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The Message of Jonah



[A transcript of a message by Jacob Prasch: note that this is speech prose. Note also that Hebrew terms have only been loosely transliterated.]

by JACOB PRASCH

BEFORE we turn to the book of Jonah, turn very briefly please to the book of Acts chapter 2.24 and 27:

"And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power."

In verse 27 we have a quote from the book of Isaiah and the Psalms, *Because thou wilt not abandon my soul to hades, nor allow thy holy one to undergo decay.*

It was impossible for death to hold Jesus in its power: it was a theological, spiritual and logical impossibility.

We are told in the book of Hebrews that Isaac was willing to sacrifice his only son — as a type of Christ — because even then he knew that God could raise his son up from the dead to fulfil his purpose. It is an example of how God puts somebody in a 'death situation', with the assurance that his resurrection power is going to be found in it. With these things in view turn with me to the book of the prophet Jonah.

The word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying,

2 "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me."

3 But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

4 And the LORD hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up.

5 Then the sailors became afraid, and every man cried to his god, and they threw the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone below into the hold of the ship, lain down, and fallen sound asleep.

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Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path
— Psalm 119:105



6 So the captain approached him and said, "How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god. Perhaps your god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish."
7 And each man said to his mate, "Come, let us cast lots so we may learn on whose account this calamity has struck us." So they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.

(Now in Proverbs 16:33 it says: *The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.*)

8 Then they said to him, "Tell us, now! On whose account has this calamity struck us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?"

9 And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land."

10 Then the men became extremely frightened and they said to him, "How could you do this?" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

11 So they said to him, "What should we do to you that the sea may become calm for us?" for the sea was becoming increasingly stormy.

12 And he said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm for you, for I know that on account of me this great storm has come upon you."

13 However, the men rowed desperately to return to land but they could not, for the sea was becoming even stormier against them.

14 Then they called on the LORD and said, "We earnestly pray, O LORD, do not let us perish on account of this man's life and do not put innocent blood on us; for Thou, O LORD, hast done as Thou hast pleased."

15 So they picked up Jonah, threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging.

16 Then the men feared the LORD greatly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

17 And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

We're not told it was a whale. The Jews translate this literally as in modern Hebrew *liyathan* — Leviathan, whales are not usually indigenous to the mediterranean, we don't know what kind of fish it was, we just assume it was a whale (strictly speaking of course a whale is a mammal not a fish — it has no gills).

Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the stomach of the fish, "I called out of my distress to the LORD, And He answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; Thou didst hear my voice.

3 "For Thou hadst cast me into the deep, Into the heart of

the seas, And the current engulfed me. All Thy breakers and billows passed over me.

4 "So I said, 'I have been expelled from Thy sight. Nevertheless I will look again toward Thy holy temple.'

5 "Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, Weeds were wrapped around my head.

6 "I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever, But Thou hast brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God.

7 "While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD; And my prayer came to Thee, Into Thy holy temple.

8 "Those who regard vain idols forsake their faithfulness, 9 But I will sacrifice to Thee With the voice of thanksgiving That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD."

10 Then the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land. Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying,

2 "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you".

3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days' walk.

4 Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days

and Nineveh will be overthrown."

Now the word here for overthrown is *nechpakeh*. It's the same word used in Genesis for the destruction of Sodom, the most terrible destruction and judgement on a city that the Jews had a record of in the Torah. By using that particular term *nechpakeh* it would have conjured visions of what God did to Sodom and Gomorrah.

5 Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them.

6 When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat on the ashes.

7 And he issued a proclamation and it said, "In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water.

8 "But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands.

9 "Who knows, God may turn and relent, and withdraw His burning anger so that we shall not perish?"

10 When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity

"While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD; And my prayer came to Thee, into Thy holy temple."



which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it.

1 But it greatly displeased Jonah, and he became angry.

2 And he prayed to the LORD and said, "Please LORD, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore, in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that Thou art a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity.

3 "Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life."

4 And the LORD said, "Do you have good reason to be angry?"

5 Then Jonah went out from the city and sat east of it. There he made a shelter for himself and sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen in the city.

6 So the LORD God appointed a plant and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head to deliver him from his discomfort. And Jonah was extremely happy about the plant.

7 But God appointed a worm when dawn came the next day, and it attacked the plant and it withered.

8 And it came about when the sun came up that God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he became faint and begged with all his soul to die, saying, "Death is better to me than life."

9 Then God said to Jonah, "Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?" And he said, "I have good reason to be angry, even to death."

10 Then the LORD said, "You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work, and which you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight.

11 "And should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?"

Now understand that this is a very arid climate — it's not that the air conditioning isn't working — this was a gruelling situation to be in.

Now the idea of not knowing the difference between their right hand or their left hand in the Hebrew text is this: you'd have the term *yad*, right hand is *yemani*, as in "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may I forget my right hand." *Im eschcachak yerushalim tishcah yemani* (the King James mistranslates it "my right hand forget her skill" — it's not what it says in the Hebrew).

The right hand of the Lord in the bible:

"The Lord will bring salvation with his right hand". Isaiah has the *same to whom has the arm* — same Hebrew word *yad* — *of the Lord been revealed?*" The Right Hand is a type of Jesus in the Old Testament. What it is

basically saying is, "these pagans don't know the way of salvation, they don't know the difference between the right hand and the left hand they don't know how to save themselves." It's the right hand of the Lord that brings salvation. That would be the implication from the Hebrew term: the right hand.

