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Biblical Imagery in J.R.R Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring*

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Candidate:

Ms. DJELLAB Samira

Supervisor:

Dr. MEHDI Rachid

Panel of Examiners:

- **Chair:** Ms. SLIMI Sabrina
- **Supervisor:** Dr. MEHDI Rachid
- **Examiner:** Mrs. ARAB Naima

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Abstract

Many critics emphasize the profound influence of Christianity on literature, through centuries. This thesis sets out to demonstrate that religion has indeed hugely contributed into shaping literature in general and fantasy fiction in particular. To illustrate this point, this research discusses the biblical imagery in John Ronald Reuel Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, namely the image of journey and the image of burden.

Keywords: Christianity, English Literature, Fantasy Fiction, Imagery, J.R.R Tolkien, the Bible.

Dedications

I dedicate this humble work to the hero who understands my dream-worlds and makes me live like a queen in the fairy lands, my father.

I dedicate this work, also, to:

- ❖ My beloved mother who obliged me to study and realize this thesis.
- ❖ My brother Mohand Djellab, the hand which keeps me always up.
- ❖ My life-long companion Sidali.
- ❖ My lovely sister Celia and my dear brother Karim.
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- ❖ Myself.



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General Introduction

The Lord of the Rings is often considered as a trilogy. Indeed, this saga is divided into three parts: *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King*. It is worth mentioning, however, that each part consists of two books. Hence, *The Lord of the Rings* saga is made up of six books. Despite of being written between 1937 and 1949, it was until the years of 1954 and 1955 that the three volumes of this epic fantasy saga were published. Since that, the novel is rating the bestselling book ever written. Between 2001 and 2003, Peter Jackson, a New Zealand film producer, screen writer and director, realized the most successful adaptation of the novel in three movies under the same titles of its volumes. Thus, *The Lord of the Rings* is the most known high fantasy story, and the most academically awarded for the both saga novels and films.

For our study we have chosen the first part of the trilogy entitled *The Fellowship of the Ring*. The first book of this first part of the saga narrates the story of Frodo's journey to take the One Ring from the Shire to Rivendell. The second book tells the story of the formation of the fellowship which accompanied Frodo in his second quest to destroy the One Ring. This division of the novel constitutes the frame work of our study. Interestingly, the novel is supported with a prologue which explains briefly the history of the hobbits, the most important events of Middle-earth, and gives a set of information related to the story.

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien is an English author, poet, philologist, Oxford University graduated, and professor of Anglo-Saxon. He is best known for his high fantasy works: *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion*. Tolkien created an imaginary world and gave it the name of Ea, one of its important parts is Middle-earth on which most of his adventures and stories take place. He provided this fictional realm with a detailed map, usually supplemented into his novels. Tolkien, believing and appreciating his own world, had written a history about it and left a legacy of myths which are very important references for the readers of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* saga. The epic stories, legends and myths

of Tolkien's world are gathered in his novel *The Silmarillion*. Thus, we can affirm that his books and novels are all related with each other in a way or another.

In addition to the western mythology and epics' influence on him, Tolkien recognizes the deep impact of Catholic religion over him. He said: "*The Lord of the Rings* is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work, unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision. That is why I have not put in, or have cut out, practically all references to anything like 'religion' to cults or practices, in the imaginary world. For the religious element is absorbed into the story and symbolism" (Letters 191)¹.

In fact, the personal letters of Tolkien give us clear evidence about the representation of biblical imagery in his works. This is the reason, in addition to our interests in religion and fantasy fiction, why we are motivated to deal with this topic in our research.

Tolkien's works are widely popular. Accordingly, many scholars have studied the author and his novels, namely *The Lord of the Rings* saga. In fact, their focus is mostly on the impact of the Northern literature and Norse mythology on his story. Various studies have distinguished *The Lord of the Rings* as an epic novel. Also, many studies have examined the representation of religion and Catholicism in his works.

Though the question whether *The Lord of the Rings* is inspired by a religious source is much debated, researchers maintain the influence of Christian tradition on the author is huge. Critics note that Tolkien's characters stands for biblical figures. According to some critics, Frodo represents a Christ's apostle who applies, through his journey, the majority of Jesus' teachings.

In his thesis, "*J.R.R Tolkien, the influence of Christianity, and symbolism in The Lord of the Rings*", Michelle Morris investigates about the appearance of Christ-figures or who is the Christ of the story of *The Lord of the Rings*. His focus is, overall, to demonstrate how Gandalf

is the representative of the divine aspects of Jesus; however according to the author, Frodo embodies fully the human Jesus. Morris speaks, first, about the role of Catholicism in Tolkien's uprising and its influence in his works, mainly, *The Lord of the Rings*. Then, he highlights Tolkien's relationship to the Bible. As he states:

While *The Lord of the Rings* may not seem as overtly Christian as *The Silmarillion*, strong similarities between the Biblical text and Tolkien's plot still show through. *The Lord of the Rings* contains both divine beings and a fallen creation, this time concerned mainly with the fallen kingdoms of mankind. A single individual is responsible for carrying the load of evil across Middle Earth, hoping to destroy the power of the enemy Sauron. Frodo's self-sacrifice brings about the salvation of Middle Earth from this evil and the temptation of power and the redemption of mankind. (15)

Through his analysis to highlight the similarity between Jesus and Frodo, Michelle Morris focuses on the circumstances of the uprising of both characters and their mutual human qualities such as mercy, goodness, election, sacrifice and others:

Frodo shares a few important Christ-like attributes with Gandalf, namely his merciful and self-sacrificial nature. While for Gandalf these qualities might culminate in a singular action such as sacrificing himself on the Bridge of Khazadum, Frodo must keep these virtues in constant practice. Also like Gandalf, Frodo's character is wrapped in an air of mystery. . . Like Christ, Frodo's role in Middle Earth is as the chosen one; he is fated for selfsacrifice. (Ibid 43-44)

George Clark claims that Tolkien is influenced by the old epic stories, namely *Beowulf*. He states, also, that the heroes in Tolkien's narratives represent the Christian morals and ideals. Clark confirms that Tolkien's *The Lord of the Ring* is full of epic and Christian references. He says:

Tolkien followed the strategy, as he saw it, of the *Beowulf* poet and the authors of some of the Old Icelandic sagas. The saga authors, when telling the story of persons who lived before the conversion of Iceland, generally avoid anachronistic references to Christianity but sometimes attribute a kind of natural monotheism to favored heroes like Askel in *The Saga of the People of Reykjadal* (Hreinsson 4, ch. 7). The *Beowulf* poet makes his nobler characters explicitly monotheistic, but includes no explicitly Christian references and makes only one undoubted and two possible references to the Old Testament. The *Beowulf* poet whom Tolkien imagined was a learned Christian who re-created a heroic world and story in an implicitly Christian universe governed by a God whose existence and nature the poem's wiser characters intuit without the benefit of revelation. (Bloom 44)

Haley Bedell discusses in her thesis the link between Frodo's and Christ's journeys. Through a comparative study of the two characters, she proves that Frodo is the modern parallel to Christ in literature. Bedell comes to conclude and confirm that:

