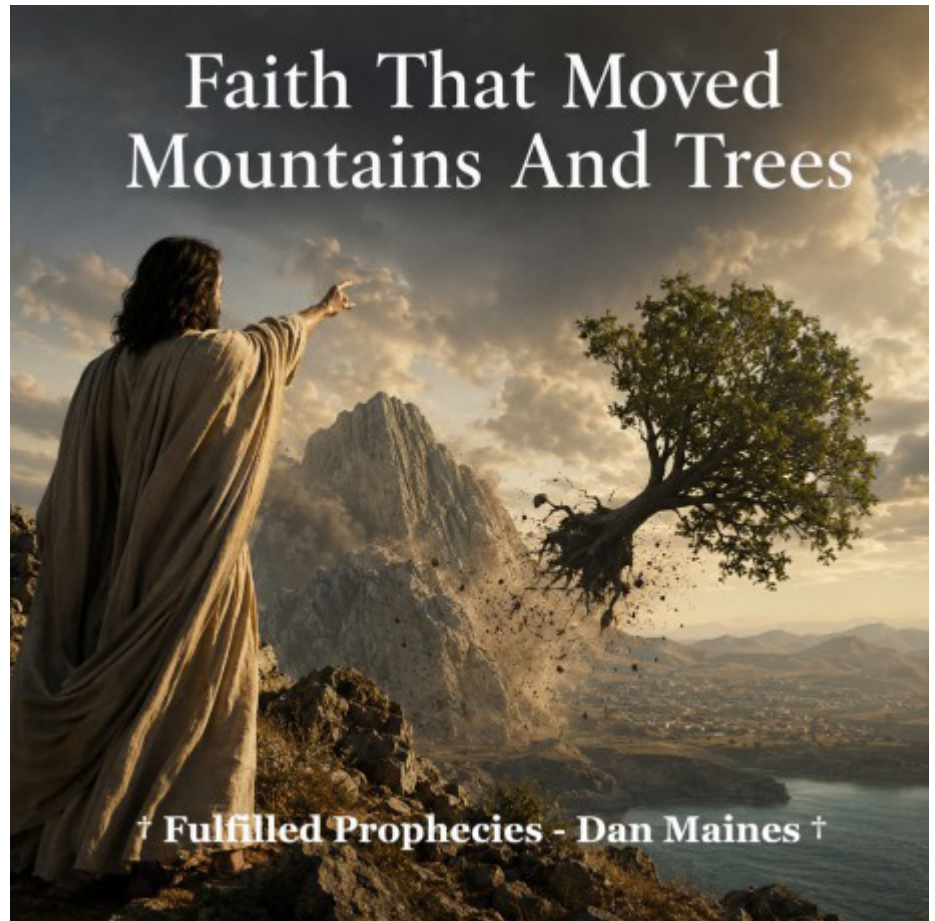


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Faith That Moved Mountains And Trees



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† Many people read the words of Jesus about moving mountains and uprooting trees and assume He was teaching that believers would perform endless supernatural stunts throughout history. But Jesus was speaking in prophetic covenant language that His audience understood. He was describing the unstoppable power of faith during the transition from the old covenant world into the kingdom of God. (Hebrews

12:26-28)

† Throughout scripture, mountains represented kingdoms, governments, nations, and covenant systems. Jesus was not promising circus miracles. He was declaring that through faith the apostles would participate in the removal of the old covenant order and the establishment of His everlasting kingdom. (Daniel 2:34-35; Isaiah 2:2-3)

† The language of trees, mountains, seas, and shaking was common prophetic imagery in the Old Testament. Jesus used the same style of language when speaking about the coming judgment upon Jerusalem and the passing away of the old covenant system. (Matthew 24:34; Hebrews 8:13)

Matthew 17:20

And He said to them, "Because of your meager faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."

† Jesus connected the moving of the mountain directly to faith and kingdom authority. The point was not physical geology being rearranged, but the power of God's purpose working through faithful believers. (Mark 11:22-23)

† Mountains in scripture often symbolized kingdoms and covenant powers. Jesus was standing in Israel under the shadow of the temple system that was about to be removed in judgment. (Isaiah 40:4; Jeremiah 51:25)

† The apostles through faith helped bring about the greatest covenant transition in history, the passing of the old covenant age and the establishment of Christ's kingdom. (Hebrews

12:26-28)

Matthew 21:21

And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen.

† The fig tree represented unfruitful Israel, just as it did throughout the prophets and in the teachings of Jesus. (Hosea 9:10; Luke 13:6-9)

† The mountain being cast into the sea points to covenant judgment. The old covenant system centered in Jerusalem would soon fall and be swept away. (Revelation 8:8; Daniel 2:35)

† Jesus was preparing His disciples for the coming judgment generation when the temple and city would be destroyed exactly as He foretold. (Matthew 23:36-38)

Mark 11:22-23

And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass, he shall have it; therefore shall he have it.

