

Episode: God and His Family No. 06

Narrator: Barnabas

Primary Scriptures: Acts 4:32-5:11

Story Summary: God's children are empowered by the Holy Spirit

Location: Israel

Time: circa 50 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Acts 4:32-33

Barnabas was one of the most influential Christian leaders in the early church. He was Paul's mentor until midway through the First Missionary Journey when it seems that Paul started surpassing him in influence. The Bible continually shows how much Barnabas was empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The first mention of Barnabas is Acts 4:36 when he gave his property to support the needs of the first church members. The follow-up story of Ananias and Saphira makes it clear that the generosity of the early church members was Spirit led and empowered.

The next mention of Barnabas is Acts 9:27 where Barnabas introduces the newly converted Paul to the apostles. The context of the story shows that Barnabas was well acquainted with the apostles and that his request for them to accept Paul carried a lot of weight. At that time in the early church, these sorts of things happened because of the influence of the Spirit.

Throughout the New Testament the early Christians are empowered by the Holy Spirit. In several cases, newly baptized believers received the Holy Spirit in a recognizable way. In other cases, certain spiritual gifts were associated with having the Holy Spirit.

In John 15-16, Jesus says he will send the Holy Spirit to empower the believers in many types of ways, including being able to recognize and impart the truth. In John 16:7, Jesus makes an astonishing statement. He tells the apostles that it is for their own good that he is going away so that he can send Holy Spirit to them. Jesus says they are better off with Holy Spirit than they are with him! Jesus goes on to say that will be so because the Spirit will convict the world about sin, will guide the believers in what is truthful to believe, and he will glorify Jesus.

Acts 11:19-24 tells of the early church in Antioch. The early believers were all Jews who converted only Jews to Christianity. But when they arrived in Antioch, they started converting non-Jews, too. When the church in Jerusalem heard this unexpected news, they wanted to verify what was going on. They sent Barnabas, who was described as "a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith."

Some time later, Barnabas and Saul (Paul) are in Antioch worshiping with the church there. In Luke 13:2, Luke writes, "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" Holy Spirit was certainly a powerful influence in the every day life of Barnabas.