Once we determine Frodo as the Christ Figure, it unconsciously and consciously alters the way we read Tolkien's work. A story about a mythical world, even not intended as a religious allegory, becomes embedded with Christian themes. The trilogy becomes not just a fascinating story, but analogous to *The Bible*. The journey to destroy the Ring becomes weighted with much greater meaning as we now see it as akin to Christ living a life free of sin to die on the cross for the sin of mankind. Frodo being the Ring-bearer becomes valiant and heroic as we see his quest as an act of willingly volunteering and sacrificing himself to save everyone in Middle Earth; his sacrifice ultimately holds more weight for the reader as it is now a direct parallel of the ultimate sacrifice known to man for a much worthier cause. The interpretation, too, gives the trilogy a much deeper meaning to Christian readers. (23)

In an article entitled "Christian Typologies in *The Lord of the Rings*", Forrest W. Schultz studies the analogy between the real world, according to the Christian worldview, and the fantasy world of *The Lord of the Rings*. Unlike other scholars, Schultz explains that there is not only one Christ-figure but three: Aragorn, Gandalf and Frodo. He related the three characters to the three vocations of Christ: the King, the Prophet and the Priest. Aragorn refers to Jesus the King; Gandalf refers to Jesus the Prophet and teacher; Frodo refers to Jesus the suffering servant and the sin bearer. Thus, the three characters accomplished together the analogy of the Christ's ministry in Middle-earth. As he states:

All of the parallels noted above between the Gandalf-Frodo-Aragorn team and the threefold office of Christ should amply serve to demonstrate the point that each of the three is a partial Christ-figure. But there is one incident that

even now dramatically depicts this point. This incident is the climactic moment of the crowning of Aragorn as king. Aragorn returns the crown to Faramir and explains that the Ring-bearer Frodo must bring the crown to him and that Gandalf must place it upon his head; and thus it was done. This beautifully and poignantly drives home the all-important truths that the path to Crown lies through the Cross, and that both the Cross and the Crown are only attainable in accord with the wisdom and the plan of God. Neither Frodo nor Aragorn could have accomplished their offices without the guidance of Gandalf. This is why Aragorn insisted that it be Gandalf who place the crown upon his hand because Gandalf ‘has been the mover of all that has been accomplished and this is his victory’”.

Most works, like those cited above, which examined *The Lord of the Rings* worked on the whole trilogy. Our research, however, focuses on its first part, particularly, on the biblical imagery in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. This thesis studies how Tolkien understands and represents some biblical themes and images through analyzing the story of his novel. To do so, we first analyze the theme of good and evil in Tolkien’s work in the biblical context. In other words, we will try to study how the author used the biblical theme, good and evil, to create his literary work. Second, we will analyze the mutual points between the biblical and Frodo’s journeys (mainly the journey of Abraham and Jesus). We will compare, also, Frodo’s and Jesus’ burdens (the Ring and the sin).

In terms of structure, this thesis is divided into an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion. The introduction is a preface to present the case of our study, *The Lord of the Rings*, and show our motivation for selecting its first part *The Fellowship of the Ring* to be the

focus of our analysis. The first chapter, entitled “Literature and religion”, deals with the representation of Christianity in literature since its appearance till the modern era and the correlation between the biblical narratives and fantasy fiction. The second chapter, entitled “Good versus Evil in the Bible and Tolkien’s Work”, studies the theme of good and evil in the Bible and Tolkien’s *The Fellowship of the Ring*. The third chapter, entitled “Biblical Imagery in *The Fellowship of the Ring*”, analyzes the biblical images used by Tolkien in his novel.

Chapter One

Literature and Religion

1 Overview

One of the reasons the Bible is the most loved, most read, most translated, most memorized, most distributed Book in the world is because of its amazing literary variety. In the pages of Scripture we find stories, poetry, prophecy, parables, and many other genres (literary types). Just as we realize to differ how to interpret the “once upon a time...” and the “to whom it may concern...” so we must do the same with Scripture. (Griffith 109)

Literature reflects people and nations; it portrays traditions, beliefs and all the aspects of the humans' lives. Poetry, prose and other forms of literature were and still influenced by religion. The influence of Christian religion is doubtlessly profound in writing. When Christianity appeared, literature in all over the world, particularly in Europe, was that of recording oral tales from the inspiration of folks' traditions and lifestyles. Thus, its spiritual side reflected the pagan beliefs; accordingly, Christianity came to bring the God's word with modern and strong doctrine, belief and canons illustrated in the Bible. The latter is a collection of sacred tomes, which include many subjects; however, the stories of prophets and the heroic tales of “righteous people” had the lion share in the biblical narratives.

The Bible influenced literature in much of its aspects, mostly in narration, though the latter is also affected by fiction. But, many authors could combine well religion and fiction by representing truths and religious morals which were not decoded, or were ignored by the non-pious audience, through allegoric stories and parables. Consequently, religion has a great impact on narration and fiction in particular, the reason of this strong correlation between the two areas.

The following chapter examines briefly the close relationship between the Bible and literature. First, we will overview religion and literature since the early Christian writings till the modern era. Second, we will discuss fantasy genre and religion, starting with a brief definition of fantasy fiction and its divisions as a post modern literary genre. Third, we will study the correlation between fantasy fiction and the religious narratives.

1.1 Christianity and Early Writings

The Bible is a set of individual books divided into two testaments or two main parts, the Old and the New Testament, written and collected in different eras. Actually, “the Bible contains many different styles of writing such as poetry, narration, fiction, history, law and prophecy and must be interpreted in the context of those styles. It is the source of the Christian religion”. (Slick)

The Old Testament is the first part of the Christian Bible, based on the ancient religious writings of the Israelites. It is also called the Tanakh, which is subdivided into three sections. The first parcel is the Torah, or the Law, referred as *The Five Books of Moses*, they were traditionally believed that they were largely written by Moses. According to Jews, the Law is told by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. Torah is also known as Pentateuch, and it is originally written in form of scrolls. The second part is the Nevi'im; it is the historical Prophetic books, written by the prophets themselves under a “divine inspiration”. The third section is the Ketuvim or the writings, they tell the story of the return of Jews from the exile to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple. This part of the Old Testament's writings is less divine

comparing to the two other previous parts. The Old Testament is written in Hebrew language with few portions in Aramaic. Actually, the Old Testament consists of thirty nine books.

Therefore, the Hebrew Bible is the collection of the Jewish writings integrated to the Christian Bible to keep their safety, after the demolition of the temple of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Even though the order of the books of the Old Testament is different for the Jews, the biblical structure of ideas is shared by Jews and Christians.

The New Testament is the second part of the Bible. Unlike the Old Testament, it consists of twenty seven pure Christian books, written in different periods of time by various authors. As Ehrman stated:

The Christian scripture did not drop from the sky one day in April the year Jesus died. They were written by individual authors at different points of time, in different countries, to different communities, with different concerns; they were later read by an even wider range of Christians and were eventually collected together into what is now called the New Testament. (8)

It is written in Greek (Koine), the language of eastern Mediterranean European countries since the conquest of Alexander the Great (335 B.C), until the Muslim conquest (around 711 AD). The New Testament discusses Jesus and his teachings, which spread Christianity. Thus, it is the stream of the Christian morality and theology. Actually, it represents the life, sayings, and acts in addition to the death of the Christ. It is composed of four gospels of John, Matthew, Luke and Mark, the Book of Acts; the Epistles, written mostly by Paul the Apostle and others; and the Book of Revelation or the description of the Apocalypse.

The New Testament is the covenant between God and the followers of the Christ, and between Jesus and mankind. It was mentioned firstly at the last supper “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins”. (Matthew 26:28).

By the end of the second century, it was generally agreed about the four gospels, the Acts, and Paul’s Epistles that were true and sacred. About two centuries later, the New Testament arrived to this final and known division of twenty seven books.

