

# An exposé of shocking false teaching and unseemly invective

This simply regards a video of a talk by James Jacob Prasch of Moriel Ministries, a particularly unpleasant false teacher and Jewish Root proponent. I first confronted him directly in the 90s and the correspondence was extremely unpleasant. He then went on to defame me with lies in situations where I had no recourse (a common practice of his). He also defamed and falsely castigated various friends of mine and other more eminent evangelical teachers.

I see that he has continued to harshly and wickedly defame and slander many other people since, as online searches can reveal. Prasch's heresy, lies, slanders and vicious temperament led to me avoiding further confrontation; there was simply no point. However, seeing this old video of his nasty condemnation of John MacArthur has prompted me to demonstrate how much in error this man is.

Now I have no brief to defend John MacArthur; in fact I admonished him for error also in the 90s, particularly for his denial of the eternal generation of the Son. Later MacArthur recanted of this false teaching, though it remains in his printed works.

I also had an unpleasant controversy with MacArthur's colleague, Phil Johnson, whom Prasch also criticises in this video and who uploaded it online. So I have no investment in defending these men; yet I consider them to be brethren and an attack on them, and the truth and honour of God, ought to be defended by someone.

So, at risk of initiating another nasty tirade and campaign of sleaze from Prasch, my job here is to warn folk about just how serious and false his teachings are, on almost any subject, from his own words found in just one video. He seems to feel that if he shouts nonsense, threatens critics, proudly enhances his authority, dominates the audience and uses abusive language, he can get away with anything.

Though I have enumerated Prasch's errors elsewhere long ago, here I will simply focus upon stating the facts regarding issues that he raises in this video. I will be as concise and simple as possible and try not to deviate from the issues that he brings up. These alone are enough to prove that he is a charlatan and a false teacher.

Prasch's errors and appalling manner are so serious that it seems impossible that anyone who supports him and his ministry could possibly be a true Christian. John says,

**In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. 1 Jn 3:10**

**We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. 1 Jn 3:14**

**We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. 1 Jn 4:6**

These are just two points Scripture gives us to test genuine godly ministry and character.

First, true Christians love the brethren. They never use lies, slander, abuse, violent imagery or plain nastiness. Even in rebuke, they love; they seek the benefit of the person they

criticise. Admonishment is sometimes necessary, but sheer nastiness, cruelty, hatred, violent language, threats and shocking imagery, are not. Those who do not love the brethren are not of God and abide in death.

Secondly, true Christian teachers hear the words of the apostles. Apostolic doctrine is a test of godliness and true ministry. People that deny or contradict apostolic doctrine are heretics.

Prasch fails both these tests (and many others). He is the most abusive and nasty slanderer of other Christians that I have ever heard of. His abuse, even of ladies, is nothing short of foul and intemperate.<sup>1</sup> This means that he cannot be a true Christian.

Prasch also denies much apostolic teaching. In fact, he is just about the worst kind of heretic. He is Arminian in his Gospel. He is Dispensational in his theology and eschatology. He is Charismatic in church practice. He is Jewish Root in his understanding of the people of God. He is an Israeli apologist in current affairs. He twists Scripture to suit his purposes. He even adopts all sorts of heretical sources, such as supposed Jewish Midrash and Jewish myths; or even liberal theology ideas.

If people support and follow this level of sin and error, it does not say much about their spiritual state. They should repent and flee to God for mercy.

## The video

This video was accessed from ‘*Prasch Unhinged*’ at michaelnewnham.com but is also available as ‘Jacob Prasch Unplugged’ elsewhere. The video is subtitled with comments by Phil Johnson. It regards a speech of some years ago. I will first quote Prasch verbatim, and then add comments.

### **Factual errors regarding MacArthur’s conference**

John MacArthur says that he’s come to the determination that all Charismatics, even moderate ones, ... are of the lunatic fringe.

Johnson tells us that MacArthur did not say that but suggested that the lunatics outnumbered the moderates.

The keynote speaker at his ‘Strange Fire’ Conference was RC Sproul [which he pronounced ‘sprowl’]. The Reformed infant-sprinkling crackpot that was the architect of the Y2K fiasco [later ‘the scaremonger’]. He goes out and recruits a theological lunatic as his keynote speaker.

Johnson tells us that Sproul was not even at the conference but sent a short video message to it. Prasch has confused Sproul with Gary North. This kind of slapstick, foolish mistake of details is common in Prasch’s works. It shows careless, superficial thinking.

