

The Mustard Seed

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The Mustard Seed

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Background

The subject of the mustard seed in the Bible had always intrigued me. Some say we already have all the faith we need. Some say we only need a tiny bit of faith. Some say both, sometimes in the same message. To me, it seemed strange that just a tiny bit of faith could move mountains. How could this be?

That intrigue prompted me to embark on an investigation into the Scriptures which relate to the mustard seed, and unravel the mystery.

All scriptures are taken from the King James Version (KJV).

The following is what I found (so far).

Scriptures that directly mention the mustard seed

Parables

All three of the parables describe the kingdom of heaven/God. (Kingdom of heaven and kingdom of God are used interchangeably.)

Matthew 13:31-32 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: (32) Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Mark 4:30-32 And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? (31) It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: (32) But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

Luke 13:18-19 Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? (19) It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

Allusions to the mustard seed parables

Matthew 17:19-20 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? (20) 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.

Luke 17:5-6 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. (6) 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.

Understanding parables

Jesus gave us a template for understanding parables. *Mark 4:13 And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?*

To understand the mustard seed, or any other parable, one first has to understand the meaning and purpose of parables. Parables reflect what was, what is and what is to come. The parables in the scriptures

are spiritual truths represented by earthly, natural stories. Parables are designed to not be understood, or only partially understood by people who are uninterested or opposed to the things of God.

Mark 4:10-12 *And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. (11) And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: (12) That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.*

Even those who love God and have accepted His salvation have to search for the hidden meaning of parables before the truth is revealed. This is akin to searching for hidden treasure. We need to seek for it until it is found, one bit of riches at a time. Seeking involves searching through all scriptures while asking the Holy Spirit for illumination, wisdom, knowledge and understanding of the subject at hand.

Proverbs 2:2-4 *So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; (3) Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; (4) If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;*

All parables are supported by at least one other scripture in the Bible. God set a principle of confirmation by two or three witnesses.

No face value wording a parable is to be taken as the high level truth. The story is not the truth. The truth is what the parable represents. God does not necessarily condone the story of some parables, and some of the stories are merely teaching tools, but the spiritual truth of all parables is absolute.

The disciples asked Jesus to explain certain parables, and Jesus answered their request. They sought Jesus for the meaning, and Jesus granted their request.

The truth of the parables that Jesus spoke made the religious leaders divided on whether He was of the devil, or of God.,

Joh 10:19-21 *There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. (20) And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? (21) Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?*

In **Luke 12:41**, Peter asked for clarification on a parable that He had just spoken, and Jesus responded, not with a direct answer to what Peter asked, but He continued with another parable on the subject. Other scriptures need to be searched to put the puzzle together.

In **Luke 12:15-21**, Jesus warned His audience about covetousness, spoke a parable, and then explained the parable, all in one set of verses – no searching required to understand the truth.

John 5:39 *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*

Operating levels of faith

Since the allusions to the mustard seed parables are teachings about faith, we need to review what scriptures say about what we might term “operational levels of faith.” We will expound on scriptures which describe variances of faith among individuals and groups.

Measure of faith

God has given us the measure of faith.

Romans 12:3 *For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*

Is the measure THE measure, or can the measure be increased and decreased?

Jesus mentioned that we reap what we **measure** out. (See **Matthew 7:2, Luke 6:38**)

In contrast, some things are not measured. According to John the Baptist, Jesus was given the Holy Spirit without measure. *John 3:34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.*

Also, the people who witnessed Jesus healing a deaf man were “beyond measure astonished” or completely astonished. *Mark 7:37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.*

Some things are measured. Some things are without and beyond measure. The level of application of faith by individuals is categorized. Those operating at the highest level get the best results.

No faith/missing faith/faithless

Jesus spoke to the crowd of a “faithless generation” when no one could cast out a dumb spirit out of a young boy. *Mark 9:19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. Matthew 17:17 and Luke 9:41* also recount this.

