

## ***FRIEDRICH NIETZCHE***

### ***Thus Spoke Zarathustra***

“[W]here the state *ceases*...the rainbow and the bridges of the Overhuman” (1.11).

“Away from God and Gods this will has lured me: what would there be to create if Gods—existed!” (2.2).

“*[S]tay true to the earth* and do not believe those who talk of over-earthly hopes! They are poison-mixers, whether they know it or not. They are despisers of life.... Sacrilege against the earth is now the most terrible thing...!” (Prologue, 3).

“[T]here is no Devil and no Hell” (Prologue, 6).

“The one they call Redeemer has cast them into bondage:—Into bondage of false values and delusive words! Ah that someone might yet redeem them from their redeemer!” (2.4).

“But Zarathustra was a friend to all those who journey far and do not like to live without danger” (3.2). Among human beings he hates “the most all pussyfooters and half-and-halfers and routing, hesitating, drifting clouds” (3.4).

“But this—is my taste:—not good, not bad, but *my* taste, about which I am no longer secretive or ashamed. ‘This—is just *my* way:—where is yours?’ Thus I answered those who asked of me ‘the way’. For *the* way—does not exist!” (3.11.2).

“[T]he human is something that must be overcome,—that the human is a bridge and not a goal: counting itself blissful on account of its midday and evening, as they way to new dawns” (3.12.3).

“[T]he best shall rule, the best also *wills* to rule!” (3.12.21).

“The *creator* is who they hate the most: he who breaks tablets and old virtues, the breaker—they call him a law breaker. For the good—they *cannot* create: they are always the beginning of the end—they crucify him who writes new values on new tablets, they sacrifice the future *to themselves*—they crucify all human future! The good—they have always been the beginning of the end” (3.12.26).

“Also not that a spirit they call holy led your ancestors to much-praised lands that I praise not: for where the worst of all trees eww, the Cross—about that land there is nothing to praise!” (3.12.12).

“[A]ll that is evil is its best *strength* and the hardest stone for the highest creator; and that the human must become better *and* more evil” (3.13.2).

“...[T]hat all things return eternally and we ourselves with them, and that we have already been here an eternity of times, and all things with us. ...I come eternally again to this self-same life, in the greatest and smallest respects, so that again I teach the eternal recurrence of all things—...so that again I speak the word of the Great Earth-and Humans-Midday, and again bring to human beings the tidings of the Overhuman” (3.13.2).

“When he was young, this God from the Orient, he was hard and vengeful and built himself a Hell for the delight of his favourites. But at last he became old and soft and mellow and pitying, more like a grandfather than a father, but most of all like a doddering old grandmother. Then he sat, shrivelled, in his stove-corner, fretting over his weak legs, world-weary, will-weary, and one day he suffocated on his all-too-great pity” (4.6).

“Away with such a God! Rather no God, rather make one’s fate on one’s own account, rather be a fool, rather be God oneself!” (4.6).

“What is good? To be brave is good. It is the good war that hallows every cause” (4.3.3).  
“For this old God is no longer alive: he is thoroughly dead” (4.3.6).

“And ‘truth’ is today now what the preacher said, who himself came forth among them, that wondrous holy man and spokesman for these little people, who testified of himself: ‘I—am the truth.’ This immodest man has now long been making the cockscomb of the little people rise—he who taught no small error when he taught: ‘I—am the truth’” (4.7).

“You are mere bridges: may superior humans stride over and across you. You signify steps: so do not be angry with him who climbs over you and up to his height” (4.11).

“Before God!—But now this God has died! You superior humans, this God was your greatest danger. Only since he has lain in the grave have you again been resurrected. Only now does the superior human become—lord and master! Have you understood this word, O my brothers? You are terrified: do your hearts become dizzy? Does the abyss yawn before you here? Does the hell-hound yelp at you here? Well then! Come now, you superior humans! Only now does the mountain of the human future go into labour. God has died: now we want—the Overhuman to live. The most concern minds today ask: ‘How is the human to be preserved?’ But Zarathustra is the first and only one to ask: ‘How is the human to be overcome? I have the Overhuman at heart, that is my first and only concern—and *not* the human: not the nearest, not the poorest, not the most suffering, not the best” (4.13.2-3).

“But then we do not want to enter the Kingdom of Heaven at all: we have become men—and *so we want the Kingdom of Earth*” (4.18.3).

### *Paraphrases*

For Nietzsche, the “Overhuman” (*Übermensch*) contrasts starkly with “modern” human beings, “good” human beings, or Christians. The Overhuman should be reached through regaining connection with the animal aspects of man’s nature. Man is a bridge “between beast and Overhuman” (Prologue, 4), and “*God is dead!*” (Prologue, 2, italics in the original).

“The human is something that shall be overcome” (Prologue, 3). The human is to be an “ape,” a “laughing-stock” for the Overhuman (Prologue, 3). Zarathustra loves those who build a house for the Overhuman and prepare earth, animal, and plant for the Overhuman’s sake (Prologue, 4). The highest hope of a woman is, “May I give birth to the Overhuman!” (1.18). The “holy” will to marriage is “an arrow and yearning for the Overhuman” (1.20). We shall will our own deaths at the right time for our goal and heir—the Overhuman (1.21). The lonely ones of today, who withdraw to the side, shall one day be a people. Out of them a chosen people shall grow, and out of them shall arrive the Overhuman (1.22.2).

“Thou shalt” is the name of the great dragon who the spirit used to call Lord and God. The spirit of the lion says “I will” (1.1). Man is body through and through, and nothing else. “Soul” is merely a word for something about the body (1.4). It is a “disgrace to pray” (3.8.2). Selfishness is “blessed” (3.10.2).

