

“Greater Works Than These”

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Philip Baptized the Ethiopian Official who Received Christ -- Acts 8:35-39 --
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"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12)

Consider. What did Jesus mean when he said that believers in him would do greater works than he had done?

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The Bible verse quotations below are from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless noted otherwise (Ref. 1).

Believers shall do the works of Jesus

The works that Jesus did while he was on earth -- such as healing the sick and raising the dead -- confirmed the authority of his teaching and demonstrated that the Father was in him and he in the Father (John 14:10-11, Ref. 2). Jesus' promise that we will do his works is directed to *believers* -- people who *trust in, adhere to, and rely upon* Jesus (Ref. 3). The works that we do in the name of Jesus as believers demonstrate the authority of the words of Jesus, point to him as our Savior, and show that he is in us and that we are in him (Matthew 28:18, 1 John 4:14, Colossians 1:27, Romans 8:1).

With Jesus' exaltation to the right hand of the God completed, he now gives us -- believers, the body of Christ -- the Holy Spirit to help us accomplish his works on earth (John 14:16-17, John 16:13, Acts 1:8, Acts 2:32-33, Acts 2:37-38, Ephesians 1:18-23). The Holy Spirit apportions distinctly different gifts to individual believers as he wills (1 Corinthians 12:11, 1 Corinthians 12:28-31, Romans 12:6-8). Not all of us are gifted to work miracles, but are given other gifts (1 Corinthians 12:28-31). That is why we as different members of the body of Christ need to work together as the body of Christ to accomplish the works of Christ.

Jesus Said Believers Shall Do Greater Works Than These

When Jesus said that believers would do "greater works than these," he was referring to the greatly increased *world-wide* reach and extent of his works that would be accomplished by his disciples. When Jesus ministered during his time on earth, he did his works in the geographic area where he traveled -- principally in Galilee and Judea (Ref. 4, Ref. 5). Jesus has since commanded his disciples -- "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19), "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). In Acts 1:8, Jesus promised his disciples (that includes us who believe in him), "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem

and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

When considering what Jesus meant by "greater works than these," think also about the miraculous change done by God that occurs in the heart of each man, woman, and child when they repent of their sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. When Peter preached his Holy Spirit-inspired sermon on Pentecost, the *result* was that about 3,000 souls repented of their sins and believed in the Lord Jesus (Acts 2:22-24, Acts 2:36-41). When Peter visited Joppa and raised Dorcas from the dead, the *result* was that "many believed in the Lord" (Acts 9:36-42). When the Lord provided an earthquake at the Philippian jail which opened the doors for Paul and Silas and the other prisoners, the *result* was that the Philippian jailer believed in (put his faith in and trust in) Jesus Christ, and rejoiced (Acts 16:25-34, Ref. 3). When Philip witnessed to the Ethiopian eunuch about Jesus, the *result* was that the Ethiopian eunuch became a believer in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Philip baptized him, and the Ethiopian eunuch went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:26-39, NASB1995).

Consider also that doing "greater works than these" *world-wide* includes acts of service such as giving others a drink of clean water in Jesus' name (Mark 9:41), teaching others to become disciples (Matthew 28:19-20), and providing for the needs of the "least of these" (Matthew 25:31-40).

Apply. Repent of your sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. You will receive forgiveness of your sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (1 John 1:9, Acts 2:38). By the power of the Holy Spirit, use the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given you to do the works of Jesus. May your actions towards others confirm the truth of Jesus' words, point people to him as their Savior (Luke 19:10), and show them the love that God has for them (John 3:16).

Related Lessons

"When Jesus Said, 'Truly, Truly,' What Did he Mean?" -- John 6:47

"The Authority of Jesus" -- Matthew 28:18

References

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