

J.R.R Tolkien's Middle Earth Series

A Christian work?

Copyright 2001; revised 2005. All scripture is Authorized King James Version, 1769 edition. This article may be copied and used without permission of the author, provided it is copied and used in its entirety

This article is the second of two letters, and was originally written and published in a church bulletin, much to the chagrin of certain brethren who were either involved in watching the Lord of the Rings movies and rereading the books, or allowing their children to watch the movies and read the books. The sad fact of the whole affair is that the church was a fundamental, unaffiliated Baptist church, and the brethren claimed to be fundamentalists as well. In addition, these individuals were some of the supposedly better taught brethren.

What this does illustrate for certain is the fact that knowledge does not equal obedience. And, just because someone appears to be well taught in one aspect of Bible doctrine, it does not mean that they are understanding of other doctrines taught in the Scriptures.

With these thoughts in mind, please read the following article carefully and thoughtfully, searching out the scriptures honestly. I am certain of what you will find – that is why this article was written.

Due to recent events the question has arisen:

Can you relate, or illustrate the things of God with fantasy and/or fiction?

Now this is a proper question to address in this time in history, as many believe that it is entirely possible to show the principles and truth of the word of God with situations and stories that have no basis in fact. In short, the stories told are not even remotely true.

However, before beginning let's look at what is already known about the series of books dealing with hobbits, orcs, elves, wizards and the like.

This is what we do know from J.R.R Tolkien himself; that the entire Middle Earth series (The Silmarillion, The Hobbit, and The Lord of the Rings trilogy) were revised by Tolkien to more effectively present Catholic elements and doctrine without revealing that was what he was doing. Moreover, Tolkien used many elements of Norse religion ((This is politely called "mythology." Although I suspect the Norse would have taken much umbrage at calling their religion a myth.)) in the setting and storyline of the books.

The above two things we know for certain. There are sufficient quotes from Tolkien himself in his letters to substantiate this. What this means is that one is reading about and being entertained by false religion, and another gospel. ((Though the following may seem bold, it really is not, it is a simple statement of fact: All false religions present another gospel. That is why they exist. The authors of false religion do not like the true Gospel, and thus set about to "create" another "gospel.")) The question here is: Can this false religion/fantasy/fiction present the truths of God? While we are at it, let's also ask another question: Why is "mainstream Christianity" so bent on promoting this series, along with other fantasy/fiction works such as The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe, and The Chronicles of Narnia as "Christian" writing?

In answering the first question, let's consider another question. This question is of the greatest import, and most germane to the entire issue. *Can you tell the truth with an*

untruth (or a lie)? ((The only difference between an “untruth” or something that is false, and a lie, is the intent of the one delivering the false information. An untruth may, or may not be identifiably used for a deception. A lie is always used in the commission of a deception.

However, the above is only man’s way of looking at it. It is not the LORD God’s way of looking at it. Regardless of the intent, anything that is untrue, is still unrighteous and sin. Moreover, God cannot and will not use it for His purposes. God hates those things that are false.))

Think about it . . .

With the above question in mind, it is imperative to first define some terms with commonly accepted, proper dictionary definitions *in the context of this discussion*. All definitions are from the Oxford English Dictionary of the English Language. Although this will be long, it is essential to one’s understanding of the issue at hand.

Fantasy:

3. Delusive imagination, hallucination; the fact or habit of deluding oneself by imaginary perception or reminiscences (*Obs.*)

4. Imagination; the process or the faculty of forming mental representations of things not actually present.

Fiction:

3. The action of feigning or inventing imaginary incidents, existences, states of things, etc., whether for the purpose of deception or otherwise.

4. The species of literature which is concerned with the narration of imaginary events and the portraiture of imaginary characters; fictitious composition.

5. A supposition known to be at variance with fact, but conventionally accepted for some reason of practical convenience, conformity with traditional usage, decorum, or the like.

Invention:

1. The action, faculty, or manner of inventing.

2. The action of devising, contriving, or making up; contrivance, fabrication.
4. The faculty of inventing or devising; power of mental creation or construction; inventiveness.
6. Something devised; a method of action, etc., contrived by the mind; a device, contrivance, design, plan, scheme.
7. A work or writing as produced by exercise of the mind or imagination; a literary composition. (*Obs*)
8. A fictitious statement or story; a fabrication, fiction, figment.

