

“Something Greater Than a Miracle!”

John 14:11-12

Intro. – There was a commercial back in the late 1970’s that made the rounds. A girl and boy (presumably husband and wife) are sitting in a restaurant. The boy is stuffing his face while this girl begins telling the audience how they really needed a change, inferring that McDonalds, Burger King, Wendys etc. were getting monotonous and besides that they were not all that wholesome. After going through all of this, she begins to attempt to describe “the change of taste” they found at Arby’s. It is at this point she becomes lost for words, and the boy then chimes in and says, “It’s a lean, luscious, big wholesome, delicious change of taste.” Immediately upon which the girl responds, “It’s a miracle!”

This response, no doubt, was intended to be taken two ways... I use this, however, not to advertise for Arby’s, but rather to illustrate the extensive miss use of a Biblical term. Today, I know of few words more loosely used than the term *miracle*. We see it being used to describe an Arby’s roast beef sandwich...; we see it being used to describe the reaction of a parent over their child’s all “A’s” report card...; we see it being used to describe the simple laws of nature...; we even see it being used to describe an IU football win! This is far from the Biblical use of the term *miracle*.

Leaving this for a moment, let’s return to our text. We find here that Jesus is reassuring His disciples that after He goes to be with the Father, they will continue to do *these works* or *miracles*. The fulfillment of this is recorded in Acts... But, Jesus goes on to say, “*greater works than these shall you do.*” Does this mean the disciples would do greater miracles? And if this is the case how do you define “*greater works*”? No, never will you find the disciples working miracles more impressive than those worked by Jesus. What then, did Jesus mean “*greater works than these shall you do*”?

Purpose: to better realize the promise of this text holds true to us

Yes, we also can do something greater than a miracle! To prove this, our text will help us accomplish this:

I Defining the Term -- MIRACLE

A. Modern Day Definitions

1. Strange events in nature and/or history are often labeled *miracles*.
 - a. e.g. if a friend escapes death in a car wreck, we often say, “It’s a miracle they’re alive...”
 - b. ordinary course of nature... often referred to as a *miracle*...
2. Modern philosophy/psychology describe *miracle* as being “a violation of nature.”
 - this too misses the mark especially when one sees behind this that man is denying the possibility of miracles by saying the laws of nature cannot be violated.

To summarize the current use of the term, anything unusual or unexpected is referred to as a *miracle*. However, as we now turn to the Biblical concept of *miracle* we see the term used in an entirely different sense, filled with purpose and reason.

B. Biblical Definition and Purpose

1. More than strange events in nature and history:
 - a. historical events which gave evidence of the Divine authority of the one who worked them.
 - 1) Jesus is the perfect illustration of this:
 - Mark 2:9-12 “Which is easier to say to the paralytic ‘Your sins are forgiven; or to say, ‘Arise, and take up your pallet and walk’? But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, He said to the paralytic, ‘I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home.’ And he rose and immediately took up the pallet and went out in the sight of all...”
 - John 20:30-31 “Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”
 - 2) Apostles – as stated in text, they too performed miracles, again to give evidence of God’s authority behind their message...

- b. all of these events provide evidence for you and me to accept the Bible as God's final and complete revelation!
- 2. Didn't violate nature, but *transcends* nature:
 - a. miracles followed a law, but not the law of nature; instead, followed the law of redemption!
 - b. miracles are not predictable to the laws of nature, nor are they random events... they are a part of a definite pattern, a higher pattern than nature. They are a part of redemption!

Summary: we give this short definition: *Miracles are the immediate works of God which go beyond the laws of nature for the single purpose of revealing God's redemptive plan to lost man.*

We see then *miracles* were also called *signs, wonders and works* and that God worked them through His Son and even men for the purpose of revealing redemption. Now, what could be greater than being used of God to work a miracle?

II Defining WHAT is Greater

- returning to our text, we reaffirm Jesus promised *greater works than these* – what could be greater?
- A. Not Found in Miracles the Apostles Worked
 - 1. Facts don't bear this out...
 - 2. Disciples never worked more impressive miracles than those of Jesus – what then is meant?
- B. That Which is Greater (Crux of the Matter)
 - 1. Key: miracles not an end in themselves, but means to an end = end *greater works than these!*
 - a. Matthew 18:11; Luke 19: 10 *“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”*
 - b. John 20:30-31 *“Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”*
 - c. Jesus' main reason in coming? To work miracles? No – to seek and to save the lost!
 - 2. “Greater works” = Jesus referring to the conversion of lost souls, the restoring of lost sons and daughters! Thus, there is no greater work possible than that of saving souls!!
 - 3. Christ is envisioning far more conversions and a far wider spread of His gift of grace!
 - 4. Thus, Jesus by saying *greater works than these* was Jesus' referring to the moral and spiritual revolution brought about by the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ the Lord!
- C. This Promise Holds True for You and Me
 - 1. We know the promise made to Apostles, but how about us?...
 - 2. If this promise is affirmed elsewhere in Bible and applied to all Christians then yes it applies to us!
 - a. note: working of miracles is not promised to us – Bible teaches this clearly...
 - b. but what of taking the Gospel and being used of God to seek and save the lost?
 - 3. Brethren, you and I are the means through which the Gospel is to be taken:
 - a. 2 Corinthians 5:20 *“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”*
 - b. 1 Peter 4:10-11 *“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, let him speak, as if he were speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as if by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”*
 - c. Matthew 28:19-20 *“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 command you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*
 - 4. The real Author of Salvation is God, but He uses you and me to convey the message, This brethren and friend is ***something greater than a miracle!***

III Defining WHY This is Greater

- returning to our text, in short it tells us why: *because I am going to the Father:*
- A. Christ's Mission Was Fulfilled

1. Most focused individual to ever walk the earth... He was here for one reason – seek/save lost!
 2. Victory over death was declared upon His bodily resurrection. This made it abundantly clear that death no longer had dominion...
 3. Gospel message was now COMPLETE/FINISHED
- B. Lost Only Forgiven Through the Gospel
1. Jesus said Matthew 12:39 *“An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet.”*
 2. Point must get: not by or through miracles will we be forgiven... Romans 1:16 Gospel is Power of God unto salvation to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
 3. Not saying miracles are insignificant... evidence is clear... BUT they are a means to an end, we now can and are to be living examples of that end because we are now enabled to do something greater than a miracle!

Conclusion: How about it, if you and I had the choice what would we choose to do? To work a miracle in the truest Biblical sense... or to bear the Gospel message which is the power of God unto salvation?... What would you choose?

Might we see we all possess the complete revelation of God, the Bible, and we are agents through whom lost men, women and young people can be reconciled to God. O brethren and friend, that we would see this, this is the greater works of our text. O that we would see this is something greater than a miracle!