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<sup>1</sup> Prasch’s attack on one poor lady included this, ‘*You questioning me? You are nothing but a low life, disgusting, demonic, slanderous, low-ranking, volunteer soldier in Satan’s army. You liar, you lunatic, you poisoned, perverted diseased soul. You’re nothing but a spiritually deluded buffoon, a servant of demons, an idiot, an ignoramus.. You’re a narcissistic, babbling religious crackpot, a witch, a wicked daughter of darkness, filthy demon inspired liar, a stupid woman.*’ His slanders continued in other emails and include the terms: ‘thug’, ‘pathological liar’, ‘religious fruitcake’, ‘slandering witch motivated by demons’, ‘cheap-mouthed hooligan’. Discerningtheword.com [I do not support this woman or her teaching.] This sort of verbal / written abuse is condemned in Scripture (1 Cor 5:11, ‘railer’) and no true believer could speak thus. Sadly this invective is typical of scores of other attacks on godly men and women (including me, Alan Morrison, Nick Needhan, Peter Glover, Stephen Sizer, and numerous others; as well as many former Moriel colleagues and supporters).

This language is unedifying and disrespectful to RC Sproul; i.e. ‘*a theological lunatic*’, ‘*infant-sprinkling crackpot*’, ‘*the scaremongerer*’. I may not agree with all of Sproul’s Covenant Theology, but I regard him as a godly man, seeking to help God’s people. Harsh invective is completely inappropriate.

Rallying to his defence and support is his lapdog Phil Johnson, Jimmy deYoung, who I’ve always regarded as a crackpot. ... Their beliefs are crackpot beliefs.

Johnson says that he has no idea who ‘Jimmy deYoung’ is supposed to be; no one of that name spoke at the conference. Whoever he is, publicly calling him and the others a crackpot is unedifying. Yet more foolish factual mistakes by Prasch.

### **Errors of doctrine**

John MacArthur claims to be a Calvinist. He believes in the TULIP (sic): total depravity, undeserved grace, limited atonement ... irresistible grace ... and perseverance of the saints. ... You have no choice.

‘The TULIP’ is an odd thing to say. ‘TULIP’ is not a noun but a mnemonic<sup>2</sup> for a series of doctrinal issues.

‘*Undeserved grace*’ is just wrong; he means ‘unconditional election’. In fact ‘undeserved grace’ is a tautology since all grace is undeserved.

The denial of choice is wrong. Calvinism avers that man can choose but man in sin can only make wrong choices until he is acted upon by God’s Spirit.

You must understand that Prasch continually lauds his academic credentials when, in fact, he betrays academic ignorance, grammatical howlers and schoolboy errors.

I have read Calvin’s Institutes backwards and forwards ... I will give \$5,000 ... \$10,000 cash ... to anybody that can find me The TULIP in Calvin’s Institutes. ... Calvin never even taught this.

This claim is completely bogus. TULIP is an acronym<sup>3</sup> developed c.60 years after Calvin’s death to summarise Calvin’s teaching. Of course the term ‘TULIP’ is not in the Institutes, but all the five points of the doctrines of grace (i.e. TULIP) are, which is why Calvinism developed as a theological system and spread all over the world, based upon the spread of the ‘Institutes’.

To say that Calvin never even taught this is a gross slander and a wild, foolish thing to say. Even Calvin’s contemporary opponents never said such a thing. In fact, Calvin’s contemporary opponents (such as Pighius) attacked Calvin because he did say these things, especially eternal, unconditional election.

### **Errors of history**

It came from Beza, the Remonstrance of Dorts.

This is just nonsense.

Firstly, the claim that Beza produced doctrines contrary to Calvin has been proved plain wrong by scholars;<sup>4</sup> though a few less qualified people have taught this.<sup>5</sup> Beza headed up the scholastic development of Calvin’s theology, which continued with other theologians in

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<sup>2</sup> A device, such as a pattern of letters, ideas, or associations, which assists in remembering something.

<sup>3</sup> A word formed from the initial letters of other words.

<sup>4</sup> Such as Professor R A Muller or Carl R Trueman.

<sup>5</sup> Such as R T Kendall or Holmes Rolston III.

various countries; this is normal scholastic development of a new theology. Thus the Westminster Confession of Faith, for example, is in accordance with Calvin's 'Institutes'.

Secondly, he seems to be conflating Beza (Calvin's successor in Geneva) with the Arminian Remonstrants. These were the followers of James Arminius that provoked the Synod of Dort (not Dorts) which finalised its doctrine in 1619; years after Beza died in 1605.

This is a theologically and historically stupid thing to say.

Calvin had nothing to do with the Reformation.

