

# 『ロード・オブ・ザ・リング』における神学

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## Theology in *The Lord of the Rings*

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### Summary

J. R. R. トールキンの『ロード・オブ・ザ・リング』は、出版当初あまりよく売れない本だった。しかし年を経ていくうちに多くの人に読まれるようになり、今ではこの作品を知らない人はほとんどいない。今世紀の映画化によって、『ロード・オブ・ザ・リング』は世界中にその名を知らしめることとなった。

トールキンの作品は様々な要素を豊かに含んでいる。彼はミドルアースの歴史を作り、独自の言語を作り、登場人物たちの背景についても詳細に渡るまで書いた。さらにトールキンは伝説や神話、そして聖書などの要素を取り入れてこの作品を書き上げた。トールキン自身はこの作品にアレゴリーはないと述べているが、作者がカトリックの信者であったことから、作品の中に聖書的意味を見出すことは可能なものと思われる。例えば善と悪の戦い、登場人物の成長などが挙げられる。登場人物たちはそれぞれが役割を持ちながら、時折キリスト的な性質に変わる。ガンダルフは戦いの後に蘇生して白のガンダルフへと生まれ変わり、フロドは他の人が負うことのできない重荷——指輪——を負ってモルドールへ向かう。アルゴルンはリーダーであり王でもある。サムはフロドの良き理解者であり、助け手でもある。また、最後に登場人物が別世界へ旅立つという点においては、著者が別世界 The Kingdom of Heaven へ憧れていたことを示している。

トールキンはこの作品に、聖書に見られる人の賜物やキリストの姿、そして永遠の命を表わした。作品の中に深い意味を探ることは、作品を味わうという点でも、知識の幅を広げる点でも有益である。意味を知ることにより奥深い鑑賞ができ、それを共有することで、知恵も知識も深まっていくものと思われる。

## 1. Introduction

J. R. R. Tolkien's story has its beginning in the early 1930s. When he was busy making examination papers at Oxford University, suddenly some words came out of his mind, and onto the paper left blank by one of the examination candidates; "In a hole in the ground, there lived a hobbit." <sup>1</sup> *The Lord of the Rings* was first published in 1954 on publication the book was poorly received by critics. However, the book grew in popularity in the 1960s and 1970s and achieved cult status and became one of the most successful books of the twentieth century.

The significant movie version of *The Lord of the Rings* came out in 2001. The film director Peter Jackson says "Making *The Lord of the Rings* is something that is quiet amazing. It is a special book and a special project and there is never a day goes by when I do not think it is a real honour to be doing it. [...] Since starting this movie, I have read this book hundreds of times, literally word for word. Indeed, before I film a scene, I usually go back and read that chapter from the book." <sup>2</sup>

Some members of the C. S. Lewis Society take a cool view of the big hit that this film has been. They do not appreciate the film so much, and say that the film just takes the role of making the story famous. However, in my opinion, the movies are an excellent medium of inspiration and enlightenment, and the trilogy is a powerful example of how a work of fiction can evoke a feel for the sacred calling.

Tolkien's work is all the more deeply Christian. The religious significance of *The Lord of the Rings* arises out of its plot and characters, its images and tone, its landscape and point of view. Tolkien seems to have had a strong sense of the once-and-for-all character of God's revelation in Israel and Jesus. For Tolkien, every Christian is meant to take on the form of Christ. In *The Lord of the Rings*, not only Gandalf, but also Aragorn, and Frodo are imbued with them.

The theological criticism method uses traditional concepts as a means of accessing a film's meaning. It will use an allegorical key and discover Christ figures through thinking about profound religious themes focusing on characters, plot, and atmosphere. In this essay, I intend to look *The Lord of the Rings*, and I would like to find to identify some of the ways in which these works might be considered relevant to religion and religion relevant to them. Particularly, I shall look at the theology of *The Lord of the Rings*.

## 2. Theology in *The Lord of the Rings*

*The Lord of the Rings* constructs detailed fantasy worlds with their own laws, social structures and their own theologies. Tolkien took elements from Arthurian legend, the Bible and myths and brought from together to create new interpretations of human purpose and meaning. The stories fills the mind and now the imaginations of numerous young people are populated with exciting worlds peopled by gods and demons, sorcerers and witches, alien beings, heroes and heroines, hobbits and orcs, and hosts of other fantastic creatures.