Quite a story! It was probably written during the reign of Jeroboam, somewhere between 814 and 783 BCE. We also know from history that there was an Assyrian king who became a monotheistic king, his name was Adad-Nirari III who reigned roughly from 810 to 782 (there was actually one Egyptian pharaoh who became a monotheist and there were a couple of kings of Babylon who became monotheists — see the book of Daniel). It may have been this king who turned to the true God.

Jews were always called to be lights to the gentiles — even in the Old Testament. They didn't do it the same way we do it now but if salvation was to come from the Jews, as Jesus said in John chapter four, they were still to be his witnesses to these nations and show them the true God. Today rabbis complain about "Christians" proselytising Jews, forgetting that the Jews themselves, based on what Moses originally decreed, were supposed to be out trying to win people to believe in the true God! The very fact that they are not doing that, shows that they are no longer practising a true Judaism.

The Story of Jonah

He was reluctant to go to Nineveh and not without good reason. These were, to say the least, not the nicest people in the world: they were 'bad people', they were total heathens! More than that, as a bible believing Jew, he would have read the prophecies of his predecessor the prophet Amos and he would have seen what God decreed and predicted through Amos about Nineveh. So he would even have had a biblical basis for not wanting to go there. It was not just that he knew God would have compassion on them but that they might kill him. He knew that, on the face of it, they were destined for judgement, as the prophet Nahum had predicted (and this happened at a later point when they turned back to their pagan ways), he had good reason not to go.

But let's begin with Jonah's name 'Yonah', meaning, in Hebrew, a dove. What images would this conjure up? One is in John 2:16. Jesus drove the people out of the temple who were selling doves (this comes from Leviticus 14. A dove was an animal deemed suitable for sacrifice and as such it was a type of Christ — as all these animals were). In the song of Solomon chapter 1:5, he tells the lover that *her eyes are like doves*.

Eyes because doves are monogamous birds and they only have a relationship with their partners, they don't



procreate with other doves. So too in Genesis 8, first Noah sends out a bird that the Torah would later decree to be 'unkosha' — a raven, but the second bird he sends out is a dove. All these images would have been conjured up in the minds of Jews. In the New Testament Matthew chapter 3:18, the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus as a dove. All these images might highlight some aspect of Jonah and his character but probably the most important is found in the Psalm of David 55:4-6:

4 *My heart is in anguish within me, And the terrors of death have fallen upon me.*

5 *Fear and trembling come upon me; And horror has overwhelmed me.*

6 *And I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest."*

The idea is this: wanting to escape from the calamity that has come upon you and Jonah was a man that wanted to escape from the calamity that came upon him!

But what about this calamity, what does it mean for us? What we have to understand about Jonah is the first thing we have to understand about all the Hebrew prophets. Every single Hebrew prophet is a type of Jesus, a type of the Messiah, every one of them foreshadows him: who he would be and what he would do. There is no Hebrew prophet whose life does not foreshadow or typify the Messiah who would come after them, to bring in the Redemption which they prophesied.

Let's look at Jonah as a type of Jesus

Turn with me please to 2 Kings chapter 14:25. That's the first place we read about Jonah in the bible.

He [Jeroboam] restored the border of Israel from and the entrance of Hamath as far as the sea of Havenah, according to the word of the Lord the God of Israel, which he spoke through his servant Jonah the son of Amittai the prophet who was of Gath-hepher.

Notice that Jonah was sent to his own people the Jews first — only after this was he sent to the gentiles. In Matthew chapter 15:24 we read the following:

But Jesus said, *"I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*

Jesus was first sent only to his own people, then only at a later point was he sent to the non Jews. We are told that Jonah was from this particular area Gath-hepher: Gath-hepher is in walking distance of Nazareth.

Now there was something unique about Jonah in this. Turn with me to John chapter 7:52 — something here

that the Sanhedrin overlooked!

They answered and said to him, "You are not also from Galilee are you? Search and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee." (or as they say in the same chapter, verse 41) *"The Messiah is not going to come from Galilee, is he?"* No prophet comes from Galilee? They were wrong. Jonah came from Galilee! He's the only one except for Jesus who was from Galilee.

Jonah chapter 1:4-6, a terrible storm comes, and the word for wind in Greek in the New Testament is *pneuma* and in the Hebrew it is of course *ruach*, but in both it is also the word for spirit. In this storm sent by God, during the storm Jonah sleeps in the boat and the other people are frantic about this, "How can you be sleeping in the boat during the storm?"

[We have a tape on this, The boats of the bible on Mark chapter 4 and 6, where we explain the typology of the boats in greater depth]

But let's look very briefly at Mark chapter 4:37-38:

37 *And there arose a fierce gale of wind* (same idea this would look very much like the Septuagint Greek version of Jonah). *and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up.*

38 *And He Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they awoke Him and said to Him,*

"Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

What happens to Jonah prefigures what will happen to the Lord Jesus. Jonah becomes a type of Christ.

Now let's understand this a bit more. Jonah 1:12, *"Pick me up and throw me into the sea then the sea will become calm for you."*

Jonah, of his own choice, was willing to lay down his own life to bring salvation to others, including gentiles. John 10:17-18, *"For this reason the Father loves me because I lay down my life that I might take it again, no one is taking it from me but that I lay it down of my own initiative"*.

