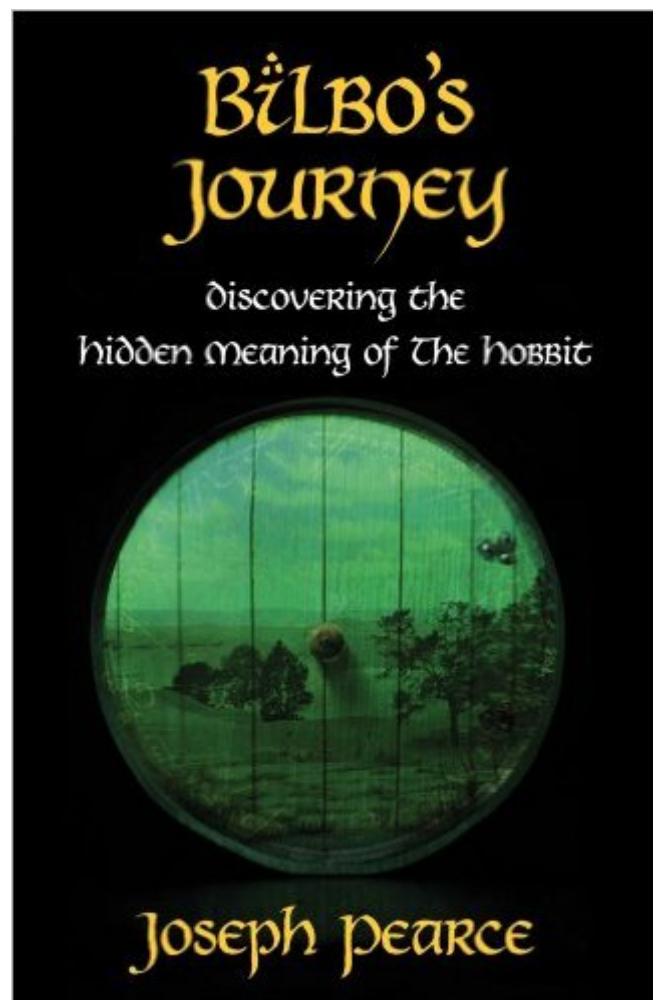


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Bilbo's Journey: Discovering The Hidden Meaning In The Hobbit



Synopsis

Discover the Christian meaning in The Hobbit. In Bilbo's Journey go beyond the dragons, dwarves, and elves, and discover the surprisingly deep meaning of J.R.R. Tolkien's classic novel The Hobbit. Bilbo's quest to find and slay the dragon Smaug is a riveting tale of daring and heroism, but as renowned Tolkien scholar Joseph Pearce shows, it is not simply Bilbo's journey, it is our journey too. It is the Christian journey of self-sacrifice out of love for others, and abandonment to providence and grace. In Bilbo's Journey: Discovering the Hidden Meaning of The Hobbit you will relive the excitement of Tolkien's classic tale, while discovering the profound Christian meaning that makes The Hobbit a truly timeless adventure.

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Customer Reviews

Many regard Joseph Pearce as today's premiere Catholic biographer. He's profiled many literary icons like Shakespeare, G.K. Chesterton, and C.S. Lewis. His book on J.R.R. Tolkien remains my favorite Tolkien biography. Thus I was excited to hear about Pearce's new book on The Hobbit, published alongside its December film adaptation. Bilbo's Journey: Discovering the Hidden Meaning in The Hobbit (Saint Benedict Press, 144 pages, paperback) goes beyond the fantasy to unearth the profound Christian truths hidden within Tolkien's classic work. Tolkien himself described the Lord of the Rings trilogy, which The Hobbit precedes, as a "fundamentally religious and Catholic work." This underlying dimension is often noble, as in the virtue and self-sacrifice we spot in Bilbo, the dwarves, and the elves. These characters, Pearce notes, embody Jesus' beatific teachings. But there are

also darker dimensions like the pride, lust, and greed we see in figures like Smaug, which affirm Jesus' warning that "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). When examined through this Catholic lens, The Hobbit becomes a multi-layered spiritual journey: "[The Hobbit] is a rite of passage from ignorance to wisdom and from bourgeois vice to heroic virtue. Its main character, Bilbo, represents each of us journeying toward God and moral perfection." Pearce also shows how this journey is aided by religious forces like providence. Though Tolkien never mentions God throughout his fiction, his characters consistently face dire odds but emerge through the help of so-called "luck."

Pearce and Tolkien believed that The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings were fundamentally religious and Catholic works. Apparently critics had either missed or resented this interpretation. Pearce paraphrased Tolkien in suggesting that the real reason for critical prejudice against Tolkien's and similar works had grown out of a particular hostility toward Christianity. The failure to see and understand the hidden meaning of Tolkien's works, parallels an episode within the pages of The Hobbit where the company of dwarfs and even Gandalf could not see, let alone interpret directions on an ancient map. Elrond did see, understand and read that hidden message because he viewed it on a midsummer's eve under a crescent moon. These were the same conditions in effect when the message was first inscribed. Similarly, to fully grasp the hidden meaning of The Hobbit, the tale must be read with Catholic eyes. Who better to uncover the hidden meaning of The Hobbit than noted Catholic author Joseph Pearce, who wrote biographies of J. R. R. Tolkien and two of the major influences in Tolkien's intellectual and literary development--Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton. To further support his assertions Pearce delved into many of the sources used by Tolkien in writing The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings allowing him to share Tolkien's perspective.

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