

Great Work

People in the past have received praise for doing "great works." Some are known to history for having their name altered by the word great. There was:

- **Ramesses II "The Great" of Egypt.** 1279-1213 BCE. Some wrongfully credit him as the Pharaoh of the Exodus, which occurred in 1441 BCE.
- **Cyrus The Great** of Persia founded the Persian Empire between 559 and 530 BCE.
- **Genghis Khan:** Founder and Great Khan of the Mongol Empire: 1162 – 1227.
- **Peter The Great** of Russia, Ruling Czarist Russia from 1682 - 1725.
- **Catherine The Great** of Russia ruled "The Golden Age of Russia" from 1762 - 1796.
- **Muhammad "The Greatest" Ali,** although Joe Louis was champ longer, Rocky Marciano retired undefeated, and the Klitschko brothers hold all the heavyweight champion titles between them.

Turning to Bible times, we find that:

- **Abraham** believed that God could do anything. God gave him a son in his old age and built a great nation.
- **Joseph** trusted God and saved Jacob's family and Egypt.
- **Amram and Jochebed** refused the decree of Pharaoh and raised Moses, Aaron, and Miriam
- **Jehoiada** saved the Davidic heir to the throne from an evil queen and led the Kingdom of Judah Back to the Lord
- **Alexander The Great** conquered Persia and North Africa, which led to the writing of the Septuagint.
- **Herod The Great** built many cities in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. He rebuilt the Temple, where Jesus and the apostles taught the people.

Has anyone ever actually performed a great work, or is God always working through people?

Solomon attempted to do great works and tried his hand at all he could find to do. *"I undertook great works, building myself houses and planting vine-gardens. I made myself gardens and fruit gardens, planting in them fruit-trees of all sorts. I made pools to give water for the woods with their young trees"* (Ecclesiastes 2:4-6). But in the end, he declared, *"The dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it. "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "all is vanity!"* (Ecclesiastes 12:7-8). People and the things they do will all come to an end. It is shocking to see the things you worked very hard on in earlier years scrapped with a few examples remaining in museums.

Moses once referred to great works and the one who performed them this way. *"Know this day that I am not speaking with your sons who have not known and who have not seen the discipline of the LORD your God—His greatness, His mighty hand and His outstretched arm, and His signs and His works which He did in the midst of Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land; and what He did to Egypt's army, to its horses and its chariots, when He made the water of the Red Sea to engulf them while they were pursuing you, and the LORD completely destroyed them; and what He did to you in the wilderness until you came to this place; and what He did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben, when the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them, among all Israel— but your own eyes have seen all the great work of the LORD which He did"* (Deuteronomy 11:2-7).

Joshua and the people conquered the land but were never considered The Great Ones. *"The people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the **great work** of the LORD which He had done for Israel"* (Judges 2:7). It was God who did the great work, and it is God who is The Greatest. Nehemiah understood that he was only a tool to do God's work as he built the walls of Jerusalem. When confronted by those who would hinder the work, he said to them, *"I am doing a **great work** and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?"* (Nehemiah 6:3).

The New Testament authors knew that God, His Son, and The Holy Spirit were the only Great Ones. The writers encourage us to be like Nehemiah and do as directed by God. Paul said, *"So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out** your salvation with fear and trembling"* (Philippians 2:12). And looking to the future, Paul encouraged them this way. *"Let us not lose heart in **doing good**, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary"* (Galatians 6:9). God's greatest work is salvation for those that remain faithful in the face of anything. *"...Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life"* (Revelation 2:10).

Are you doing Great Things by obeying Jesus Christ?