The Old and the New Testament are both shaping the Bible. Therefore, the two scriptures are forming the body of the Bible and conducting the faith and the doctrine of the Christians.

The Old Testament lays the foundation for the teachings and events found in the New Testament. The bible is a progressive relation. If you skip the first half of any good book and try to finish it, you will have a difficult time understanding the characters, the plot and the ending. In the same way, the New Testament is only completely understood when it is rightly viewed as a fulfillment of the events, characters, laws, sacrificial system, covenant and promises of the Old Testament. (Sarah.R)

On the other hand, many studies argued that there are several other Christian writings not joined to the Scripture, nor even recorded as literary documents. “The books I have just described were not the only writings of the early Christians, nor were they originally collected into a body of literature called ‘the new testament’. We know of other Christian writings that have not survived from antiquity”. (Ehrman 10)

Not all the Christian sects agree about the canonization of all the books of the Bible. For this reason, the non canonical religious books are placed in a separated section from the Bible, and have been dubbed apocrypha. “Apocryphal books aren’t limited to the Old Testament. There are many early Christian writings that some call the New Testament apocrypha. They are also called extracanonical literature, since they were not part of the ‘canon’, or official list of books considered part of the inspired Holy Bible”. (Levy)

All the survived religious texts written after the death of Jesus, and before the eighth century excluding the New Testament are shaping the early Christian literature. In fact, it influenced the forthcoming writings and literature in general. This influence touched even the fictional literature; notably, through the Christian allegorical stories, with symbolic characters and reflective events to express Christian truth and teachings.

The noteworthy early allegories are many, we have as illustration: Prudentius’ *psychomachia* or the soul war written around 400 AD (late antiquity). This long poem discusses a battle between the Christian and the pagan’s faith, through the personification of the good’s virtues such as Hope and Love, versus the vices of evil such as Greed and Anger fighting each other. Moreover, the reader can get it as an ordinary literary story, or a tale of angry women combating each other, because the poet had not provide it with any explanation about the allegory he used. However, it is considered through history as a valuable early Christian allegory.

While investigating about allegoric Christian stories we should mention the old English epic poem *Beowulf*, for being the best portrait of the early influence of Christianity on literature. The poem is over much debated whether its context is for Christian or pagan morals. As long as it is written in the eighth century, this means that Christianity is already

appeared but not sufficiently spread. The story is told by a British Anglo-Saxon anonymous poet when Britain was Christianized. Meanwhile, the course of the tale happened in early Scandinavia, when it was not yet Christianized.

The legend of Beowulf is a collection of pagan topics and ideals, but there are obvious influences by Christianity as well. Pagan heroic concept met the Christian theme of the good and evil, God's will and forgiveness of sin. Throughout the whole poem one can notice references which are related to God, to the Christian philosophy and faith as well as to old Hebrew ideologies. (Stoll)

Another discernible example of this influence is *the Dream of the Rood*, written by an anonymous poet in the eighth century. The story takes place in a dream, where the author hinted a beautiful tree, which is the rood (or the cross) where Jesus crossed and upon which he died. The rood spoke with him and narrated its story, how it is forced to be part of the savior's death, and contributed in his suffering; however, that was the God's will. The poem allegorizes Man's sin and redemption, and reminds the purpose of the death of Jesus. Nevertheless, it reflects the pagan belief through the spirituality of the objects and animism. *The Dream of the Rood* represents also the strong impact of the Christian religion and its doctrine on the early literature, and how it competed the representation of paganism.

Around the thirteenth century another kind of religious literature called tracts (religious tracts) appeared. They are pamphlets or publications used for religious purpose, written by a group of Anglican clergy men, as a kind of propaganda for Christianity. It was quite spread with the development of the printing press.

1.2 Religion in Medieval Literature

Many historians maintain that Middle Ages is that period of history between the fifth century with the fall of the Roman Empire till the fifteenth century (1485). It is divided into three main periods: early, high and late Middle Ages. This era is notable for several characteristics most of them are: the feudal system and the domination of the Roman Catholic Church, which expanded and became the commandant power of the social, political, religious and all the aspects of life, even literature and philosophy.

The feudal system was counted to be reflecting the God's idea of the great chain of being, composed by: God, Angeles, human beings and animals. Hence, this idea was applied in the division of society and the economic system. The philosophy of the Church explained even the Black Death or the Plague, which killed half of the population, to be the God's punishment for people's sins. Under those circumstances, people used to dedicate their lives to the Church, worship, and show redemption, while preparing themselves for the afterlife. As a result, Catholicism expended and dominated completely the medieval life. Faria .S khan claimed that:

Literature has been considered to have a dual purpose, to teach and to delight. During the Medieval Era it was believed that Human activity is not autonomous. Men are incapable to act as individuals- all men belonged to the Catholic Church, which expected them to believe and follow what it taught. The destiny of mankind was in the hands of the Divine. Men were dependent creatures, unable to exist without God. It was believed that Man is finite, he is made of dust and to dust he shall

return. The sole purpose of life was to please God. Religion was the pivot of society and mankind was relegated in the background. England moved within the narrow shell of Scholastic philosophy. Churches and monasteries were the schools. They were operated by the clergy. The schools were dreary and cold, and physical activity was severely repressed. Few men could read and write. The Church authorities were the most learned people. They had access to all kinds of information. There were few books in Latin; it was very difficult for a common man to understand them. (62)

Medieval people were illiterate. That is to say, they were unable to decode the philosophy of that time, nor even to read the Bible. Education was provided mainly by Abbey Schools by Monks and Cathedral Schools by Priests. Hence, the Pope and religious men were the center of biblical explanation and interpretation; as result, the Church was coming to be corrupt.

Starting from the high middle Ages, the period that followed the Norman Conquest of Britain in 1066, the Old English had been influenced by French elements. For this reason, literature knew a remarkable development. In contrast to early Middle Ages, when English literature was as a continuation of the traditional literature of antiquity.

The English literature was represented by medieval drama and poetry. Drama was another method provided to the Church to teach illiterate people the Christian teachings, through Mystery plays, also called Miracle plays. The performances depict biblical events, from the first fall in the beginning of the world till the judgment day. These plays were usually performed as cycle plays with circulating wagons, between three major towns in England. The famous of this kind of plays is *The second shepherds' play*, which was the most played and repeated. Mystery plays were developed to Morality plays, which were not exclusively the

stories of the Bible themselves, but fictional. By the same token they were allegoric plays, usually with abstract ideas, characters and events with religious concepts.

The well known of Morality plays is *The Somonyng of Everyman*. The hero of the story, called Everyman, lives his whole life without any idea about the judgment day. The personification of death comes one day to take him through the pilgrimage of the soul to face God. Everyman asked for one more day to get a companion for this journey. Thus, he asks many friends who are allegorically represented through the personification of many things such as family, goods and fellowship, but in vain, because all refuse to join him. Then, he deduces that nothing will go with him except his good deeds, and that the only way for salvation in front of God is the redemption. Everyman represents all the mankind; thus, the play's moral is allegorical for all the medieval audience.

