

ESV STUDY BIBLE NOTES

John 14:9-14

14:8–11 Philip apparently asks for some sort of appearance by God. In the OT, Moses asked for and was given a limited vision of God's glory (Ex. 33:18; cf. Ex. 24:10). Isaiah, too, received a vision of God (Isa. 6:1; see note on John 12:41). Jesus is the greater fulfillment of these limited OT events (see also Ezek. 1:26–28). In keeping with OT teaching, Jesus denied the possibility of a direct vision of God (John 5:37; 6:46; cf. 1:18), yet he makes the stunning assertion that those who have seen him have seen the Father—a clear claim to deity. Philip's request shows that he has not yet understood the point of Jesus' coming, namely, to reveal the Father (1:14, 18).

14:10 I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Though there is a complete mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son, the Father and the Son remain distinct persons within the Trinity, as does the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14), and the three of them still constitute only one Being in three persons.

14:11 The works themselves includes the miracles of Jesus and also the other actions and teachings that he did and gave (see note on v. 12).

14:12 the works that I do. In John's Gospel, the term "works" (Gk. *ergon*), both in singular and in plural, is a broader term than "signs." While "signs" in John are characteristically miracles that attest to Jesus' identity as Messiah and Son of God, and that lead unbelievers to faith (see note on 2:11), Jesus' "works" include both his miracles (see 7:21) and his other activities and teachings, including the whole of his ministry (see 4:34; 5:36; 10:32; 17:4). These are all manifestations of the activity of God the Father, for Jesus said, "The Father who dwells in me does his works" (14:10). Here Jesus is teaching his disciples to imitate the things he did in his life and ministry. The disciples' **greater works** will be possible because Jesus is **going to the Father**, subsequent to his finished work on the cross (12:24; 15:13; 19:30); this indicates that the "greater works" will be possible because of the power of the Holy Spirit who would be sent after Jesus goes to the Father (see 16:7; also 7:39; 14:16, 26). The expression "greater works" could also be translated more broadly as "greater things," since the Greek *meizona* is simply a neuter adjective and the noun "works" (Gk. *erga*, plural) is not included here as it is in the earlier part of the verse. These "greater works" include evangelism, teaching, and deeds of mercy and compassion—in short, the entire ministry of the church to the entire world, beginning from Pentecost. (E.g., on the day of Pentecost alone, more believers were added to Jesus' followers than during his entire earthly ministry up to that time; cf. Acts 2:41.) These works are "greater" not because they

are more amazing miracles but because they will be greater in their worldwide scope and will result in the transformation of individual lives and of whole cultures and societies.

14:13 Praying in Jesus' **name** means praying in a way consistent with his character and his will (a person's name in the ancient world represented what the person was like); it also means coming to God in the authority of Jesus. Probably both senses are intended here. Adding "in Jesus' name" at the end of every prayer is neither required nor wrong. Effective prayer must ask for and desire what Jesus delights in. See also note on 1 John 5:15.

14:14 If you ask me gives warrant for praying directly to Jesus (but see ESV footnote). Many other verses encourage prayer to God the Father (see 15:16).¹

¹ Crossway Bibles, [*The ESV Study Bible*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2052–2053.