Tolkien was a Catholic Christian, and it could be expected that readers might find Christianity in the books. On the other hand, Ralph C. Wood has found that the books contain no formal religion. Wood says that since the hobbits do not pray, the Shire dwellers do not built temples and do not make ritual sacrifices, Tolkien makes the mythical world of Middle-Earth a non religious world.

Although Tolkien himself mentions that his books are not a Christian allegory, Tolkien's world is inescapably a God centred world because of his faith; for instance, surely it presents the War between good and evil, or light and darkness. The hobbits do not pray or worship, yet there are parables and analogues of Christian faith present throughout the story. The hobbits find themselves performing acts of faith; entrusting themselves to each other and to their own convictions about the good. These faithful acts form distinctive echoes of Christian faith. Here I shall find the protagonists' spiritual gifts, Christ-like figure, and eternal life.

### 2-1. Spiritual Gift

In 1 Corinthians 12:28, Paul lists the spiritual gifts as "first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues". The calling of the fellowship in *The Lord of the Rings* can be seen as a modern reworking of this idea of diversity. If I look at some characteristic talents in the story, one can see how their roles or gifts work. Taking *The Fellowship of the Ring*, it might be interesting to see these lists of gifts in protagonists. Each character has their gifts to save Middle-Earth from evil. All members of the fellowship are caught up in the same great purpose, to oppose evil and to restore the good.

In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Gandalf is chosen for his wisdom, Aragorn because of his ancestral link to the Ring, Boromir for his bravery, Legolas for his elvish mastery of the woods, Gimli for his dwarvish knowledge of mountains and mines, and Sam because he is

Frodo's closest companion. Merry and Pippin are chosen, despite their youthful inexperience, because they are eager to follow Frodo. All fellowships work together at first, and they are separated. However, the mission is just one; to destroy the Ring, evil's power.

The first significant talent which we can see is Gandalf's gift. His character indicates his gift of wisdom; 'Wizard' derives from the Middle English 'wys' which means 'wise', and Gandalf's wisdom is linked to his learning. Wisdom is also a central virtue in the biblical tradition. Both Proverbs and Ecclesiastes speak of the wise as being receptive to instruction, as heeding the counsel of others, as possessing self-control, honesty, and diligence. The wise are also teachers and scholars and writes, and they are usually elderly person like Gandalf. And the wizard Gandalf shows miracles and leadership to guide people. He knows something of the dark history and fearful destiny bound up in the one Ring. He also looks to be the hypothetical Christ (I shall examine later).

The second person who has a gift is Aragorn, and he is a central member of the Fellowship because he is the heir of Isildur. Only he can wield Isildur's once-broken sword, which is an instrument not only of great power but also of true authority. His kingly powers are made evident at Isengard where he would be crowned king. He is aware of the burden of his heritage and he carries the knowledge that he has to reveal his true self to play his part in the fight against evil. That burden, that knowledge is what shapes and colours his perceptions. His right-hand man, Legolas is from the oldest and the wisest of the races in Middle-Earth. He has great physical and mental strength and he is a powerful and experienced person.

Thirdly, Frodo is the main person to carry the burden/Ring, and there cast the Ring into the fires of Mount Doom. Other characters, like Boromir, Faramir, and Gollum, yield to temptation and think to use the Ring for themselves or their selfish reason. Yet Frodo is humble. When all people argue how to destroy the Ring and who take it to the Mount Doom, only he can stand for taking the Ring. He does not think of using the Ring for himself in a selfish way on the long journey.

Fourthly, Sam is the strongest helper for Frodo. It is his friendship that enables Frodo to carry out his quest. He is goodness, loyalty, decency, and good enough to help in such a big quest. Sam is the ultimate hero of *The Lord of the Rings*, because he is the ultimate servant. That he wants nothing other than to serve his master Frodo makes him, if not the greatest of all the hobbits, certainly the most admirable. The actor Elijah Wood, who plays Frodo in the film, says "It is love. It is that unconditional love that says, regardless of what you do or where you go, I will always be there for you."<sup>3</sup> His role as a helper is

an echo of the gospel; “Whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:43-45) And Sam’s faithful friendship as the servant would be drawn Jesus’ word “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends”. (John 15:15)