† Jesus spoke these words right after judging the fig tree and while standing near Jerusalem and the temple system.

† The mountain context fits covenant judgment upon unbelieving Israel and the removal of the old covenant order. (Matthew 21:18-19)

† The sea in prophetic language often represented the nations and chaos into which kingdoms were cast in judgment. (Daniel 7:2-3; Revelation 17:15)

Luke 17:6

But the Lord said, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea'; and it would obey you.

† Trees in scripture often symbolized nations, rulers, and covenant people. Jesus again used prophetic imagery familiar to His audience. (Ezekiel 31:3-6; Daniel 4:20-22)

† The uprooting of the tree symbolized judgment and removal. Israel as an unfruitful covenant nation was about to be uprooted because of unbelief. (Matthew 3:10)

† Christ was teaching that even faith as small as a mustard seed would accomplish God's covenant purpose during that generation. Nothing would stop the establishment of His kingdom. (Matthew 16:27-28)

Daniel 2:34-35

You continued watching until a stone was broken off without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed to pieces all at the same time, and they were like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found.

But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the entire earth.

† God's kingdom itself is pictured as a mountain filling the earth.

† This connects directly with Jesus using mountain imagery for kingdom authority and covenant transition.

† The old kingdoms were removed while Christ's kingdom became everlasting. (Daniel 2:44)

Jeremiah 51:25

"Behold, I am against you, mountain of destruction
That destroys the whole earth," declares the LORD,
"And I will stretch out My hand against you,
And roll you down from the rocky cliffs,
And I will make you a burnt out mountain.

† This proves mountains symbolized kingdoms and ruling powers in prophetic language.

† Jesus and the apostles used the same covenant judgment imagery found throughout the prophets.

† The first century audience would have understood this symbolic language far better than modern readers often do.

Hebrews 12:26-28

And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN." This expression, "Yet once more,"

denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let's show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

† Hebrews directly explains that God was removing the old covenant system so the unshakable kingdom of Christ would remain.

† The shaking language came from the prophets and referred to covenant judgment, not the destruction of the physical planet. (Haggai 2:6-7)

† The kingdom believers received was already arriving in that first century transition period and could not be stopped. (Colossians 1:13)

Acts 17:6

When they did not find them, they began dragging Jason and some brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have upset the world have come here also;

† The apostles did exactly what Jesus said they would do. Through faith they shook the covenant world of their day.

† The gospel overturned the old order and spread throughout the Roman world before Jerusalem fell. (Colossians 1:5-6)

† This was not about believers physically moving mountains and trees. It was about the unstoppable victory of Christ's

kingdom. (Matthew 28:18-20)

Historical References

† Eusebius wrote that the destruction of Jerusalem fulfilled the warnings spoken by Christ against that generation and marked the end of the old covenant order.

† Josephus described the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 with language of national catastrophe and covenant devastation exactly matching the warnings of Jesus.

† Clement of Alexandria spoke of the passing away of the old system and the establishment of the new covenant through Christ.

How It Applies To Us Today

† Faith is not about performing entertainment miracles to impress people.

† Faith is trusting completely in Christ and His kingdom promises even when the world stands against us.

† The kingdom of God has already overcome the old covenant world and continues advancing through the gospel.

† We don't need to move literal mountains because Christ has already established His unshakable kingdom.

† Believers today still participate in kingdom work as the gospel changes lives throughout the earth.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Was Jesus teaching that Christians would literally throw mountains into the ocean?

A: No. Jesus was using prophetic hyperbolic language common throughout scripture. Mountains symbolized kingdoms and covenant systems. The old covenant order was about to be removed through God's judgment. (Matthew 21:21; Hebrews 12:26-28)

Q: Why did Jesus mention trees being uprooted?

A: Trees often represented nations and rulers in scripture. Jesus used the image to describe covenant judgment and removal. (Ezekiel 31:3-6; Matthew 3:10)

Q: Did the apostles fulfill these promises?

A: Yes. Through faith and the preaching of the gospel they turned the world upside down during that generation and helped establish Christ's kingdom throughout the Roman world. (Acts 17:6; Colossians 1:23)

Q: Does this mean miracles never happened?

A: No. The apostles performed miracles during the transition period to confirm the message of Christ. But the language about mountains and trees primarily pointed to covenant judgment and kingdom victory, not endless physical demonstrations. (Hebrews 2:3-4)

Q: Why do many people today misunderstand the mountain language?

A: Many modern readers interpret the language literally and miss the prophetic symbolism used throughout the Old Testament. Jesus was speaking the same covenant language used by the prophets concerning kingdoms, judgment, and covenant transition. (Jeremiah 51:25; Daniel 2:35)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Matthew 17:20; Matthew 21:21; Mark 11:22-23; Luke 17:6; Daniel 2:34-35; Jeremiah 51:25; Hebrews 12:26-28; Acts 17:6

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History; Josephus, Wars of the Jews; Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

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