This is the highest folly. Even GCSE exam teaching claims that Calvin was the theological systematiser of the Reformation. Luther was the hammer that broke the Reformation open in the contention with the Roman Church, but Calvin was the systemiser that brought the whole thing together and produced the seminal work ('Institutes') that served as the foundation for revival and Reformation all over the world.

This sort of wild claim is beyond daft.

The Reformation was spawned when Erasmus published his New Testament. The Textus Receptus, comprised of four earlier Byzantine (sic) manuscripts. Calvin was a baby. When Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the cathedral of the Wittenberg (sic), he was a little boy. Zwingli actually began his reforms in Zurich before Luther, Calvin wasn't even around. He had nothing to do with any of it. He came two generations later.

Oh dear! Where do we start?

- Erasmus did not spawn the Reformation; in fact, Erasmus did everything he could to stop the Reformation; he was a loyal Roman Catholic, though he favoured some moral reforms. In fact, Erasmus was a humanist and was not even evangelical. Furthermore, it was his book on free will that drove Luther to write the superlative, 'Bondage of the will'.
- Regarding Erasmus' text, his Greek text was based upon three cursive manuscripts available to him in Basle, which date from, the 12<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> century. He also used readings from three other cursives at Basle of roughly the same dates. His readings were based on unspecified Greek texts; Kenyon says that it, '*swarms with errors*'.<sup>6</sup> Quotes from the Fathers were also authoritative for his choice of readings, despite lack of support from Greek texts. Prash's claim that it was, '*comprised of four earlier Byzantine (sic) manuscripts*' is just wrong on all counts.
- Erasmus' NT was not called 'the Textus Receptus'. His edition of the NT appeared in 1516 (when Calvin was seven). The Textus Receptus did not appear until much later. The Dutch publishing family Elzevir used the Stephanus text of 1550 plus the ten editions by Beza, which began in 1565. The Elzevir editions appeared in 1624 and 1633. The term 'Textus Receptus' (text received by all)<sup>7</sup> appeared in the 1633 edition preface. So the TR did not appear until over 100 years after the Erasmus NT text.
- Zwingli's reforms began in 1519. He was not even called to preach at Zurich until late 1518, over a year after Luther started the Reformation in Germany.
- '*Calvin came two generations later*'. Later than what? Erasmus' NT (1516); Luther's nailing of the theses (1517); or Zwingli's reforms (1519)? If we say 1516, two generations would normally be considered as 80 years later, i.e. 1596.<sup>8</sup> Well, in Nicholas Cop's

<sup>6</sup> Kenyon, *The Story of the Bible: A Popular Account of How it Came to Us*, c 2.

<sup>7</sup> That is, 'Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum'.

<sup>8</sup> A Biblical generation is 40 years.

rectoral address in 1533 (which Calvin helped to prepare) there was an emphasis on church reform on the lines of Luther; Calvin was forced to flee Paris as a result. Calvin was persecuted for demanding the Reformation within 17 years of Erasmus' NT.

- 'Byzantine'; he means 'Byzantine'. Grammatical mistakes are common in Prasch's works. All available manuscripts at this time were of the Byzantine family.

Prasch is just spouting slapdash history and false information. He clearly knows nothing about this subject at all.

His [Calvin's] Bible of choice was the Latin Vulgate.

This is spoken as a derogatory statement. However, there was no other Bible widely available in the early Reformation. Luther's German translation was the first vernacular version in centuries (NT 1522; OT 1534). In fact, Calvin used texts in Hebrew, Greek, Syriac and Latin for his commentary work (including Erasmus' NT), which prompted his unprepared sermons.

Calvin also helped to produce the French NT, which became a key influence for the NT in the English Geneva Bible, favoured by the Puritans. Calvin also edited a second edition of the Olivétan Bible,<sup>9</sup> which became the general basis of the Genevan Bible. There were also many other translations of portions of the Bible, such as Jacques Lefèvre de'Étaples' (Jacobus Faber) Latin translation of Paul's letters (1512) or the Psalms (1509) and a French Bible version (based on the Latin text) in 1523.

It was the task of the Reformers to produce cheaply available, good vernacular translations based on the best original manuscripts. To criticise Calvin for not having access to one of these before they existed is stupid.

He ran a theocratic police state resembling the modern Taliban in Geneva.

This is so crude and foolish that one gasps for breath.

For details of the truth regarding Prasch's lies about the history of the Reformation see my book, '*Was the Reformation good news*'. Virtually everything Prasch says about the Reformation is false; he even applauds out-and out heretics like Kaspar Schwenkfeld von Ossig as being more evangelical than Luther when the man denied justification by faith and the humanity of Christ.<sup>10</sup>

Firstly, Calvin did not run the city-state of Geneva; it was run by elected councillors who had invited Calvin to be their preacher at the Cathedral. Calvin was never a civil governor (magistrate) and was not even a citizen of Geneva until asked to become one in 1559. Calvin's influence was achieved by the strength of his moral integrity, wisdom and preaching of the truth.