Fifthly, Boromir would seem to be the Judas of the story, for it is he who breaks the fellowship by trying to seize the Ring from Frodo. However, he makes good on his solitary confession of sin by fighting orcs in order to save other hobbits. He admits his sin, and the future king, Aragorn hears his last confession. Although he betrays the rule of the fellowship, in his sacrificial death he has something similar to John the Baptist. As John prepares the way of the Lord and makes His paths straight, Boromir and his father rule the country until the heir of Isildur will be crowned, where Aragorn is to be King. Boromir’s death is nobility like the death of John the Baptist. Ultimately, Boromir fulfils the words of Jesus “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

As for the Judas in *The Lord of the Rings*, it could be said that Gollum takes the role it in the story. The interesting thing is that Gollum also helps for destroy the Ring. Thanks to his guide, Frodo and Sam can go through the secret way which only Gollum knows, and they can reach to the destination. In addition, if he were not at Mount Doom, Frodo could escape from the mountain with the Ring and Frodo would live long and miserable like Gollum, or Sauron would find him to take the Ring, and then the quest would have failed. Due to Gollum’s ambition, the Ring is brought to the mountain and is destroyed. Gollum’s role can be said similar to Judas, because Judas leads the Pharisees to arrest Jesus. If Judas were not the disciple of Jesus, Jesus would not be arrested and not be crucified (or God takes another way to salvation). Owing to Judas, the crucifixion happens and salvation comes to the world. Similar to this, owing to Gollum, their quest and the purpose of destroying the Ring are successful.

The close kinship between the Gospel and the central call of the quest will be found. Jesus commands his disciples not to save their lives for their own sake but to lose them for his sake and the Kingdom; “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mark 8 :36-7) By the end of the quest in *The Lord of the Rings*, the entire fellowship has learnt this most basic and profoundest of all lessons.

Gifts in 1 Corinthians	LOTR Characters	Gifts in LOTR
Apostles	Gandalf	Miracles, Teacher
Prophets	Aragorn	Leader
Teachers	Legolas	Teacher, Tongue
Miracles	Frodo	Carrier, Apostle
Healings	Sam	Helper
Helps	Boromir	Sacrifice
Administration	Gollum	Guide
Tongues		

All members of the fellowship are caught up in the same great purpose, to oppose evil and to restore the good. The term 'fellowship' is used in Paul's letter as 'fellowship in the gospel' (Philippians 1 : 5). Paul encourages us to work in one spirit for one purpose to spread the gospel; "if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfil my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." (Philippians 2 : 1-2) Fellowship itself is also part of Catholic culture. In the Fellowship, all members hold together as responsible individuals banding together in free communities.

*The Fellowship of the Ring* indicates Paul's teaching, not only on spiritual gifts, but also on working in one spirit. The fellowship unity makes the fellowship a starting analogue of this passage; "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift." (Ephesians 4 : 4-7) And when Elrond emphasises the unity of all members, his encouragement can be linked with Paul's idea; "if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Corinthians 12 : 26)

In *The Lord of the Rings*, the smallest person takes on the most important role of carrying the Ring. It may be an echo of Paul's word "those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary". (1 Corinthians 12 : 22)

Comparing with Romans, Paul insists that human beings would live in their righteousness. It seems to me, in this story, most of the fellowships are examples of righteousness, because they keep their faith to save Middle-Earth, and they overcome the temptation of the Ring. To be righteous, John says that 'we shall be like Christ'. (1 John 3:2) Through moral attitude in the quest, the fellowships grow up with being like Christ.

## 2-2. Christ-like

When I look at the protagonists' spiritual gifts in *The Lord of the Rings*, I think some Christians may have been reminded of Christ figure by some characters in the story. For instance, Gandalf is shown as the hypothetical Christ in his resuscitation, Aragorn as the leader and his lowly appearance as the Messiah assumes lower status, and Frodo bears the burden/Ring. In addition, Arwen is also one kind of the hypothetical Christ because she has chosen the mortal life even though she is immortal nature. One may hypothesise that Christ is represented in the story.

Resurrection is one of the underlying currents in *The Lord of the Rings*. Gandalf dies after his fighting the Balrog at the bridge of Khazad-Dum. He rises from the dead and changes from the Gray to the White, just as Jesus rises again. Gandalf represents Christ not only in his resurrection, but also in some of his words. Gandalf teaches Frodo to forgive the utterly undeserving Gollum, even as Bilbo had done. When Frodo asks why Bilbo should have not given Gollum the justice he so fully deserved, Gandalf answers with the moral and religious centre.

