

Simply Christ
Gospel Newsletter
Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

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The Greater Works of Christ

Lazarus had been dead four days when Jesus commanded that the stone which sealed his tomb be taken away. Martha, aware of what condition Lazarus' body would be in, said, "*Lord, by this time he stinketh.*" John 11:39. She was correct. In fact, his organs would have been decomposing, his body bloated, and bloody foam leaking from his mouth and nose due to internal pressure caused by bacteria breaking down cells and tissues. Yet, in spite of all this, Jesus stood at Lazarus' tomb and spoke three words which ushered in one of the greatest miracles ever seen upon earth. A body which had been decaying and decomposing for four days, instantly was reconstituted, and Lazarus was raised from the dead.

The evening before his crucifixion, Jesus gave an astounding promise. He said, "*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.***" John 14:12. In fact, the early believers did do the works that Jesus had done. Great miracles and healings were manifested, not only by the apostles, but by many of those who believed upon Jesus Christ. Demons were cast out, blind eyes were opened, the lame walked,

and all manner of diseases were healed. Even the dead were raised.

These miracles were not exclusive to the early church. In the early twentieth century, many astounding miracles were seen during the half century which followed the outpouring of God's Spirit in that period. Yet, in all the history of the church, there has never been a physical miracle recorded which exceeded the magnitude of the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. Some men have made great claims, but Jesus did not need to make any claims at all. The man who had been decomposing in a tomb for the past four days was now standing perfectly whole.

Jesus' promise was not only "*He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also,*" but he also said, "*...and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*" I have heard many muse about the greater miracles we are going to perform above what Jesus did. They say, "We are not just going to heal the lame, we are going to cause arms and legs to grow where there are none." Such things are at best mere supposition, but usually just foolish boasting. Can God do it? Absolutely! But even then, would it be a greater physical miracle than calling a decomposing body back to life?

Lazarus' resurrection was a temporal miracle. Perhaps it was decades later, but Lazarus' body died again. Jesus gave us a basis for comparing temporal, or physical miracles, with eternal things. He said, "*And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for*

thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.” Matthew 18:9. Can you see his message that the salvation of a person’s soul is greater than the loss or restoration of their natural sight?

Every great work Jesus did upon earth was a witness of the greater work he came to accomplish. He came as *“the Lamb of God”* to *“take away our sin.”* I John 3:5. It is actually this *“greater work”* that almost all the church staggers at in unbelief. To tell someone the blood of Christ will take sin out of your heart, mind, and nature is considered to be beyond the realm of possibility, even for God. We believe Jesus can raise the dead, heal the lame, open blind eyes, but we recoil at the truth that he actually takes sin out of our heart.

Jesus’ promise to those who believe him is, *“greater works than these shall he do; **because I go unto my Father.**”* He explains this when he later says, *“But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, **sorrow hath filled your heart.**”* John 16:5-6. Jesus’ path to go to the Father was through the cross. It was there he would destroy sin and Satan, and thereby bring deliverance and salvation for all who would come to Him. This was His *“greater work!”*

God gave a promise to Christ through Isaiah, saying, *“I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the*

people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.” Isaiah 42:6-7. The true mission of Christ was to open the eyes of the spiritually blind and bring them out of the prison of sin. He accomplished this for all upon the cross and committed the ministry of this “*greater work*” to the church.

As “*ambassadors for Christ*” we are sent into the world “*in Christ’s stead.*” II Corinthians 5:20. The “*greater works*” we are given to do is to preach the gospel and minister its saving power to “*everyone who believes it.*” Romans 1:16. When you see a person delivered from the power and presence of sin, you are seeing the “*greater works*” of Christ manifest.

Some may be offended when I call signs and miracles the “*lesser works*” of Christ, but it is true. Yet, these “*lesser works*” are still beyond the ability of any man. These are only done by the working of the Holy Ghost through the people of God. The situation I see in the church today is that, as a whole, we deny the “*greater works*” (deliverance and freedom from sin), and we lack the “*lesser works*” (the manifestation of true miracles). We end up with a so-called salvation which makes no one free and miracles that often are only wishful thinking. Without the outpouring of God’s Spirit, you will not see the miraculous “*lesser works,*” and without the preaching of “*the truth*” which “*shall make you free*” John 8:32, you will never see the “*greater works.*” O how we need both to be manifested in the earth today!