Secondly, all states and cities in Europe were theocratic in the sense that they were dominated by the state church, which was Roman Catholic; even emperors were

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<sup>9</sup> The Waldensian Pierre Robert 'Olivétan' (died 1538; a cousin of Calvin) translated the NT into French, highly influenced by Jacques Lefèvre de'Étaples. His Waldensian Bible version (1535) was based on Hebrew texts and Byzantine NT manuscripts that were more like the Textus Receptus than the Vulgate.

<sup>10</sup> Schwenkfeld (1490-1561) was a German theologian, who initially led the Protestant Reformation in Silesia. Schwenkfeld disagreed with Luther on several important matters. He correctly argued for the complete separation of church and regarded the bread and wine as symbols only. However, he did not accept the doctrine of justification by faith. He also espoused the deification of Christ's humanity. Scorned by Protestants and Roman Catholics, he fled Silesia in 1529. In 1540 he was condemned by the Lutheran Schmalkaldic League. Escaping persecution, he went into hiding and wrote pseudonymously for the rest of his life.

dominated by the pope. Erastianism was normal at that time. In England, which was ruled by a tyrant called Henry VIII, the king had the titles of 'defender of the church' and 'head of the church'. In all states, religion was a key part of the way things were run.

Yet Geneva was nothing like a police state; if it were why would religious refugees from all over Europe flock to it for protection? While other nations were burning Bible translators (like Tyndale) and imprisoning Protestant leaders, Geneva welcomed them (such as John Knox).

Calvin's influence was for the good of the people of Geneva, which had formerly been infected with bawdiness, rioting, lawlessness, violence and all sorts of misdemeanours.

People were burned alive. You wanna talk about lunatics, you wanna talk about crazy people, you wanna talk about religious psychos? Calvinists could give lessons to Kenneth Copeland. They could teach Benny Hinn how to be nuts. If you wanna talk about crazy people, if you wanna talk theological lunatics, doctrinally misguided people who misguide each other ...

This is an old chestnut and refers to the burning of Michael Servetus. For details on this see my works, such as my Question Card, '*Was Calvin responsible for the burning of Servetus?*'

In brief, Calvin had no authority to make a decision for the council of Geneva regarding Servetus' punishment. In fact, Servetus had a universal death sentence on his head and was a wanted man all over Europe for his heresy, which was a capital offence at that time. Calvin actually tried to reduce the sentence and helped Servetus as much as he could, even visiting him in prison and lending him books to help his defence.

Listen to the derogatory language used of great men of God here. According to Prasch, all Calvinists are '*lunatics*', '*crazy people*', '*religious psychos*', '*theological lunatics*', '*doctrinally misguided people who misguide each other*'. Shame on him. So John Newton was crazy. Charles Spurgeon was a psycho. Augustus Toplady was a lunatic and John Bunyan was misguided. Perhaps the boot is on the other foot?

### **Further invective**

You are a false teacher John MacArthur. You are a heretic. You have a lying spirit. You are an apostate. You are not a servant of the living God anymore. You better repent, you have a lying spirit, you're are a servant of the devil. ... He's a deceiver who deceives others. ... I respected him; now I have more respect for a pimp on a street corner. ... such a dangerous and misguided man.

Now if MacArthur were a serious heretic, invective of extreme force may just be acceptable if steps had been taken to correct him personally first and he had refused. But it seems that Prasch has not done this since his account is that he only met MacArthur once when he shared a platform with him earlier.

Now, bearing in mind that I think that MacArthur is in significant error on Amyraldism and Dispensationalism (curiously also upheld by Prasch), this level of defamatory speech is neither necessary nor acceptable. The reference to street pimps is gross and sinful.

I'll bring a Bible [to a proposed debate] and yes it will be Greek. The Bible was not written just in Greek but in Hebrew and Aramaic (Syriac) as well. The biggest part is in Hebrew. More foolish mistakes from a self-proclaimed academic.

## Conclusion

So, JJ Prash is condemned as a false teacher by his own words, which can be heard for yourself. Bear in mind that this is just one tirade of hundreds.

Prash is a slanderer, a heretic, a defamer of the brethren and a teacher of false history. Added to this is the most nasty, scurrilous attitude that betrays a seriously damaged character.

Why he still has any following at all is beyond understanding.

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