Many that live deserve death. And some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them? Then do not be too eager to deal out death in judgement. For even the very wise cannot see all ends. I have not much hope that Gollum can be cured before he dies, but there is a chance of it. And he is bound up with the fate of the Ring. My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end; and when that comes, the pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many – yours not least.<sup>4</sup>

His word is the only declaration to be repeated in all the story, and many readers may be reminded of this word when Gollum takes the Ring from Frodo at the Mount Doom. As I mentioned before, owing to Gollum, the Ring is destroyed. And Gandalf's idea that mercy and pity are essential may be based on Jesus' command; "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you". (Matthew 5 : 43 – 44)

Another example of the hypothetical Christ is Aragorn. He is the heir of Isildur, and the relationship between Isildur and Aragorn reminds me of the relationship between Adam and Jesus Christ. As Adam brings evil in the Eden, Isildur brings the Ring as evil power. As Christ comes to his salvation, Aragorn comes to save Middle-Earth and to be the king, and he has a kingdom to come into. His one image is very powerful and he has hands of the healer. He has the ability to heal people by touching as Jesus has touched and healed

Jairus daughter, the centurion's servant, the lepers, and the blind.

And thirdly, Frodo also can be called the hypothetical Christ. It is Frodo who bears the Ring and saves mankind from evil as Christ bears the cross to save people from sin. Frodo is the smallest person and the important part to carry the Ring. He goes through the waste land with temptation of the Ring, like Jesus is led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (Matthew 4) Under the Eye of Sauron, Frodo's stumbling approach to Mordor is like the faltering steps of Christ weighed down by his cross as he repeatedly falls on the path to Golgotha.

In Frodo and Sam are hunger, thirst, and drastic deprivation, and in their virtual abandonment of all hope, the final path to bring the Ring, Sam carries the burden together as he carries Frodo and the Ring on his shoulder. Sam becomes almost Simon, who is the man of Cyrene, bears Christ's cross together. Through sharing the burden, people will find that Jesus' promise which those who take up the burden and follow Jesus will find the burden lightened.

Hobbits fulfil the Paul's commandment "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." (Philippians 2 : 3-4) The hobbits' virtue is not that they are small minded but that they love and serve each other. They do not care about accruing neither power nor wealth. The urgent call of the gospel is the summons to give up even good things, to surrender all coercive power, to lose one's own life in order that others might find the treasure of the Kingdom.

Christians are called to be hobbit-like servants of the King and his Kingdom. Frodo and Sam are first in the reign of Iluvatar because they are willing to be last and least among those who 'move the wheels of the world'.<sup>5</sup> To be a servant is to be liberated from self-concern. It is to be devoted to the common good that one hardly thinks of one's own wants and needs at all. Such self-giving commonality is the essence of life in *The Lord of the Rings* and it is the chief reason the hobbits are entrusted with destroying the Ring.

Finally, Arwen also can be called the hypothetical Christ. The elves are by nature good, however, Arwen surrenders her immortality in order that she may be united in death in her mortal spouse. Although it seems to me that she loses her eternal life, Tolkien offers a powerful imaginative analogy between the immortal Arwen's decision to become a mortal woman and Christ's refusal to regard his equality with the Father as a thing to be grasped. Just as Christ empties himself of his divine eternality in order to assume the



form of a mortal servant and to become obedient unto death, Arwen gives up her undying life to perish alongside her beloved Aragorn. As God has highly exalted Christ, Arwen becomes happier than before with Aragorn.

Figure	Characters	Reason
Christ	Gandalf	Resurrection, his words
Christ	Aragorn	Leader, King, Healer
Christ	Frodo	Carry the burden
Simon	Sam	Help to carry the burden
Christ	Arwen	Choosing the mortal life

Tolkien's Christianity imbues *The Lord of the Rings* not only with the virtues but also with the conviction that, when completed and perfected, prudence issues in holy folly, justice in undeserved mercy, courage in unexpected endurance, and temperance in joyful self-denial. Tolkien thinks all people can take a role like Christ.

All people are called to be Christ like before God. Faith is the total entrustment of people to the God who has trustworthily revealed himself in Christ. It is the confidence that this true God will dispose of our lives graciously. As the people of God in the world, the church is empowered by the Spirit who makes the crucified and risen Lord present, even as it eagerly awaits his final consummation of all things, when there shall be a new heaven and a new earth. Except Arwen, some elves and protagonists leave for the Undying Lands at the end of the story.

