

Mark 11:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Analysis

Jesus taught about faith: 'whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith' (ὅς ἂν εἴπῃ τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ, Ἀρθητι καὶ βλήθητι εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, καὶ μὴ διακριθῇ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἀλλὰ πιστεύσῃ ὅτι ἀ λέγει γίνεται, ἔσται αὐτῷ ὃ ἐὰν εἴπῃ). This is hyperbolic language about faith's power. The 'mountain' likely refers to Mount of Olives where they stood, or metaphorically to obstacles. Faith without doubt (μὴ διακριθῆ, μὴ διακριθῇ, not wavering) accomplishes the impossible. The condition 'shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass' requires confidence in God's power and alignment with God's will. This isn't blank-check promise—faith operates within God's purposes. Mountain-moving faith isn't coercing God but trusting His promises. James 1:6 warns against doubting; Matthew 17:20 similarly promises mustard-seed faith moves mountains. Faith believes God's word and acts accordingly.

Historical Context

Jesus had just cursed a fig tree (Mark 11:12-14, 20-21), which withered—disciples marveled. Jesus explained this demonstrated faith's power. 'Mountains' in Jewish

idiom represented great difficulties or obstacles. Zechariah 4:7 prophesied: 'Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.' Rabbis spoke of 'mountain-removers'—teachers who overcame great difficulties. Jesus literalized the metaphor to teach faith's potential. Early church experienced miracle power through faith—healings, exorcisms, resurrections (Acts). Yet not all prayers were answered as desired (Paul's thorn, 2 Corinthians 12:7-9), showing that faith operates within God's sovereign will. 'Prosperity gospel' misuses this verse, treating faith as technique to manipulate God. True faith trusts God's wisdom when mountains remain.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' teaching about mountain-moving faith balance confidence in God's power with submission to God's will?
2. What's the difference between biblical faith that trusts God versus 'prosperity gospel' that treats faith as technique to get what we want?

Interlinear Text

ἀμὴν	γὰρ	λέγει	ὑμῖν	ὅτι	ὅ	ἄν	εἶπη	τῷ
verily	For	I say	unto you	That	those things which	G302	he saith	G3588
G281	G1063	G3004	G5213	G3754	G3739		G2036	
ὅρει	τούτῳ	Ἄρθητι	καὶ	βλήθητι	εἰς	τὴν		
mountain	unto this	Be thou removed	and	be thou cast	into	G3588		
G3735	G5129	G142	G2532	G906	G1519			
θάλασσαν	καὶ	μὴ	διακριθῇ	ἐν	τῇ	καρδίᾳ	αὐτῷ	ἀλλὰ
the sea	and	not	doubt	in	G3588	heart	he	but
G2281	G2532	G3361	G1252	G1722		G2588	G846	G235
πιστεύσῃ	ὅτι	ὅ	λέγει		γίνεται	ἔσται		
shall believe	That	those things which	I say		shall come to pass	shall have		
G4100	G3754	G3739	G3004		G1096	G2071		
αὐτῷ	ὅ	ἐὰν	εἶπη					
he	those things which	G1437	he saith					
G846	G3739		G2036					

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 17:20 (Faith): And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

John 15:7 (Parallel theme): If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Matthew 21:21 (Faith): Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

Psalms 37:4 (Parallel theme): Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

John 14:13 (Parallel theme): And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Luke 17:6 (Faith): And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

1 Corinthians 13:2 (Faith): And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

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