



MATTHEW
8:17-9:8

The Incompatibility
Between Jesus and Existentialism

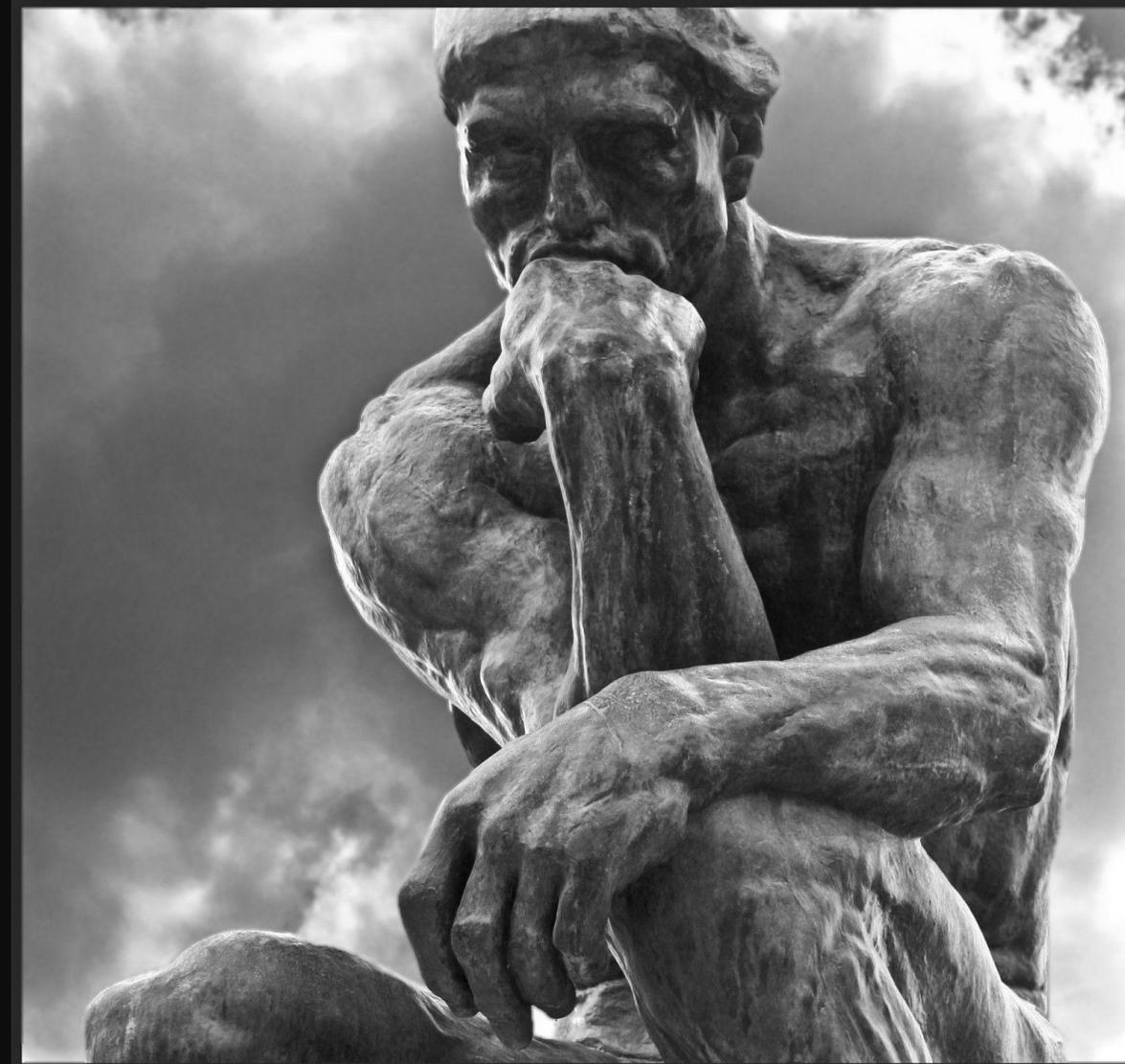
MESSIAH ON A MISSION (PART 15)

Christianity

is not

Existentialism!

