

The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit

Are they innocent, harmless books?

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The following is the first of two letters to brethren concerning the dangers of fiction and fantasy books. Specifically, this addresses J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth series.

Who could hate a hobbit? What is wrong with the good wizard Gandalf? And, why do you hate elves?

Perhaps, these are not the questions to ask when asking whether or not the popular series of books about the fictional Middle Earth is actually a good thing for anyone to read, let alone bible-believing, born-again children of God.

Perhaps a better question to ask is:

How do we, as the children of the living God, judge the acceptability of books, movies, etc, etc.... Of course, the answer is virtually axiomatic: Why, the Word of God, of course.

If that is true, then let us look at how J. R. R. Tolkien's works on Middle Earth compare to the admonition of the Lord.

1. Most people do not know that the popular (a virtual cultic following) series of books about the doings of Middle Earth in the Third War of the Rings, does not begin with the book The Hobbit. Instead, the story begins in another book, much longer

and more difficult to read, called The Silmarillion.

The Silmarillion is the ground of the entire series. Without this book, the series has no real beginning, and no real meaning. The setting and seriousness of The Hobbit, and The Lord of the Rings is largely lost outside of The Silmarillion. But this book appears as virtually another religion to almost everyone, including the lost. One reviewer described it as “*A grim, tragic, powerful book, shot through with heroism and hope ... its power is almost that of mysticism.*” ((Toronto Globe and Mail, date not cited))

Of course there is a reason for the power that approaches mysticism. If the reviewer had fully understood the following information presented in the book and repeated on the Wikipedia website, it would have been clear that it is mysticism.

“The Silmarillion is a collection of Tolkien’s works, standardized and published by his son Christopher, posthumously. It contains these five pieces:

1. The Ainulindalë – the creation of Eä, Tolkien’s universe.
2. The Valaquenta – the Valar? and Maiar?, the deities and angels.
3. The Quenta Silmarillion – the history of the events before and during First Age.
4. The Akallabêth – the history of the Second Age.
5. Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age.

The Silmarillion is a very complex work, employing an extremely wide array of themes, that originate in lore of countries all over Europe, but not adhering to any of them. Thus, the title of Eru Ilúvatar (One who is Father of All) is clearly a borrowed from the Norse mythology; the story of Túrin Turambar is very similar to a motive from Kalevala; and Númenor is obviously reminiscent of Atlantis (in fact, one of

the names Tolkien gave that land was Atalantë)." ((Wikipedia website: www.wikipedia.com))

With such detail and arrangement as an alternate creation account, holy places, the reason for evil, gods and how one must attain peace in the afterlife, quite clearly the entire series beginning with *The Silmarillion*, and including *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, is nothing less than a false religion.

2. The entire Middle Earth series employs such creatures as immortal elves, ogres, wizards, mortal men, dragons, and a particular type of physical demon (orcs). Of the above mentioned, only ogres, the demons, and dragons are always evil. Men, wizards (a magican) and elves can be either good or evil. However, elves never lose their immortality unless they willingly give it up – *no matter what they do*.

So what is wrong with this?

First, the Lord commanded that Israel should not suffer a witch to live (this includes wizards being simply male witches).

Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live. (*Exodus 22:18*)

Moreover, the Lord stated expressly that witchcraft and rebellion are equally abominable sins.

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. (*1 Samuel 15:23*)

So far there is no evidence that LORD is going to change His mind. In fact, we can be certain He will not.

Second, nowhere in Scripture (a true Book) are we told that

anyone, man or angel, can do anything they want without consequence before God. Yes, lost or saved, even the most inane, idle word we may speak will be accounted for before the LORD.

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.
(*Matthew 12:36-37*)

Third, we are never led to believe in the Scripture that the end justifies the means. If it did, then the Lord Jesus Christ would have never died on the cross for us. Yet, in the entire series on Middle Earth, over and over again deception, outright lies and murder are used for a “good” end, and justified because of the outcome.

Fourth, The entire series is no different than Dungeons and Dragons. The exact same characters, and character types appear in D & D. It simply depends on whose set you buy.

3. Okay, it is just fiction, and I take it that way. It cannot harm me.

That would be nice – if it were true. It simply is not. Going outside of the Lord’s commandments and playing around with things that the Lord said not to look upon, nor touch; opens one up to the devil in a very serious way – *especially when it comes to witchcraft*. The battlefield wherein we frequently fight is the mind. If the mind is turned away from the reality of this spiritual war in which we are participants, the devil has the greater advantage. No, he cannot possess a saved person, but he can, and will, keep the mind filled with ungodly thoughts and attempt to build a resistance to the things of God, so that the person does not ever properly serve the Lord. Moreover, failure to follow the Lord’s will in such matters can result in the Lord allowing Satan to torment one

mentally and physically so that a lesson may be learned.

But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. (*I Samuel 16:14*)

For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (*I Corinthians 5:3-5*) (*Somehow, I fail to see this as a desirable way to learn.*)

Additionally, if the mind is filled with such things that strengthen the flesh, and focus one on the things of the world – then one starves and weakens the mind of the soul so that the victories more frequently go to the flesh. The end result of that is a bad witness, or no witness at all. This is expressly why we are commanded to put away the things of the flesh and the world, and dwell upon heavenly things, right things, and things that speak of the truth.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (*Colossians 3:1*)

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (*Philippians 4:8*)

Incidentally, isn't it somewhat of a contradiction for someone who has been born in the truth and of the truth, and knows

reality to engage in fantasy (which is by definition not reality and a lie), and fiction (again, a lie), and in escapism (mentally opting out of reality)? If someone is born-again of God, then shouldn't they love things that are true? After all, the following passages of Scripture speak clearly to the fact that God is not about untruth, nor does He abide it. Moreover, He wants His children to set aside such things and focus on the Lord who saved them, rather than on things of fantasy.

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; (*Titus 1:2*)

Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: (*Hebrews 6:17-18*)

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (*Hebrews 12:1-2*)

4. J. R. R. Tolkien did not intend to create a false religion.

Whether J. R. R. Tolkien truly understood what he was doing, only the LORD God really knows. However, the understanding of the person involved in perpetrating the evil is rarely, if ever, the issue. The real issue is that there is a real creation, a real reason for evil and wickedness, and a real

righteous God of all that insures that all men know that He is there, and what He requires. This is plainly stated in Romans, chapter 1:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (*Romans 1:18-21*)

In closing I would like put forth one final thought for your consideration. I have read the entire series on Middle Earth (even *The Silmarillion*). I did it long before I was saved. However, the power of the books is such that I kept them for years. It was not until I was saved that I put them away – but I could not destroy them. It took approximately a year to come to the point of destroying them. I consider myself very fortunate, and blessed of God that I was able to do so. I have had many friends and acquaintances that Tolkien's series of books were instrumental in getting them involved in Dungeons and Dragons, and then into witchcraft, and/or drugs. The power and pull that Satan has through these books is tremendous. It is a "nice escape" that is literally playing with fire.

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