Truth:

1. The quality of being true.
2. One's faith or loyalty as pledged in a promise or agreement; solemn engagement or promise, a covenant (*Obs*)
3. Faith, trust, confidence.
4. Disposition to speak or act truly or without deceit; truthfulness, veracity, sincerity; formerly sometimes in a wider sense: Honesty, uprightness, righteousness, virtue, integrity.
5. Conformity with fact; agreement with reality; accuracy, correctness, verity (of statement or thought).
6. Agreement with a standard or rule; accuracy, correctness; *spec.* accuracy of position or adjustment.
7. Genuineness, reality, actual existence.
8. True statement or account; that which is in accordance with the fact.
9. True religious belief or doctrine; orthodoxy.
- 9b. Conduct in accordance with the divine standard; spirituality of life and behavior.
10. That which is true, real, or actual; reality.
11. The fact or facts, the actual state of the case; matter or circumstance as it really is.
12. A true statement or proposition; a point of true belief; a true doctrine; a fixed or established principle; a verified fact, a reality.

Now, about that last question: In Romans there are two passages found that deal with whether or not we can present (or illustrate) the truth with a falsehood, and grace with sin. ((The principle here is the same.))

For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.
(Romans 3:7-8)

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?
(Romans 6:1-2)

Doesn't the contrast between the truth of God and a lie become more stark, and more discernible the worse the lie? Certainly it does – *but only if you already know the truth*. Moreover, you are still committing sin against God, whom you say you serve.

Can I then say that I make the truth of God more glorious the worse I sin, and the more I lie?

No, absolutely not.

How can one carry the name of the Lord, and all the while smear His name in the mud by association because they think they can still engage in the same wickedness they engaged in before they were "saved."

Why then am I found at fault for my sin? Because sin is still sin. No matter what veneer one attempts to put on it, sin has been, is now, and will always be – sin. Moreover, God hates sin.

Why don't we just do all manner of wickedness so that the truth and glory of God shines forth to the uttermost? Moreover, why isn't Satan the greatest preacher of the Gospel?

And, why does He state that my damnation is just for this attitude? Because it is not the same as God's attitude. For

one to avoid condemnation before God, one must have the same attitude towards sin as God, and be every bit as righteous as God. In other words, one must be in total agreement with God in everything they do.

Of course the short answer to all this is that you cannot make a picket fence white by painting it black. Somehow it just doesn't work. Neither can you brighten a room by turning off all the lights and painting the walls black. And just to beat a dead horse – You cannot arrive at a place by traveling away from it.

The principle is this:

Evil and wickedness will never, never, present the truth of righteousness and the glory of God.

To say that it can, is to call evil good, and good evil. That which is false (a lie) can never present the truth.

Now if one decides to present the truth of God, and proclaim the Gospel by living worldly, enjoying the things of this world and fulfilling our lusts – what are they actually doing? And, what will they be called? The answer is quite plain: They will be perverting the Lord's gospel, and changing it into their own gospel. Thus, the condemnation given in Galatians 1:8-9 will apply to them (or us) as well.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (*Galatians 1:8-9*)

As for the second question which is "And, what will they be called?" Without doubt, "hypocrite" is probably the word that will be most often used.

What does all this have to do with the book "Finding God in the Lord of the Rings" and the newspaper article "Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" has foundation in Christianity"? Everything actually. You see, the authors of the book and the article have shown their ignorance of biblical principle in their failure to include certain facts, and as a result have drawn mistaken conclusions.

First, they do not understand the biblical principle presented above: That you cannot tell the truth using that which is false.

Second, they declare that J.R.R. Tolkien was a Christian based upon Tolkien's own perception of what Christianity is.

Third, they obviously do not take the word of God literally.

Lastly, they do not understand that the one true religion, the pure religion, and the original pure doctrine – *is Christianity*.

1. Beginning at the last point first – The Bible (the right one, the KJV) plainly teaches that the Gospel was preached to Adam after the fall, by Christ Himself as is given in Genesis 3:14-15, 21.

And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (*Genesis 3:14-15*)

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. (*Genesis 3:21*)

In the above passages note that the enmity spoken of exists

expressly between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman only. This statement excludes the seed of the man (or 'of Adam') meaning that the conflict spoken of will be between one born of a virgin and those who are the children of the Devil. Moreover, in the following verse (v. 21) the LORD expressly uses animal skins to cloth Adam and Eve instead of any of the other materials that could have been used. This plainly indicates that the LORD God shed blood to cover (or clothe) Adam of Eve.