- Existentialism probes the deep philosophies of life. Ruminating on the complexities of meaning with the existential circumstances of the character.
 - The attempt to make Christianity about objective knowledge rather than a revelation of the Mighty God that gives personal transcendent transformation is a futile exercise.
 - Existential Theology takes the stance that we always have to start with our finitude, our historicity, our social location, our embodiment, and our existence. We take account of and speak out of an analyzation of that particular situation.
-



Example of Existentialist Interpretations of Scripture

“J. Peterson: In May 2017, Peterson began *The Psychological Significance of the Biblical Stories*, a series of live theatre lectures, also published as podcasts, in which he analyzes archetypal narratives in Book of Genesis as patterns of behaviour ostensibly vital for personal, social and cultural stability. In October 2020, Peterson announced plans for a lecture series on the Book of Exodus and the Book of Proverbs.”

(Wikipedia: Jordan Peterson)

Georg Hegel (1770-1831)



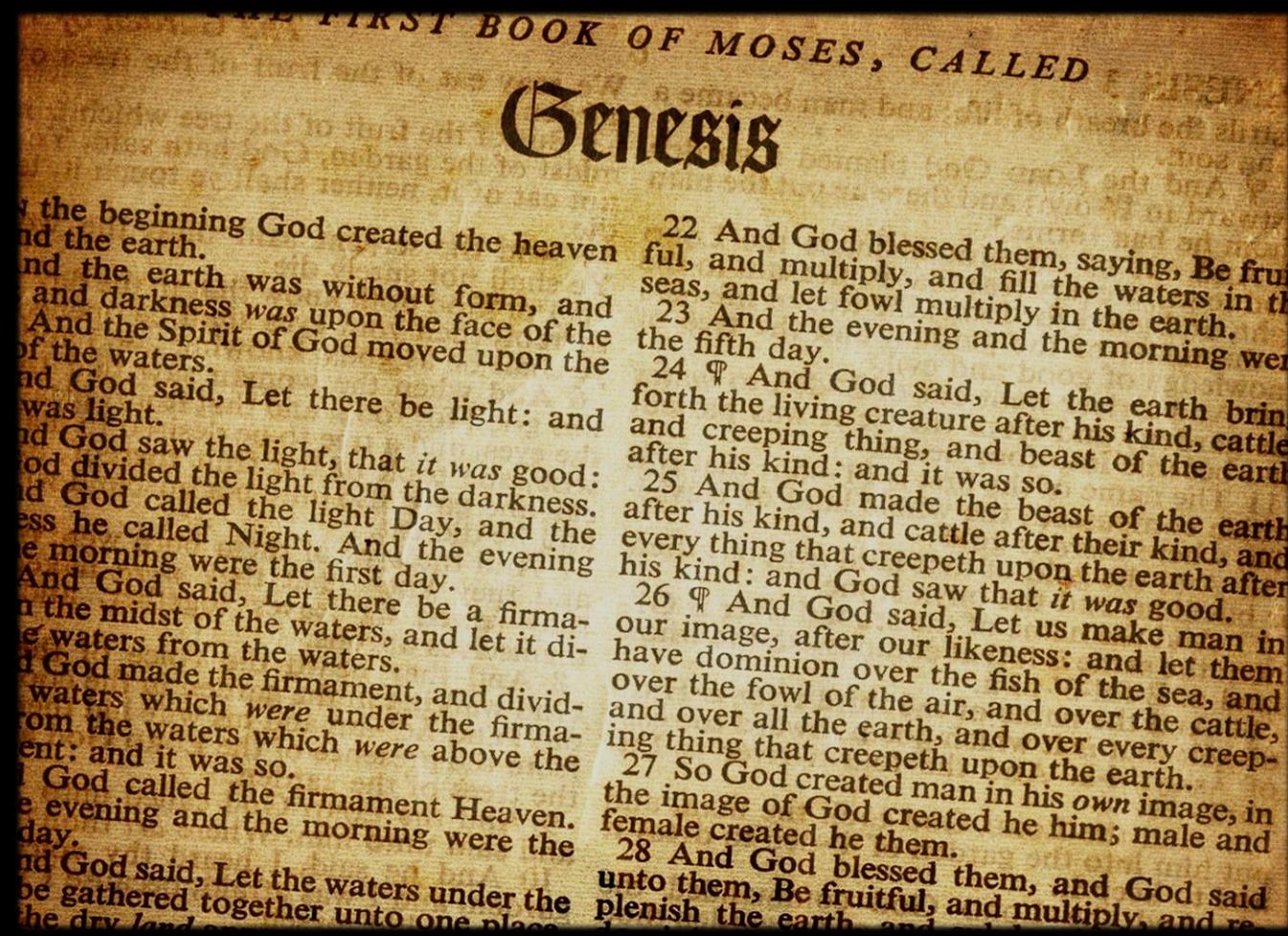
Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)



