized Jesus** was there, but **the disciples didn't**. So when the demon was starting to make a scene, THAT'S when the crowd starts to run over—when they see the demon making a scene—not when Jesus showed up.

They didn't even notice Jesus's arrival. They were too enthralled in tweedle-dee and tweedle-dum's argument over there. That is when Jesus is 30 feet from them. They're like, "Eh, this is more interesting." Then the demon starts to MANIFEST, THAT'S when they run to the scene. It's just typical. That's why we run to **newscasts** and are slow to get behind **testimonies**. But that can change. Journey Life Church, we can be people of good news and not the bad all the time.

See what Jesus does here? Imitate Him! **Win - Jesus walks right past the argument and to the need!** Walk right past those arguments, power struggles, and nonsense, and go to the need, because the Holy Spirit inside you is ready to meet those needs. The failure was caring about those stupid arguments more than Jesus. But the win is walk right past the argument and to the need. Verse 25 again ...

"When Jesus **saw that a crowd was running to the scene,** he rebuked the impure spirit. 'You deaf and mute spirit,' he said, '**I command you,** come out of him and never enter him again'" (Mark 9:25).

Possible Failure # 4 (which Jesus avoided) – letting Satan have the stage

This was a place where the disciples had already failed. They gave Satan the stage and then they gave arguments the stage. But the win is somewhere else.

Win – get to a place of faith and take authority. You see this consistently through Scripture where Jesus would get **away from the crowd**. He'd **shut the door**. He'd have groups of **people leave the room** where He was praying for people sometimes. Then He'd **speak with authority**. He was modeling that for us. **Jesus could have done it with everyone around.** We see that too. It's just that there is a principle for us of **guarding the place of faith**, and staying close to people of faith. So, **don't let Satan have the stage**—ever—not this Halloween, not ever. Instead, get to a place of faith and **take authority**.

Watch. Jesus commanded; He didn't ask. Too many of us are asking in prayer for things that Jesus told you to command. Don't command God, that's just disrespectful. Command the demon, the sickness, the impossibility to move—that IS how Jesus prayed, with authority. That's how everyone who sees consistent results that I know in praying for miracles prays, with authority. **No wimpy prayers here. I need that on a t-shirt.**
Verse 26 ...

“The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, ‘He’s dead.’ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up” (Mark 9:26-27).

Boom. Done—demon's gone.

“After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, ‘**Why couldn't we drive it out?**’ He replied, ‘This kind can come out only by prayer’” (Mark 9:28, NIV).

Now here's the win—this is the real win. They had failed oh so epically. But when they got alone with Jesus, they did something that makes these kinds of failures worth it. **Win – Ask Jesus to teach you how to win.**

See, here's what you have to realize. **Peter's walking on water** was just the beginning of Peter's story. Just like the **disciples** failing to heal this boy was just the beginning of theirs. And you and I failing, it's just the beginning. These **steps of faith cannot produce anything but faith.**

I've prayed for many people who have died. We were sincerely believing for healing. I had a friend who had 8 kids. He was 41. He was healed of an aggressive cancer as we prayed. Six months later they discovered liver disease that took him in three months. I talked to him the day before he passed. His faith was as strong as ever for his healing. He prayed and prophesied things over me that are still happening. Listen, no one involved in that regretted for a second believing with all our hearts for his healing. We'd do it again.

[Musicians come forward]

Robby Dawkins said this in a post on Instagram this week: One of the biggest questions I'm asked by people is, “What if I pray for someone to be healed and nothing happens?” My answer is something like this: The healing is God's business. If you believe in God and trust that He will work through you, HE WILL!

Even on the occasions when I've prayed for someone and we haven't seen an immediate response, nobody got mad at me. No one yelled at me or told me I was a failure. Instead, they appreciated that I cared enough to pray for them. EVEN when people tell me they don't want prayer, they still appreciate the offer.

I never know what is going to happen when I pray for people, but I relax in the knowledge that God is giving His all for ALL involved (me and the person I'm praying for and those witnessing). You can know that too. Don't worry about the results—they're for Him, not us.

