

Believing For Greater Things: 5

Believers Will See And Do Greater Things

Believers Will See Greater Things

John 1.50

“Jesus said to Nathanael, 'Do you believe simply because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than that'” (NCV)

In this passage (verses 43-51) we read that first Jesus found Philip, then Philip found Nathanael – reaching out to others, fulfilling the commission to evangelise.

Can anything good come out of Nazareth?

- Some have suggested that Nazareth had a reputation – place of outcasts; slums; held in contempt
- It was at Nazareth where Jesus was rejected and they tried to throw Him off the mountain/hill (Luke 4.29-30)
- Jesus was unable to do any mighty miracles in Nazareth (Mark 6.1-6)
 - who does He think He is – 'just the carpenter'
 - they took offense at Him
 - Jesus marvelled at their unbelief – God isn't moved by need, He's moved by faith

Jesus sees Nathanael approaching and remarks that he is an honest man, in whom is no guile or deceit or falsehood nor duplicity (see Amplified translation)

Jesus then says something that amazes him – 'before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you'

- something significant that went straight to the heart of the matter for Nathanael
- what was he doing sitting under the fig tree – thought processes or actions: making plans, pondering Scriptures or had frustrations, discouragement
- To this statement Nathanael responds favourably and in faith – You are the Son of God.

Nathanael is only mentioned twice in the whole Bible – 5 times in this passage, and again in John 21.2. Scholars believe he could be the *Bartholomew* mentioned by the other gospel writers – (Bartholomew is not mentioned in John).

You will see greater things

Jesus told Nathanael (and the other disciples – you is plural in vs 51) that they would see something greater than what had just been manifest to him.

They would see the angels of God ascending/descending on the Son of Man -

“..you will all see heaven open and angels of God going up and coming down on the Son of Man” (NCV)

Because they had put their faith in Him that they would see greater manifestations of the power of God at work – they would see miracles, receive revelation and experience God to a greater extent than any of the prophets who were before.

Three days later Jesus began His miraculous ministry at the wedding feast in Cana, the home town of Nathanael (John 21.2). This miraculous event sealed their belief in Jesus as He manifested His glory (John 2.11) as a confirmation of His words to them a few days earlier.

At a much later stage in His ministry, (John 11, 'Jesus raises Lazarus') Jesus reminded Martha of Bethany -

“... Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God” (John 11.40)

What is understood to be 'the glory of God' ?

- Glory - (Heb. *kabod*, *tip'eret* ; Gk. *doxa* - meaning heavy, weighty, honour, splendour, brightness, pre-eminence, majesty). Glory is the full weight of God Himself and His power manifested in tangible form eg a cloud in 2 Chronicles 5.14 & Mark 9.7
- Moses asked to see the glory of God (Exodus 33.18)
- God shows him His glory – He makes all His goodness pass before him (Exodus 33.19; Exodus 34.5-7)

Believers will see God's glory – the greater things that Jesus spoke of to Nathanael - the opened heavens and God's goodness being poured out. Peter testified to this in Acts 10.38

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, who went about doing good, healing all who were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did....”

Peter said to Cornelius – we saw the greater things that Jesus did: His acts of goodness, healing the sick and setting people free from the oppression of the devil.

Believers Will Do Greater Things

But what about us born-again believers. Jesus didn't say that we would just see the mighty works of God but that we would do them as we allowed God, by His Spirit, to work through us.

John 14.12

“I tell you the truth, whoever believes in Me will do the same things that I do. Those who believe will do even greater things than these because I am going to the Father” (NCV)

In fact Jesus didn't just say that we would do the works that He did. It says in this verse that we will do greater things than He did.

The woman was healed by touching the hem of Jesus' garment – cloth was taken from Paul and brought healing to the sick some distance away (Acts 19.11-12), Peter's shadow

passing over the sick healed others (Acts 5.15-16)

Just think of some the great miracles that Jesus performed through His earthly ministry. He says that we will do greater things than He did, not in our own power or might, but by the Spirit of God that is in us. (Zechariah 4.6)

Jesus going to the Father meant that He would send the Holy Spirit, the *Paraklete* – (Helper, Comforter, Counsellor, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthenener, Standby)

Jesus promised that after the Holy Spirit had come we would be filled with power* to fulfill the great commission given to us to go into all the world (Mark 16.15-18; Matthew 28.18-20)

**dunamis* – power, force, strength, might, ability and efficiency; explosive power (*hence the word dynamite*) ; - miraculous power, power to perform miracles

Jesus said in Mark that signs (greater things) would follow those who believe.

In My name... cast out demons, speak with new tongues, take up serpents and deadly things and come to no harm, lay hands on the sick and see them recover.

When Jesus said that believers would do greater things than He did, He followed that statement up with this:

“and whatever you ask in My name. That I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it” (John 14.13-14)

“I tell you the truth, whoever believes in me will do the same things that I do. Those who believe will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And if you ask for anything in My name, I will do it for you so that the Father's glory will be shown through the Son. If you ask Me for anything in My name, I will do it” (John 14.12-14, NCV)