Medieval literature knew also special poetic themes. First, the chivalry or the heroic poems told by the noble knights to narrate their adventures in wars and battles. The most known chivalry poem is *The Legend of King Arthur* by Thomas Malory. In the light of that, courtly love penetrated into poetry afterwards, where the knight describes his legends to attract his beloved, who is not his wife, and always found that she is married to another man. This impossible love evolved to be the situation of all the nobility and the main theme of poetry. Furthermore, chivalry and courtly love were not far from religion in principal. Both themes represent the loyalty and faithfulness of the warrior towards his nation. Even the love stories they lived were the ones of distance without any physical contact. Regarding that, they are already impossible and sinful; those stories are about incomplete relationships. Actually, that preserved the integrity of Christianity within its teachings and values.

In the late Middle Ages secular philosophy appeared with John Wycliffe's translation of the Bible to vernacular medieval English language, and his attack to the luxury of the Roman Catholic Church and the privileged status of religious men. As a consequence, the late

medieval literature was affected, and started to detach from the centering blindly on the interpretations and the didactic explanations of the Catholic Church. Thus, poetry was taken to the direction of treating worldly themes instead of concentrating only about the afterlife, and above all to criticize the hegemony of the Church.

The best example for secular late medieval literature is Chaucer's masterpiece *The Canterbury Tales* (1400). It is the first collection of stories written in vernacular English language, composed by 17000 lines, mostly written in verse though some of them are prose. The poem is the story of a group of pilgrims taking together a journey from London to visit the shrine of Saint Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral, where each one of them told his tale to entertain the others. Actually, Chaucer uses in critical way many religious figures and many characters of different status in society.

The religious figures in the Canterbury tales highlight many of the problems corrupting the medieval church. The monk, who is supposed to worship in confinement, likes to hunt. Chaucer's Friar is portrayed as greedy hypocrite. He tells a tale about a summoner who bribes an old innocent widow. The Summoner, in relation, skewers friars in his tale, satirizing their long-windedness and their hypocrisy. The Pardoner openly admits to selling false relics to parishioners. Through the Prioress supposedly wears a rosary in devotion to Christ, her ornate token seems much more like a flashy piece of jewelry than a sacred religious object. ("Theme")

While discussing about the use of vernacular languages and the representation of the religious themes in medieval literature, it is equally important to mention Dante Alighieri who

wrote in Italian dialect. Unlike Chaucer, Dante wrote his *Divine Comedy* (1320) with pure religious theme. His poem is a long narrative about a fictional journey towards God, through visiting Hell, Purgatory and Heaven. It is in fact, allegoric fictional story drawing the medieval Christian theology.

Medieval literature at the early and high periods was the one of religion in perfection, since the Roman Catholic Church dominated all the aspects of life within literature and philosophy. Accordingly, religion was represented in drama, poetry, prose and all forms of literature. However, in the late medieval era secular literature appeared to attack the corrupted Church and get off from the afterlife themes, where God and religion where the center of life, to the worldly themes where man is the pivot. That was mostly expanded in the next coming era which is Renaissance.

1.3 The Representation of Religion in English Literature

Renaissance followed the period of Reformation. In fact, the latter was a great attack and criticism against the Roman Catholic Church within the extreme authority of the Pope. Forthwith, a literary and philosophical movement called Humanism with secular ideas flowed. Humanism appeared for the purpose of breaking the chains of the Dark Ages, it has paved the way for the Enlightenment and the free thinking, with intention to separate religion from the State. As a result, man, science and knowledge were very essential; however, religion became a case of criticism and skepticism. In addition to all those movements, the major important literary boom is the translation of the Bible.

Renaissance literature is notable mostly for drama. The famous figures that evolved it are: Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare, who marked the history of

English literature. Eventhough his position towards religion was not obvious and not clear in his works, Shakespeare's relation with Puritanism seemed to be not a good one. It must be remembered that in the same period Puritans banded and forbade theaters in the ground of England, and took a stand against arts especially fictional literature. Puritans related and explained drama to be the source of the dissolution of morals and values. They argued that taverns and houses of prostitution are situated wherever the theaters are.

During the reign of Elizabeth I (1556-1603) diverse new religious denominations appeared, as a result of the Reformation and the break off from the Catholic Church. As a compromise between Catholics and Protestants, Elizabeth gave birth to the Anglican Church. When James I of England reigned, he made a turn off in English political life and literature as well. Not only by his translated version of the Bible (1611), but also with the republication of the Book of Common Prayer (1604). The latter is the explanation of the Christian prayers from the birth to the funeral of the worshiper.

On the other side, the positive impact of Puritanism started to appear in literature later on in the seventeenth century, as it is well represented by religious allegory. The remarkable figure of the seventeenth century Christian and biblical allegory is John Bunyan. He is an English writer and preacher, his great fame is due to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, one of the most precious works of religious literature. Bunyan wrote his novel in sublime beautiful language. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is about a character named Christian (who substitutes every man). Christian goes in symbolic journey from his home town the City of Destruction to Celestial City, which is said to be Heaven. Meanwhile, he takes with him a heavy burden which is in fact his sins. Through his trip Christian meets much of significant characters such as Mr. Worldly Wisdom, Faithful and Hopeful. The journey is actually a dangerous one, with struggling to arrive to the salvation in order to prevent his soul from Hell.

Ryken states that:

The Pilgrim's Progress is a paradox. On the one hand it is a work of folk literature. This makes it a book of the common people, just like the Bible. Through the ages, parents have read *The Pilgrim's Progress* to their children much as they read Bible stories to them. Reinforcing this identity of being a book for ordinary people rather than literary scholars is the religious nature of the book. It is a book of edification first, and beyond that it offers whatever entertainment value we might wish to find in it. But that is only half of the picture. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is also a complex work of literature, appealing to people of literary sophistication as well as the common person. Perhaps no other literary masterpiece incorporates as many different literary genres as *The Pilgrim's Progress*. (IV)

Written in 1719, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* as a realistic fiction gave the identity to the English novel. The story of the novel is the biography of the title character Robinson, who spent twenty eight years on an isolated island. In principle, Robinson's adventures are also portraying religious morals and teachings, through the Christian allegory represented in it. As Foster claims:

The emblematic vision of the protestant divine led naturally into a metaphorical view of life. Specifically, the standard metaphors which ordered the religious world vision of the seventeenth-century protestant were the view of life as a journey or pilgrimage, geographical wandering as spiritual alienation from God, the wilderness and 'lost soul' metaphor, and in fact, that overriding view of all objects and situations in the world as being vehicles for the conveyance of a spiritual meaning. This view of

reality results, of course, in the allegorical interpretation of the life of man in the world and naturally an author like John Bunyan in the construction of works such as *Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*. The same metaphorical vision works throughout *Robinson Crusoe*, but more complete understanding of that mechanism of God's responsible for controlling events and situations in this world is necessary before we turn specifically to Defoe's novel. (26)

The biblical and the religious influence on English literature carried on its trip through history; once more, in the romantic period it had a station. As Enlightenment and Age of Logic came to deny emotions' value and God's existence, romanticism appeared to answer and confirm the importance of feelings and the vitality of religion as a great truth. In the works of Wordsworth, Blake and the high figures of that period we find Christian philosophy with religious references, symbolized in elements from nature. Thus, the symbols in romantic poetry reflect God's grace, pureness and bless through many examples such as the use of birds, white young lambs and children. Thereupon, the poems figure also redemption, through the getting back of the poets to the pure nature and leaving the corrupted ugly world. Therefore, we find a strong relation between the authors and God, discernibly in the works of Whitman, David Thoreau and Emerson, through their transcendentalism.

Another side of Romanticism is the one of religious criticism, illustrated through Nathaniel Hawthorne's hostile position against Puritanism. The latter is described in the ugliest way through his marked American novel *The Scarlet Letter* (1850).