I would add this. **See sickness and impossibilities as another opportunity for God to get glory.** God gets glory when you're humble enough to learn from Him. That's why the win is asking Jesus to teach you how to win.

When Jesus saw that people were **unreceptive in His hometown**, He immediately knew that He needed to send out more workers and expand in faith. **Many of us would see opposition and wonder if God was in this.** Jesus was like nope—it's time to move forward. Jesus saw lack of faith in His hometown and knew it was time to raise the tide of faith!

This is how you fail up. You **see every failure as a chance to raise the tide** of faith, for God to get **glory**, for Him to **build you and the community** around you into something greater. "Well, I don't want to get my hopes up, Pastor." I'm sorry, but Jesus does and so do I—not so that they can be dashed, but so that HOPE can grow. **Your hope, your faith only grows through action and risk.** Get into the heart of Jesus. Ask Him in your secret place, "Why couldn't I drive out? Why didn't that healing happen?" And give Him the opportunity to shepherd your heart. But that only happens AFTER you've taken risk in faith. That's how you fail up.

Response – If you're not a full-time follower of Jesus yet, think about the possibilities of Jesus working in your life in supernatural ways. This doesn't mean you're perfect. It does mean that Jesus will help you to grow.

Take a moment to ask Jesus about a time when you failed, when your prayers failed. Go back into that room in your imagination. Where you were praying, whether out loud or in your head. And ask Jesus, right now, where were You with me then? Then ask Him, how can we win next time?

Now take that moment with Jesus and put it to good use. Do something with it. Take a risk in faith and pray for someone.

Do What Jesus Did – Week 4 – The Holy Spirit 9-30-18

Pastor Jared Stepp and Blake Kane

Intro – [Jared] From time to time we do tag team teaching where we go back and forth, and the other one rolls their eyes and makes sarcastic comments. No, no, no. It's a change of pace to get different voices and passions up here. It's going to be fun.

If you're not a full-time follower of Jesus yet, you're going to see in Jesus someone who is very personal today, a person who lived as a loving and empowering leader. You're going to want to follow Him today. You're going to get that chance too. Get ready.

Turn to John chapter 14, fourth book of the New Testament. Here's a little background for John 14. Jesus is giving His final instructions at the Last Supper. Yes, it comes early in John. Mind you, it's not this last supper (**01 Last Supper Wrong**). So many things wrong with this picture. It's this one (**02 Last Supper Lego**), :-). Well, sort of. That's closer than Da Vinci's. Here's what many scholars would agree was closest (**03 Last Supper closer**).

It's the final week before the cross. From His perspective, He's Coach Jesus giving them the final plays before He knows everything is going to change for them. He's trying to thoroughly prep them to stay true to Him, to advance in the Kingdom, and to be ready for the next things, as any good coach would do.

He knows a ton of things they don't know. And the things He knows are so unfathomable to them that **He's going to say them, knowing that they won't fully get it, until after it happens**. This section of Scripture from the end of chapter 13 is structured with Jesus answering four questions from the disciples.

Four Questions from the Disciples

1. Peter. "Lord, where are you going?" (John 13:36)
2. Thomas. "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (John 14:5)
3. Philip. "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." (John 14:8)
4. Judas (not Iscariot). "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" (John 14:22)

Jesus is coaching them up. They're stuck in a bunch of concerns and worries and misunderstandings. Jesus isn't at all concerned that they don't fully get it now. In fact, He knows that there's NO AMOUNT of explaining that will make them fully get it right now. He is entirely focused on them getting it AFTER the resurrection. He's laser focused on prophesying the right things in their lives so that they can have epiphany after epiphany later, and upgrade after upgrade after the cross. Here's a point right off the bat that, if you get it, will change how you process what you're hearing from God, or what you're reading in Scripture.

Jesus is always coaching you up. He's always teaching and instructing you, not based on how you are but on what HE KNOWS you will become when you lean into Him. Jesus is always coaching you up, with much more precision than any sports or life coach could, because He knows the future. Jesus is coaching you up with the precision of the one who created you, knows you better than you know yourself, and desires to bring the best out of you that can possibly be brought out of you. **Jesus is always coaching you up.** This kind of coaching with this kind of forward-looking precision is called in the Bible: prophecy. Watch how He does it with the disciples in the section of this Scripture that we're going after today. But more importantly throughout this message, let Jesus speak to you and coach you up right now.

