

Has Anything Been Done Like This Great Thing?

The children of Israel were poised to cross the Jordan River and face the strong inhabitants of Canaan. Moses filled them with courage, as he reminded them of the great power of the God they served.

Ask now concerning the former days which were before you since the day that God created man on the earth, and inquire from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything been done like this great thing, or has anything been heard like it?

Has any people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard it, and survived? Or has a god tried to go to take for himself a nation from within another nation by trials by signs and wonders, and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors, as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? To you it was shown that you might know the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him (Deuteronomy. 4:32–36).

God invited His people to examine the whole history of the whole world, from the very beginning of time to their present day, from the easternmost point to the westernmost point, through all the chronicles of every civilization that ever existed—they would never find a record of a god who performed, much less attempted, anything close to what God performed for the children of Israel.

What God achieved is amazing on so many levels. God chose one man Abraham and made sweeping and seemingly-impossible promises to make him a father of children, to make of these children a large nation, to help them conquer a land flowing with milk and honey, and through Abraham to bring about a Messianic promise that would bless all nations. To make this project even harder, God didn't start with a family that showed much potential. After all, Abraham was quite advanced in years (Hebrews 11:12 puts it a little less politely, "as good as dead," beyond the usual age for children). Later God pointed out that He "did not choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you" (Deut. 7:7). In other words, God started with the roughest, least promising raw material available. Then, He

sent them into the crucible of 400 years of Egyptian slavery. This would be like a man trying to start a campfire with a single match, but first pouring a bucket of water over the tinder! And still, God managed to fulfill His great promises, and rescue them from captivity through the plagues and the parting of the Red Sea. And then He demonstrated even greater love, by revealing Himself to His people at Mt. Sinai, showing them His holy nature, and instructing them in His specific will.

For any god less than Jehovah God, such an outrageous project would be biting off considerably more than he could chew. Yet God's daring and difficult plans are exceeded only by His power and love, and He fully accomplished all these things for His people.

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But it gets even better. While these ancient deeds are amazing enough, God surpassed them with another "great thing." John 3:16 says,

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Ask the same question again, that Moses asked the children of Israel: "has anything been done like this great thing, or has anything been heard like it?" You can search all the records of mankind, from Adam and Eve until today, from Africa to Asia to America, and you will never find a story of love and power as great as the gospel! God made an ancient promise to send a Savior who, against staggering odds, would establish an unbreakable kingdom. God detailed the promise through the prophets of the Old Testament, and fulfilled the details to the letter. God bent the course of history to His will, caused Jesus to be born in Bethlehem, caused Him to live righteously, turned Him over to be scourged and crucified for mankind, and then caused Him to be raised from the dead on the third day.

A lot of great things have happened in history. There have been great battles and there have been unlikely rescues and there have been cool inventions and there have been astonishing discoveries. But you can search the internet, you can scour the newspapers, and you can travel the ends of the earth, and never will you find such an accomplishment as God defeating the Romans, defeating Satan, and defeating death, securing salvation for mankind!

Not only did this achievement demonstrate the power of God, but it also demonstrates His love—a quality of God just as amazing as His power. Man has made up many stories about many gods, and many fictions that captivate the imagination, but never did something like the gospel occur to a human writer (and certainly not to many writers, from many walks of life, writing over a course of two thousand years). An author named Will Durant once said, just of the four gospels alone, “That a few simple men should in one generation have invented so powerful and appealing a personality, so lofty and ethic, and so inspiring a vision of human brotherhood, would be a miracle far more incredible than any recorded in the gospels.” What a true statement! The quality of the Bible, the breadth of its vision, and the clarity of its message, certainly argue for a supernatural origin.

Men have dreamed up gods who conquer, gods who smite, gods who destroy, and even gods who love, but only who love selfishly. But man has never dreamed up a god who God loved mankind to such a degree that He sent and sacrificed His own Son to secure their salvation.

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:6–8).

God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:8–10).

So, go ahead, ask around. Inquire from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything been done like this great thing? Has a god tried to claim for Himself a weak and humble people, to rescue them from the domain of darkness, and empower them to conquer the world? Has a god crucified His own Son to accomplish this? No, nothing approaches nor compares to the marvelous story of God’s love for mankind. Will you not obey it today? Will you not tell it today?

—*John Guzzetta*