Jonah was willing to lay his life down to bring salvation and deliverance to others, so the Messiah, who Jonah prefigures, was willing to lay his life down so salvation would come to others.

Turn with me now please to Luke chapter 11:30 *"For just as Jonah became a sign to the Israelites, so shall the son of man be to this generation."*

We know from Kings that Jonah was the son of Amittai. He prophesied during the reigns of Jeroboam [both very bad men/kings. There were two Jeroboams; one was as bad as the other]. At the preaching of Jonah the gentiles repented when the Jews would not, at the message of Jesus the gentiles accepted what he said at a time most Jews did not. Not all Jews rejected him, not



all Jews rejected Jonah. But basically, it was the gentiles not the Jews who repented in the days of Jonah and it was the gentiles not the Jews who repented in the days of Jesus.

Jonah 1:17 tells us this: "*The Lord appointed a great fish*".

The Lord sent the storm in chapter 2:1

Jonah prayed in the stomach of the fish, he said "*I called out of my distress, and he answered me, etc.*"

The Lord appointed the storm, the Lord appointed the great fish. Now this was a 'death experience'. Some argue from the Hebrew text that Jonah may have actually died biologically, from the implications of what 'Sheol' could mean. But certainly the connotation would be there of a 'death place'. It was the Lord who appointed Jonah to a place of death, the Lord consigned him to it.

In Acts chapter 2:23 we read, "*this man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God...*"

Isaiah 53:10, "*It was the will of the Lord to smite him.*"

Jonah was delivered up by the foreknowledge of God to a place of destruction, Jesus was delivered up by the foreknowledge of God to a place of destruction. Jonah 'died' in the sea, he died, as it were, his death experience [whether he died or not people may debate but his death experience took place in the sea].

Turn with me please to Psalm 69.

This is of course a psalm of David which is Messianic prophecy in the literary genre of Hebrew poetry. It is in this psalm for instance, we read in verse 21, "*They gave me gall for my food and they gave me vinegar to drink*". A prophesy of what would happen when the Lord Jesus was on the cross. However, this psalm which looks ahead to the death of Jesus begins, *Hoshanna Elohim: save me O God from the waters that have threatened my life*.

Metaphorically then the death of Jesus is represented in Hebrew prophesy as a drowning experience. Now we just sang this wonderful hymn, "When peace like a river attended my soul; when sorrows like sea billows roll", this was written by Mr Stockwood but what many people don't know and what I didn't know until five or six years ago is that he composed it after his family drowned where, of all places, a building of the American colony hotel now stands in Jerusalem. It was after his family died that he actually wrote it in Jerusalem. The idea of 'sea billows roll' is the drowning experience that happened to his family — but also in biblical typology particularly the Psalms — you see, when people are under this kind of death experience, it is alluded to as drowning and points to Jesus.

Jonah chapter 3:8, But both man and beast in sack cloth and ashes repented after Jonah had told these

people, "Repent, repent, repent, God will destroy this city in forty days." And he goes on to say, "perhaps if you repent God may turn back — (in verse 8) he may relent."

Recently I actually had a long email from somebody trying to justify people who predict things that don't happen. He was trying to justify Rick Joyner, Gerald Coates and these guys, by saying, "Well, was Jonah a false prophet? Look at what Jonah predicted and it didn't happen." That was his argument to justify these false prophets! However, the text of Jonah makes it very clear that it was a conditional prophecy: that says "if you don't repent this is what's going to happen." He never said that it was going to happen — full stop. It was conditional. It's an unfair comparison — but they always have to pervert the bible out of context.

Nonetheless we see that Jonah gave a direct message of 'repentance because the judgement is coming.' In the gospel of St. Matthew chapter 4:17, Jesus began to preach, "repent because the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jonah gave a message of repentance so that judgement could be averted, so it was with Jesus and his disciples. "Save yourself from this wicked generation."

Jonah chapter 2:4, *So I said, "I have been expelled from thy sight from before thine eyes."* The Hebrew says that Jonah was expelled 'from before the presence of God', God could not look upon him, God wouldn't look upon him, he was cast away from before God's eyes. We look at the gospel of St. Matthew chapter 27:46, "*Eli Eli Lama Sabachthani — my God, my God why have you forsaken me*". Jonah was cast away from the presence of God's sight, God would not look upon Jonah, so God would not look upon Jesus.

Jonah 1:17, He was three days and three nights in the stomach of the great fish and, as Jesus of course tells us in Matthew 17:39-40, that's a picture of the resurrection. As Jonah was three days in the stomach of the great fish, so Jesus would be three days in a tomb. Jonah is, like all of Israel's prophets, a type of Jesus. He teaches about the Messiah who would come after him, every Hebrew prophet does. When you read their lives carefully, they teach something about the Messiah — and Jonah is no exception.

Jonah is given over to this death experience, but there were things in Jonah's life that were blocking him from being conformed to what God wanted him to be.

1. He resisted God's will, he didn't want to do what God wanted him to do and again not without good reason: he knew what Amos had said about this nation that he was been sent to, he knew these people were bad. Who wants to be sent to a place like that where you might get killed?