The Victorian and Modern eras witnessed a notable crisis of faith, with the advance of science and the emergence of modern philosophies such as Darwinism. Moreover, the literate people started to doubt of religion and the Bible, mainly the question of creation. In addition to that, Nietzsche "killed God" and portrayed religion as a master who enslaves his believers.

The economic crisis and the foreign philosophies had a great impact on the English society and literature; then, with Marxism, atheism became the dominant trend for the literary men.

Furthermore, literature became a means for attacking religion; thus, religious themes were often absent in literary works. However, the English novel achieved to keep the existence of religion in literature through narration. The religious morals and symbols are conveyed in tacitly in the narratives to defend the values and the ethics. For this reason, it has enlightened people to see what they could not see during the occurrence of this turmoil.

The codes conveyed by Scripture's stories could not be understood by all the generations in different eras. However, literature develops and updates to fit the readers through various norms and techniques such as symbolism and imagery, in order to reintroduce the religious morals.

2 Fantasy Fiction and Religion

2.1 Fantasy as a genre of Literature

The word fantasy means “the forming of mental images, especially wondrous or strange fancies” (“Fantasy”). Therefore, fantasy literature is that genre which depends, at its core, on fiction and imagination in the formation of the stories and tales.

Fantasy is a form of literary genre in which a plot cannot occur in the real world. Its plot usually involves witchcraft or magic, taking place on undiscovered planet of an unknown world. Its overall theme and setting involve a combination of technology, architecture and language, which sometimes resemble European medieval ages. The most interesting about fantasies is that their plot involves witches, sorcerers, mythical and

animal creatures talking like humans, and other things that never happen in real life. (“Definition”)

The literary genre of fantasy is divided into low and high fantasy. The story of low fantasy is written in realistic fiction. Even though the characters and the plot are extraordinary and strange, but the realm of the story takes place in our recognizable world. Thus, it is somehow related to reality and close to be believable. However, high fantasy is that kind of narration about another imaginary world, impossible plot and inhuman characteristics. It is quite important to mention that fantasy fiction is discernible for its diversity of subgenres. They are classified according to their form and matter. That is to say, fantasy as a genre can be represented in many forms such as novel, poetry or drama. However, in terms of matter it is classified regarding the style of the narration and the theme; thus, fantasy story can be a gothic narrative, a fairy tale, a romantic legend and so on.

The roots of fantasy literature are back to the old oral traditions. It is also inspired by legends, folktales and myths. Those early narratives have got their identity through fairy tales and fables such as *The Beauty and the Beast*, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and *The Little Glass Slipper* or *Cinderella*. However, it is until the mid of the twentieth century that fantasy have been considered as a literary genre and achieved a large audience. The fantasy novel knew a great fame and was well spread in the post modern era, through marked works such as: *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Earthsea*, *A Song of Ice and Fire* and *Harry Potter*.

Fantasy is well known for the use of mythical creatures and wise characters; while the hero is usually young and innocent, he has a will to protect his nation or to save humanity. The conflicts are often resolved by the good deeds of the characters through defeating the evil. They use magic and supernatural powers to achieve what is extremely impossible. The story

as whole reflects the basic values shared generally by all the cultures in all over the world. Accordingly, its themes are, above all, about right and wrong, justice and injustice.

2.2 Fantasy Fiction and Religious Narratives

Unrealistic settings, marvels and even miracles are related to fantasy. Thus, this genre depends on rudiments of created fantastic worlds full of odd stuff, inhuman characteristics, superheroes and extraordinary settings.

Eventhough fantasy and reality are paradoxical, we find sometimes in fantastic fictional stories elements which are imagering something of our real life and it is usually conveying values. Furthermore, the latter are religious codes. Actually, the reader is affected by the morals of fantasy stories whether he intends to do or not, because usually we get the greatest impact from the novels which entertain us. Thus, we receive easily the hidden or the obvious religious codes. “Speculative fiction has always concerned itself with the religious imagination. Its themes cluster around the mysterious and the transcendental and, as modern science has concentrated on the empirical speculation in areas of metaphysics and theology has been transferred into the realm of fiction” (Webb & Enstice 339).

The super natural elements in the religious narratives influenced the imagination in the story of fantasy, that what created bridges to relate between fantasy and religion. Accordingly, as it is mentioned above, fantastic story is turning around the adventures of heroic characters, what is also another point to argue the relationship between fantasy fiction and religion. The heroes in both fantasy and Scripture are usually burdened with the duty of protecting their nations, gifted with superpower and great excellences and surrounded with miracles made by them or supervised by godly wondrous power.

The style or the approach through which the biblical or the religious story is represented in the fantasy novel differs from an author to another, between intertextuality, inspiration, allegory, symbolizing and imagering.

We have as illustration C.S Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1952). It is a high fantasy novel, which bases in principal on religious themes. In fact, Aslan, the creator of the realm on Narnia, represents allegorically Jesus. "Religious symbolism thus plays a major in the chronicles of Narnia . . . Aslan a literary Christ figure who plays a pivot role in the story of Narnia, just as Jesus Christ is central to the Christian faith" (McGrath).

To put in brief, "Christ's death provided atonement for sin, and in this way He redeemed men to Himself. Therefore, a hero in a book or a movie who provides atonement for others through self-sacrifice is said to be a 'Christ type' hero" ("Christian"). Thus, J.R.R Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* represents also religious themes through the Christ type heroes of the story.

To conclude, the high fantasy fiction literature portrays Christianity through many examples, and *The Lord of the Rings* is no exception. In the light of that, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the first part of Tolkien's trilogy, is the case of our study. This thesis is, overall, about biblical imagery in *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

Chapter Two

Good Versus Evil in the Bible and Tolkien's Work

The theme of good against evil has been brought out in literature since the early times. The oral tales and folk stories are told to teach people what is good and what is bad. Thus, children could recognize good and evil, and their impact on one's life. With attention to those stories, we have noticed that literature does not give a definition of evil nor good. It is through the stories' contexts and the representation of the characters that, a reader, a child or an adult, can distinguish between these two concepts.

We cannot say that all the stories are about good versus evil, but we can affirm that all stories deal with this conflict between the righteousness and the bad. Generally, a story is a tale about one character or many characters, who want to realize and do the right, while struggling in bad circumstances or fighting against evil individuals. Hence, good and evil can be represented as obvious adversaries, like two opponents in a boxing ring through a hero character, who is combating against his enemy or evil. This adversity can also be hinted tacitly, when the hero is struggling in plights and hard situations to achieve his good target.

In all probability, good and evil are two parallel sides of man's character; this is the reason why this theme is so important in literature. This composition of the wrong and the right is one of the human conditions of being. It is undeniable that human beings are capable to do good and evil at the same level. That is to say, Man who can teach, share, save, build and grow generations of human beings, animals and plants is the same who can kill, rape, destroy and torture.

It is generally agreed that good is the thing that cannot hurt anyone, and evil is that negative force which can do. However, evil can be omitted or rectified by the goodness. Thus, good is also the power which defeats the bad. This is why humans get always other chances to rectify the remains of their damages. For Christians, the greatest of chances is God's plan of redemption and salvation.