A storm arose while Jesus and His disciples were crossing the lake in a boat, Luke records that Jesus implied that their faith was missing. *Luke 8:24-25 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. (25) And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.*

Mark records in the same scene that Jesus asked why they have no faith. *Mark 4:40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?*

Jesus admonished Thomas to not be faithless but to believe. *John 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.*

Paul wrote that not all men have faith. *2 Thessalonians 3:2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.*

Weak faith/little faith

Paul told the Romans that those with weak faith need some extra leeway and protection in certain matters. *Romans 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.*

Jesus pointed out the little faith of the disciples and reminded them of how he fed them, and for not understanding His parable of “the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees”. *Matthew 16:6-8 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. (7) And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. (8) Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?*

Jesus noted Peter’s “little faith” and his “doubt” when He saved him from sinking into the water. *Matthew 14:30-31 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. (31) And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*

Jesus assured the people of “little faith” that he would clothe them and admonished them to seek the kingdom of God instead. Little faith seeks security. Great faith seeks the kingdom. *Luke 12:28-31 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? (29) And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye*

shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. (30) For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. (31) But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Matthew 6:30-33 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? (31) Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (32) (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. (33) But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Wavering faith

Hebrews 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

In a short time, Peter went from great faith and belief in Jesus to walk on water, to little faith and doubt when he saw the wind. *Matthew 14:28-31 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. (29) And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. (30) But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. (31) And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*

James alluded to similar situations. *James 1:5-7 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. (6) But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. (7) For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*

1 Kings 18:21 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

Increasing and growing faith

Paul complimented the church in Thessalonica for their faith and charity, then said something may be lacking in their faith and needed to be perfected. *1 Thessalonians 3:10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?*

2 Thessalonians 1:3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

Paul told the church in Corinth that their faith would need to be increased in order for them to help him preach the gospel. *2 Corinthians 10:15 Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,*

The father of the demon possessed child asked Jesus to help his unbelief. Then Jesus healed the boy. *Mark 9:24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.* He told his disciples later that belief, along with “prayer and fasting” was needed in similar situations. *Mat 17:21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.*

Hebrews 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

The apostles asked Jesus for increased faith. *Luke 17:5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.*

Great faith/perfected faith/all faith/full faith

Paul, in the midst of giving hypothetical examples, implied that it requires “all faith” to move mountains. *1 Corinthians 13:1-3 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. (2) 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. (3) And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

Abraham wasn't always perfect in faith. He had to grow in faith and rid himself of all unbelief in order for God's promise for his seed to be fulfilled in him. *Romans 4:19-21 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: (20) He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; (21) And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

His faith was more of the wavering classification when he attempted to counterfeit the promised seed. *Gen 16:3-4 And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. (4) And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.*

Abraham's faith was perfected when obeyed God and offered his only son of the promise, Issac. *James 2:21-22 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? (22) Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?*

Genesis 22:16-18 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: (17) That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; (18) And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Jesus marveled at the great faith of the centurion who totally believed that Jesus could heal his son, even from a distance. *Mathew 8:10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. (See also Luke 7:9)*

Barnabas was full of faith. *Acts 11:24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.*

As was Stephen. *Acts 6:8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.*

Faith in Jesus, of Jesus, in God, of God

We have the faith of God/Jesus that He pours into us.

Romans 3:3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Galatians 3:22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

Ephesians 3:11-12 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: (12) In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

Romans 3:22 *Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:*

Mark 11:22 *And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.*

Revelation 14:12 *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

Habakkuk 2:4 *Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.*

The gift of faith

Unlike the full time living in faith, the gift of faith is situational, given to individuals by the Holy Spirit as and when He wills. **1 Corinthians 12:7-11** *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. (8) For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; (9) To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; (10) To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: (11) But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*

What determines our level, or category of faith?

Of all the categories of faith, only great faith, perfect faith and increasing faith are complimented and encouraged. The other faith levels, including small, tiny faith are described as lacking and marginally acceptable.

The primary limiter and negator of our faith is unbelief. The working level of our faith is the product of our belief versus our unbelief. Great unbelief = small or no faith. Great belief, coupled with faith filled action = great faith and perfected faith. Small or tiny faith presents an opportunity, even a necessity to consistently believe without doubting to accomplish the impossible.