Furthermore, it was understood plainly by Abel, as Abel testifies to this day in the word of God.

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. (*Genesis 4:4-5*)

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. (*Hebrews 11:4*)

What was it about Abel's offering that was acceptable to God? And Cain's offering that was not? Perhaps it is this parallel passage from Leviticus that makes it clear:

When a ruler hath sinned, and done *somewhat* through ignorance *against* any of the commandments of the LORD his God *concerning things* which should not be done, and is guilty; Or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge; he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without

blemish: And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD: it *is* a sin offering.

And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out his blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering. And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him. (Leviticus 4:22-26)

This is one of many sacrifices that Israel was required to perform. The primary purpose of these sacrifices are explained in Hebrews, chapter nine:

Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service *of God*. But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; *Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he

entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. (*Hebrews 9:6-12*)

All of the above passages of Scripture speak plainly to the fact that Abel's sacrifice of the blood and fat of a lamb was consistent with the picture the LORD wanted presented concerning His sacrifice on the cross in atonement for our sin. This makes Abel a prophet of the LORD and thus sheds light on another passage from Luke, chapter one:

And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: . . . (*Luke 1:67-70*)

Which also completes the proof from the Scripture that the gospel has always been the same for everyone, and was preached from the beginning. First, we find it preached by the LORD Himself unto Adam and Eve, and then by Abel unto Cain.

However, we are also shown that Cain rejected the gospel and attempted to substitute his own form of sacrifice and have the LORD accept it. Thus, the first perversion of the gospel was by Cain as the passage from Genesis, chapter four stated:

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. (*Genesis 4:4-5*)

In so doing, Cain created the first false religion by

illustrating the sacrifice of Christ to come as a sacrifice that did not require blood to be shed. In short, Cain denied a basic truth of the gospel – “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.” (*Hebrews 9:22*)

With this plainly understood, we can put two other biblical points with it and understand, that if we look hard enough, we can find God in anything, and *all religions have their foundation in Christianity.*

The first thing to factor with Christianity being the one true religion – *that God created everything.* There is no other Creator. Neither man, nor the Devil and his angels, create anything. In the Gospel of John, chapter one, the Scripture is very express about this:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (*John 1:1-3*)

All man and the fallen angels can do is pervert that which already exists. Therefore, if we add these elements to one other element then it gives us the complete picture. The last element to add is the fact that *all things were made to show the glory of God.*

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. *There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, . . .* (*Psalms 19:1-4*)

These things now made plain, it should be clear that what the

authors stated is deceptive. Sure we can “find God in the Lord of the Rings,” just like we can find God in Mormonism, or Catholicism, or Wicca, etc., etc. Yes, we can certainly state that “Lord of the Rings” has a Christian foundation. All false religions do, even Greco-Roman and Norse “mythology.” (Just take a long look at Hinduism, it has some remarkable similarities to Christianity.)

2. The authors and defenders of Tolkein’s works (along with all other “Christian Fiction”) obviously do not take the word of God literally. How do I know this? These are the very same people that state that there is no difference between the Bible versions. Yes, James Dobson and Focus on the Family, Jim Ware, World Magazine, et al., will declare that the NIV, NASB, NKJV, NCV, NJB, etc., etc. are all the same. For this to be true one must make the Scripture into allegory. You know – Lazarus and the rich man – that didn’t really happen. The pool at Bethesda – it never really existed. Literal seven day (24 hour day) creation – not really, etc., etc.

3. The proponents of Tolkien’s works also promote him as a Christian. This is based upon Tolkien’s own claim of being a Christian. J.R.R. Tolkien had a flawed perception of true Christianity. Tolkien himself stated in one of his letters, specifically Letter #142:

“The Lord of the Rings is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision. That is why I have not put in, or have cut out, practically all references to anything like ‘religion’, to cults or practices, in the imaginary world. For the religious element is absorbed into the story and the symbolism.”

And from Letter #195:

“Actually I am a Christian, and indeed a Roman Catholic, so that I do not expect ‘history’ to be anything but a ‘long

defeat' – though it contains (and in a legend may contain more clearly and movingly) some samples or glimpses of final victory."

