

Sunday, January 22, 2012—Mark Dispensationally Considered—Mark 11:22-26: Can We Name and Claim Today?

Review

- Last week we studied verses 12-14 where Jesus cursed the fig tree and the tree began to dry up and (Matthew 21:18-20) wither away. At the end of last week's passage we in verses 20-21 that on the next day Peter called our Lord's attention to the withered tree.

Mark 11:22-24

- **22) And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.**
23) 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.
24) Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive [them], and ye shall have [them].
- Mark 11:22—Jesus now begins to respond to Peter's recollection by telling all the Apostles to, "Have faith in God."
- Mark 11:23—Jesus goes on to tell the Apostles that their faith can move mountains if they believe without doubting.
 - ". . .whosoever shall **say** unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be cast into the sea; and **shall not doubt** in his hearth, but **shall believe** that those things which he saith shall come to pass; **he shall have** whatsoever he saith."
- This is a favorite verse of the word of faith movement. Commentators on this passage debate whether Jesus is speaking literally or figuratively. Commenting on this passage Charles F. Baker states:
 - "We believe in the literal interpretation of Scripture, but this does not mean that we have refuse to recognize figurative and symbolic langue where it exits. When Christ spoke of a faith that would move mountains, we do no believe He was talking about literal mountains. If He was, then there is no record of anyone, including Jesus Himself, who had this kind of faith which actually uprooted a whole mountain and cast it into the sea. To do such a thing would cause great loss of human life and damage to property. Suppose for a moment that someone had faith to cause the Swiss Alps to be cast into the Medierranean Sea. Can one begin to imagine how many millions of lives would be snuffed out and the worldwide disaster from earth shocks? It is well-known that "rooting up mountains" is in common Rabbinic use a hyperbole for doing the impossible or the incredible." (Baker, 220-221)

- George William offers the following cryptic commentary on the passage:
 - “In the East, a successful teacher who can remove difficulties is entitled a rooter up of mountains. The Apostles by their praying and preaching and faith moved great mountains of Hebrew tradition and exclusive salvation, and cast them into the “sea” of the Gentiles.” (Williams, 720)
- Matthew 21:21—I struggle with accepting Pastor Baker’s commentary in this case because Jesus just did something in their midst that was impossible without faith. He spoke to the fig tree and it immediately withered away. If Jesus is not speaking literally in this case than how were the Apostles to understand his statement in Mark 11:23 “he shall have whatsoever he saith.”
- Mark 11:24—“Therefore,” i.e., on the basis of what I just told you. Jesus tells them that whatever they desire, when they pray, believe that they will receive it, and they will have their desires.
 - Matthew 21:22—these are the verses of the modern word of faith, name it claim it movement. They have pitched their tent and make their living teaching these verses. People are told to claim and believe God for everything from finances, houses, cars, airplanes, business fortunes, salvation of family members, healing of their bodies, freedom for abuse and drug addition, etc. They even have a built in excuse for why it’s not working the way the verses teach: the people didn’t have enough faith.
 - Matthew 18:19—word of faith teachers commonly add the concept of agreement together in pray to Matthew 21:22.
- I personally don’t question the plain teaching of these verses. The real question is this, “What, if any application do these verses have in the dispensation of Grace for the body of Christ. We have to recognize that remember that is a dispensational subject and functions according to the dispensation that is in effect.

Israel’s Prayer Life in Time Past

- Under the law Israel had a contractual relationship with God. Sin hindered her fellowship with God.
- Deuteronomy 28—the contractual blessings and curses of the Law.
- When living in sin God would not even hear Israel’s prayers
 - Isaiah 59:1-2
 - Psalm 66:18
 - Proverbs 15:29
 - Micah 3:4
 - Leviticus 26:40-43
 - II Chronicles 6:24-27

- II Chronicles 7:14
- Pauline Counterpoint: As members of the Body of Christ we have the total complete forgiveness of all our sins, justification, and peace with God as a result. Therefore we enjoy an intimacy with God that Israel never did.
- All our sins have been forgiven:
 - Ephesians 1:7
 - Colossians 1:14
 - Colossians 2:13
- We have God's very righteousness imputed to our account:
 - Romans 5:1
- Because all our sins have been forgiven and we have been justified we have direct and uninhibited access to God at all times through prayer.
 - Romans 8:14-17—Abba Father
 - Ephesians 3:12

Jesus Teaching on Prayer

- Matthew 6:7—Jesus tells them not to pray using vain repetition yet that is precisely what people do with the Lord's Prayer that follows.
- Matthew 6:9-13—Is this really how we should pray today during the Dispensation of Grace?
 - Are we looking for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth?
 - Is God supernaturally providing our daily bread like will for Israel during the tribulation?
 - Do you really want the conditional forgiveness taught in the prayer and immediately following?
- Pauline Counterpoint: These verses are totally contrary to Paul's teaching on forgiveness.
 - Ephesians 4:32—we are instructed to forgive because we have been forgiven.
 - Teaching that the Lord's Prayer is for today would also mean that our forgiveness was conditional.

Mark 11:25-26

- **25) And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.**
- **26) But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.**

- Just as in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is teaching that in order for Israel to be forgiven they first have to forgive. This is not the type of total and complete forgiveness that Paul says the body of Christ enjoys during the present dispensation of Grace.
- In the immediate context, name it and claim it/word of faith payer is tied to the concept of conditional forgiveness. One cannot pick and choose what they like and take one without the other.