Jesus told the father of the demon possessed child that belief was needed. **Mark 9:23** *Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* He told his disciples later that they could not cast the demon out of the child “because of your unbelief”. **Matthew 17:20** *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.*

Jesus message to his disciples is that moving mountains requires great faith and prayer, uncorrupted and unhindered by doubt and unbelief. **Matthew 21:21-22** *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. (22) And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*

Daniel was delivered from the lions because he believed in God. **Daniel 6:23** *Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.*

Jesus, the Seed

The first mention of seed is in Genesis when God (through Jesus) established the principle of sowing and reaping on this earth. (**Genesis 1:11**)

Prophecies and promises of the Seed

After Adam sinned, God made a proclamation to the devil of enmity between her seed and his. Her Seed would bruise the devil's head, and the devil's seed would bruise His heel. The seed is Jesus. **Genesis 3:15** *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

That set in motion a propagation of the Seed from generation to generation through Noah (**Genesis 9:9**), through Abraham (**Galatians 3:16**), through David (**2 Samuel 7:12-13**), through Mary where the Seed of the Holy Ghost impregnated her (**Luke 1:35**).

The Holy Spirit merged God's seed with Abraham's seed inside of Mary. **Luke 1:35** *And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*

Hosea looks ahead to Christ. Jezreel means seed of God and God will sow. **Hosea 2:19-23** *And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. (20) I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD. (21) And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; (22) And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. (23) And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.*

Isaiah speaks ahead to Christ springing forth out of the earth. **Isaiah 60:21** *Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.*

Isaiah 61:11 *For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.*

Jesus is the light that is sown. **Psalms 97:11** *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.*

Jeremiah speaks ahead to Christ being sowed into the new covenant. **Jeremiah 31:27-28** *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. (28) And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the LORD.*

Jeremiah 31:31 *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:*

Ezekiel spoke a parable of a planting in Israel which parallels the mustard seed parables. **Ezekiel 17:22-23** *Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent: (23) In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.*

Jesus spoke of his impending sowing into the earth. **John 12:23-24** *And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. (24) Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

The planting of the Seed and baptism

There is a natural/spiritual parallel between baptism and the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

John, who was assigned to prepare the way for Jesus, preached and baptized. This was a forerunner and a prophecy of the planting of our salvation through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. *Mark 1:2-4 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. (3) The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (4) John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*

Jesus Himself was baptized as a self-prophecy of His planting. *Matthew 3:13-17 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. (14) But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? (15) And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. (16) And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: (17) And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

When Jesus responded to the request by James and John for special places next to Him, Jesus responded with a reference to His, and their baptism. *Mark 10:38-39 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? (39) And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:*

Jesus referred again to his death, burial and resurrection. *Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!*

We are planted together in the likeness of His death and resurrection. *Romans 6:3-11 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (4) Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (5) For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: (6) Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. (7) For he that is dead is freed from sin. (8) Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: (9) Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. (10) For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. (11) Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Colossians 2:12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

1 Peter 3:17-21 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. (18) For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: (19) By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; (20) Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (21) The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

The propagation of the Seed

Jesus is God and man. Abraham supplied the human part through Mary. The Holy Spirit supplied the God part through Mary. *Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come*

upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Romans 1:3-4 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; (4) And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

Jesus had no earthly descendants to sow His seed into. The only place for the Seed to be planted was in the ground (grave) so His seed could be propagated. *Galatians 3:29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

If Jesus, the Seed, would not have died and been planted in the earth, we could not be His seed. The Seed enabled us to be planted and resurrected into His kingdom. *Romans 6:4-5 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (5) For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

Because of His death, burial and resurrection, we in Christ are a merger of the Jews and the gentiles into His body, the church.

Whether we are a bird in the mustard tree, a branch on the olive tree or a fruit vine, or we are a stalk of wheat, we are in Him and He is in us, and we are bearing fruit for others to pick from.

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Matthew 13:30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Romans 11:24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

The least of the seeds

Paul spoke of Jesus being sown in corruption, weakness, dishonor, a natural body and raised in incorruption, glory, power, a spiritual body. *1 Corinthians 15:42-45 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: (43) It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: (44) It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. (45) And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*

Isaiah speaks of His lowliness. *Isaiah 53:2-10 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. (3) He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (4) Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. (5) But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (7) He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. (8) He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he*

stricken. (9) And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

And, in continuation, speaks of His seed. *Isa 53:10-12 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. (11) He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. (12) Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

When Jesus perceived His disciples striving to be the greatest, He, speaking of Himself, made himself least among them all. *Luke 9:48 And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.*

Again, Jesus, speaking of Himself, said this. *Mark 9:35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.*

Mark 10:43-45 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: (44) And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. (45) For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Matthew 20:26-28 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; (27) And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: (28) Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Matthew 23:10-11 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. (11) But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

Luke 22:27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

Jesus, just before going to Gethsemane with His apostles, humbled Himself and washed the feet of each of them. *John 13:13-15 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. (14) If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. (15) For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*

Philippians 2:8-9 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (9) Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

The two Adams and the kingdom of God

The kingdom of heaven/God on this earth was originally given to Adam, the son of God. **(Luke 3:38)** Adam forfeited his dominion when he made the fateful decision to serve the devil over God.