2. Secondly, he lacked the compassion of God. He understood the judgement and anger of God but he lacked the compassion of God, and he was very good at



something which we say in Yiddish: *treching*, complaining. *Trech, trech, trech*, complain, complain, complain. Somebody who with good reason doesn't want to do what God wants them to do. What God was asking him to do was very difficult: to go to a people he didn't even like, a people who were going to hate him because he wasn't one of them. In terms of the ancient world, he was from the west they were from the east.

Just by virtue of the fact that he was a Hebrew, a believer in the true God, not a pagan and that he was from the west of the known world and they were from the east, that made him a target just by going there. His complaint was not without good reason: the things he was concerned with were valid points, humanly speaking. It was difficult for him to understand how God could have such compassion on such barbarians.

You know for me it would be like, I suppose, going to fundamentalist muslims who put a bomb on a aeroplane at Lockerby, or who want to kill my Israeli family, or perhaps like a Jew being sent as a evangelist to the generation of Germans who carried out the Holocaust. There were good reasons, humanly speaking, why he could not feel or experience the compassion of God for these people, these were bad men.

The Jonah within us:

It says the word of the Lord came twice to Jonah. Now the word for word in Hebrew is *davar*, but in Greek it's *Logos*. It doesn't mean a message so much as it means a person. Jesus is the *Logos/davar* in the Old Testament.

Once more, in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit was only for certain people at certain times, high priests kings and prophets but the Holy Spirit still communicated Jesus to them the way he does us. It was only Jesus' identity that was not there but it was still him: "the word came", it means "the Lord Jesus came". It was a christological encounter with Christ in Old Testament terms. Again when Adam heard God walking in the garden — that was Jesus. When Jacob wrestled with the *Metatron* (angel of God), it was Jesus. Jesus was in the Old Testament the same as in the New. When the word of the Lord came, it was an encounter with Christ.

When the Lord asks you or me to do things we don't want to do, or when there are things in my character or your character that are blocking what God wants, the Lord's not going to give you just a message, he's going to come to you. Jesus is going to stand in front of you, you're going to 'see' him. The message is going to be obvious once he comes and you'll know what's wrong with you! It's the encounter with the person, not just

the word or the message or a letter or a telegram, a fax, an email — it's the person. When Jesus comes to us we'll know where we stand, when we stand in front of him.

The name of Jonah:

In the Hebrew part of the world today Jews normally name their children after dead ancestors but in the bible they named them after biblical characters in Israel's history. In Hebraic thought, 'son of', does not simply mean offspring — biological descent or pedigree, it means *in the character of*. Turn with me please to Matthew 16:17, Jesus said, "*Blessed are you Simon bar Jonah*" — that's of course Aramaic and not Hebrew: the Hebrew would be *ben Jonah*. Now why is Jesus calling him by his surname as well as his first name? True his father's name was Jonah but there's more to it than that: it's providential that Peter's name was Bar Jonah. He's in the character of Jonah — and so are you and so am I.

"Jonah didn't want to get involved with these gentiles, nor did Peter bar Jonah want to get involved with gentiles!"

Here they go to the place Caesarea Philippi: a place where the Greeks had worshipped Pan and a place where the Romans worshipped Caesar Augustus. Here in Matthew 16:22 Peter was very angry and wanted Jesus to deal with and judge these pagan gentiles for defiling the holy land just as Jonah wanted the Lord to

judge the gentiles. Jonah didn't want to go to the gentiles did he? Neither did Peter — in the character of Jonah — in Acts chapter 10, the story of Cornelius and the 'non-kosher' food, Peter did not want to go to the gentiles just as Jonah didn't. "You are Bar Jonah", "Peter, you are in the character of Jonah, you don't like these Greeks and Romans, you're in the character of Jonah, he didn't like the pagans either, you're in the character of Jonah: he didn't want to go where I wanted him to go."

Look at John 21:18:

18 "*Truly, truly, I say to you (he's speaking here to Peter), when you were younger, you used to gird yourself, and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go.*"

Peter, in the character of Jonah, didn't want to go.

Look at Galatians chapter 2:11-12: Jonah had a attitude against non Jews that made him behave less than honourably, Gal 2:11:

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

12 *For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he be-*



gan to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.

Jonah didn't want to get involved with these gentiles, nor did Peter bar Jonah want to get involved with gentiles!

There are a lot of people I don't want to get involved with. As a younger believer I went through terrible, terrible battles of hatred and I mean hatred. I remember I saw the film *The Hiding place* — Corrie ten Boom and what the Nazis did to these Christians, these believers in Holland who protected Jews: how they murdered the old man and raped the women and so forth — and I was so angry. I began praising God for creating hell, not just for Nazis but for Germans — I hated Germans. When we take our tours to Israel we go to *Yad vashem* [the Holocaust Memorial] I stay in the bus. I don't go in there. I remember once I visited the Nazi death camp at Dachau where the Germans did the experiments on the Jewish children. I just think of my own children. I think even of that little girl hiding in the movie *Schindler's List*. I could just picture my son Eli in that situation. I battled with hatred towards Germans.

My father was in the American military in the second world war: his family was from Merseyside. His mother was from there. (She left before the war and came back after the war) When my father came with the American navy, he saw what the Germans did to Liverpool, how they destroyed everything including where his mother was from. And I had this hatred of German people. It took me a long time through the Lord bringing German people into my life — whom I love and who are believers — to lose this hatred.

There were some people who hated gypsies: "these people were crooks, they're connivers", but there was someone along the road who had the compassion of the Lord for the gypsies and now they're the fastest growing church in the United Kingdom, lives radically changed.