What would cause the apologists for Tolkien to say that Catholicism is Christianity? It is because their own perception of Christianity and what a Christian is, is horribly flawed. James Dobson is a Nazarene, and still holds firmly to Nazarene doctrine – especially the doctrine of "saved by grace, kept by works." It is not any different for Jim Ware who attended Fuller Theological Seminary. FTS is totally ecumenical, so much so that FTS has no difficulty preparing men and women for positions in the ministry of both Calvinist and Arminist denominations. Jim Ware sees no problem with this. Apparently, Jim Ware sees no problem in "misquoting" either, as he misquoted Tolkien by stating "The Lord of the Rings is of course a fundamentally religious and *Christian* work;" instead of the actual "*Catholic* work;" in a Focus on the Family, Family magazine article supporting the Lord of the Rings.

To be plain – Catholicism is NOT Christianity. There is no part of Catholic doctrine that is Christian.

4. Finally, you cannot tell the truth with a lie. I know many point to that verse in Romans that declares "Yea, let God be true and every man a liar" and yet we are flawed vessels carrying the truth. Seems contradictory doesn't it? But is it really? What is the difference between the Lost and the Saved? I think the apostle Paul expressed it best (given him by the Holy Ghost) in Galatians 2:20 which states "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, **but Christ liveth in me**: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." And again in Romans 7:25 "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then **with the mind I myself serve the law of God**; but with the flesh the law of sin." The great and

fundamental difference that empowers us to carry the truth of the Gospel is that our soul has the righteousness of God; thus we can carry the truth and not be liars. The lost do not have this. Those that depend upon their works for their salvation do not have this. They are altogether liars. So, the principle holds true even here: You cannot tell the truth with a lie.

Should we then listen to those that continue to claim that "God" is presented in such books as The Hobbit, The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe, and the Chronicles of Narnia?

A simple, to the point answer is: No. But the reason for the answer should be well understood. In Galatians 1:8-9 it is stated: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Now these verses are not talking about the newly saved, or recently saved, untaught Christian. Rather, these verses refer to those that have studied the issue and believe that salvation is not secure in Christ, and preach the same. That same person is willing to defend that position *based upon scripture*. With that understanding, consider the following excerpt from a letter I received from Dr. James Dobson's personal assistant concerning his view on Eternal Security. The letter is dated February 29, 2000.

"We welcome your inquiry pertaining to Dr. Dobson's beliefs on eternal security. In response, Dr. Dobson holds to the classic Arminian view—that is, he believes God never violates the free will of the individual. Dr. Dobson feels that the Lord does not force people to accept Him, nor will He lock them into an earlier commitment if they subsequently choose deliberately and willfully to disobey His known will.

Also, while Dr. Dobson does not affirm the doctrine of eternal security, he is at the same time confident that out

loving Heavenly Father will not banish us from fellowship with Him for our mistakes, human frailties, faults, and failings. God's forgiveness for sin is one of the foundation stones of the gospel message. Still, this does not change Dr. Dobson's conviction that the choice is ultimately ours. He believes it is possible for an individual to remove himself from the grace of God, and exit by the door through which he originally entered—the will. This means that, in Dr. Dobson's view, it is possible for a born-again Christian to shake his fist in God's face and say in essence, "I will have my own way!" When that occurs, "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." This scripture, which is quoted below in its larger context, is one of at least fifty references that may be cited in support of the theological perspective to which Dr. Dobson ascribes:"

This then is the crux of the issue as to why we should not listen to such people. They are accursed of God for their perversion of the truth. This is the same problem that exists with J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and many others. Sadly, they do not know the Lord Jesus Christ, but rather have believed "another Jesus" . . .

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*. (*II Corinthians 11:4*)

. . . and followed the false light.

For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to

their works. (*II Corinthians 11:13-15*)

Which means they are blinded by Satan concerning the truth, and speak from that blindness.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (*II Corinthians 4:3-4*)

So what should we do? Interestingly enough, the Lord has covered all the bases, as usual. You know, it is manifestly impossible to stay on task when one's mind is elsewhere. It is also impossible to be engaged seriously, about serious issues when one's mind is filled with fantastic junk. Two verses come to mind as good, solid admonitions for one to follow. (and they have everything to do with the definitions above)

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*)

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (*1 Peter 5:8*)

Finis