

John 14:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Jesus makes a startling promise: 'He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also' (ho pisteuon eis eme ta erga ha ego poio kakeinos poiesei). This grants believers participation in Christ's miraculous works through faith. The even more shocking addition follows: 'and greater works than these shall he do' (kai meizona touton poiesei). How can disciples do greater works than Jesus? The explanation: 'because I go unto my Father' (hoti ego pros ton patera poreuomai). Jesus' ascension enables the Spirit's coming (14:26, 16:7), empowering global gospel advance. The 'greater works' are not greater in power but in scope - through the Spirit-empowered church, the Gospel reaches all nations, whereas Jesus' earthly ministry was geographically limited. The verse promises Spirit-enabled ministry that extends Christ's work globally.

Historical Context

Early church history validates this promise - through the apostles' Spirit-empowered ministry, thousands were converted, churches multiplied throughout the Roman Empire, and the Gospel transcended cultural boundaries. The Book of Acts demonstrates these 'greater works' - Peter's Pentecost sermon converting 3,000, Paul's missionary journeys establishing churches across Asia Minor and Europe. Church Fathers appealed to this verse defending apostolic authority and miraculous gifts. Medieval mystics saw it validating monastic miracles. Reformation theology emphasized the 'greater works' as gospel proclamation

bearing fruit globally. Pentecostal and charismatic movements cite this verse supporting contemporary miraculous gifts. The verse has generated debate about cessationism versus continuationism, but Jesus' emphasis is clearly on gospel expansion enabled by His ascension and Spirit's descent.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How can believers do 'greater works' than Jesus - what does 'greater' mean in this context?
2. What is the relationship between Jesus going to the Father and believers doing greater works?

Interlinear Text

ἀμὴν	ἀμὴν	λέγω	ὕμῖν	ὁ	πιστεύων	εἰς	ἐμὲ	τὰ
Verily	Verily	I say	unto you	G3588	He that believeth	on	me	G3588
G281	G281	G3004	G5213		G4100	G1519	G1691	
ἔργα	ἃ	ἐγὼ	ποιήσῃ	κάκεῖνος	ποιήσῃ	καὶ	μείζονα	
the works	G3739	I	do	also	do	and	G3173	
G2041		G1473	G4160	G2548	G4160	G2532		
τούτων	ποιήσῃ	ὅτι	ἐγὼ	πρὸς	τὸν	πατέρα	μου	
these	do	because	I	unto	G3588	Father	my	
G5130	G4160	G3754	G1473	G4314		G3962	G3450	
πορεύομαι·								
go								
G4198								

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 21:21 (Faith): Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

Mark 16:17 (Faith): And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

Acts 16:18 (Parallel theme): And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

Acts 9:34 (Parallel theme): And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

Acts 5:15 (Parallel theme): Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

Acts 19:12 (Parallel theme): So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

Acts 9:40 (Parallel theme): But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

Acts 8:7 (Parallel theme): For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

Acts 2:41 (Parallel theme): Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Acts 4:4 (Faith): Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.