To take another example: I've been attacked by muslims even in England — physically attacked by gangs on Speakers' Corner for preaching the gospel — and it's not a racial thing: I love Asian christians: they're great people. But when I read what the muslims do in Pakistan to christians or what they do to christians in Saudi Arabia I get angry. I look at the Amnesty International website and I just get so angry.

One of the great blessings of my life, one of the great thrills of my life was when I spoke about Islam in Auckland, New Zealand and some Iranians, who had just come to New Zealand from Iran, Shia muslims, repented and accepted Jesus and renounced Mohammed and the Koran and became believers.

I know people who were anti-semitic before they got saved: some crooked Jewish landlord did something to their aunt Milly thirty years ago and so they hated Jews.

But after they got saved the Lord gave them a love and a burden for the Jews they couldn't explain and they couldn't even understand. There's things in us, things that are not irrational, things that have some logical basis — sometimes even an apparent biblical basis: there were reasons Jonah didn't like these people. He had read what Amos said about them, he had read what God was going to do, so it was not totally irrational, in fact it was totally rational. There were good logical reasons humanly speaking. But he could not see and understand the compassion of God. No matter how bad these people are, when the word of the Lord comes to us and we stand before Jesus, we see that no matter how bad they are (even compared to us); we're all infinitely bad compared to Jesus. You know the sort of thing:

"Single mothers on council estates be warned: you've got five kids from three different yobbos and we're having to support them. Why do I have to pay taxes and support my family? To pay for these kids why don't these yobbos that you pick up in the pub support their own kids? Why should I have to?" It's rational but where's the compassion of Jesus for these single mothers? When I see them on the news doing these things, throwing bottles at football games: they don't care about football, they just care about getting drunk and throwing bottles — it's tribalism. "Please beat their heads in", that's me! Not altogether irrational but "where's the compassion of Jesus?" I've known yobbos who've got saved, I've known muslims who've been saved and I've known prostitutes who've been saved and I've known drug addicts who've been saved: I used to be one! Where is the compassion of Jesus?

So Jonah gets plunged, God creates a storm, God appoints a death and there he finds himself buried in the guts of a fish, underneath the Mediterranean somewhere between Turkey and Tel Aviv. Now this particular experience is one of the things in the bible which theologically teaches about life after death. But it also is one of the things that reveals something about what will happen to Jesus. When he died on the cross for our sin, when his Father couldn't look upon him, when his father's voice went into the depths of sheol and raised him from the dead. We are told in Acts 2:24 that death itself could not contain Jesus Christ, the grave was not strong enough to contain him, death itself was not strong enough to control Jesus, to hold him in.

Turn with me please to 2 Corinthians 4:8-14:
8 we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing;
9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;
10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.
11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be



manifested in our mortal flesh.

12 So death works in us, but life in you.

13 But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore also we speak;

14 knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you.

As the prophet Hosea puts it in chapter 6:2, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is our resurrection because his death is our death. Look at what Hosea says, *He will revive us after two days; and the third day he will raise us up that we may live before him.*

Because Jesus' death is our death, his resurrection is our resurrection, could death contain Jesus? No! Can death contain you or I? Because of Jesus, No! There are no shortage of things in my life, that block what God is wanting me to be and things in my life that are blocking me from really doing what God is wanting me to do. Sometimes I feel like I am being put to death, when I complain about my neck, when I complain about been rejected by so much of the popular church because I won't go along with what's going on. Then I get a copy of Brother Andrew's newsletter and I read of christians living in almost sub-human poverty, imprisoned and their families unable to support themselves. My kids have a roof over their head: what do I have to complain about? Yes my neck hurts but I have pills. There are people whose necks hurt and they don't have the money for a pill. I have a pill in my pocket if my neck goes into spasm, I carry it around with me. All that bothers me. Why am I being put to death?

Why is it that ministries who teach the truth are always struggling for money but the ones who are corrupt rake it in? Because they struggle for money too — only they are expanding their corruption! Honest ministries are trying to expand the truth — they have to struggle and trust God. Death works in me. Why, Lord, if I am teaching the truth? I was only upholding the Trinity yet people who were part of Moriel began using my name a few weeks ago to endorse people who denied it. When I took the stand, they slandered me, they said I was mentally unbalanced from my automobile accident. Maybe I am unbalanced — but not from my automobile accident — who needs this? What those people did was wicked but the real question is why did God allow it? What is God saying to me in this? God will deal with them but what is he saying to me? When my neck hurts the way it does today, (I am going to have to take a pill pretty soon!) what's God saying to me? What's God saying to you, when you are

in the fish's guts? Remember Jesus said he's like Jonah: it seems like God himself banishes us from his presence. We are behaving in a way we think is reasonable and at least it's not irrational. We had reason on our side but we are in this bad situation. Sometimes lousy employment, sometimes no employment, financial hardship, health problems, problems in the church, problems in the ministry, problems in the family, problems in the marriage, problems, problems, problems. It seems like the Lord has banished us from his presence, he put us in a tomb, he left us in a grave. Oh! Not the Ninevites, not the Mormons or the Muslims, not the yobbos or the prostitutes! He puts us in the grave.