So here's where we're going to pick up in John 14—after Peter's "Lord, where are you going?" and Thomas's "how can we know the way?" and now to Philip's request.

"Philip said, 'Lord, **show us the Father** and that will be enough for us.' Jesus answered: 'Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you **I do not speak on my own authority.** Rather, it is the **Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me** when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least **believe on the evidence of the works themselves**'" (John 14:8-11).

Jesus really comes after Philip here. He takes great exception to this statement from Philip. "This is something you should have gotten by now, my man." This is why—**Philip's request shows that he has become more unimpressed as He's seen God move more.** "You know, Jesus, we saw You turn water to wine, the crowds of people in Judea and Samaria, open the eyes of the man born blind, the paralyzed guy at the pool, multiplying food, and then raising the dead guy **Lazarus. Hey, that was a big day!** Right! Cool beans, but it's been a few months. And lately it's been like a lot of teaching, some lepers get healed. **Ah, I've seen better.**" He's playing the critic, "**Just one more thing, Jesus.** You've done all of this, but just one more thing." Jesus is not standing for that. "**Don't you know me Philip!**" Jesus is incredulous. "How can you say that? Look, Philip, what you're expressing is that you really don't get it. I am the perfect representation of the Father." Because ...

Jesus is perfect theology. He had literally just said it a second earlier, "If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him" (John 14:7). That was Jesus's answer to Thomas's question a second earlier. "How can you ask Me to show you the Father? Don't you know Me? Don't you believe Me. The Father and I, We've spent eternities in this perfect relationship, enjoying life, creating worlds. I don't do anything without Him. You know Him, because you know Me. Let me invite you again, Philip, get to know me."

[Blake] It's interesting to note the phrasing that Jesus says here, "It's the Father living in Me that does the work" and then in verse 11 He says, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me." Jesus is giving this model for fellowship with the Father. It's a communion

between the two that makes Jesus do what He does. Because of the communion that He has with the Father, Jesus goes and does the works that the Father does. We see often in Scripture where Jesus would actually pull away from the disciples to go spend time with the Father. And there's a lesson to be learned by us in this and that is: you will act like who you fellowship with. Jesus did what the Father did because He fellowshiped with Him.

We have this opportunity as believers and being baptized in the Holy Spirit to have consistent fellowship with the one true God and to commune with Him anytime we desire. It's from that place that we see our actions start to model what God would do. When I'm having consistent fellowship with the Holy Spirit, I start to see more like Him, act more like Him, hear more like Him, and feel compassion more like Him. When I take more time to fellowship with Holy Spirit, my thought life becomes led by Him. I don't struggle with sin.

Some of you who have struggles with sin or consistent sin in your lives are dealing with this very thing right now. You're trying to get better on your own power. Start to spend more time communing with Holy Spirit and watch how the desires of sin start to fall off of you just naturally. The Bible teaches us in James 4:7, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." The best way to make the devil go away is to spend time with God.

But it goes way beyond just being able to conquer sin and temptation. When I am constantly communing with God, I start to be like Him in every way. All of a sudden I'm living out of an overflow with that. Not only is MY life changed, but people around me start to change. Why? Because I start living from an overflow of His Spirit and all of a sudden people start to encounter God through what He's doing through me. This is where it gets super fun, people. I live out of that place of intimacy and communion with the Lord. All of a sudden I start to feel the Lord's heart and compassion for other people and He USES me in some crazy supernatural way. And then we are both closer to Him because of the encounters that we've had with Him. Isn't that awesome?

[Jared] Let me, as your pastor, invite you right now—**Get to know Jesus**. Listen, the big guns Jesus is going to bring out in a minute—the show me things, the things that authenticate and prove—**NONE OF IT MATTERS** if you don't know Jesus. He's saying, "Spend time in My presence. Learn from Me." Jesus says just a little while later, "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3). If you don't spend the time getting to know Jesus and letting Him get to know you, you don't have a home in heaven. And specifically in this context, miracles aren't gonna help you. This is foundational—the presence of God. Knowing Jesus. Get to know Jesus.

