



Conducted by
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"John 14:12 states, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.' What would the greater works mentioned here be?"

When we first look at this scripture we cannot remotely understand how we could possibly do any *greater* works than those done by Jesus. Indeed, I think we all understand that the work of Salvation as accomplished by Jesus could not have been accomplished by anyone else; as Peter stated concerning this work, "This is the stone (Jesus) which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4: 10-12). So the work of Jesus as regards salvation was and is quite exclusive.

However, there is a categorical statement by Jesus that the person who believes on Him should do similar works to those which He, Jesus did, and should also be capable of *greater* works. What we need to do is to determine the sort of works which Jesus did and to find out if any or all of these works were repeated by those who believed on Him, and also to explore what is meant by the greater works.

THE WORKS OF JESUS

Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4). Here the Lord seems to be saying that the works which he did were not his own, but God's. If you recall, he said this to his disciples when they came upon the man who had been blind from birth. They had asked Jesus if it was the blind man or his parents who had sinned, because they obviously equated the blindness with someones sinful condition. Jesus answered, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John 9:3). As we read on we know that Jesus cured this man of his blindness, and in doing so he worked a miracle, a supernatural manifestation; therefore, Jesus was instrumental in displaying the supreme power of God. I believe that a grasp of this fundamental fact is crucial to our understanding of the question. You will remember, no doubt, that when Nicodemus came to Jesus by night he said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou does, *except God be with him*" (John 3:2). Keep that in mind, because we shall see later that Jesus gives us a clue as to why the *greater* works will be able to be done.

Prior to this event, Jesus had encountered the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda and had healed him. In trying to condemn Jesus, the Jews rebuked the man who had been cured for carrying his bed on the Sabbath day; by inference, of course, they were also rebuking Jesus for *healing* on the Sabbath. In his defence before the Jews a little later, Jesus said, "I have done one work, and ye all marvel" (John 7:21). These events, and others, prove to us that some of the works of Jesus were of supernatural origin.

Shortly after his discourse with the woman at the well of Sychar, Jesus was exhorted by his disciples to take food. Jesus answered, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." His disciples thought someone had brought him food, but Jesus went on, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:31-34). What was this work of God that Jesus had to finish? Well, Jesus explains to them that they were fellow-labourers with him in the harvesting of souls of God. We have to understand that the mission of Jesus was as he stated it, "For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost" (Matt. 18:11).

The miracles, signs and wonders which he wrought were incidental to his main task and also attested to the fact that the main purpose in God sending his Son was to save people from perishing in sin.

Without tracing every specific work of Jesus I believe what he did can be summarised as follows:

1. The works that Jesus did were God's works.
2. Many of the works were supernatural, e.g. miracles and signs.
3. He did these to substantiate his relationship with God; "Believe me for the very works sake."
4. He did many works which ideally expressed his faith and love, "He went about doing good."
5. His great work was as Saviour, and I believe all his other works testified to this.

HAVE THE WORKS OF JESUS BEEN REPEATED?

Remember, he said to his disciples, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also." I think we have already disposed of the idea that anyone else could have been the Saviour, so that particular work, as we explained is both unique and exclusive. In the economy of God it was necessary to have a Saviour and Jesus was that Saviour. But once the door of Salvation had been opened by Christ Jesus, the great task of carrying the saving message, the gospel, had to be undertaken by others, and I believe it is true to say that when a person receives Christ he also receives the essence of the gospel in his life. Therefore, even though a believer could never have died for the sins of mankind, I believe he can and should be as intimately involved in the promotion of the gospel as Christ was. In this sense, the believer is repeating in his own life that work of God for the salvation of souls with which Jesus was intimately concerned, and for which he ultimately died. In the mainstream of Salvation, both the Saviour and the saved, although offering in what they could achieve, are nonetheless driving toward the same objectives.

I do not believe that the power to work miracles devolves on anyone in this age; the substantiation of the claims of Christ now rest on the solid ground of the gospel. But when we read our New Testament we can see that for the establishment of Christianity in the world, the power to work miracles was passed on to some of the disciples by Jesus. Furthermore, the expression of faith in their lives outworked itself in such a way that love, compassion, goodness and mercy, which had been so much in evidence in the life of Christ, now become apparent in the lives of those who believed in him.

Yes, I believe that many of the things that Christ showed us and taught us have been repeated in the lives of those who love him, and have we Christians ever really plumbed the depths of what John teaches? "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." In the mainstream of the current of God's love the Christian has to swim strongly, not tread water.

THE GREATER WORKS

I said earlier that I believed that Jesus gave us a clue why greater works could be done, and I believe the clue lies in the words, "because I go to my Father" It is quite evident to the thinking Christian that the ultimate power rests with God. Jesus knew this, and he also knew that in order for that power to be unleashed the total involvement of the Godhead had to be complete; I believe this is why he said to his sorrowing disciples "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7). Later in that particular discourse with his disciples he said, "All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (16:15). This is delegation of the Holy Spirit by Jesus into the lives of his disciples. The ultimate power of God made available to Christians!

It seems to me that many people today are trying to mis-appropriate the power of God. Those who believe in the direct action of the Holy Spirit are looking only for speaking in tongues and gifts of healing; I believe they will look in vain. Why do people want to speak in tongues and heal? Are they Christocentric or egocentric? We should heed the words of Paul, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." (Gal. 5:25, 26).

The most effective witness has come from Christians who have allowed the Holy Spirit to operate in their lives and produce His own fruit; love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. Such Christians took the Gospel to the world, that Gospel which is the 'dynamite' of God. They turned the world upside down. With joy they assaulted the citadel of sin.

They saw and helped to bring into being that glorious church which he promised and died for. They went out without fear, adding living stones to that church. These, I believe, are the greater works that Jesus foresaw His children doing, but His children could only do them 'because I go to my Father.'

Oh, if only people would stop trying to make the Holy Spirit into the Grand Master of the Magic Circle and realise that all the resources of heaven — the Power of God, the Advocacy of Jesus, the gracious in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit — can be channelled through the 'earthen vessels,' so that they, being partakers of the divine nature, may extend the great work and power of the Godhead through the gospel. This can be greater work. Lord, lift our eyes so that we may see the fields white unto harvest. Lord, fill our lives with the glory and grandeur of your Church.