

## Be Thou Cast into the Sea

*“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. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matthew 21:21-22).*

What do you make of these words of Jesus? Have you ever thought long and hard about them? I suspect that many Christians tend to acknowledge them but not spend much time contemplating them. Is Jesus making a literal statement to be understood at face value? I suspect that many Christians think that Jesus is merely making a statement that is figurative designed to teach principles of prayer. I happen to believe that Jesus never exaggerated and that these words can be taken literally. In other words, I believe that if a Christian has faith and does not doubt, he could say to a mountain, “Be thou removed and cast into the sea” and it would be done. For all I know, some Christian many years said with faith to the mountain, Krakatoa, “Be thou cast into the sea,” and thus it happened.

While I believe Jesus’ words can be taken at face value, I also believe that when He spoke them, He was doing so to teach important principles about prayer. The Bible contains many examples of God doing mighty things through His people. There was the parting of the Red Sea through Moses. Personally, I believe that the raising of people who were dead back to life was equally amazing. Elijah and Elisha both raised people from the dead. The Apostle Paul did this also. I believe these people did these things through faith. They believed and so it was done. They did not believe they had the power in themselves to do it. They fully believed that God could and would do these things and so they were done.

Are we to believe that is Jesus’ plan that only a select few should accomplish such great things or is He teaching that we should all expect God to do miraculous things through us? I believe He is teaching us to expect the impossible and that He desires to do miraculous things through us. Does this mean that we should all say to various mountains to be cast into the sea? I don’t think so. (Although, that would be awesome to behold.)

Jesus said, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father” (John 14:12).* I believe that God can and may, even now, use Christians to raise people from the dead and even cause literal mountains to be cast into the sea. Whatever things God brings about through the faith of His people, He will do so in accordance with His sovereign will. If somewhere on earth, He wishes a person to be raised from the dead through a Christian with faith, it will be done.

With all these things being said, we cannot deny that God seems to do the more miraculous signs to draw attention to His message being proclaimed through His people. Miraculous signs were abundant during Jesus’ days on earth and immediately following Pentecost. According to the Bible, God was using these miracles and signs to bear witness to the gospel being proclaimed by His people. *“How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will” (Hebrews 2:3-4).*

Many Christians believe that ever since His prophetic Word was completely given (the Bible was complete), there is no longer a purpose for God to display signs and wonders like He did in the early days of the Christian Church on the basis I Corinthians 13:10. Though I disagree with their interpretation, I cannot deny that God has displayed His power through signs and wonders of this nature rarely in the course of history. But, I believe nothing prevents Him from doing so now and I do not want to assume that He will not do so.

If God does not plan to perform these types of miraculous signs during my years, then how should I understand these words of Jesus, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father” (John 14:12).* I do not claim to have a firm answer to my question but I do wish to set forth my current understanding.

Before He ascended into heaven, Jesus told His disciples, *“Go make disciples of all the nations,” (Matthew 28:19a).* I believe that it is humanly impossible make disciples. Yet, Jesus commands us to do so. What is necessary for a disciple to be made? Our work is to proclaim the gospel and pray. God is the one who gives the increase. In order for a disciple to be made, God must raise that person from spiritual death to new life in

Christ. I have been actively involved in the work of evangelism for many years and the longer I do it, the more obvious this becomes.

What if the raising of a spiritually dead person to new life in Christ is actually a greater miracle by God's definition than raising a person physically? If so, then the words of Jesus can be fulfilled in me as God raises spiritually dead people to life through me. If this is true, then when I am praying for God to raise the unbelievers I speak with to new life in Christ, am I not seeking something as spectacular as the one who says to a mountain to be cast into the sea.

For the past several years, I have been proclaiming the gospel to the thousands of Muslims in Dearborn, Michigan. It is obvious that unless God raises them from spiritual death, they will perish. For years, I have been praying for the people to whom I have proclaimed the gospel. I know that only God can raise them from the dead. I believe that God is able to suddenly raise thousands of them from spiritual death to new life in Christ and I pray to that end. In my mind, I am praying something just as spectacular as saying to the mountain, "Be thou cast into the sea."

*Father, I pray that this great mountain would be cast into the sea to your glory!*