

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Greater than Jesus

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Jesus spent the last night before his death strengthening the faith and encouraging the hearts of His apostles. Before the sun would go down again, Jesus will have died and be separated in both body and spirit from his closest followers. He spent this night preparing the apostles for His soon separation from them. He did not want their heart to be troubled, nor be anxious in fear. He informed them that He was going to the Father and offered this rebuke: “*Ye heard how I said to you, I go away, and I come to you. If ye loved me, ye would have rejoiced, because I go to unto the Father; for the Father is greater than I*” (John 14:28).

Is the Father greater than Jesus because Jesus is not Divine or equal with God? Some believe that Jesus, fulfilling his role as “mediator” between God and man, became man, making Himself less than God, the Father (cf. *1 Timothy 2:5*). No doubt man is less than God, but one cannot assume when the eternal Word took on flesh and blood, He forfeited His Deity (cf. *Hebrews 2:14*). Other statements in Scripture clearly contradict such an assumption.

Jesus is on point in John 10:29-30, when describing His hearers as sheep. He declares, “*My*

*Father who hath given them unto Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand*” (v. 29). God is greater than all, which would include man in the flesh, or any evil spirit inhabiting heavenly places. As long as Jesus’ hearers listened to His voice, no one could snatch them out of the hand of the Father in heaven. But Jesus also includes Himself as having this same power for He declares “*no one shall snatch them out of my hand*” (v. 28). Jesus then adds this fact: “*I and the Father are One*” (v. 30). The Jews knew that Jesus meant He was Deity, for they sought to stone Him for “*blasphemy*” because “*Thou being man, makest Thyself God*” (v. 33).

Jesus exalted the Father above all without demoting Himself to be less than God. Therefore, we should not assume that Jesus declaring “The Father is greater than I” is spoken in the sense that on earth He had emptied Himself of His Deity. Yes, He emptied Himself of the glory that God possesses in the heavenly places to take on the essential role of the humble servant as man (*Philippians 2:5-6*). The glory shared with the Father before the creation of the world was what He prayed to have again when He returned to His Father in heaven (*John 17:5*).

If Jesus did not affirm “The Father is greater than I,” in the sense that Jesus left His Deity in heaven when He became man on earth, fulfilling His role as the mediator, what did He mean?

Earlier on this same evening in the upper room Jesus compared greatness in the context of submission manifested in one being sent by another. Jesus in teaching His apostles humility of service through His washing their feet, declared, “*A servant is not greater than his Lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him*” (*John 13:16*).

Put yourself in Jesus’ place for a moment. You are about to glorify your father in heaven, by fulfilling His will on earth through your death. After your suffering you will be raised from the dead and return to Heaven, completely fulfilling the will of Him who sent you. What a time of rejoicing for this reunion of the Father and the Son. If Jesus’ disciples loved Jesus as Jesus would like them to, they would not be sorrowing in His departure but be rejoicing with Him. Jesus declares “The Father is greater than I” in the sense that He has submitted to His Father’s will who sent Him, and now is looking forward to rejoicing with the Father in the glory of God’s eternal plan now accomplished.