Jesus is so incredulous He has to bring out the big guns. Here we go.

"Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least **believe on the evidence of the works themselves**" (John 14:11).

This is why miracles were and are indispensable tools for the kingdom of God until the new heaven and earth. They point people toward belief and the authenticity of God's work in their lives.

[Blake] So here in John 14:12, Jesus is speaking to His disciples. We come across this super interesting statement. He says,

“Very truly I tell you, WHOEVER believes in me ...”

So there's a few points to this that are interesting. First, there's the call to believers. He says whoever believes in Me. So right here He's about to lay down this plan for anyone who believes in Him. What Jesus is about to say is literally for every single person who believes that Jesus is Lord. So we know from right here that He isn't saying, “Any pastor who believes in Me” or “any healing evangelist that believes in Me” or anything like that. Jesus says WHOEVER. No exclusions. The only criteria is that you believe in Him. Let's move onto the next phrase in this verse ...

“...WILL DO the works I have been doing”

Pay attention to the WILL DO words here, because it's important. Will is a definite statement. It's a declaration of definite action. It's expressing inevitable events that are to occur. So we pair that with the rest of the statement WILL DO THE WORKS I HAVE BEEN DOING.

You have to catch what Jesus is doing right here. Jesus is literally laying down a job description right down before the disciples. Anyone that gets hired into any job has a list of duties that they are supposed to complete every single time they go to work. And what are the duties that Jesus lays down before them? Any of the works that He has already done. That means healings, miraculous provisions, words of knowledge, prophecies, and the list goes on and on. But we have to understand here that Jesus isn't just laying this down as something that we might be doing or is even optional. He says here, “Anyone who wants to believe in me, they are going to do the things that I've done.” If you are a believer, you will do the works that Jesus did. This raises the responsibility of our call. The expectation that Jesus is laying down here is nonnegotiable. It's WE WILL, not WE COULD.

If what Jesus is saying here is true, and that's why we are all here, because we all believe what He says, then we have to address this higher standard of what He's called us to. And think about it for a moment, the Jesus model is way more effective anyway! We can talk and debate with people all day long about the gospel, but it's hard to debate when someone gets healed and has an authentic encounter with Jesus. It's hard to debate when you get an accurate word of knowledge about something that there's no way you could have known about someone's life. It's hard to debate that!

But then we run across this next part of the phrase that is actually mind blowing and it's here in the next part of the verse. Jesus says ...

“...and they will do even greater things than these”

This is nuts! Jesus is actually laying down plans for us to do even greater things than He did! I get excited when someone gets healed! But here Jesus is saying that it's going to go beyond that? This means we have permission to get a little crazy people! It's time for us to get a little reckless with our faith and start believing for some crazy stuff to happen! Not only is Jesus giving us full permission to be Him, He's telling us to go dream bigger things, go do greater things, use His ceiling as our floor and launch off of that to encounter people for Him on this earth! This should shift everything for us!

There's another side note right here that we have to catch, and that's what the Father's heart is actually like. A true father's heart will seek or make his kids go further than he ever did. Jesus goes and says that those who come after Him will do even greater works than He did. This is the goodness of God. He shows us something amazing and actually hands it over to us and says, “Here, kid, go fly! Dream bigger! Do greater than I've ever done!” Who hasn't wanted to hear that from their father?

So let's move onto this last part of the verse ...

“...because I am going to the Father.”

Jesus is reiterating to them the reason they have to take this on, why they have to take on this work. This is the plan. He wasn't coming to stay for eternity, just yet. No. He wanted to trust us to be Him on this planet.

That's really the point of our Christianity here, isn't it? If the whole point of us becoming a Christian was just to get saved, then why would we still be here afterwards? I don't get to just accept Jesus into my life and say beam me up Peter! NO! That's the beginning of Christianity. That's the entry point. The rest of the journey is living like Jesus. We have a specific responsibility. I'll draw your attention to Matthew 28:19 when Jesus says, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Jesus says, “Go! Do this!”

