

Scripture everywhere teaches, that Christians must live by faith not by sight—if we live by sight, things look a mess—not only, broadly speaking, in our nation and world, but at times, narrowly speaking, in our own hearts and homes...

But, on the other hand, if we live by faith, we are able to see around us, the mighty, greater works of our Savior—not only in the lives of others, but also in our own hearts and homes—yes, our enemy is at work in this world, but more than this, our Savior is at work in this world, and He's at work, by His Spirit, through His church...

Our Savior was about to leave His disciples—they would be left in a world filled with sinners and Satan—and yet, our Savior wanted His disciples to know—though things may look like they are losing the fight, take courage, believe, for in fact He is working—this work may often go unnoticed (and at times despised), but Christ is working...

Thus, I want to consider verses 12-14 under a single theme—The Greater Works of Christ, by His Spirit, through His Church, and there are three things to consider with regards to these Greater Works—their Identity, Means, and Purpose...

- I. Greater Works: Their Identity
- II. Greater Works: Their Means
- III. Greater Works: Their Purpose

I. Greater Works: Their Identity

1. There are fundamentally three things in v12 that need answering—the WHO, WHAT, and WHY of greater works...
2. [1] The WHO—"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me"—He who becomes My follower or disciple...
3. Here at the beginning of our text we are reminded, these works (whatever they entail) are done by faith in Christ...
4. These works are not done by the ability or power of man—they are done because we are joined by faith to Christ...
5. Which believers are meant—well, obviously, our Savior first of all refers to His apostles to whom He is speaking...
6. But as we shall see, our Savior also has in mind, Christians of all ages, who would believe through the apostles...
7. [2] The WHAT—if you notice carefully our Savior says they will do the same works, and yes, even greater works...
8. Thus, the question becomes—what exactly does our Savior mean by "works"—well, there are two options...
9. [a] The work of signs and wonders—that this is included seems evident from v11, where our Savior referred to His works...
10. The apostles (and some of their associates), would be given the ability to perform similar miracles as did Christ...
11. But—I suggest this is not what our Savior primarily meant by "greater works"—simply because, the miracles the apostles performed were not greater than our Savior's...
12. Furthermore, only a few, the apostles and their associates performed these miracles, and that only temporarily...
13. [b] The work of spreading the gospel—the word "greater" refers more to the quantity than quality of works...
14. In other words—the work of the apostles would exceed that of Christ's—they would do MORE work than He...

15. They would spread the gospel over the known world—the church would grow as thousands would be saved...
16. You know, if you think about it, relatively few people were converted, directly, under our Savior's ministry...
17. But this would change under the ministry of the apostles, through whom the gospel would spread over the world...
18. Thus, by "greater works" is largely meant—the broader work our Savior would do, through and in His Church...
19. Leon Morris—"Jesus is saying that on the basis of his finished work of salvation the church would go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring many, many more people into salvation than Jesus did during the years of his ministry on earth..."
20. J.C. Ryle—"The full meaning of this promise is not to be sought in the miracles which the Apostles wrought after Christ left the world. Such a notion seems hardly borne out by facts. We read of no Apostle walking on the water, or raising a person four days dead, like Lazarus. What our Lord has in view seems to be the far greater number of conversion, the far wider spread of the Gospel, which would take place under the ministry of the Apostles, than under his own teaching..."
21. [3] The WHY—"because I go to My Father"—this is the reason why, His Church will do greater works than He...
22. By "going to the Father" our Savior means—the completion of His redemptive work and the gift of His Spirit...
23. He is going to die, rise from the dead, return to the Father, sit on a throne, and from there, send the Holy Spirit...
24. Thus, by returning to the Father, our Savior assumes His death and resurrection, or the purchasing of salvation...
25. To put it simply—our Savior returns to the Father as the victorious Redeemer, with authority over heaven and earth...
26. Or else, put another way—our Savior inaugurates the NC by shedding His blood and assuming His throne...
27. Perhaps I can summarize it this way—with the beginning of the NC, comes our Savior greater works through His people...
28. To be more specific—let me summarize—with the beginning of the NC, comes a greater revelation, commission, and provision...
29. And it's because of these three related things—that the works of the apostles (and church), would be greater (broader)...
30. [a] The NC has a greater revelation—that is, within the NC, there is a fuller revelation of God's grace in Christ...
31. This of course does not mean—the OT was not sufficient, but it was less clear compared to the brighter light of the NT...
32. Matt.11:11—"Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he..."
33. The revelation of God is so much brighter in the NC, the least within it, is greater than the greatest in the OC...
34. John the Baptist is here described as the greatest in the OC because He had the privilege of introducing Christ...
35. But every member of the NC has a fuller and clearer revelation about Christ, than even John the Baptist had...
36. [b] The NC has a greater commission, Matt.28:18-19—"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations..."
37. This of course does not deny that some Gentiles were converted under the OC—there were some (even many)...
38. But largely speaking—within the OC, true religion was restricted to a single nation, and even a single land...

