

World of Warcraft, part one
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WoW opening clip... then Chris plays throughout!

(1) We are made for another world!... **PAUSE...** We're made to experience an '**Other**' kind of reality... **PAUSE**

(2) We are made to **explore new places...** engage life with a **strong sense of adventure...** We're meant to that with a **clear/focused sense of calling & mission** **PAUSE...** (3) We're meant to do this kind of life as part of a **team... community... with other people... people we respect... need... needed by... trust... and maybe even love!** **PAUSE...**

(4) We're meant to live in this kind of '**Other**' world! **PAUSE...** In a world where you are judged by **who you really are, on the inside...** In a world where **things are clear** where the lines between right and wrong/good and evil are visible... where you **know where you stand...** what you need to do... where life is **navigable!**

PAUSE... (4) We're meant for that kind of **Otherworld!** And we're meant to **build our lives** within that world... **PAUSE...** (5) Starting at level one - without a whole lot **ability/skill** - we're meant to create ourselves... to **become who we are/tobe...** to engage and utilize '**otherworldly**' **gifts and powers (supernatural gifts and powers)...** **PAUSE...** and at the end of it all... at the end of the biggest battle/**most difficult instance...** having defeated the biggest (6)Boss?... We're meant to **bask in glory!**... life/death **thrill of victory!!!**

These are the things that drove many (50yrs ago) to read, '**(7)The Lord of the Rings**' (when *print* was the

only door to the otherworld)... These are the things **that drove us to the theatre** to see/experience that same LOR story (& otherworldly adventure stories) **filmdoor... PAUSE...** these are the things drove many (years back) to a (Middle earth) game like **D&Dragons** & (I think) these are some of the things that drive people to engage in (8)**MMORPG's** like WoW! **PAUSE** only with WoW... you get to **engage** the story... step into & **participate** in it... Today's tech allows you to actually **write** the story!... co-create world **PAUSE...** [**interview CM avatar?... where? (show map) describe last battle... rewards?**]

No wonder **over 8m.** pay \$50/15.US a mo. to subscribe to WoW... (& Oh, & to top it all off... it's fun!) **PAUSE**

This week mtg with Graeme Morton "**What do you hope people take away from this message?**"... I stumbled a bit... "(9) That people would see 'otherworld' leanings for what they are... that somehow in seeing them wonder why they're there... ultimately meant for"

Tolkien once wrote, "**(10)** 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

Tolkien saw his story as a pointer to an even greater story... & I believe Spirit of God led him in **his world creating endeavour...** **PAUSE...** I wonder if that same Spirit now be using this **third generation middle world** in the same way?... **PAUSE...** Could WoW be a pointer to God's other world?... **a world lived before w/God?**

PAUSE... Is this really all about a longing to be a part of **that supernatural story? LONG PAUSE...** "(11) Richard Bartle, co-creator of the first networked virtual world, in his book, *Designing Virtual Worlds*, defines them as "places where the **imaginary meets the real.**" (Bartle 2004) Think about that... isn't that **exactly what happens** when you engage in a **virtual otherworld?**... RL meets VL **PAUSE...** to me, that **(12) intersection is why online engagement so attractive!** (Next week discuss why 50% WoW addicted!) lot's of reasons but I wonder if the biggest is our innate human desire to engage in a **"real meeting virtual"** experience... to be caught up in a **"natural touching supernatural"** moment... to feel the freedom of your **"fixed in time and spaceness"** **flying into the timelessness and spacelessness of another world"** ... **LONG, LONG PAUSE...**

(13) the **world creators** at Blizzard made a mythical world with all kinds of **built in potential...** potential for **discovery, building of lives, accomplishing of mission,** etc... they built this world so that players (also designed with all kinds of creative potential) can flourish, play and find life there! **(and to take in over a Billion dollars last year!) PAUSE...**

God, in Christian myth, created this world with all kinds of built in potential... & made **beings w/desire, energy, passion, creativity to engage that world...**

"(14) God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature so they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, and, yes, Earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of Earth." God created human beings; he created them godlike, reflecting God's nature. He created them male and female. God blessed them: "Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge! Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth." Gen 1:26-28 **PAUSE...**

"God built this world so that players (you and I) could **flourish, play and find life!**"... [Where are you now Chris?... stormwind... Best moment in the game?] ... Someone built this world we're living in... just as WoW players realize creator/ architect in behind their world **[God like]** so too, real life humans consider/ know creator/ architect behind RL... **PAUSE...** Something about knowing that Creator made it for us!! **PAUSE...** for us to know Him!.. A hugely enabling realization! when you realize that that connection is not just a "mythical abstract knowing" **that the knowing of the creator connects you to a whole new view of the world then everything changes!** **PAUSE** RL takes on a whole new meaning w/ connected to **O's otherness...** "a "(15) real/imaginary/ 'not so imaginary'/ beyond our imagination" link made!

PAUSE... knowing God we realize that there really is another **supra-normal game** at play...a virtual kingdom (**KOG** in the bible/**heaven**/knowing God reality) where the **supernatural** is alive and well... and **attainable!...** where live and death **mission exists/matters...** where **community is real...** where **you count, are known and are fully you!...** **PAUSE...** [everything changes!]

(16) I think WoW... more than many games we play in life **consumerism** games... **power** games... **hedonistic** **leisure** games... **wealth** games... **skin deep aesthetic** games – points to that other kingdom... that other King! (at least WoW says, "life is found in another world!")

VERY LONG PAUSE... In the Christian Story the Creator takes the lead in terms of inviting us into the game... **God makes the connection** between us and his kingdom... does it via the totally realized human life of Jesus X!... **[perfect melding of real/unimaginable]**

X is **God's internet connection** into another world!... a supernaturally empowered conduit... bringing life... real life... "(17) Its in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone."
Then Paul prays... (this is my prayer for all of us WoW'ers/virtual life seekers) [(18) Eph 1:16-19... I ask]

I ask—ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory—to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do, grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for his followers, oh, the utter extravagance of his work in us who trust him—endless energy, boundless strength! Eph 1:16-19