He's banished us from his sight. But death could not contain Jesus and death cannot contain you either. I've said a thousand times the test of a true christian is not that they don't have trials — on the contrary if you don't have trials you're not a christian — you have tribulation in the world. The test of a christian is not that you don't go into the fish's guts, the test of the trial is what happens when you're inside of it.

Turn with me to Psalm 18:4-6.

There are direct parallels in the Psalms to what happened to Jonah in that fish's gut.

4 *The cords of death encompassed me, And the torrents of ungodliness terrified me.*

5 *The cords of Sheol surrounded me (Jonah uses the word sheol). The*

snares of death confronted me.

6 *In my distress I called upon the LORD, And cried to my God for help; He heard my voice out of His temple, And my cry for help before Him came into His ears.*

We may have been banished from his sight but not from his ears. Psalm 42:7: *Deep calls to deep at the sound of thy waterfalls and all breakers and waves have rolled over me (just like Jonah).*

Psalm 116:3-9:

3 *The cords of death encompassed me, And the terrors of Sheol came upon me; I found distress and sorrow.*

4 *Then I called upon the name of the LORD: "O LORD, I beseech Thee, save my life!"*

5 *Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate.*

6 *The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me.*

7 *Return to your rest, O my soul, For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.*

8 *For Thou hast rescued my soul from death, My eyes from tears, My feet from stumbling.*

9 *I shall walk before the LORD In the land of the living — not the dead.*

Even if you die there is a resurrection, there is a

**"He will revive us
after two days,
and the third day he
will raise us up that we
may live before him"**



millennial kingdom. (Verse 15) *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his godly ones.* Even if we die we see him not in the land of the dead but in the land of the living. What does Job say? Job 19:25-27:

25 *"And as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.*

26 *"Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God;*

27 *Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes shall see and not another.*

Even if we die we will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

"*Out of the depths I cry to thee O Lord*", wrote David. When you're in the depths, you've been banished from God's own presence. Your arguments are rational — at least to your own mind, certainly they are logical and even to a degree biblical. There you are in the stomach of the fish, the waves have overtaken you, you are not only drowning but are perhaps drowned. The bars of sheol give you no way out and you can't even see the Lord: he has banished you from his presence. But these Psalms don't tell us he looks upon us, they say he hears. Then and only then did the fish regurgitate Jonah out onto the beach. He must have looked a mess and smelt even worse but he was ready for action! When you go through a mess like this you might not look so good either and could also do with a bottle of eau de Cologne, but you'll be ready for action. As Paul said, his death is our death, so his resurrection our resurrection.

Death could not contain him, death cannot contain us. As Hosea said, his death is our death, his resurrection our resurrection, death could not contain Jesus and death cannot contain us. You're going down for the third time, you're in the gut of the world. God is calling you to do things you don't want to do, you know there's things in your life and in your character that don't reflect the character of Jesus. Like Peter you are bar Jonah. Like Peter I am bar Jonah.

Here comes the storm, the tempest that God himself sends and the fish is waiting for his lunch and it's you! There you are down in the depths, banished before the eyes of God himself, while the wicked continue in their wickedness, instead of setting his hand against them he has set it against you. You've had it spiritually, you've had it emotionally.

3 *"For Thou hadst cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the current engulfed me. All Thy breakers and billows passed over me.*

4 *"So I said, 'I have been expelled from Thy sight. Nevertheless I will look again toward Thy holy temple.'*

5 *"Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, Weeds were wrapped around my head.*

6 *"I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever, But Thou hast brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God.*

7 *"While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD; And my prayer came to Thee, into Thy holy temple.*

8 *Those who regard vain idols forsake their faithfulness,*

9 *But I will sacrifice to Thee with the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD."*

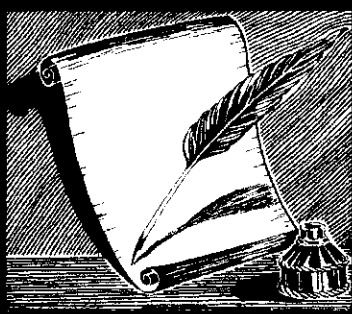
When I was born again I made a vow. I vowed that I would accept Jesus as the Lord of my life, the one who saved me; he gave his life to me I vowed I'd give my life to him. Every time I fall into sin I am not keeping that vow, every time I resist his will I am not keeping that vow. I made the vow but when it comes time to pay up I can always find a very logical argument, not infrequently even a scriptural argument, against 'paying up'. When you make a vow to the Lord don't delay in

paying it, he won't let you out of it. The storm will come, the fish will eat you, but the fish couldn't hold Jonah and it won't hold you either, the grave couldn't hold Jesus and it won't hold you either. You tell the Lord you'll pay that vow. You know, what has happened to you has happened for a reason, the fish will vomit you out on the beach as well. I

think every one of us should be called bar Jonah. I certainly think it's a name that suits me: bar Jonah. It says "the billows and waves overtook me." Sometimes the billows and waves overtake me and even though it may be the people, what is God saying in it? I don't know what he is saying to you, sometimes I am not even clear what he is saying to me but I know this, sometimes the only place you're ever going to find out is in the gut of the fish. This fish could not devour Jonah, the grave couldn't hold Christ. The fish could not devour Jonah, he was invincible no matter what it seemed like. No matter how adverse the circumstances, even out of God's sight that fish could not hold him, that grave could not hold Jesus Christ. I don't know what fish swallowed you, I don't know what tomb you might be in but it can't hold you either.