The Bible tells the story of the origin of evil, and how Satan seduced man to do a bad act and to disobey God. Hence, the issue of good and evil becomes an important theme in literature. Murphy stated that: “Ever since Adam and Eve ate the apple, which was a bad thing to do, people have wondered about the nature of good and evil. And writers have made it the theme of their works” (Murphy). Moreover, for many ages, people related evil to Satan and good to God; they had no other explanation for those issues. With modern literature, people come to understand the concepts of good and evil differently; Satan is not the only source of evil. The human being, with his frailty and inherited sense of sin, is also a causative of evil. On the other hand, the modern philosophies proved that religion does not represent always good, because even the Church was the pivot of corruption in the medieval era. Thus, we can confirm that evil comes from many sources, not exclusively from Satan, as it was traditionally believed.

However, what is certainly true is that God is the stream of goodness according to the Scripture. Indeed, “God created human beings and did all the best to keep them safe. However, the world has changed and men are greedy. Their greed leads them to do so many things that are wrong. It is this greed that has caused all the evil in the world” (“Shakespeare’s”). Even though man has this immoral desire, but he also, as a conscious creature, has a good side and a sense of repentance towards his bad deeds. Therefore, “the moral sense or conscience affords the highest distinction between man and the lower animals” (Darwin 70). It is the consciousness of the human being which controls the choice between what is wrong and what is not. According to this moral sense, man has the ability to realize what to follow, what to avoid and what to fight against.

Good versus evil manifest in all forms of literature, not just as a fictional representation of bad creatures or fantasy characters, but also through images which reflect true stories. The real images and the fictional ones set to figure out how good and evil appear in the real world.

Therefore, this dichotomous theme is omnipresent in literature, where a hero is depicted as a brave man/women always fighting against evil and defending good, and a Satan-type character aiming to overwhelm the world or a given part of it by his wicked powers and malice plan.

By all means, Shakespeare is one of the most important figures in the history of literature. As it is mentioned in the previous chapter, Shakespeare's works represent, in the long run, many religious themes. Johnson claimed: "Like the Bible, Shakespeare's works are full of moral dilemmas and religious references that still ring true today" (Johnson). Foremost, the theme of good and evil is the prominent religious theme in his works. As Cain killed Abel for evil sake, Hamlet is killed by his brother because of greed. And as Eve tempted Adam to sin, Lady Macbeth pushed her husband to commit a murder. Indeed, Lady Macbeth is the most known of the evil characters of the English literature; Shakespeare portrayed her like the Devil serpent,

"Look like th' innocent flower,

But be the serpent under't" (Shakespeare 20).

On the other hand, we see that King Lear's daughter, Cordelia is representing a saint or a Christ-type character, unlike her evil sisters. Accordingly, good and evil are main themes in Shakespeare's works.

Our investigation about the theme of good and evil proves that: "From the stories being told by our mothers to children and through modern films and literature, Good versus Evil has been a very common theme" ("Battle"). To point out, *Beowulf*, *Snow White*, *Paradise Lost*, *The Lord of the Files*, *Hunger Games* and *Harry Potter* are all dealing with the conflict of good versus evil. That is to say, good and evil are primitive, traditional, classical and contemporary issues.

In addition to the fact that the theme of good and evil is essential in literature; it is also the central theme in the Bible. For Christians, “learning the wisdom of the [B]ible helps us to discern good from evil and good teachings from evil teachings. Even when evil teachings distinguished as good, and argued shrewdly, we will not be easily fooled. There is no better application for the wisdom of the Bible than to be able to distinguish Good from Evil, and to practice good in our own lives” (“Good”).

This chapter investigates about good and evil in literary and biblical contexts. The first part of this chapter studies good and evil in the Bible. The second part discusses good versus evil as literary theme in Tolkien’s *The Fellowship of the Ring*, through analyzing the fellowship’s conflict against the Dark Lord. The third part analyses mutual points between Tolkien’s tale and the Bible concerning the theme of good and evil.

1 Good and Evil in the Bible

Scripture represents good and evil in many different ways. In fact, the Bible says about several stories that depict this theme. Most of the biblical stories accentuate the conflict between good and evil ones. The Bible defines good to be the righteousness. That is to say, the Bible explains that good is to follow the stream of justice which consists of God and righteous people. Therefore, evil is to disobey God’s commands and follow the injustice and the source of wickedness.

Good and evil are obviously the balance of all morals. To distinguish between good and evil is the principal concern of any knowledge. Thus, the Bible related this concept to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

According to the book of Genesis, God creates Heaven, earth and Man. He plants the Tree of Life together with the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the midst of the Garden of Eden in heaven. In addition to these famous and significant trees, the Lord God grows other plants and trees which are tasty and beautiful. There, also, God creates man and dubs him Adam. Then, the Lord makes women from one of Adam's ribs, to be his mate, and gives her the name of Eve. Immediately, God forbids them to eat from the Tree of Knowledge.

Satan seduced Eve and Adam to eat only from the Tree of Knowledge because it is the forbidden one. His aim was to make them sinners. The point which should be noticed foremost is that the Devil seduced Eve and Adam, but he did not oblige them. They were able to refuse to disobey God and eat from any other tree in Eden. This fact says two important things. First, the Devil seeks for evil by all means, and evil means obviously to disobey God. The second fact is that Adam and Eve sin with their own choice. This conclusion, indeed, takes us back to the first point which is discussed above, that evil is not caused exclusively by Satan but also by man. Therefore, it seems that human beings have not inherited only the sense of sin, but also the morality of "the prohibited is the most desired"

The question that arises is why the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is prohibited? The answer is because this tree is not an ordinary one. The tree of knowledge of good and evil is the distinguishing mark in the history of man. Satan explained to Eve that the fruit of this tree affords the ability to become God-like. "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4-5). Thus, Eve is attracted by the effect of this fruit and ate from it; she gives also to her husband to eat with her.

In fact, Adam and his wife are naked, but they did not feel ashamed because they had no ability yet to discern what was good and what was bad. But after eating the fruit, their eyes opened, they became able to distinguish and know everything. Therefore, "they knew that

they [were] naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Ibid 3:7). Thus, they became omniscient and godlike. Indeed, having the ability to distinguish between good and evil is the basic of all knowledge.

On the other hand, the book of Revelation confirms that at the end of the world all the penitent people will get the chance to be godlike and live the eternity while the evil will be removed. This time, God will supervise this process. With God’s will, all his followers will eat from the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and all of them will be healed and granted with happiness forever. Additionally, the book of Proverbs defines the same fruit to be the fruit of wisdom and blessings. Thus, we can deduce that evil, according to the Bible, is not the tree itself; but, it is the act of the disobedience which is a bad thing to do.

The story of the Tree of Good and Evil is an important lesson that teaches people the value of knowing good and evil. Adam and Eve were under test, and they failed. They followed evil, they missed the way of goodness; therefore, they got punished. Their offspring are programmed also to sin and to be seduced by bad things. But, God made for them a plan of redemption. The principle of this plan is to call man to keep walking aside with goodness in the righteous path.

God represents the goodness, “O taste and see that the LORD [is] good:” (Psalms 34:8). And all what he has created is good. By all means, God ordered his creatures to follow goodness and righteousness. What is expressed in many passages and through several verses: “Depart from evil, and do good” (Ibid 37:27). “Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil” (Proverbs 3:7). “Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil” (Ibid 4:27). “Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate” (Amos 5:14-15). For this reason, evil is God’s antonym and his enemy.

On the other hand, Satan represents the evil side. He rebels upon God because he is greedy and wants to be a Lord and a controller. Moreover, Satan is the same wicked power which seduced Eve and Adam to sin. It is mentioned in the book of Revelation that the old serpent, which tempted Adam and Eve, is itself the Devil and Satan.

