

Lord of the Rings

by John Vansloten

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CLIP #1 - Opening clip from film - +/-1:36 - 3:33 Start at the beginning of the film - screen with the words, "Newline Cinema Presents"... and freeze audio and video after "One ring to rule them all"...

And so begins the amazing story of the Lord of the Rings! It was a time when darkness and evil were on the rise. The world was changing... everyone could feel it... but no one was quite sure what was going on. You see, **"Much that once was, was lost... for there were none who now lived who remembered it..."** The people had forgotten all about the ring's terrible destructive power! They had forgotten their own past... "History became legend and legend became myth". And now, after many, many years a terrible resurrection had occurred... evil had come alive again... the ring was on the move... and it was destined to return to its evil master, the Dark Lord Sauron.

And if this ring were to succeed in its journey... If this ring were to reunite with its master... Then evil would have the victory, all hell would break loose and darkness would rule over all! Someone had to do something... Someone had to destroy the ring. **LONG PAUSE...**

And so a fellowship was formed... A group that would fight to the death for the power of Good! A group that was led by the most unlikely of leaders... a hobbit named **Frodo**. The fellowship was also made up of representatives from the other races that made up middle earth... There was a Dwarf named **Gimli**, two from the race of men, one named **Boromir**, the other named **Aragorn**, and elf named **Legolas**. There were also three other hobbits, **Samwise Gamgee**, _____, _____, and, finally, there was the sage; a good and wise wizard named **Gandalf**. These now formed the fellowship of the ring... These were the warriors for cause of

Good. And it was up to them to see that the ring was destroyed.

And each of them, in their own way was motivated to see evil destroyed. Why? Because they knew its destructive power, and they knew they couldn't let evil win. Throughout the film we're introduced to the different faces of evil as it plays out in the lives of the members of the fellowship. **Gimli** meets evil as a 'destroyer' when he comes upon the horrible scene where his people have been wiped out, obliterated by an evil army of Orcs. **Aragorn** has experienced evil in an inherited way. His Father was once in a position where he had the chance to destroy the ring, but instead chose to succumb to its power. Evil lived on because of his dad! And now, for all of Aragorn's life, he's had to live with evil's terrible legacies of shame, guilt and regret. And for many of the others in the fellowship, for the **Elves and Hobbits**, who still live in relative safety, evil shows another face in how it threatens to upend life as we know it. In how it thrives on creating fear and unrest... how it seeks to terrorize and take away the peace. Can you imagine living in that kind of world? Another, very personal, way we see evil at work is in the enmity it brings. Evil at its best seeks to destroy relationships. Evil wants to breed division, isolation, hatred and brokenness. You see it in the film all kinds of ways, between humanity and nature... in the terrible destruction of trees to build swords... and most poignantly we see enmity between human beings.

There's a clip that shows how this reality can play out early on in the story. Gandalf the good has just found out about evil plan behind the ring and he heads off to a trusted mentor, a life long confidant, a wise friend to seek advice. Then this scene ensues... (If you're the kind who scares easily... you may want to go for popcorn right now)... **Clip #2 - +/- 42:58 - 44:24 Start with Saurodon saying, "Against the power of Mordor there can be no victory" freeze video as Galdalf flies to the top of tower after Saurodon says, "You have elected the way of pain" when the scene goes black... And cut the**

audio before you hear the 'thunk' sound... Nothing like getting together with an old friend eh?... **PAUSE...** Such is the terrible, destructive power of evil! Just as men desire power so to, evidently, do the wizards!

And so each of the members of the fellowship knew evil in a very personal and real way. They knew that it must be stopped... But not just stopped for the sake of its absence... We don't seek evil's destruction for evil's sake, we seek its destruction so that all that is good and beautiful and right might grow and flourish. You see evil and all its destructive faces (Bustedness, brokenness, enmity, fear and death)... its not the way things are supposed to be. Middle earth was never meant to be that way. It was created good and meant for good. And yet evil has found a way in and wreaked havoc on the hearts of many... The fellowship included.

And each of those hearts, in turn, now yearns for things to be made right again! Yearns for the evil to be dispelled and more importantly yearns for good in all its fullness to reign supreme. The hearts of those who live in the shadow of an evil kingdom of darkness yearn for the day when the kingdom of light shall rule again. **PAUSE...** There is a great scene that depicts this yearning... In it, the man Aragorn is talking with the other man Boramir. Evil for Boramir has been seen most clearly in the lost glory of the kingdom **Gondor** that his dad leads. His father is now longer respected, hopelessness has filled his people's hearts and he yearns for a former glory to be regained... **[Just met Galadriel > told him special words about the future of his people]** **CLIP #3 - +/- 2:17:10 - 2:19:02 Start just before Aragorn says "Take some rest these borders are well protected" (include his walking into the scene) ... Freeze video and audio on Aragorn's face after Boramir says, "The Lord's of Gondor have returned"**

Don't we all yearn for that time and that day to be ours again? For the white city to regain its former glory? And yet evil is still so present... **PAUSE...** The power behind the ring seems so omnipotent...

undefeatable. How in the world can a relatively helpless and hapless fellowship like this, a mere 9 of them, conquer a power so big, and so prevalent?