There's a responsibility that I have taken on as a Christian that I have to take ownership of. I am responsible for those around me to see Jesus. I feel like we all need to say this in the room. **I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THOSE AROUND ME TO SEE JESUS!** This is our calling as Christians. I don't get to just live an average life anymore of what only I can do. I am paid for, bought with a price, and this is my duty. My only option now is to live supernaturally now and to be an encounter of God wherever I go. Not a bad deal at all, I'd say. It's expected by God that I will live a life full of power, being Jesus to other people on this earth every single day.

Take a second to imagine the disciples demeanor at this very moment. I imagine they probably felt like some of you are feeling right now. Like, how are we supposed to do this? This sounds nuts! And it's understandable that they'd feel this way. Before Jesus,

they had never seen anything like this. Miracles weren't a part of their lives. They hadn't seen signs and wonders. They had John the Baptist who was proclaiming Jesus was coming, but before that they had four hundred years of no communication between God and the Jewish people. So you have to imagine that Jesus's coming and doing all of this stuff was wild! And here He is laying down this expectation for them that after He leaves they are supposed to take up this mantle and move in power just like Him—and in even greater ways.

And then up until this point the disciples had walked along Jesus. They had seen the miracles, signs, and wonders, and had even done some themselves. But they always had Jesus to fall back on. We remember that last week in Mark chapter 9, Jesus bailed out the disciples when they were trying to help the demon possessed kid. But Jesus is putting this on them now. It's their job to spread the gospel. You can imagine that they were wondering how. How are they going to do this without Jesus being present? And even though Jesus had been talking about Him leaving, they still didn't understand all of what He was talking about. So what was the plan? How are they going to get the power to carry out such an amazing feat as to do greater works than even Jesus? How are WE supposed to do this? Let's keep reading and see the rest of Jesus's plan.

“And **I will do** whatever you ask in my name, so that **the Father may be glorified** in the Son. You may **ask me for anything** in my name, and I will do it” (John 14:13-14).

[Jared] Wow! Look at that. We don't have time to break this down. But just, wow! There are two other messages packed into this. But we're going to move forward, and let the Scripture speak for itself to stay focused. Look at verse 15 ...

“If you **love me, keep my commands.**”

[Blake] So we start off in this verse by Jesus saying, “If you love Me, keep My commands.” And I just wanted to mention this, Jesus isn't excluding anything, but keep it in the context of the chapter as well that He is firmly talking about what they are to be doing during His departure to the Father. Continuing on His work that He started. He says, “Keep My commands.”

But He actually takes another step in this, saying that not only if you believe in Me will you do these things, but if you LOVE ME will you do these things. This is a whole other level. Doing the things that Jesus commands actually looks like love to Him. You've probably heard of the five love languages. I personally believe that God is all five and this has acts of service written all over it, lol. But it's a matter of living a life of worship to Him. Anytime like this that we see in Scripture something that allows us to show Him love back or any type of affection or devotion should have us pouring this out to Him like crazy! He's already given us full love and affection. The chance to actually return it to Him is amazing! Take advantage of that!

But this also brings us to some serious questions that we have to answer for ourselves. If I call myself a follower of Christ but I don't carry out His commands, can I really say that I

believe in Him? Can I honestly say that I love Him? Those are intense questions, for sure, but it's something we have to answer in our hearts. We have to be willing to take honest looks at our Christianity and really answer these questions. His faith in me was never in question; it was always my faith in Him. His love for me was never a question. It's always been there. But it's my love that's in question. Maybe you say in your heart, *Well, I love God in other ways and I'm not comfortable doing those things*. Maybe that's true, but Jesus lays down a clear line right here and we have to pay attention to it. There was no negotiating that happened during this conversation at the Last Supper. He says, "If you believe in Me and if you love Me, then this is what you'll do." We have to make a decision in our hearts that God is really worth what we say and sing He is worth in our lives. He's too good, He's too amazing. And the things He's commanding us to do are all amazing. He's calling us to love Him and be a miraculous encounter for other people. What better thing could you ask for?

