

The Worlds of Lewis and Tolkien: Christian Imagery in Narnia and Middle Earth

#2: The Fall: Sin and Evil

I. Evil is the Distortion of a Good Creation

A. LOTR and Narnia are not “Dualistic” in their view of good and evil

“There are only two views that face all the facts. One is the Christian view that this is a good world that has gone wrong, but still retains the memory of what it ought to have been. The other is the view called Dualism. Dualism means the belief that there are two equal and independent powers at the back of everything, one of them good and the other bad, and that this universe is the battlefield in which they fight out an endless war.” C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

B. Lord of the Rings

- Illuvatar created all things good (with a song!)
- Evil things started out good
- The land of Mordor is example of sin’s destruction
- Lothlorien preserves a glimpse of a perfect world

C. Narnia

- Aslan created all things with a song (The Magician’s Nephew)
- All was good before corrupted by Evil. “‘You see, friends,’ explained Aslan, ‘before the new, clean world I gave you is seven hours old, a force of evil has already entered it.’”
- Narnia’s state in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is evidence of “the Fall”

II. Evil is Embodied in a “Satanic” Character and Its Minions

A. Lord of the Rings—Sauron

- *sauros* is the Greek word for “lizard”
- Originally good and became a servant of the evil Melkor (Morgoth)
- How do we see examples of how evil/wicked is Sauron and his servants?

B. Narnia—Jadis the White Witch

- How is she different than the traditional “witch” in popular fiction?
- What are examples of her wickedness?

III. Sin is Deceptive and Powerful

A. Lord of the Rings—The Ring

- Many are tempted by the ring: Isildur, Bilbo, Gollum, Frodo, Boromir, Gandalf, Saruman
 - “He [Gollum] hated it and loved it, as he hated and loved himself.” --Gandalf
 - How does Gollum’s “split personality” help us understand sin?
 - How does Saruman’s “apostasy” help us understand the power of sin?
 - “It is perilous to study too deeply the arts of the enemy, for good or for ill.” –Elrond about Saruman

- Tolkien provides a bad foil for every good character to show what *could* happen if one does not resist the ring
 - Gandalf vs. Saruman
 - Aragorn vs. Boromir (and Isildur)
 - Frodo vs. Gollum
 - They are all “like and yet unlike” –Gimli speaking of Gandalf and Saruman

B. Narnia—Turkish Delight

- What do we learn from Edmund’s experience with Turkish delight?

IV. God is Sovereign Over Evil

A. Lord of the Rings

- A Greater power is at work

“Behind [the ring’s abandonment of Gollum] there was something else at work, beyond any design of the ringmaker. I can put it no plainer than saying that Bilbo was *meant* to find the ring, and *not* by its maker. In which case you were also *meant* to have it.” Gandalf, FOTR (1:65).
- What is intended for evil, works for Good

“A traitor may betray himself and do good that he does not intend” –Gandalf, ROTK

“And he [Gollum] 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.” –Gandalf, FOTR
- There is order and purpose in the war against evil

“What shall we do with the Ring, the least of rings, the trifle that Sauron fancies? That is the doom that we must deem. That is the purpose for which you are called hither. Called, I say, though I have not called you to me, strangers from distant lands. You have come and are here met, in this very nick of time, by chance as it may seem. Yet it is not so. Believe rather that it is so ordered that we, who sit here, and none others, must now find counsel for the peril of the world.” --Elrond, FOTR
- In the end, Evil defeats Itself
 - Examples of evil defeating itself: orcs fighting themselves in merry/pippin’s escape and frodo/sam’s escape; Saruman caught in his own trap, Wormtongue kills him
 - Ultimate example: Frodo not the “hero” but rather Gollum takes the ring and falls into Mt. Doom

B. Narnia

- Aslan’s death backfired on the White Witch
- The White Witch’s stone statues become Aslan’s army to defeat her