

FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION IN MIDDLE-EARTH

Whilst reading The Lord of the Rings I was struck at times by phrases which seemed to echo verses from the Bible. Galadriel's words to the Company in Lothlórien, "do not let your hearts be troubled", reminded me of Christ's words in St. John's Gospel 14 v. 27. So pursuing the idea that a thread of Professor Tolkien's faith must run through his works, I looked more closely for other examples.

In LotR the Christian idea of a Pilgrim with a burden to lose and a world to be saved from overwhelming evil begins in Book 1, ch. 2 when Gandalf recounts the History of the Ring to Frodo, and declares that he has been chosen for a dangerous quest [I Corinthians 1, vv. 27-8]. He, Frodo, an insignificant person as far as the rest of the world is concerned, must take the Ring to the Crack of Doom to be destroyed, or evil will triumph. Later, at the Council of Elrond, Frodo commits himself publicly to the Quest. This is not unlike a confession of faith a person makes when becoming a committed Christian.

In Lórien, the Company is made welcome (Book 2, ch. 7). They are fearful, sad and weary because of the loss of Gandalf, so Galadriel speaks words of comfort and welcome [John 14 v. 27; 2 Thess. 1 v. 7; Prov. 3 v. 24]. Later Gandalf returns and appears, to Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli, all in white [Rev. 1 v. 14]. Then as a conqueror robed in white and riding a white horse (Book III, ch. 7) [Rev. 6 v. 2] he leads the host at Helm's Deep. [Notice that one of his companions is Erkenbrand carrying a Red shield and a Black horn, bringing with him Pale death.]

Frodo, Sam and Gollum reach Mordor (Book 4, ch. 2). Jeremiah 2 v. 6 and Deut. 8 v. 15 describe a Wilderness very like to Mordor. Later when Sam is in danger and distress (Book 4, ch. 10) he calls out in an unknown tongue [Acts 2 v. 4]. Strengthened by his experience he puts Shelob to flight.

Eagles are birds of the Bible as well as of Middle-earth. They are very large birds [Ezekiel 17 v. 3 & 7] and were a mode of holy transport. Galadriel sent an Eagle for Gandalf (Book 3, ch. 5) [Exodus 19 v. 4]. An Eagle carried Gandalf again in Book 6, ch. 4 and Frodo and Sam (Book 6, ch. 4). In The Hobbit Bilbo, Gandalf and the Dwarves were rescued by Eagles (ch. 6).

A very obvious comparison with Genesis 2 v. 9, the Two Trees in the Garden of Eden is with the Two Trees in the Garden on Valinor (QS, "The Beginning of Days"). Also in QS, compare the chaining of Morgoth by Eärendil ("The Voyage of Eärendil") to Rev. 20 v. 1-3.

These are a few examples of the Bible being one of the sources used by Professor Tolkien in his Histories of Middle-earth and the Great Ring. A table summarising these points is found below:

Irene Garnett

TOLKIEN	BIBLE (Authorised Version)
<u>QS</u> (hardback)	
p. 38, The Two Trees	Genesis 2 v. 9
p. 252, Eärendil chains Morgoth	Rev. 20 v. 1-3
<u>LotR</u> (one volume ed.)	
p. 74-5, Frodo 'chosen' (Bk.1, VII)	1 Cor. 1 v. 27-8
p. 376, Company welcomed to Lórien (Bk.2, VII)	2 Thess. 1 v. 7
p. 516, Gandalf the White (Bk.3, V)	Rev. 1 v. 14
p. 565, The White Rider (Bk.3, VII)	Rev. 6 v. 2
p. 657, Mordor (Bk.4, II)	Jer. 2 v. 6
<u>Eagle References</u>	
<u>The Hobbit</u> , ch. VI	
<u>LotR</u> , p. 524, Galadriel sends for Gandalf (Bk.3, V)	Ex. 19 v. 4
p. 985, Eagle carries Gandalf (Bk. 6, IV)	Ezek. 17 v. 3
p.987, Eagles save Frodo and Sam (Bk.6, IV)	Ezek. 17 v. 3 & 7
p. 756, Sam speaks in unknown tongue (Bk.4, X)	Acts 2 v. 4

[Editor's note: if anyone has any more examples on this subject, I should be happy to hear from you!]