

# The Fellowship of the Ring

Tolkien himself describes The Lord of the Rings as “a fundamentally religious and catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision.” Following is a tool to guide your thoughts toward some of the Biblical themes in the Fellowship of the Ring.

## THE CHARACTERS:

Who might the following represent? Note that Tolkien’s characters are not allegorical, that is, there is not necessarily a one-to-one representation. Characters may hint at several different representations at various times and in various ways.

Frodo?

Gandalf?

Saruman?

Sauron?

Gollum?

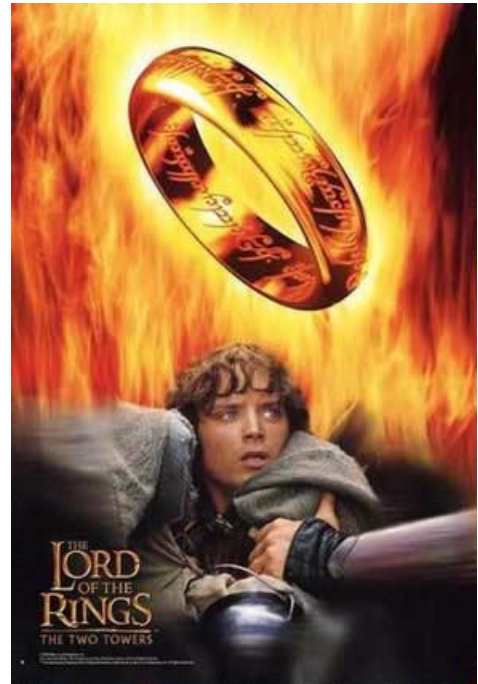
The hobbits?

The many races in the fellowship?

The elves?

The orcs?

Ring wraiths?



## Christian Themes:

### SIN AND ITS POWER

What is ring created to do? How is the ring similar to sin?

What power does the ring have over its wearers and what does it do to them?

Why is the ring most tempting to the outwardly powerful and noble?

Saruman tries to convince Gandalf to join him, saying: "We can bide our time, we can keep our thoughts in our hearts, deploring maybe evils done by the way, but approving high and ultimate purpose: knowledge, rule, order; all the things we have so far striven in vain to accomplish..." What false way of thinking is portrayed here?

How do the wicked in the movie treat one another? Why? Contrast this with the fellowship of the good.

### GOD VS. THE DEVIL



In what way is Sauron's all-seeing eye similar to Satan's power in our world?

Throughout the movie, Sauron seems to be winning, and the fellowship fighting unbeatable odds. Yet they do not give up hope. Why? How does this relate to our lives, our perception versus reality?

### CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

What does Frodo, the story's hero, teach us about true greatness?

Can Frodo depend on himself in this story? Is this salvation by works or by grace?

Which characters look like they should be the hero? What makes Frodo the hero of the story?

## MERCY

Gollum gets the ring by killing his brother, like Cain. When Bilbo gets the ring, he doesn't kill Gollum. Gandalf says:

"Pity? It was pity that stayed his hand. Pity, and Mercy: not to strike without need. And he has been well rewarded, Frodo. Be sure that [Bilbo] took so little hurt from the evil, and escaped in the end, because he began his ownership of the Ring so. With Pity."

"I am sorry," said Frodo. "But ... I do not feel any pity for Gollum.... He deserves death."

"Deserves it! I daresay he does," [replies Gandalf]. "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.... [T]he pity of Bilbo will rule the fate of many -- yours not least."

What does Gandalf's explanation say about judging and forgiving? About God's right to kill? About God's mercy toward us?



## VOCATION AND CROSS

How does Lord of the Rings teach us about vocation? About bearing the cross in vocation?

Early in the story Frodo recount's Bilbo's words: "It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door," he used to say. "You step into the Road, and if you don't keep your feet, there is no knowing where you might be swept off to." How is this like our life as Christians traveling in the world? What certainty is there in this dangerous business?

*Faith Goes to the Movies*

*Rev. David A. Kind - May 1, 2003*