By the same token, Jesus says that the Devil is the father of all the bad. He is the murderer and the wicked power which causes always evil. The Christ describes Satan to be the father of lies and that neither truth nor righteousness can be taken from him.

The Bible shows that Satan is the adversary of God. He is, therefore, the enemy of Jesus as well. Thus, the Christ ordered his people to keep always vigilant, and stay away from Satan's wickedness. Because, the latter endeavors to tempt people to do wrong and to eliminate goodness in them just like a beast devours its prey. To put in brief, the devil is the enemy of God, Jesus and righteousness. Thus, people should avoid him in order to please God and relieve their souls from sins.

In addition to Satan's seduction, all people are originally sinners, most of them have the desire of disobedience and rebellion. For this reason, the Lord God has sent his messengers to teach people what is the good, and how to follow it. Most of the prophets represent models to teach people how to follow the good path. Moses and Aaron are the leaders who got out their nations from captivity and oppression. Solomon and David are the wisest men who taught people to discern between the right and the wrong. Abraham and his sons represent the best image of God's obedience. Thus, the process of fighting evil is an integral part of God's plan for saving his people.

Chiefly, Jesus came also to discern between good and evil. The Christ teaches his people how to make from their faith a shield against the arrows of evil. He shows the way of peace and salvation. His mission is foremost to fight against the forces and the authorities of darkness and the rulers of oppression and injustice.

2 Good and Evil in *The Fellowship of the Ring*

In order to understand the story of *The Lord of the Rings*, the reader should have, at least, an idea about Tolkien's other works, namely *The Hobbit* and *The Silmarillion*. The story of *The Lord of the Rings* takes place in an imaginary world, Middle-earth, in which various creatures (Fairies, Elves, Orcs, Trolls, Lords, Wizards, Men and Hobbits) live. These creatures have a special history included in a book entitled *The Silmarillion*. The latter is a set of mythical stories that explain the history of the universe of Ea, upon which Middle-earth is situated.

The story of the Ring goes back originally to *The Hobbit*. The latter is about Bilbo Baggins, the hobbit who goes in a wonderful journey, full of adventures, peril and dramatic events together with Gandalf the wise Wizard, Elves and Dwarves. Bilbo is able to trespass dangers and defeat the dragon Smaug; consequently, he wins a portion of the treasure found by him and his company. Though Bilbo takes a little part of his share of the treasure, he is back to his homeland (the Shire) as a very wealthy hobbit. During his journey, Bilbo finds and owns a magical Ring. Actually, this Ring has a weird effect; it confers invisibility to its wearer. As a result, Bilbo can escape from many predicaments. The story ends with the return of Bilbo to Hobbiton in his beloved and utopian Shire.

The Lord of the Rings saga is a sequel of *The Hobbit*. In the first part of Tolkien's trilogy, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Bilbo comes to discover with Gandalf the Wizard that the magical Ring is created by the Dark Lord, and that it makes a high risk for its owner and his periphery. As long as Bilbo feels aging and unable to bear the Ring's burden, he decides to leave the Shire and go in a journey without mentioning his destination. He leaves his house, possessions and his mysterious Ring to his cousin and heir Frodo Baggins. After the disappearance of Bilbo, Gandalf tells Frodo about the story of the Ring and the danger which

threatens the Shire. In fact, Sauron the Dark Lord is seeking for the One Ring to overwhelm by its wicked powers Middle-earth and spread darkness upon it. Thus, Frodo, being now the owner of the Ring, is obliged to leave the Shire and go to unknown destination. For his journey, Frodo is accompanied by his closest friends and cousins Sam, Pippin and Merry. And they are joined later on by an Elf and two Men, a Dwarf and Gandalf, to make the fellowship of the Ring.

Knowing the danger that the ring could bring to his village, Frodo sets out as far as possible from the Shire. Through out his journey, he is attacked by Wraith Riders, his enemy's servants. Later on, he understands the kind of danger he is getting through. Frodo decides this time by his own will to transport the Ring to the fire of Mount Doom in Mordor, the only place where the Ring could be destroyed.

The Epic story of *The Lord of the Rings* shows that J.R.R Tolkien is remarkably influenced by the medieval literature and the early Scandinavian tales, namely *Beowulf*. Tolkien is a dexterous author. He could combine religion with fairy-tales, Germanic philology and Norse mythology. His works reflect the northern European literature, myths and languages. He said: "But an equal basic passion of mine was for myth (not allegory!) and for fairy-story, and above all for heroic legends on the brink of fairy-tale and history, of which there is far too little in the world (accessible to me) for my appetite. . .there was Greek and Celtic, and Romance, Germanic, Scandinavian and Finnish" (Letters 167).

Actually, Tolkien achieves to make a bridge between his epic story and the legends that he is inspired by. All these myths and tales which influenced Tolkien deal with a conflict between good versus evil. *The Fellowship of the Ring*, particularly, is about a battle between a Christ-type hobbit with angelic fellowship against the Dark Lord and his evil servants. Tolkien aims to portray his creed through using the Bible's central theme, which is good

versus evil. The latter is also the basic theme of the fairy-tales and myth from which he has his greatest inspiration, as he claims: “Myth and fairy-story must as all art, reflect and contain in solution elements for moral and religious truth (or error), but not explicit, not in the known form of the primary (real) world” (Ibid).

Frodo is from Baggin’s hobbits, a special strain whose inhabitant “love peace and good tilled earth” (Tolkien 1)¹. For this reason, he sacrifices his life to protect the Shire and restore peace in the whole Middle-earth. The unity of the fellowship to fight their enemy is strong because of the friendship between the hobbits, the loyalty of Samwise and the good relationship between all the nine members of the fellowship. They are the faithful followers of Frodo to fight against Sauron. They walk with Frodo in dangerous ways and risk their lives because they blindly trust him and know very well that he is doing the best for their world.

In the First Age of the history of Middle-earth, Sauron creates twenty Rings of power. He gives three of them to the kings of Elves, nine to Men and seven to be worn by Dwarves, whilst he keeps one for himself. Sauron’s plan is to make One Master Ring to control through it the other rings, so to be able to overwhelm all the races which live in Middle-earth. After forging all the rings, he keeps his One Ring secretly with him; then, he recites his spell on it:

“One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,

One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them.

In the Land of Mordor where the Shadow lie” (I).

However, in the Second Age, the king Isildur achieves to cut one of Sauron’s fingers; it is, in fact, the one which bears the One Ring. Ever since, the Dark Lord spends his life seeking for his Ring of Power. Therefore, the story of *The Lord of the Rings* takes place in the Third Age

Middle-earth, when Frodo Baggins inherits the One Ring and fights together with his fellowship to keep it, as much as possible, away from Sauron.

The One Ring is an object that reflects Sauron himself. The latter places a great amount of his evil powers in the Ring in order to spread his darkness and his malignity all over the universe of Middle-earth. Actually, the One Ring is extremely powerful. It has a great negative impact on its bearer. The Ring consumes the power of goodness of its bearer and transforms it to evil. Hence, it provokes the greed, the desire of power and the malicious sense inside the creature which bears it. In addition to that, the Master Ring seeks always its original owner Sauron, because it is made by his own evil spirit. So, whenever the Ring is borne, its wearer's location is alerted to the Dark Lord. Thus, the Ring itself represents a great danger for its owner. Elrond, the Elven king, said:

We cannot use the Ruling Ring. That we know too well. It belongs to Sauron and was made by him alone, and is altogether evil. Its strength, Boromir, is too great for anyone to wield at will, save only those who have already a great power of their own. But for them it holds an even deadlier peril. The very desire of it corrupts the heart. Consider Saruman. If any of the wise should with this Ring overthrow the Lord of Mordor, using his own arts, he would then set himself on Sauron's throne, and yet another Dark Lord would appear. And that is another reason why the Ring should be destroyed: as long as it is in the world it will be a danger even to the Wise. (348-349)

Thus, Frodo and his friends are all the time surrounded by peril all along the Ring is with them and not yet destroyed.

