

“Greater works than these”

John 14:12-17

12 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. 13

"Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

16 " [And] I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper [another Counsellor of the same kind as I am], that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

This is a power-packed passage! There are 4 really big deals in these six verses.

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1. Greater works (verse 12)
2. Answered prayer (verses 13-14)

3. Loving Christ (verse 15)

4. Another Counselor-the Holy Spirit (verses 16-17)\

Because there is so much here, we'll take them one at a time.

/In this passage, the Father continues to be front and center. \ In fact, the Father is prominent throughout all of chapters 14-17.

/What's more, we are introduced to the Counselor or Helper – the Holy Spirit\. He will play an important part as well in these last teachings before Jesus departs from the disciples to go back to His Father.

Let's begin with verse 12.

John 14:12 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.

/Now Jesus had just finished talking about HIS OWN works: \

John 14:10-11

10 "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. 11 "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.

/Jesus was talking about His miracles! He was talking about the signs which revealed His identity. \

And now He tells His disciples that they will do the works that He did.

/Not only that, but in fact they will perform greater works than these!\

John 14:12 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.

Say what? That's an astounding statement! Shocking even!

/On the surface, it sounds like Jesus is telling them that they will perform greater miracles than He did. More spectacular. More supernatural.\

But that's simply not possible. He fed 5,000 with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. He raised Lazarus from the dead after he'd been in the grave for four days. He gave sight to a man who was born blind.

/No one ever came close to these miracles, before or since.\

OK, so we need to investigate this more fully.

To do that, we will slow down and take in this verse a little at a time.

/First, about whom is Jesus speaking in verse 12?\

“He who believes in Me”.

/ What He is saying here is true for all believers now, not simply the twelve gathered with Him that night.\ This also means that -

/Faith in Christ is the starting point for performing these works.\

Verses 10 and 11 suggest that Jesus is talking about believing that He is in the Father, and the Father is in Him. Or more simply, believing that Jesus is God.

Next we have the astounding part of the verse:

the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do;

/But before we tackle that word “greater”, let’s step back and remind ourselves of the big picture here.\

Jesus is going away from them. They have no idea what happens next. They just know that they won’t be following Him, at least for the time being.

John 13:36

Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later."

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/Jesus began this chapter with words of comfort. Do not let your hearts be troubled. \

And so we have the same thing here.

/Jesus is going back to His Father, but His works on earth will continue. Only now, He will work through believers. \

John 14:12 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.

OK, so now we are ready for that word “greater”.

/The Greek word for “greater” means “in greater degree”.\ It does not mean “more”. This is greater in quality, not quantity.

/Jesus used the word when He said that the Father was greater than all. (John 10:29)\

He'll use the word again in chapter 15:

John 15:13

13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

We get all caught up with the supernatural, the miraculous, but for God that's just a means to an end. /The greatness of a work is not how supernatural it is. The greatness of the work is determined by the purpose for which it is done.\

Jesus did perform miracles, but that's not all He did. In fact, He put much higher value on the words that He said. The words are spirit, and they are life.

And He did or said nothing except what the Father asked Him to say and do.

/And He was motivated by one purpose. He sought the glory of His Father – the One who sent Him. He did everything to fulfill the will of His Father.\

John 8:28-29

So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. 29 "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."

OK we have one final phrase to consider here in verse 12, and then we can put this all together to ascertain the meaning of the verse.

John 14:12 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.

/What explains the fact that believers will do greater works than the ones that Jesus had accomplished up to this point in His life?\

They will do these because He goes to the Father.

/And what is the significance of His going back to the Father?\

How much time do you have? The answer to that question could be a whole series in itself. A long series!

What happens when Jesus goes back to the Father? Right away, two things stand out, and they are incredibly significant.

They are:

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1. Jesus will be seated at the Right Hand of the Father
2. The Holy Spirit will be given to believers.\

Jesus is at the Right Hand of the Father. He intercedes for the saints.

When Jesus went to the Father, the Father gave the Holy Spirit to indwell the disciples – and all believers in Christ.

John 16:7

7 "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

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/These two events bring about a revolutionary change in the nature of the life of the believer in Christ.\ And even that is a big understatement.

So I'm going to let Paul tell you about it:

Eph 1:15-23

15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

These are in accord with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

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But at this point in the gospel of John, the disciples knew nothing about this. Let's return to the Upper Room now.

John 14:12 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.

/Because Jesus goes to the Father, the works of Christ will no longer be limited to the confines of His earthly existence. \

Jesus never left Palestine. His ministry was almost entirely to the Jews there. He performed His works so that these Jews would believe in Him. But relatively few did. He came unto His own, and His own did not receive Him. (John 1:11)

/Jesus is now glorified in heaven. Now He works in earth through the church. \

/His ministry is to all men and women, Jew and Gentile, to the ends of the earth. \

The works are greater now because Christ has died for the sin of the world, and He has been raised from the dead, and He has ascended into heaven.

/The blessings that come to those who believe now are staggeringly greater than anything the Jews were promised in the Old Testament. \

/The works are greater because of the greatness of the message we preach. \
Greater because of the power of the word of the Cross. Greater because of redemption, and reconciliation, and the baptism by the Spirit.

With Jesus in heaven, and the Holy Spirit in our hearts, a new age has dawned, one with new power, new opportunities, and new capabilities.

Yet, the works are still designed to bring people to faith in Christ.

/And the goal remains the same: to glorify the Father, who in turn glorifies His Son.
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