**Jordan Peterson
(1962-present)**

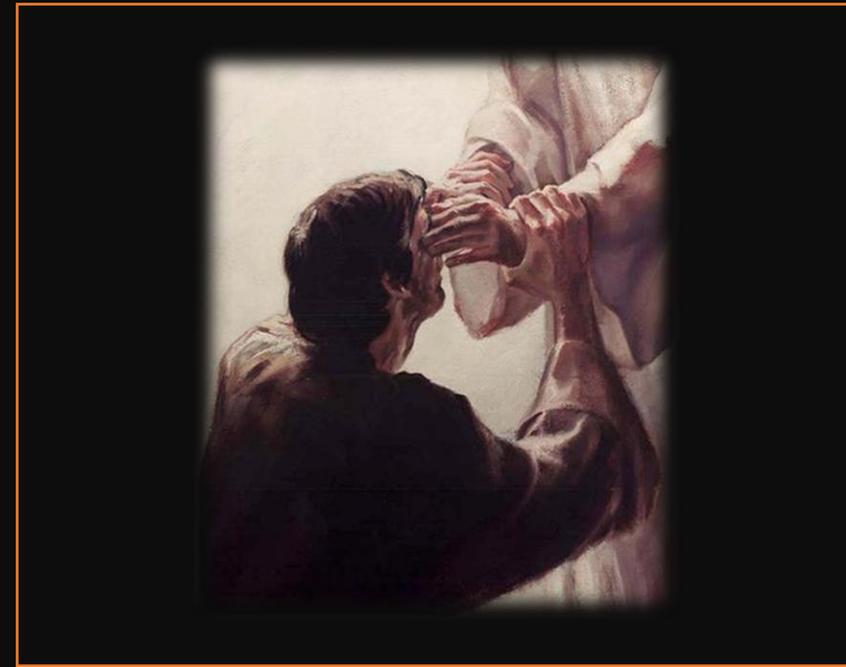


Dr. Peterson would approach the Bible as an existentialist. Analyzing the present situation seeking meaning of and behaviour modifications for existing characters within ones existing circumstances.



Biblical Existentialists find meaning, definition, explanation and ultimately corrective recourse within the characters existing realities. Believing that all of life is paradoxical and that the key to the paradoxes of life situations are to be discovered in the complex and exhaustive analysis of the psychological significance of Biblical narratives.

Healing Is Part of Jesus' Mission (Matthew 8:17) The context in Isaiah 53 prophesied that the suffering servant's death would heal the nation from its sin (Isa 53:4-6, 8-9; cf., 1 Pet 2:22-25), an expression frequent in the Prophets (Mt 13:15; Isa 6:10; 57:18; Jer 3:22; 6:14; 8:11; 14:19; Hos 14:4)



The idea that genuine physical healings can illustrate principles of spiritual healing (Matthew 9:5-7, Matthew 9:12; Matthew 13:15) is evident in the text of Matthew.