GOD BLESS YOU

**"Even if we die
we will see the
goodness of the Lord
in the land of the
living."**



From the
editor's desk...

We'd love to hear from you. Write or email us at the addresses below.

Please Note...

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What's been happening?

In the Name of Jesus Christ, Greetings

May I introduce myself, my name is Margaret Godwin (just Marg will do) and I am pleased to take on the role of Administrator for Moriel Ministries in Australia for as long as it pleases Our Father in Heaven.

The Ministry is now fully operational out of Melbourne and we have a team of willing helpers to do the mail out and other jobs that require doing from time to time.

THANKYOU

There are some people I would personally like to thank for their help:

- Maureen O'Brien from Christian Witness Ministries and her husband Terry who have paved the way in their setting up of C.W.M. in Australia. Their contribution with the blessing of Philip Powell has been invaluable and helped set Moriel administration on a strong foundation here.

- Mark & Rachel who so willingly have given of their own time and expertise to getting everything into print. This young couple have taken a step in faith of expanding their printing business (The Ink Spot) and they have given far more than we could ever repay, so we pray for God's blessing towards their new venture.

- Keith & Carol Driller of Lifeshaper (Langwarrin) who provide our tapes and videos with such a giving heart. Many, many hours have gone into producing the best quality product available. Their encouragement and help has shone through their Love of Jesus.

- John Zari, our international ad-

ministrator in the UK, with his never-ending patience towards his impatient "Aussie Scribe" has been wonderful and along with his delightful sense of humour has seen us through a great deal.

- Allison Dodd, Jacob's personal assistant, has been more than helpful in advising and setting up the administrative side of things (from the UK perspective).

- Philip Foster who helps put our newsletter together, thankyou.

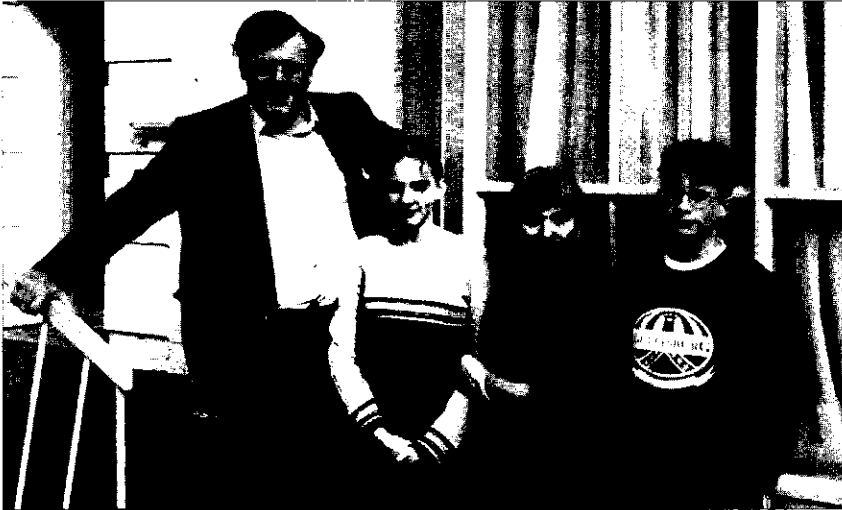
The way the whole team of Moriel in the UK is so excited about getting the Australian connection set up to the Glory of God has made me feel very humble. May the Lord continue to bless them as they give so generously of themselves.

I am constantly amazed and grateful for the way God has brought all these people together with all their different talents and kindnesses to me. What a wonderful God we serve, who has all things in the palm of His hand.

And lastly and by no means least, all those faithful brothers and sisters who have continued to pray and support the ministry. Where would we be without their faithfulness?

JACOB'S TOUR

Jacob's visit was like a whirling dervish but how greatly blessed we were. God has opened up the Moriel Ministry to Australia in a way that only He can do. Jacob's teaching was so precious to us all who were fortunate to see and hear him and what a joy to meet his family. His wife Pavia and children Batmiel (Beth) and Eli. All who know and love Jacob dearly will understand when I say that God surely knew what he



was doing in bringing Jacob and Pavia together; she is blessed with a very quiet and gentle way.

Beth and Eli were an absolute delight and they all shared so generously of themselves individually and as a family — I missed them greatly when they left.

We had a delightful time here in Melbourne showing them our beautiful city. The entire family enjoyed a visit to the Healesville Sanctuary. I think Pavia was relieved to know we do not have taipans slithering down our streets. Koalas and kangaroos were the highlight of the visit. Jacob felt that God definitely expressed His sense of humour when he made the platypus.

Beth was delighted to be able to go to the area where the television show "Neighbours" is made and we were fortunate to visit on a day that they were filming externally.

The gastronomic delights of Lygon Street certainly brought a smile to Jacob's face.

And my cat, Sylvester, has never enjoyed so much pampering as she did whilst Eli was here; at one stage I thought she may well have been on her way to the UK, although I do not think that Eli's guinea pig, Stanley, would have been too impressed had that been so.

They then went off to Sydney and Surfers Paradise before flying home to England much to Jacob's sadness. It is not easy touring the world without family for weeks and sometimes months on end so it was a very spe-

cial time for them as a family.

Thought you may like to see a photo of the family taken here in Melbourne.