At first when you watch the film, the odds seem astronomical. Evil seems far too great a force. Perhaps all we can ever have is our yearning for that 'something more'.... Or perhaps not... **PAUSE...** Maybe there is another answer. Maybe there is another hope?

As the story unfolds there are these scenes that seem to elude to this 'something more'. The elf king **Elrond** speaks of it as he addresses the fellowship just before they head out on their journey. **[FROM BOOK]** "You have come here and are met, in this very nick of time, by chance it may seem. Yet it is not so. Believe rather that it is ordered that we, who sit here, and none others, must now find counsel for the peril of the world."

Elrond in the Lord of the Rings, page _____ **"It is ordered?..." LONG PAUSE...**

There's a scene in the film that also points to this 'Something more' that we need to consider. Its eluded to in a conversation between Gandalf and Frodo while in the caves of Morya. Well into their journey Frodo sees that an evil being named Golum is following them. Golum himself had the ring at one time in the past and Bilbo (another hobbit from another story) was the one who stole the ring from him. Bilbo could have killed this evil Golum but chose to show mercy... Frodo questions that mercy in this clip and in so doing elicits this 'enlightening response' from Gandalf... **1:50:40 - 1:52:46 Start with scene where Frodo is sitting on a rock with his back to the camera and then turns and sees something in the caves of "Morya" and then says to Gandalf, "There's something down there!" ... and freeze video on Frodo's face after Gandalf says, "And that is an encouraging thought" (quick fade on audio shortly thereafter, before Gandalf says, "Oh") ...**

Hmmmm.... What is Gandalf referring to when he asks, **"Many that live deserve death and some that die deserve life, can you give it to them Frodo?"** Is he alluding to a 'Giver of Life?' A wiser mind? And then, after Frodo grieves

the fact that he's received this difficult calling, Gandalf says, "So do all who live to see such times, but that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us." **PAUSE...** Is there a Giver of times? Who is that? Gandalf goes on, "There are other forces at work in this world Frodo besides the will of evil... Bilbo was meant to find the ring.. in which case, you also, were meant to have it... and that is an encouraging thought." Meant by whom?... Given by whom?

To whom is Gandalf referring with all these allusions? Is there a greater force at work besides the will of evil? Above the will of evil? His inferences seem to point to something more than just a mere, impersonal concept like fate... Is he talking about a greater *Being* for the force of Good? One that ensures the final victory of Good over Evil? A real reason for hope? Is there a greater truth in behind all that's happening? An even greater reality that everyone just can't clearly see yet?

LONG PAUSE... Tolkien once wrote about why he created the story of the Lord of the Rings... In his essay entitled, "On Fairy Stories" (he called fantasy a fairy story) he spoke of how fantasy stories can work in very enlightening ways to reveal the truth. The creation of secondary worlds, he writes, offers the reader (in his case) the viewer (in ours), "...a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth..." For Tolkien, story has the power to do this in a very unique and revelatory way!

Could it be that his purpose in writing this great tale was to reveal to all of us, what Gandalf is trying to reveal to Frodo? The fact that there is a greater force for good in an evil saturated world? And that we, when we consider this possibility and perhaps come to believe it as truth can also come to see it as an "encouraging thought"? You think about the end of the whole story... not just this film... And you see that final scene...

PAUSE... You can't 'not believe' that there is a greater force in behind all that appears to be reality... Its truly amazing! (And no, I would not dare

give it all away!!)

So what is this reality that Tolkien so creatively points to? Who is the unknown life giver? Unknown Meaning maker? The unknown one who orders the things of this world for the cause of Good?

[TAKE up BIBLE...] From another story... A clue. In this story a guy named Paul is standing before a council of Greek philosophers... all seeking to discover the truth and know reality for what it is... **Acts 17:22ff**

Message...

God affirmed his good reality to the human race through a resurrection from the dead. Paul here referring to the person of Jesus Christ. Christ's message was clear... God is real... There is a force in the world beyond the will of evil... and that force is meaning to accomplish something through history (including yours)... even in the midst of all of the confusion and brokenness that evil seems to offer... there is a greater force at work. A Good and greater force. Jesus taught people that this world is in the hands of another... In the hands of God. For Christ, the son of God, this is his Father's world. And his Father is good and loving, and will not let us go... he holds it all in check... though the wrong seems oft so strong he is the ruler yet! And ultimately his Kingdom of light that will win out... we'll see the white city again!

Is that just a fantasy? A mere fairy story?

Tolkien once wrote, "The Gospels (the stories of Jesus Christ) contain a fairy story, or a story of a larger kind that embraces all the essence of fairy stories. They contain many marvels, particularly artistic, beautiful and moving; mythical in their perfect self contained significance... But this story has entered history... this story is supreme; and it is true. Art has been verified. God is the Lord, of angels and of men – and of elves"

The Tolkien Reader 1966, 88, in B&W xiii

Let the story of the Lord of the Rings [BOOK] introduce you the

greatest story ever conceived [BIBLE]. Let it introduce you to the 'Story Teller'

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