When one is seeking to find answers as to why someone is healed in scripture often the answer is discovered in the spiritual intention.



(8:18-22) Authority Over Disciples



At critical junctions in Matthew “Son of Man” occurs as part of an allusion to Daniel 7:13–14; these occurrences signal Jesus’ vindication and authority (Matt. 10:23; 16:27–28; 24:30–31; 26:64). The title “Son of Man” was Jesus’ primary self-designation. (Used over 80 times)

“Jesus was neither a preexistent Son nor did He have preexistent flesh, He was speaking of his mission and his identity. Biologically, half of Jesus’ chromosomes came from God, and the very life that was in Him was Yahweh. Jesus was inviting his hearers to move beyond the miracles He did for them and work toward revelation as they participated in genuine relationship”

(Norris, I AM: Oneness Pentecostal Theology)

(8:23-27)

Authority Over Created World



- Matthew demonstrates Jesus' power over the created world (8:23–27), over evil (8:28–34), and over sin (9:1–8). The cumulative effect of these displays of power is to show that Jesus is the true king of all. His arrival signals the return of the rightful king of all things, whose power will be made explicit in the final moments of the Gospel (“All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me” [28:18]). So, the displays of power in chapters 8–9 are displays of kingdom authority. In line with prophecy Jesus is reclaiming what rightfully belongs to God (e.g., Ps. 24:1).

(8:28-34) Authority Over Evil Spirits

8:28 Gadarenes. Jesus and his disciples have now crossed the lake (the Sea of Galilee) and arrived in the region of the Gadarenes, which is part of the Decapolis (see 4:25).¹

According to Josephus, Gadara was home to Gentiles as well as some Jews (J.W. 1.155). A mixed population makes sense of the presence of a herd of pigs (8:30), since Jews considered pigs and their meat unclean (Deut. 14:8). It is not clear, however, whether the two demon-possessed men healed by Jesus are Jew or Gentile
(Archeological Study Notes)



JESUS -- GO HOME AND LEAVE US ALONE!

“How To Get Jesus To Leave You Alone”

Jesus obliged the people of Gergesa/Gadara (Matt. 8:34) by leaving their area and returning across the Sea of Galilee to “his own city,” Capernaum. All three Synoptic Gospels record the return across the lake, but only Matthew calls Capernaum “his own city,” no doubt reflecting the fact that this town had become the center of Jesus’ ministry in the Galilee area (cf. Matt. 4:13). (ASB)



