

Greater Works

When Jesus spoke of the relationship between Himself and The Father, He said, *"If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father"* (John 10:37-38). Jesus referred to the miraculous gifts that only the creator of the universe could do. Doing the works of the Father proved that the Father was with Jesus, and therefore Jesus' words should be believed. The evidence confirmed that the words were from God, and Jesus' physical miracles proved His words could be trusted. Jesus' plea then was, "Believe Me, Who I am, and What I say."

Jesus pleading for men to believe His words is the key to understanding His final instructions to the men who would be His apostles to spread the gospel. After declaring Himself to be *"The Way, The Truth, and The Life,"* (John 14:6), Jesus said, *"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). The "greater works" Jesus referred to did not include the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit which allow them to do the same healing works. No one can do "greater" miracles than raising the dead, walking on water, and turning a handful of fish and loaves into enough food to feed five thousand. So the word "greater" must be accounted for in terms of a movement from the age of atonement and prophesy to the age of fulfillment and propitiation. The works Jesus intended for His apostles and those who believed Him must be beyond what He could do while living with men.

Jesus worked in a time of restrictions, under a Law that could not forgive and forget sin. His message was that *"the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."* The apostles would use the key to tell people that the Kingdom is open *"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven"* (Matthew 16:19). Although the Veil to the Most Holy Place was torn, top to bottom, when Jesus died on the cross (Mark 15:38), the way into the throne room of God in heaven was still closed until the apostles preached baptism in the name of Jesus Christ as Jesus commanded them. "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"* (Matthew 28:18-20). A few days later, speaking to the multitudes in Jerusalem, *"Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 2:38). That gift of the Spirit is eternal life. *"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 6:23).

At least two points impact the expectations Jesus had for His followers. The first is *"make disciples, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you."* The second is *"baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."* Jesus never commanded his followers to perform miracles, but miracles would follow as a part of the work they were given to complete. Miracles would be performed through them as they had been performed by Jesus, and for the same reason, *"so that you may know and understand, that the words spoken are from God"* (Matthew 10:7-8). In Jesus' prayer to His Father, He prayed that the apostles' words would convince people everywhere to believe in Him as the Christ and believe and obey His words (John 17:20-21).

Paul understood the power in the Gospel's Words as he wrote to the church in Rome. He wrote, *"For I am not ashamed of **the gospel**, for it **is the power of God for salvation** to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The righteous man shall live by faith' (Romans 1:16-17). There was no power to save eternally in the miracles Jesus and His apostles performed. Salvation is in the obedient faith produced by the word of God delivered to mankind by Jesus (John 6:63). And Peter recognized this as he said to Jesus, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life' (John 6:68).*

Jesus gave His apostles, and by extension, us, the task of carrying His words to everyone as we have an opportunity. The works are "greater" because they tell of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God and His Son.