And we see the goodness of God again come out in amazing ways in the next verse.

"And I will ask the Father, and **he will give you another advocate** to help you and be with you **forever—the Spirit of truth**. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But **you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you**. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:16-18).

So here's where it all starts to come together. The disciples know they can't do all of this on their own and Jesus has been talking about going away from them the whole time. And here's Jesus answer—the Advocate. The Advocate (Holy Spirit) is coming to actually live inside of them to help them do what is needed to be done. This is what makes all of what Jesus is saying back in verses 9-11 makes sense. Jesus was giving a model for what living with the Holy Spirit looks like.

[Jared] Jesus will not leave you as orphans. So many believers live like orphans with their words and attitudes and actions. **What do parents do?** This is parenting done right—they **nurture, direct** daily, **guide** into truth and wisdom, **empower, call out gifts**, and finally **give permission for their kids to soar** in their gifts. Parents say, "Don't say that, that right there, that's what bullies say. **That's not who you are.**" Parents redirect attitudes toward love and goodness. So many live like orphans, when Jesus said, "No. You have the Holy Spirit in you, who cries out Abba, Father. You're adopted into My family. You're not an orphan." **When you aren't walking in the authority of your Heavenly Father and doing the things that Jesus did, with the love that Jesus had, more and more—you're living like an orphan.** Jesus said you're not an orphan. It's time you started believing that. Why? You have the Holy Spirit in you. He cries out to the Father.

The Holy Spirit is an **advocate, a legal council**, just like Jesus. Jesus called himself an advocate earlier. The difference is that Jesus will be an advocate from heaven and **the Holy Spirit will be the advocate from earth**. He will teach you, nurture you, show you good things, produce Jesus in you and all around you. He'll say, "You know that thing

you just said, it might have been right, but it didn't reflect my heart. I love that person SO much."

See Jesus's wording here about the Holy Spirit. **"He lives WITH you and will be IN you."** Two different things going on here. **1. The Holy Spirit taking up residence inside the believer.** This is a consistent concept throughout Scripture. We see it happen in John 20:22, right after the cross, after the Resurrection. Jesus breathed on the disciples and gave them the Holy Spirit. This was the disciples' salvation experience. So this is what we see. When you and I are born again, the Holy Spirit takes up residence inside of us. You have to have Him inside you to be saved. At salvation, you have all of the Holy Spirit you'll have in you.

But there's even more good news. **2. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will "live with you."** That means the Holy Spirit being in you isn't the only help. Jesus says it so many times elsewhere that the Holy Spirit will be on you also. He's in you to develop you in His fruit—love, joy, He's on you so that you can show the world that Jesus is alive. There are two distinct works of the Holy Spirit in Scripture. **1. Salvation - Holy Spirit comes inside. 2. Holy Spirit baptism - He's coming on you for witness and power to do the works Jesus did.**

In the Bible, many times, but not every time, these two works of the Holy Spirit happened on the same day. But so many **believers are content** with the first one. "Well, I've got my ticket punched to heaven." And they're not pursuing the second. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is powerful for witness. He's available in this way to all believers. He wants to immerse you, baptize you. Jesus said the Spirit would clothe you in power.

Then witnessing is way more fun. Take **Dustin**, praying for a paralyzed guy last week. Pastor **Ben** at the Holt High School football game this week. Me with **Juliana** this week. And Pastor **Angela** this week. **Blake** in the aisle of Kroger this week. **Witnessing is way more fun and effective with the power of the Holy Spirit.** A few months ago, **Blake and Mark Richey were in Meijer. They prayed for a guy who was gracious enough to allow them to video it. Check it out. [Video]**