Human beings are not equal and should not become so. More and more shall war and inequality be set among human beings—for the Overhuman (2.7).

To Zarathustra’s horror, God himself became a Jew (4.3.1).

Nietzsche’s “will to power” is a difficult idea and easily misunderstood. It is not will power exerted by the human ego, nor a kind of brute force, exercised by human beings. It is a transpersonal or cosmic will found in the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer in *The World as Will and Representation*. The entire world is basically will, as manifested in gravity, magnetism, and the life-force that drives plants, animals, and man. The human will is a more highly developed form of the basic force of the universe. The will to power is cosmic and not man-centred.

Companions the creator seeks and not corpses, nor herds or believers either. Zarathustra promises to show the creators, harvesters, and celebrants the rainbow and “all the stairways to the Overhuman” (Prologue, 9). It is the desire of the creators to create new virtues. Man has given himself all his good and evil. They didn’t take it, find it, or hear a voice from heaven. So the creators must annihilate: War, courage, and bravery are wanted, not love of one’s neighbour or pity (1.10).

“Good and evil” are always transitory. Out of themselves they must overcome themselves again and again (2.12). Creators in good are evil must be an annihilator and shatterer of values (2.12).

In conjunction with the arrival of the Overhuman is the destruction of old values and the creation of new ones. One sees how this would appeal to revolutionary movements of all stripes. Nietzsche’s ideas received attention from the German Nazis. His anti-Semitic sister Elisabeth ingratiated herself with Hitler. In many ways Nietzsche’s philosophy appears compatible with Nazism, though Nietzsche himself opposed nationalism, socialism, and anti-Semitism.

### *Gay Science*

Nietzsche's eternal recurrence is also a difficult idea. It is not to be taken as something literally or ontologically true. Nietzsche is not arguing things actually do recur eternally. Rather, it is a thought experiment that can inform and clarify our existential choices. It prompts one to do what one genuinely wants to do instead of mindless activity or act perform out of sense of social obligation. It prescribes no specific content. The choice is up to the individual in his or her "loneliest loneliness" (*Joyful Science*, 341).

### *Works*

"Rather than looking towards distant unknown bliss and blessing and reprieves, simply live in such a way we would want to live again and want to live that way for eternity!—Our task steps up to us at every moment" (*Works* 9:11).

### *Other*

"The term *Übermensch* was used frequently by Hitler and the Nazi regime to describe their idea of a biologically superior Aryan or Germanic master race; a racial version of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* became a philosophical foundation for National Socialist ideas. The Nazi notion of the master race also spawned the idea of 'inferior humans' (*Untermenschen*) who should be dominated and enslaved; this term does not originate with Nietzsche, who was critical of both antisemitism and German nationalism. In his final years, Nietzsche began to believe that he was in fact Polish, not German, and was quoted as saying, 'I am a pure-blooded Polish nobleman, without a single drop of bad blood, certainly not German blood.'" In defiance of nationalist doctrines, he claimed that he and Germany were great only because of 'Polish blood in their veins,' and that he would '[have] all anti-semites shot.' Nietzsche died long before Hitler's reign, and it was partly Nietzsche's sister Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche who manipulated her brother's words to accommodate the worldview of herself and her husband, Bernhard Förster, a prominent German nationalist and antisemite. Förster founded the *Deutscher Volksverein* (German People's League) in 1881 with Max Liebermann von Sonnenberg."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia, "Friedrich Nietzsche," [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich\\_Nietzsche](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Nietzsche).

## *Blog Entries*

### *A Doddering Old Grandmother*

“When he was young, this God from the Orient, he was hard and vengeful and built himself a Hell for the delight of his favourites. But at last he became old and soft and mellow and pitying, more like a grandfather than a father, but most of all like a doddering old grandmother. Then he sat, shrivelled, in his stove-corner, fretting over his weak legs, world-weary, will-weary, and one day he suffocated on his all-too-great pity” (4.6).

Here, Nietzsche’s prophet Zarathustra describes the “evolution” of the God of the Bible from the “hard and vengeful” God of the Old Testament to the “doddering old grandmother” shrivelled in his stove-corner.

Many hold this erroneous view of the God of the Bible. As the Jews’ idea of God evolved, so “God” evolved. Hell was at first a delight to this “God,” but now he is weak and impotent, like the powerless Jesus. The worst fault of this “God” is that he pities the human race. Pity is, above all, what Zarathustra hates. For the Overhuman, there is no place for pity. Courage to be and the will to power are the supreme values.

Nietzsche failed to see that the God of the Old Testament is exactly the same as the God of the New Testament. Just as the God of the Old Testament was holy, righteous, just, loving, and merciful, so is the God of the New Testament. God is not impotent or anything close to a “doddering old grandmother.” He is ruling as the Great King over the human race as I now speak. He is waiting for the right time to intervene powerfully in history. Revelation describes the prophetic “day of Yahweh,” when the hard, vengeful, holy God will destroy those who have persisted in rebellion against him. Nietzsche’s description of God is outright blasphemous and totally wrong.

God has disclosed himself to us in creation, the canon of Scripture, and Christ. He has revealed what he is like and his plan for history. He loves mankind and is merciful toward those who turn to him in repentance and faith. His grace saves us and gives us eternal life, which is far better than Nietzsche’s eternal recurrence.

As Christians, we are to counter arguments claiming God has evolved or that the God of the Old Testament differs from the God of the New Testament. There is one God, eternal, immutable, in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is powerful and sovereign, not weak and impotent. He never changes. This is the God we believe in. This is the God we worship and esteem. This is the true God.

Sorry, Friedrich. Once again, you are dead wrong.

- Jeff Coleman

## *Bibliography*

Nietzche, Freidrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Trans. Graham Parkes. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford U. Press, 2005.