OTHER ITEMS

Enclosed is our new catalogue (throw out the old one) which we hope you will find easy to follow. New videos, tapes and books will be added, as they become available. Please if you have any problems with our products do not hesitate to let me know.

We welcome your letters and comments (good or bad) and will publish a small selection in each newsletter.

Doctrinal queries will be forwarded to the UK for a reply but as you can appreciate this will take some time so please be patient.

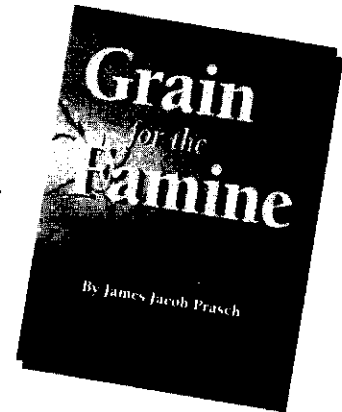
As God leads the team here at Moriel to be ever listening to what He would have us do, we would appreciate your prayers and support for this ministry and for Jacob and his family.

Finally big thankyou's to those throughout Australia that have so generously helped organise meetings etc in their own area and for those who offered accommodation during Jacob's tour. I am most humbled by the love and help that has been forthcoming and by the way that Our Gracious Lord continues to bless the ministry.

To Him be the Glory.

IN CHRIST

**IT'S COMING
AND WILL
BE HERE SOON!**



No, it is not our precious Lord as yet! We are happy to advise that Jacob's book "**Grain for the Famine**" will be available here in Australia in early November 1999; with a second book due for release early in the new year.

We are more than happy to take orders now and forward to you as soon as they become available. Please use catalogue order form.

● *For more information: see new catalogue enclosed with this issue.*

PLEASE NOTE: This is the only official book authored by Jacob Prasch and is only available through the new Moriel Ministries address.

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Your letters

Happy to re-establish relationship with Jacob.

Mrs & Mrs Dover, Queensland

I recently read on the Moriel site that Jacob is no longer associated with Grafted Olive. I would appreciate it if you would forward future writings from Jacob, as they are very encouraging and truly give a meaning to the scriptures that are not taught much these days.

C Woodland, Queensland

Scribe: Jacob was never associated with Grafted Olive. Mr Henry Sheppard of South Australia who formally mailed out the Moriel newsletter has started the Grafted Olive. Thank you so much for your letter and we are delighted to put you on the mailing list.

We have just received the leaflet in the Vanguard giving us your address so that we can receive Jacob's newsletter again. We have missed it and were told that it was no longer available from the previous source. We do love Jacob's ministry, are you able to give us any idea why it was shut down so quickly with no reason given?

Mr & Mrs Smith, Queensland

Scribe: By now you will have read Jacob's statement and all has been explained. We look forward to a long and greatly blessed relationship. Praise God.

Please add me to your mailing list for Jacob's newsletter. Thank you and God bless you greatly.

Mr Higgins, Victoria

I was on the list to receive the newsletter and then suddenly it stopped appearing in my mail. I am only too happy to continue my financial assistance for Moriel and would appreciate receiving the newsletter once again.

Mr Roberts, NSW

Scribe: Dear Mr Roberts there is no subscription fee for the newsletter. If at any time you wish to assist the ministry that is between you and the Lord, however your support will always be gratefully received.

I would like to thank Jacob for his ministry and fellowship, he has helped my husband to begin to understand the scriptures with clarity and I believe the Lord is truly working in him. I thank you again, Jacob for your time, which I know is very precious. We support Jacob in his ministry and pray the Lord will bless and protect him and his family. Blessings in Jesus,

Mrs R, WA

Scribe: I have passed your message onto Jacob and you will never know how timely your love and support was. Praise God.

A beloved sister in Christ sent this piece to me and as you will see it is a real christian uplift. Should you wish to have a copy for yourself or perhaps as a gift, A4 laminated copies in full color are available, please send a cheque for \$4.00 (includes postage) and it will be mailed out immediately.

The Fellowship of the Unashamed

I am a part of the fellowship of the unashamed
The dye has been cast, the decision has been made.
I have stepped over the line. I won't look back,
let up, slow down or back away.

My past is redeemed, my present makes sense,
my future is secure. I'm finished and done with low
living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees,
colourless dreams, tamed visions, mundane talking,
cheap giving and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position,
promotions, plaudits or popularity. I don't have to be
right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded or
rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on His presence,
walk with patience, live by prayer and labor with
power.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my
road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions are
few, my guide is reliable, my mission is clear.
I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured
away, turned back, deluded or delayed.

I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the
presence of the adversary, negotiate at the table
of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or
meander in the maze of mediocrity.

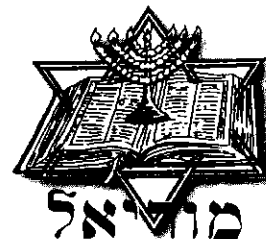
I won't give up, shut up, let up, until I have stayed up,
stored up, prayed up, paid up, spoke up for the cause
of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ.

I will go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till all
know and work till He stops me. And when He comes
for His own, He will have no problem recognizing me.
My banner is clear.

I am a part of the fellowship of the unashamed.

ANONYMOUS

Moriel Ministries is a non profit, non denominational christian organisation which provides biblical teaching materials with a special focus on problems and significant events of the last days. The newsletter is provided free of charge to those who request it.



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MORIEL — GOD IS MY TEACHER