[Blake] So with all of this and wrapping up this series, I want to leave you with this last thought as we are coming to a close and I ask the musicians to come. The God of all the universe, the Creator of literally everything, decides to rest His Spirit in us. What are YOU going to do about it? God is waiting for His sons and daughters to come to a realization of what this means. We've talked about walking in the miraculous and signs and wonders, but what else can you tap into from Holy Spirit that you've never thought of before? If we have the Author of creativity living inside of us, shouldn't we be the ones inspiring the artists of the world? If God is the Creator of finances, shouldn't we be the ones that everyone is coming to because we are killing it in every financial industry? Shouldn't we have the most innovative executives? The brightest and most inspiring teachers? The most moving musicians? What I submit to you now is that God said we would do even greater works and He gave us His Spirit to do them. What would it look like in your life today if you were to actually engage with the Holy Spirit and drive for

the best in everything you do because you have Holy Spirit giving you strategies and power to do so? What if supernatural parenting became the standard for families? What if Christians in the film industry wrote and directed the most awe inspiring films that Hollywood would be seeking our advice from? What if, just like Jesus, we dared to live lives that drew people to encounter with God in every facet of our lives. I dare each one of you to dream today with the Holy Spirit and start doing what Jesus did.

[Jared]

Response. Salvation. Are you ready to say yes to Jesus? He's a really good empowering leader and He's ready, right now, to give you the Holy Spirit to live inside you. It's going to be awesome.

- **How can I sense Your presence more in my daily life? How can I know You're here and with me?**
- **What are the greater things in my life?**

Take these questions into your time with the Lord and write things down.

Prophecy over people. We're going to cap off this Do What Jesus Did series right now **by doing what Jesus did.** Does that sound good? One of the things that Jesus did throughout these stories and throughout His life and ministry was to **prophecy over people.** He called out the best in people. We saw it in the **story of the paralytic two weeks ago.** We saw it with **the disciples last week.** And now this week, Jesus is speaking these **greater things into their lives** that they're scared about. They're asking Him questions. They don't have full understanding. Jesus is saying, "**YOU WILL DO greater things**"—that's prophecy. "You will do." It's for us too. For these disciples, that prophetic word sustains them through the toughest time of their lives that they're about to experience and confirms what God does later in them. **Without Jesus's prophecy in this moment, I firmly believe these guys don't survive the trial** they were about to go through.

Some of you need a word from God today. So we're going to invite you forward to have someone ask God for a word for you. If you want to be prophesied over, now's your chance.

If you want more, and want to know how to do this, come to the supernatural training right now with lunch.

Also, if you're new or newer, stay with us for the Welcome Party with lunch to get to know us and the staff.

APPENDIX H: MARKETING FOR THE SUPERNATURAL TRAININGS

The *Supernatural Trainings* were only marketed internally through announcements, emails, and personal invites. Each week for five weeks ahead of the September 30 start for the trainings, emails were sent out talking about them. The announcement for the *Supernatural Trainings* was made each of the three weeks ahead of the September 30 start, and the graphic looked like this:



APPENDIX I: DO WHAT JESUS DID SERMON SERIES

PRE-SERMON AND POST-SERMON SURVEY

RESULTS STATISTICAL COMPARISON

***t*-Test**

This section of results is in relationship to the pre-post comparisons of responses to the survey items. It only includes cases where there are both pre-sermon series and post-sermon series survey scores.

This first table contains descriptive statistics of the pre-sermon series and post-sermon series survey results for each of the items in pairs.

Table 9. Descriptive statistics of the pre-sermon series and post-sermon series survey results

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Q2Pre	6.93	44	1.576	.238
Q2Post	7.48	44	1.338	.202
Q3Pre	8.05	44	1.493	.225
Q3Post	8.02	44	1.635	.247
Q4Pre	4.07	44	1.873	.282
Q4Post	5.70	44	2.483	.374
Q5Pre	8.89	44	1.498	.226
Q5Post	8.95	44	1.569	.237
Q6Pre	2.72	43	3.011	.459
Q6Post	3.74	43	4.376	.667
Q7Pre	7.45	44	1.970	.297
Q7Post	7.43	44	1.897	.286

This table makes the comparisons between the scores.