### 2-3. Eternal Life

At the end of the quest, Gandalf, Frodo, Bilbo and the elves are going to the Undying Lands. Generally speaking, one of peoples' most common beliefs is the fear of death. People fear death because beyond the grave, there is nothing; and when human beings die, they rot. Tolkien refuses to dismiss this dark view of death. As a Christian, he honours the hope for the bodily resurrection of the dead that leads to the Eternal Life.

The Christian has the hope of the coming of the new heaven and the new earth; the conviction that salvation in this life is never completed, and God will consummate it on the Last Day. The Christian hope concerns a radical change that breaks the cycle of the world's endless turning. It should be noted that the New Testament parables of heaven are communal in nature. Heaven is portrayed as a banquet, as a wedding feast, or as the new Jerusalem. The term 'heaven' is used in the Pauline writings; 'heaven' is referred to both as the future home of the believer and as the present dwelling-place of Jesus.

This takes the natural human aspiration of happiness and reorders it to the Kingdom of Heaven. It is the hope in a future that God alone both can and will provide. The hope gives faith its real motive force; “the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. [...] For we were saved in this hope”. (Romans 8 : 21, 24)

One of Paul’s most significant statements concerning heaven focuses on the notion of believers being ‘citizens in heaven’. In the Christian faith, Tolkien would think “our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ”. (Philippians 3 : 20) Tolkien seeks first the kingdom of God and God’s righteousness, so he shows the protagonists’ departure at the end of the story.

Tolkien’s friend C. S. Lewis has the same view of death. In the fact, the writing of *The Chronicles of Narnia* owes a great deal to Tolkien. In the end of the Narnian stories, the protagonists are dead in their world due to an accident, and they have an eternal life and live in Aslan’s country forever. Although other stories, such as *La Petit Prince*, *A Dog of Flanders*, and *The Happy Prince*, give readers sorrow in the death of the characters, Lewis overcomes the fear of death and demonstrates one kind of joy for characters and readers. The one reason is that he thinks “[death] is mercy because by willing and humble surrender to it Man undoes his act of rebellion and makes even this depraved and monstrous mode of Death an instance of that higher and mystical Death which eternally good and a necessary ingredient in the highest life.”<sup>6</sup> Lewis also indicates the final end of the victory is the new heaven and the new earth.

There is considerable wisdom that death is the gift of God. Tolkien suggests that the life has its real urgency and point, because we live towards death. The end of *The Lord of the Rings*, where the defeat of evil is muted by an enormous grief at the departure of Gandalf, Frodo, Bilbo and the elves, can be seen without tears only by the flint-hearted. People can remember that a melancholy air also infuses much of the Scripture and that Hebrew wisdom is built on an unflinching honesty about death. If a Christian dies, lots of people will miss the person in this world, but in the heaven he will be welcomed and enters a new world being told, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!” (Matthew 25 : 21)

In the very final scene of *The Lord of the Rings*, Sam comes back to his house, talks to his wife and children, and they all go into the house. This final scene in the story shows us God blesses small people in their normal life, and people can find happiness in their daily

life. Sam is already in the heaven in his daily life. Tolkien was also a domestic person and enjoyed his life with Edith with continued to focus on the inner world of imagination, memory and language. And Tolkien suggests there is the heaven in our normal life. The Kingdom of Heaven is the future world, and at the same time, is the present world in our heart. "The kingdom of God is [...] righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Romans 14 : 17)

Tolkien fulfils his desire, longing for the Kingdom of Heaven. His idea can be found in Pauline phrase "Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death." (1 Corinthians 15 : 24-26) *The Lord of the Rings* accomplishes the writer's and human beings' desire which they could not achieve in this world, and shows eternal life in the new world.

### 3. Conclusion

Although it was not allegorical story, *The Lord of the Rings* have Christian themes in portraying a Christ figure and the quest of life, which go deeper than many readers, as they look for biblical parallels. Christianity is so deeply and fully in their stories, because the faith would inevitably infuse whatever they wrote. Despite the fact that he disliked allegorical or instructive styles, Tolkien clearly reflected the Christian theology in the writing. In the stories, spiritual gifts, Christ-like figure, and eternal life can be found.

In the first theme 'spiritual gifts', the common theme can be found as the fighting between the good and the evil; it is portrayed as the warfare between the good and evil. Tolkien participated in the World War and the experience could be put into the work. And in the faith as Christians he always struggles to fight against evil in this world. One of Tolkien's most important teachings is that we are never meant to take evil with the same seriousness that we accord to the Good, lest we become fascinated with things we allegedly abominate.