Genesis 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

Romans 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Jesus reestablished the kingdom of heaven in our hearts, and soon on this earth, and the dominion which Adam had forfeited.

1 Corinthians 15:22-24 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (23) But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. (24) Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

1 Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

Romans 6:8-9 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: (9) Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

Ephesians 1:19-22 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, (20) Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, (21) Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: (22) And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

Revelation 1:5-6 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, (6) And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

God took the first Adam from the earth and gave a kingdom to him. God took the second Adam from the earth and restored the kingdom to Him so He could propagate His seed.

The parables of the mustard seed in context

As is mentioned earlier, the parables in the scriptures are spiritual truths represented by earthly, natural stories. Parables provide hidden truths of what was, what is and what is to come. The stories in the parables are not truth. In fact, some of the stories may be mere object lessons. The truth in the parables is the spiritual message of the parables. Let's examine the setting and context in which the mustard seed parables are written.

Matthew's accounts begin a series of seven parables in chapter 13, beginning with the Sower.

Parable #1

Matthew 13:3-9 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; (4) And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: (5) Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: (6) And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. (7) And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: (8) But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. (9) Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Jesus follows up in **Matthew 13:19** an explanation of the parable. The key of the explanation is "**When any one heareth the word of the kingdom**". It is a parable about people who understand or do not understand the word of the kingdom. **Luke 8:11** said the seed is the word of God. Jesus is the Word is the Seed.

Mark's gospel has a similar parable. *Mark 4:26-29 And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; (27) And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. (28) For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. (29) But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.* The seed cast into the ground is Jesus. The kingdom of God progresses until the believers and non-believers are harvested.

Parable #2

Matthew 13:24-30 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, *The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: (25) But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. (26) But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. (27) So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? (28) He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? (29) But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. (30) Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*

Jesus, when requested by His disciples, explained the parable. *Matthew 13:37-43* *He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; (38) The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; (39) The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. (40) As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. (41) The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; (42) And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (43) Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

Again, the parable expounds on the kingdom. Jesus is the Sower and the Sowed. (**Luke 8:11** says the seed is the word of God. **John 1:1** says the Word, Jesus, is God.) The field is the world. The good seed are believers in Him. The tares are the non-believers, sown by the devil. The believers and non-believers will dwell together until the end of the world when Jesus will send angels to reap the non-believers and through them into the lake of fire and the believers will remain on the earth forever in His and the Father's kingdom. Jesus is propagating His seed.

Next in Matthew is the parable of the mustard seed. We will come back to that one later.

Parable #4

The next parable after the mustard seed. *Matthew 13:33* *Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.*

By this time, we already know enough about Bible parables to figure out that the three measures of meal represent the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit collaborating to plant Jesus, the bread of life. (Not all leaven is bad. See **Leviticus 7:13, 23:17**. Only the devil's perversion of leaven is bad.) We are learning kingdom truths which previously been hidden. *Matthew 13:34-35* *All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: (35) That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.*

Parable #5

Matthew 13:44 *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.* The field is the world. The man is Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom to redeem all mankind.

Parable #6

Matthew 13:45-46 *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: (46) Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.* Again, the man is Jesus. The one pearl is you and me. He paid the price to redeem each of us.

Luke 15:4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

Parable #7

The last parable in this series: *Matthew 13:47-50 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: (48) Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. (49) So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, (50) And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

This parable foretells the end, when believers will remain and the non-believers will be cast into the lake of fire.

After the seventh parable, Jesus speaks of the written treasure of the old and new covenants. *Matthew 13:51-52 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. (52) Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.*

Now, let's step through parable #3.

