



## Greater Things

<sup>12</sup>*Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. (John 14:12)*

### Introduction

I specifically asked to speak on this message; didn't understand it.

How can we do things greater than the Son of God?

First important word—*ómin* (hymin), *ó* (hah). To the one, he—despite the singular form refers to the generalized person.

Second important word—*pisteuō* (pis-tay-oo-oh). Believes, with connotation of continuing to believe.

Present participle— 'believes now and continues to believe.'

Implies an active and continuous faith.

### Options

Several options to interpret 'greater things.'

**First option:** Yeshua is limited in time and space.

He never left the land of Israel.

Limited to just 3 ½ years

Ministered at most to groups numbering in the mid to low 1000's.

With the coming of the Spirit the expanding mission of the Church would be quantitatively greater than Yeshua's—More disciples ministering to more people in more places for longer times than did Yeshua.

Third important word—*meizona* (may-zone-ah). Means greater, but greater in quality, not quantity.

More important or more impressive.

But disciples work didn't appear to do this.

They healed in Yeshua's name but did not do things Yeshua did.

Did not miraculously feed multitudes, did not calm the seas.

Did not restore sight to those born blind.

Did not call forth from the grave those already dead for four days.

In John 5:20, *meizona* refers to greater things in the spiritual realm yet unrevealed.

<sup>20</sup>*For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. (John 5:20)*

### Problems:

As far as we know believers have rarely qualitatively done the same things Yeshua did, let alone greater things.

The Centurion's servant was healed remotely (Matthew 8:5-13)

Seems to transcend limits of location.

Yeshua doesn't seem to be limited in any way, but maybe in scope.

So, this option doesn't seem to work.

**Second option:** Disciples had the privilege of testifying to the *redemptive* work of Christ.

John the Baptist was the herald of the Kingdom Yeshua inaugurated, but lived, worked, and died before anyone entered it.

Similarly, it could be said the fuller coming of the Kingdom was ushered in by Yeshua's sacrifice.

So, Yeshua's earthly ministry only foreshadowed the coming of the Kingdom.

Problems:

Yeshua's work is not fully complete just because he is no longer on the planet.

**Third option:** Believers will do the works Yeshua has been doing all along.

Not sure what the greater things refer to, but we should at least be doing what Yeshua did.

Physical miracles, healings, restorations, etc

We have seen these things over the centuries.

Eg, Kenneth Copeland, Morris Cerullo, Aimee Semple MacPherson, Kathryn Kuhlman  
Anne James was healed of Leukemia.

God's children will do these things not *in spite of* Yeshua going away, but *because* he is going away.

But these are not *greater* things.

What is it that is greater than this?

Miracles in the spiritual realm

New believers coming to Christ out of darkness of the world (conversions)

Miracles in the realm of the Gentiles

At this point the Jews were still the primary focus; ministry to the Gentiles had not yet begun.

Holy Spirit had not yet been poured out.

Holy Spirit poured out at Shavuot.

All would change after Yeshua's death, resurrection, and ascension.

The words and deeds of Yeshua were veiled while He was still on earth.

The resurrection of Yeshua inaugurated a new epoch.

Human beings become agents of God's hand.

The Disciple's works have a new context after Christ's death, which Yeshua wouldn't have had.

Christ's death was a precursor to the Gentiles coming into the Kingdom.

Christ's life and events added scope to what went before.

Physical miracles are subservient to spiritual miracles.

The former serves to prove the character of the latter.

Problems:

This option seems more likely.

**Yeshua's source for the greater things.**

I read three or four commentaries (there are many, many, more)

All of them circled around the three options.

Yeshua said these words so they must be true.

Certainly, miracles and other Godly works don't come from human strength.

Then the only place greater works can come from is through relationship with the Godhead.

<sup>19</sup>.... *"Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.* (John 5:19)

Yeshua's works came through relationship with the Father.

By extrapolation, whatever we see Yeshua doing we should do.

He regularly withdrew from the world to pray.

Our potential greater works will come through relationship with Yeshua.

<sup>20</sup>*On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.* <sup>21</sup>*Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.*" (John 14:20-21)

## Additional thought

The disciples were afraid of what was to happen after Yeshua was gone.

They were dependent upon His physical presence with them.

Didn't realize He was giving them everything they would need to further the Kingdom.

Yeshua would, in just a few moments, promise them Someone to help them through their struggles.

*<sup>15</sup>“If you love me, keep my commands. <sup>16</sup>And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— <sup>17</sup>the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup>I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (John 14:15-17)*

Further, Yeshua is the source of every work and greater thing.

*<sup>5</sup>“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)*

And Peter, in a later letter, reinforces Yeshua's point...

*<sup>3</sup>His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup>Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:3-4)*

## Application

How are we to respond? How are we to understand?

If our faith is present and continuous, how should we put it into action?

The key lies in the last clause of the verse, 'because I go to the Father'.

**First**, the 'greater things' came after Yeshua left.

The greatest thing that happened after Yeshua left was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Shavuot.

One 'greater thing' **is connection** with the Holy Spirit.

Since the Holy Spirit has come into our hearts, we need to cling tightly to Him.

More 'greater things.'

The Holy Spirit brings a greater measure of holiness in our lives.

The Holy Spirit brings conviction of coming judgment. (John 16:8-11)

The Holy Spirit reminds us that D-Day has already come at the Cross and assures us of V-Day at His return.

The Cross is our assurance of victory.

The Holy Spirit points to the risen Son of God.

The Holy Spirit brings intimacy even the disciples didn't have.

**Second**, Yeshua said nothing about what the 'greater things' were, so we shouldn't focus on it either.

Works and 'greater things' are not the goal, but evidence of the goal.

Signs are not ends in themselves but point to greater faith.

Miracles and healings are not the greater works but are a reflection of Yeshua.

These are witnesses of God's breaking in of power.

Greater works are to accompany the bringing of gospel.

Signs and works testify to Yeshua as Messiah.

Faith without sight **is another greater thing**.

But Redeemed lives **are the greatest thing**.

The disciples were afraid of what was to come after Yeshua left.

They were dependent on His presence.

We have the Holy Spirit to guide and shape us.

**Third**, when these words were spoken Yeshua's work wasn't done yet.

This is the second option in action.

Kingdom was just beginning.

The work we do stirs up the faith of the people.

The greater work is that we as the body are finishing the work of Yeshua.

Redeemed lives.

**Fourth**, ultimately, it makes little difference what we think 'greater works' means.

The main thing that counts is our relationship with Yeshua.

*<sup>21</sup>“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup>Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ <sup>23</sup>Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’*

(Matthew 7:21-23)

Yeshua seems to equate focusing on the works at the expense of relationship with Him as evildoing.

As mentioned above we must stay connected to Him. (John 15:5)

#### References

- Hendrickson, W. (1953). *The Gospel According to John (Volume 1)*, New Testament Commentary. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids.
- Gangel, K (2000). *John*, Holman New Testament Commentary, Anders, M. (Gen. Ed). Broadman and Holman Publishers, Nashville.
- Kruse, C. (2017). *John, An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Vol. 4, Schnabel E. (Series Ed). IVP Academic, Downers Grove.