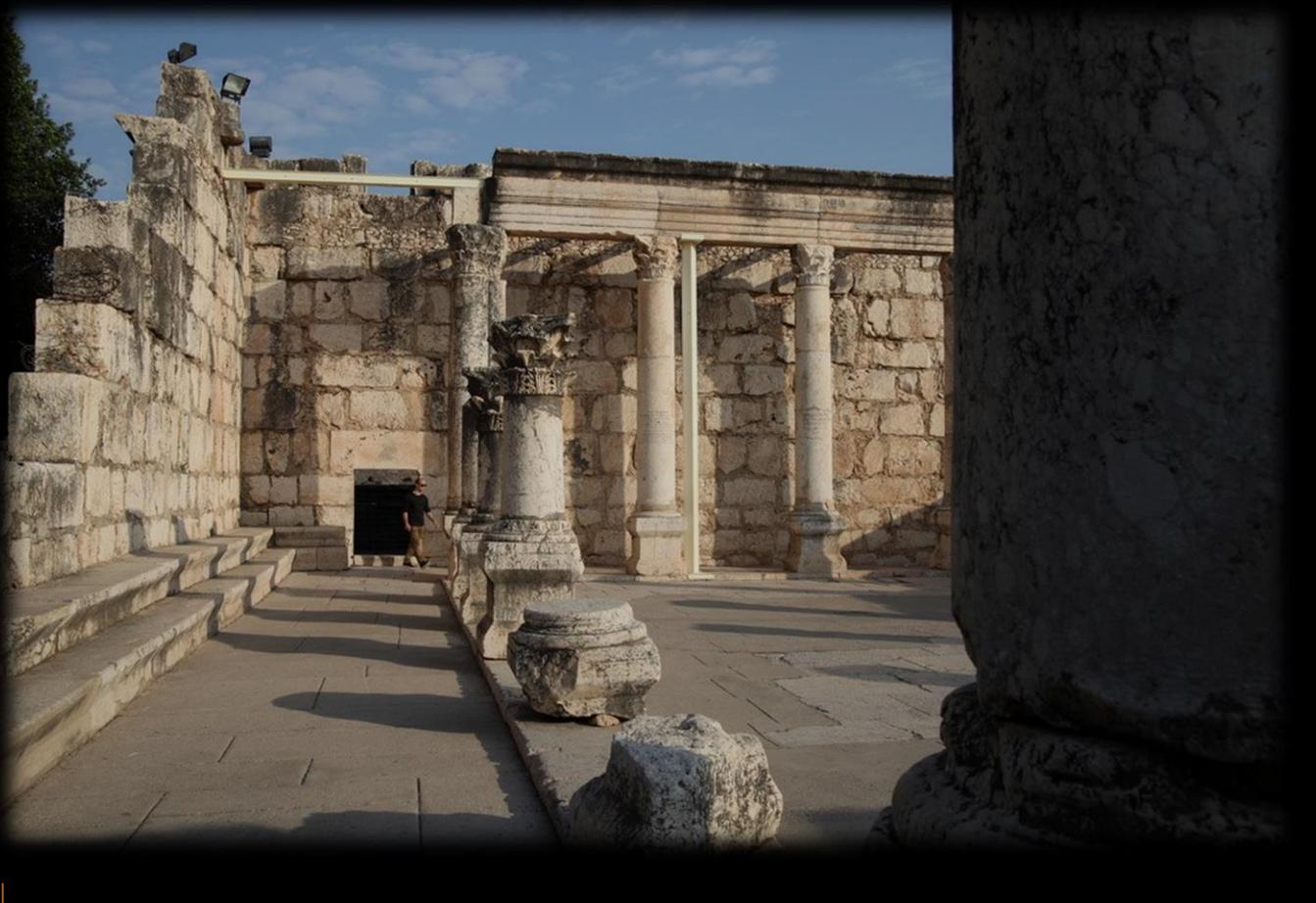
(9:1-8)
Authority Over Sin



Pharisees were irate, for they perceived Jesus' statement as a blasphemous claim of deity

They thought within themselves:

- We grasp that the person who is offended is also the person who forgives.
- When Jesus says “your sins are forgiven,” he implies that the paralytic has sinned against him.
- Jesus implies that he is not an ordinary man, that he is offended even by all of the paralytic’s sins. In saying this, Jesus implicitly claims deity, because only God is offended by every sin.
- In Isaiah, God says, “I, even I, am he who blots out transgressions for my sake, and remembers your sins no more” (Isa. 43:25). God alone can forgive sins, and Jesus forgives sins.
- The Teachers and Pharisees say to themselves, “This man is a blasphemer! . . . Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Matt. 9:3; Luke 5:21).



Let's Revisit: (8:18-22) Authority Over Disciples

- But amid his preaching and miracles, Jesus talks about the radical cost of being a disciple (8:18–22).
- Submitting to Jesus and following him are the only allowable responses to experiencing his authority. Sprinkled in these two chapters focused on Jesus' authority over illness, sin, and evil are discipleship truth claims (8:18–22; 9:9–17). The first of these two discipleship moments highlights the cost of following Jesus.
- For theistic existentialists, there is no way to know one has encountered the true God rather than the subconscious.
- The Bible is a transformational and transcendent revelation about the Mighty God! Existentialists inevitably try to make rational sense of their view of existence. The very attempt is self-defeating.