In the second theme being 'Christ-like', it can be seen the growth of characters. *The Lord of the Rings* is a book with enduring appeal because nearly every member of the company undergoes immense moral and spiritual growth. The quest leaves everyone allied with the company profoundly altered for the good. Sam experiences the largest moral growth.

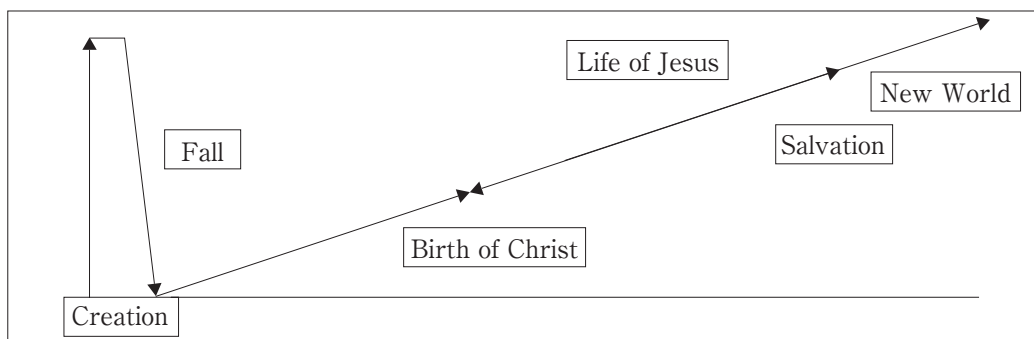
And finally, the third theme 'eternal life' shows the new heaven and the new earth. At the end of *The Lord of the Rings*, some characters are going to the Undying Lands. The en-

ding is shown the author was yearning to another world, the Kingdom of Heaven. The promises of the kingdom will all be completely fulfilled at the end of time. Mankind will be united together in God's place the new creation.

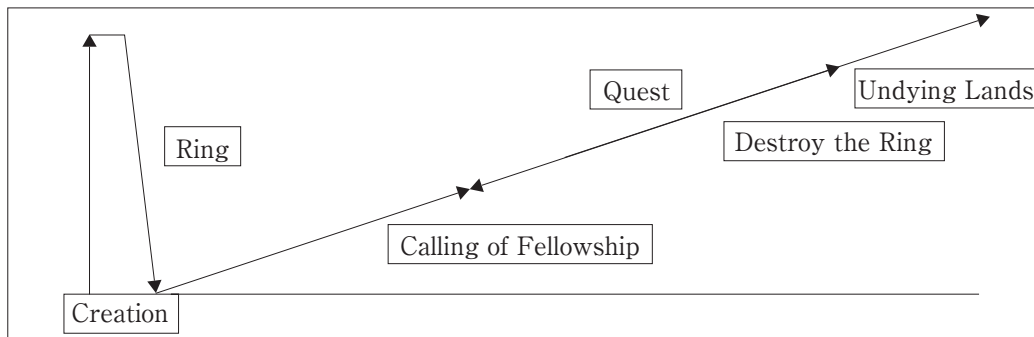
Tolkien's faith is that men were not created in order to die, but rather were born to life everlasting without any shadow of any end. Tolkien describes that creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. He explains he was made for another world, and he must keep alive in himself the desire for his true country, which he shall not find till after death.<sup>7</sup> The Tolkienian prophecy of the incarnation of God in Middle-Earth is deeply Christian.

In the Bible, God has big picture; first, creation this world and fall in Genesis, second, salvation and resurrection in the Gospels, and third, new heaven in the Revelation.<sup>8</sup> It could be said that the picture is linked with *The Lord of the Rings*; first, create the Middle-Earth and the Ring, second, quest for destroying the Ring, and third, departure for the Undying Lands. Thus, Tolkien indicates God's big picture of history through *The Lord of the Rings*.

The Bible<sup>9</sup>



*The Lord of the Rings*



In the Pauline passage, he seeks to teach truth, promote holiness, encourage unity and sustain faithfulness. I think his passage shows human life itself, and that life itself is similar to the quest in *The Lord of the Rings* in fighting against evil and growing up into maturing and then reaching the goal. The final goal of the quest of our life is to be like Jesus Christ. John says “when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3 : 2) And Jesus says “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” (Mark 8 : 34) All human beings have given spiritual gifts, and are progressing on the way to becoming a Christ-like figure, and on the way to the new heaven and the new earth.

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