Parable #3

Mark 4:30-32 And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? (31) It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: (32) But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

Matthew 13:31-32 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: (32) Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Luke 13:18-19 Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? (19) It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

The mustard seed represents the sowing of the kingdom of God/heaven on earth. This is the bruising of Christ's heel that God prophesied in **Genesis 3:15**.

Mark 4:31 says "when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:" This is a key phrase. The word "when" means at that time. At that time, Jesus became the most sin-laden, most cursed man who ever lived - for each and all of us.

2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

The main points of these seven parables:

Jesus is the Seed and the Word.

Jesus is the central figure in the kingdom of heaven/God.

The mustard seed parables refer to only one grain.

Jesus referred Himself as the seed that is cast to the ground and dies and bears much fruit.

There are prophecies of God sowing and planting a new covenant of restoration.

Jesus considered Himself as the least and the lowest servant and He died the lowliest of deaths.

Jesus brought the kingdom of heaven back to earth to reestablish what Adam lost. Jesus was sown corruptible and raised incorruptible and is the firstborn of many, and is the first fruits from the dead.

The mustard seed is Jesus. Who, or what else could it be? The Father, Holy Spirit and Jesus sowed Him into the grave, and Jesus reaped kingship in the kingdom forever.

The allusions to the mustard seed parables in context

Moving mountains and sycamines

First, let's look at Jesus's response to Peter when he made note of the cursed fig tree. *Mark 11:21-24 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. (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.*

Jesus responded with a teaching about faith, which he does regularly. He stressed the key to having what we say or pray is to believe in our heart, say AND not have doubt or unbelief. **“Have faith in God.”**

Believing without doubt and unbelief is a key component of great faith, the faith in God and of God. Jesus has that same faith, and so do we, if we believe, say and obey.

The mountain in Jesus' response represents an impossible task or a stronghold of the devil. Moving a mountain and casting into the sea of oblivion can only be done with great faith, absolutely no unbelief. Nothing wavering. (With God, all things are possible.)

Jesus demonstrated a real-life object lesson in God-faith to the disciples by cursing the fig tree, and then gave us the key to operating in that faith.

Allusion in Matthew 17:19-20

Matthew 17:19-20 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? (20) 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.

The disciples had failed to cast out a devil from a boy, and asked Jesus why they couldn't do it. Jesus responded with an emphasis on their unbelief and then **“If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed...”** in reference to the parables. Jesus made no reference to the size of the mustard seed. His reference was to believing in what the mustard seed represents.

Jesus could have easily said “Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, “If you love me and have faith in God, in Me, if you trust in me, you shall say unto this mountain...””. He could have, but He didn't because we are expected to ask and search the scriptures for the treasure.

If we have unwavering faith in God, in Jesus, kingdom faith, nothing is impossible to us, including moving mountains.

Allusion in Luke 17:5-10

This is nested in many spoken parables between chapters 12-20. Jesus' apostles made a request to Him, **“Lord, increase our faith.”** This was a noble request for help. Jesus responded with the same reference to the mustard seed (Not the size of the seed). Jesus informed the apostles of the key to having great faith.

Luke 17:5-10 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. (6) 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.

He also added another parable about the necessity of them, and us, to live by faith – all the time, through every situation. (7) *But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? (8) And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? (9) Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. (10) So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.*

Conclusion

To summarize, here are the findings based on the piecing together of the scriptures which tie to the parables of, and allusions to, the mustard seed and faith.

- Faith in God and of God is the same as faith in Jesus and of Jesus. He has given us that faith.
- I have found no scriptural support for the doctrine that tiny faith, or anything less than faith without doubt and unbelief (great faith/perfect faith), can accomplish the impossibility of moving mountains and sycamines with our voices.
- Baptism is associated with the planting of the Seed, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- The mustard seed represents Jesus, who was sown into the earth as a lowly servant/sinful, cursed criminal with a corruptible body, and was raised up a savior and King with an incorruptible, seed producing body and a Name above all names.
- The allusions to the mustard seed parables represent faith in and of the author and finisher of our faith..
- The what and who of the mustard seed is the truth message of the mustard seed parables and the allusions to them.
- The tradition of focusing on the size of the mustard seed is a detraction from the truth message concerning faith.

Lord, help us to use the faith that You have given us to be effective in Your kingdom and pleasing to You.

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.