Jesus' Language about the Son of Man

- FOOTNOTES pt 1:
- I AM: A Oneness Pentecostal Theology
- David S. Norris, PhD (109-110)

It is not uncommon when reading theological works on Christology to find various studies on the numerous titles ascribed to Jesus in order to demonstrate His true identity. We have largely avoided such an approach for a number of reasons. Donald Juel does not miss the mark when he suggests, "Titles frequently overlap in meaning to a considerable extent, and the alleged construct to which the titles refer may prove to be the product of scholarly creativity in the present." There are, however, certain titles that are important to our focus. We have dealt briefly with "Savior" and "Lord" and "Christ." We will revisit these titles and functions in chapter 11 when we speak of the glorification of Jesus. Briefly though, we need to address the title, "Son of Man," for it is arguably Jesus' primary self-designation, one utilized throughout the pages of the Gospels. While the church later came to declare a kind of dialectic profession where "Son of Man" refers to Jesus' humanity and "Son of God" refers to Jesus' deity, this was not the first-century understanding of these titles. There is a significant and varied tradition as to the usage and meaning of the "Son of Man." Indeed, it is the very enigmatic nature of the title that no doubt allowed Jesus to utilize it as a teaching tool. "Son of Man" is a title that was utilized by Jesus in several different ways, some of which were rather remarkable.

Jesus' Language about the Son of Man

- **FOOTNOTES pt 2:**
- **I AM: A Oneness Pentecostal Theology**
- **David S. Norris, PhD (109-110)**

One source as to the identity of Son of Man was understood to derive from Daniel 7, where there is a vision of the "Ancient of Days" who gives a scroll to the "Son of Man," one then empowered with authority and glory. (See Daniel 7:7-14.) Interpretations as to the identity of this "Son of Man" from the passage are varied. As with other books written in an apocalyptic genre, figures that appear in Daniel are often symbolic of peoples and events. Thus, a fairly common interpretation as to the identity of the Son of Man comes from the text itself; the "Son of Man" is identified as the elect among the Jewish people. Yet prophetic tropes can be made to carry considerable weight, and because Daniel 7 uses the language of the Son of Man "coming on the clouds of heaven," having an "everlasting rule" and that "his kingship will never come to an end" (Daniel 7:13-14), and because Enochic tradition more fully develops an understanding of the son of Man as a heavenly redeemer, the title came to have eschatological port. For some, the "Son of Man" was a coming heavenly redeemer. Thus, when Jesus used "Son of Man" to refer to Himself, He elicited considerable curiosity. Indeed, there were points in Jesus' ministry where His use of "Son of Man" compelled people to wonder whether He was claiming to be a "heavenly redeemer," operating in cosmic power.

There was another way in which the title "Son of Man" was utilized around the time of Christ. A rabbi might employ the term "Son of Man" as a circumlocution to speak of himself, something Jesus did as well. For the most part Jesus did not utilize the title in a way that would make people think of heavenly power and glory; although Jesus used the term in rather fluid ways. a good number of times He seems to link the usage of the "Son of Man" with His identity as Yahweh's Suffering Servant. As we have begun to suggest, the title was thus consonant with Jesus' propensity to speak in riddles, challenging His listeners to contemplate His identity. While Jesus could proclaim that the Son of Man had power to forgive sins and power over the Sabbath, none of this was to overtly grasp divine prerogatives. In one particular instance, He said, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." In short, Jesus furthered His mission by the use of this title, arguably offering it as a kind of tease. Additionally, as we shall see in the next chapter, Jesus could utilize this title in a key moment of revelation. Finally, as we shall explore in chapter 11, the use of Son of Man in the Book of Revelation ultimately works towards a full-orbed understanding of the identity and work of Jesus Christ.