39. This of course is changed in the NC—for here in this covenant, Christ sends His people throughout the world...
40. [c] The NC has a greater provision—that is, with the beginning of the NC, is the gift of the promised Spirit...
41. Now—let me remind you—before the Spirit was given at Pentecost, He saved, sanctified, and indwelt God's people...
42. The Spirit's coming at Pentecost, wasn't to work deeper in people, but to work broader throughout the world...
43. Acts 2:16—"And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will our out of My Spirit on ALL flesh..."
44. ALL flesh doesn't mean every person without distinction, but it refers to ALL kinds of people without distinction...
45. The Spirit was given to enable the Church to carry the gospel to the nations, so that sinners would be saved...
46. Acts 1:4—"And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father...v8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth..."
47. It's for this reason, throughout the book of Acts—Luke describes the conversion of multitudes of Jews and Gentiles...
48. Acts 2:41—"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them..."
49. Acts 4:4—"However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand..."
50. Acts 6:7—"Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith..."
51. But the greater works of the apostles didn't merely include mass conversions, but also spreading the gospel over the world (Col.1:23)...
52. Thus—the apostles (and church) would do greater works, because Christ would give them a greater revelation, commission, and provision...

II. Greater Works: Their Means

1. At first appearance, the connection of vv13-14 may not be clear, but I suggest there's an important relation...
2. Our Savior has just promised that His people will do "greater works"—and here we find ultimately who does these works...
3. Verse 13—"And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do"—Christ Himself will do by His Spirit, in answer to prayer...
4. Thus, the Church will do greater works than Christ, as they pray in His name, and He works through them...
5. Accordingly, we must here answer the question—What does our Savior mean by asking—IN HIS NAME....
6. Well, in the first place let me suggest it means more than merely adding "in Jesus name" at the end of our prayers...
7. Adding this phrase is in everyway right—but you can say "in Jesus name at the end" and not ask in Jesus name...
8. [1] To pray in faith of the merit and virtue of Christ—that is, it's to come before God for the sake of Christ...
9. Because of who He is and what He has done—it's to approach the Father because of Christ's blood and righteousness...
10. This means—who do not approach God because of our own merit—we don't ask because we deserve an ear...

