



The Hidden Meaning of *The Lord of the Rings* - (Audio CD): The Theological Vision in Tolkien's Fiction

Joseph Pearce

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Joseph Pearce offers a fascinating and insightful course on *The Lord of the Rings*, which is the greatest and most popular work of literature of the twentieth century. The course discusses the book's phenomenal success and the life of its author, J. R. R. Tolkien, before embarking on a tour of the world and characters of Middle-earth.

Despite the absence of any direct mention of Christ or the Catholic Church, Tolkien described his work as "fundamentally religious and Catholic." He was able to infuse his fictional world with theological orthodoxy through his creation myth and world order, by endowing his protagonists with Christian virtues, and by incorporating themes of grace and mercy.

Tolkien's deep faith and creative philosophy emerges from the narrative as an unmistakable Catholic presence. The very foundation of Tolkien's Middle-earth, from its creation by Eru Ilúvatar, the one God, to angel-like Melkor's sinful rebellion, to the menacing presence of Sauron, the dark lord, supports Professor Pearce's argument for the Catholicity of the work. You'll learn how the One Ring symbolizes Original Sin, how the dates Tolkien chose for events in the story are theologically significant, how the Elvish waybread, *lembas*, figures as the Eucharist, and how Frodo acts as a Christ-figure.

Tolkien also describes his work as an allegory of "power usurped for domination" - a theme which is all the more important to examine in our modern world. Characters throughout *The Lord of the Rings* are tempted by power and the urge to seize it and wield it for personal gain and unlawful control. Throughout the journey of the Fellowship, various characters face the temptation of the One Ring - the wizard Gandalf, through whom the Ring would wield a terrible power; human man Boromir, who would use it to save his people; elf queen Galadriel, weary from fighting the "long defeat" against evil. Among the characters who do usurp power for domination are Saruman, the white wizard who succumbs to evil, whose machinations at Isengard only bring more evil into Middle-earth.

Over the eight lectures in the course, Professor Pearce highlights connections, allegories, and insights which will expand your reading of *The Lord of the Rings*. It is said that art holds the mirror up to life. This is the reason that art is "real" and fiction is "true". *The Lord of the Rings* enjoys such fame and popularity because in a way, it shows us ourselves in the characters. Learn more and discover for yourself the truth written into *The Lord of the Rings* with Professor Joseph Pearce.

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