Table 10. Comparisons between the pre-sermon series and post-sermon series survey scores

Paired Scores	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Q2Pre - Q2Post	-.545	1.784	.269	-2.028	43	.049
Q3Pre - Q3Post	.023	2.129	.321	.071	43	.944
Q4Pre - Q4Post	-1.636	2.293	.346	-4.733	43	.000
Q5Pre - Q5Post	-.068	1.283	.193	-.352	43	.726
Q6Pre - Q6Post	-1.023	4.496	.686	-1.492	42	.143
Q7Pre - Q7Post	.023	1.923	.290	.078	43	.938

Correlations

This table is to describe the relationship between the pre-sermon series and post-sermon series survey scores.

Table 11. Relationship between the pre-sermon series and post-sermon series survey scores

		Q8post	Q2Post	Q3Post	Q4Post	Q5Post	Q6Post	Q7Post
Q8post	Pearson Correlation	1	.259**	.097	.126	.167	.153	.153
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.010	.341	.216	.105	.133	.133
	N	98	98	98	98	96	98	98
Q2Post	Pearson Correlation	.259**	1	.415**	.376**	.285**	.465**	.465**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010		.000	.000	.005	.000	.000
	N	98	99	99	99	97	99	99
Q3Post	Pearson Correlation	.097	.415**	1	.491**	.382**	.401**	.401**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.341	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	98	99	99	99	97	99	99
Q4Post	Pearson Correlation	.126	.376**	.491**	1	.416**	.431**	.431**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.216	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	98	99	99	99	97	99	99
Q5Post	Pearson Correlation	.167	.285**	.382**	.416**	1	.404**	.404**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.105	.005	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	96	97	97	97	97	97	97
Q6Post	Pearson Correlation	.118	.277**	.056	.281**	.037	.003	.003
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.256	.006	.586	.006	.721	.976	.976
	N	95	96	96	96	94	96	96
Q7Post	Pearson Correlation	.153	.465**	.401**	.431**	.404**	1	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.133	.000	.000	.000	.000		
	N	98	99	99	99	97	99	99

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Dr. Jeff Fulks looked at correlations between the number of sessions attended and the amount of change. He also calculated correlations between the individual change scores.

Table 12. Correlations between the individual change scores (sermon series)

		Q8post	Compassion Change	HearFromGod Change	Prayer Change	Personal Witness Change
Q8post	Pearson Correlation	1	.103	-.063	-.117	.268
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.504	.683	.456	.079
	N	98	44	44	43	44
Compassion Change	Pearson Correlation	.103	1	.061	.107	.031
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.504		.694	.495	.843
	N	44	44	44	43	44
Hear From God Change	Pearson Correlation	-.063	.061	1	.371*	.293
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.683	.694		.014	.053
	N	44	44	44	43	44
Prayer Change	Pearson Correlation	-.117	.107	.371*	1	.055
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.456	.495	.014		.727
	N	43	43	43	43	43
Personal Witness Change	Pearson Correlation	.268	.031	.293	.055	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.079	.843	.053	.727	
	N	44	44	44	43	44

APPENDIX J: *SUPERNATURAL TRAININGS* PRE-SURVEY AND POST-SURVEY RESULTS STATISTICAL COMPARISON

***t*-Test**

This section of results is in relationship to the pre-post comparisons of responses to the survey items. This analysis compares all test results.

This first table contains descriptive statistics of the pre- and postsurvey results for each of the items in pairs.

Table 13. Descriptive statistics of the training pre- and post-survey results

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Q3Pre	6.62	13	1.938	.537
Q3Post	7.28	18	1.638	.386
Q4Pre	4.85	13	2.672	.741
Q4Post	6.22	18	2.289	.539
Q5Pre	1.62	13	1.325	.368
Q5Post	4.44	18	5.227	1.231
Q6Pre	2.69	13	3.351	.929
Q6Post	3.00	18	4.898	1.154
Q7Pre	0.77	13	1.012	.281
Q7Post	2.56	18	4.540	1.070
Q8Pre	1.46	13	2.847	.789
Q8Post	1.11	18	1.278	.301
Q9Pre	0.46	13	0.776	.215
Q9Post	2.17	18	4.076	.961
Q10Pre	0.77	13	1.091	.303
Q10Post	2.06	18	4.151	.978

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