11. We stand before God cleansed in the blood of Christ and robbed in the righteousness of Christ—He come in His name...
12. Charles Ross—"To ask in the name of Jesus, is to ask as being one with him; it is to renounce all merit of your own; it is to ask as one depending entirely on his divine resources..."
13. Dan.9:17-18—"Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies..."
14. [2] To pray in harmony to the word of Christ—that is, we ask for those things that He has commanded and promised...
15. To pray in Christ's name, is to pray in harmony to Christ's will, as revealed or made known in Holy Scripture...
16. Perhaps another way of putting this would be—we come at His invitation—we come asking in His gracious name...
17. Christ has told us to take His gospel to the four corners of the world—we come asking Him for grace to do so...
18. Jn.15:7—"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you..."
19. We abide (remain) in Christ by faith, and His words abide in us by faith—we believe what His word teaches...
20. This changes our desires so that they harmonize with His—what we desire is what His word promises and commands...
21. Thus, to pray in Christ's name, is to pray with His word is in us—it is to pray with our desires shaped by His word...
22. [3] To pray for the glory of Christ—that is, ultimately, we ask that Christ would receive all the glory and honor...
23. To pray in Christ's name, is to pray that Christ would be glorified—it's to pray that He alone would be honored...
24. Now—before I leave this second heading—let me say something about the certainty of our Savior's promise...
25. V13—"And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do...v14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it..."
26. Remember, our Savior is referring to prayers offered for the advancement of His gospel throughout this world...
27. He is not saying—He promises to save every person we pray for—we have no such promise in all of Scripture...
28. But we do have the promise, that as we pray in Christ's name, Jesus Christ will save sinners and build His church...

III. Greater Works: Their Purpose

1. Verses 13—"that the Father may be glorified in the Son"—this is the ultimate purpose behind the greater works...
2. Every good work performed by the Church, is ultimate done for the end, that the Father and Son would be glorified...
3. Now—before I go any further (and suggest a few observations is closing), let me say a word about this phrase—"the Father glorified in the Son"...
4. This means, the Father is glorified by the redemption that the Son secures as the incarnate GodMan, mediator...
5. Obs.1—Christ continues His work through His church Personally—Christ Himself, though His Church, works in the world...
6. Matt.16:18—"I will build My church"—He Himself, builds His church—church history is the History of Christ's work...

7. He gives His people grace to work—He sends His Spirit to empower them to work—and He answers prayer...
8. There has often been a discussion, with regards to the best name for the book of Acts—some have suggested—The Acts of the Apostles, others, The Acts of the Spirit, yet others, The Greater Works of Christ...
9. And brethren, surely this is a very wonderful encouragement—all around us, right now, Christ is building His church...
10. To appose that work, is to appose Christ Himself, and thus, to despise the church, is to despise Christ Himself...
11. V13—"And whatever you ask in My name, THAT I WILL DO"—I Myself will do it, in and through My church...
12. Brethren, we must remember—though Christ's work of humiliation is finished, He nevertheless, yet works...
13. Obs.2—Christ continues His work through His church Powerfully—by this I mean, Christ works as glorified King through His Spirit...
14. Dear brethren, Christ isn't merely trying to build His church—there is no doubt or question concerning His success...
15. Matt.16:18—"I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it"—it is a sure thing...
16. V12—"the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to the Father..."
17. Christ sent His Spirit to ensure His kingdom would advance—that His church will be built—that greater works will be done...
18. Another way of putting this would be—Christ works through His Church as the victorious and glorious KING...
19. Mk.16:19-20—"So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen..."
20. Obs.3—Christ continues His work through His church Prayerfully—that is, He will use us and our prayers...
21. Brethren, I trust most of would agree that fewer subjects have more troubled the mind then the relationship of God's sovereign and our prayers...
22. One of the most beautiful titles for the apostles, gospel ministers, and all Christians in some sense—is that of a WORKER...
23. Throughout the NT, the apostle Paul especially, refers to himself and his helpers, as fellow workers for the kingdom...
24. 1Cor.3:9—"For we are God's fellow workers" 2Cor.6:1—"We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you..."
25. How are Christians "fellow workers with God"—first, they plead with sinners, and secondly, the plead with God...
26. Christ has made atonement for sin—and now He sends forth His people, filled and empowered by His Spirit...
27. And what are they to do—well, in part, they are to tell poor sinners about what Christ has done for them on the cross...
28. But that is not everything—no—then they must pray in Christ's name, that He would do great works through them...
29. This means, that as the church gathers on the Lord's Day, and other stated meetings, we must corporately pray...
30. But this also means, that Christians should pray privately, that Christ's kingdom would come—one sinner at a time...