Sauron is the extreme model of evil. Tolkien represents him as a satanic figure. Thus, Tolkien names the Dark Lord several times the shadow to stress the evil side of this character. In fact, Sauron's servants or the Ringwraiths are themselves the nine kings who own the Nine Rings that Sauron creates for men. As long as the Master Ring has the ultimate control over the other Rings, the Dark Lord could overwhelm these kings and seed his evil spirit inside them. Thus, he transforms them to wraiths or shadows like him. Sauron uses his Ring to make them very powerful; then, he enslaves them and makes them his terrible servants.

Actually, Frodo, being the Ring bearer, is always afraid of becoming a shadow, like the Dark Lord or his Ringwraiths. He is all the time fighting the idea of transforming to evil. "I do not wish to become like the Dark Lord himself. Yet the way of the Ring to my heart is by pity, pity for weakness and the desire of strength to do good" (81). As long as he bears the Ring, Frodo risks himself to get out of his principals as a loving and mercy hobbit to become an evil wraith.

Sauron relates his fate to the One Ring. Since he uses a great portion of his power on his Ring when he creates it, he becomes dependent on it. Without the Master Ring, Sauron cannot overwhelm Middle-earth. Moreover, only the destruction of the Ring can destroy Sauron and omit evil from Middle-earth. For this reason, Frodo and his fellowship go in perilous journeys bearing the One Ring to seek for the way to the mountains of Mount Doom, where the Ring can be demolished.

The story of *The Lord of the Rings* is about the One Ring. While Sauron is seeking his lost evil Ring in order to control through it Middle-earth, Frodo and his fellowship are facing danger everywhere to hide the Ring from the Dark Lord and destroy it. Therefore, the reader can distinguish obviously the two adversaries of this tale, and how the two enemies represent good and evil.

Gandalf the Wise explains to Frodo that there are many powers in the world, for good or for evil. The Dark Lord is wicked; he tries by all means to get his One Ring back and to spread his malice all over Middle-earth. However, Frodo is the character that represents the good power which seeks to protect the world of Middle-earth from evil and darkness.

To put in brief, this story is about the battle between the ultimate good powers of Frodo, Gandalf and the rest members of the Ring's fellowship against the evil of Sauron and his servants.

3 The Fellowship of the Ring and the Bible

Unlike the other literary texts which deal with the issue of good versus evil, Tolkien's story draws the philosophy of good and evil from the Bible. He, in fact, represents this multi dimensional theme in his fantasy story under a religious vision. In other words, the theme of good and evil in the tale of *The Lord of the Rings*, particularly in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, has many points in common with the story of good and evil of the Bible. The following section studies how Tolkien portrays good and evil in his novel from the Bible.

The first common point between *The Fellowship of the Ring* and the Bible is the characters of Sauron and Satan. Actually, the Dark Lord represents Satan in many aspects including their characters, their nature, the circumstance under which they lived before they rebel, their aim and plan.

According to the Bible, God creates everything and makes it good. At genesis of time, Satan himself was the highest of all the Angels. God called him "the son of the morning" (*Isaiah 14:12*). The archangel Lucifer, another name of Satan, is greedy; he wants to become a god. His intention is to build his throne in a higher place over the clouds and the stars of

God. Because of his fail to realize this project, Satan seduces some Angels to be his followers and transforms them to Demons. Then, Lucifer leads his army to rebel against the Lord God, the latter castes Satan out of his heaven down to Hell. Thus, Lucifer becomes the fallen angel.

Before the First Age of the Years of the Sun (in the Years of the Lamps and the Years of the Trees) the realm of Middle-earth used to be good and heaven-like. Elves and men settled in many parts of this land near each other; whereas, hobbits lived in an isolated place a little bit far from the other creatures. Hence, all the inhabitants of this world lived in peace and harmony for many years and Ages.

Like Satan, Sauron himself used to be good and helpful. The name of Sauron was Mairon which means the admirable (in Elvish, the language created by Tolkien). His job was forging and crafting; after time, Sauron showed a great ability in metal forging and became the highest of the craftsmen of Arada. Elrond narrates that after the immigration of all the creatures of Arada from the evil of Melkor, Sauron had a good relation of friendship with the Elves. He indoctrinated his deep knowledge in crafting to the Elven-smiths and helped them to create different tools that contributed in the Elves' settlement and the building of their kingdom in Middle-earth. Elrond concluded that: "nothing is evil in the beginning. Even Sauron was not so" (349).

The seed of evil grows in Sauron; he wants to control the world of Middle-earth with his powerful darkness (which he inherited from his ancient master, Melkor). In the Second Age, he rebelled against the Elves and all other creatures which lived in peace in Middle-earth. For this reason he created the Rings of Power. Sauron used his One Ring to control the nineteen kings who bore the other Rings. However, he achieved to overwhelm only nine of them, the men kings; because, the Elves and the Dwarves discovered his plan early and omitted the Rings which Sauron gave them. He seduced, also, many other creatures such as Orcs and Trolls in addition to men. Sauron arrived finally to create an army to realize through it his

plan for overwhelming Middle-earth. In fact, he achieved to spread darkness in many portions of Middle-earth; however, when he lost his One Ring, he could not carry on to overwhelm the whole world. Hence, his ultimate goal was find his Master Ring.

Devil is the dominant of darkness; his is the power which turns people from the light of God. Satan is the Lord of darkness in his kingdom; for this reason, all the sinners and his followers like darkness, as it is explained in the book of John, “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lesthis deeds should be reproved” (3:19-20).

Tolkien uses Sauron as a Dark Lord to embody the image of Satan. Sauron colonizes Mirkwood and establishes his kingdom of darkness in the Dark Tower where he dwells. Therefore, his servants become the Black Riders. In fact, Sauron shapes them in such manner which fits his realm and represents, in essence, his world of darkness. The Black Riders work as spies and agents of evil for Sauron. Through time, they become overwhelmed by the malignity of their Master; moreover, they hate light and peace. For this reason, the Dark Lord transforms them to wraiths. Indeed, the Dark Riders or the Ringwraiths symbolize well Demons and Satan’s followers of men.

The book of Revelation claims that at the end of the world, Satan will raise again after thousand years of bound. The Devil will gather his wicked army to fight against God and his people. Therefore, the Lord God will bring fire from the bottom of Heaven to destroy Satan’s wicked followers. Then, Satan will be casted to the lake of fire in Hell, where he will never again get out from. In like manner, fire is the only power which is able to demolish the Dark Lord. Tolkien draws the same image of the Revelation: Sauron will be defeated by the fires of Mount Doom through the destruction of the One Ring by Frodo and his fellowship. The both

characters, Satan and Sauron, will end in the same manner. Therefore, the character of Sauron alludes to the biblical image of Satan.

According to the Bible, sin is inside people. Hence, every man has in him this wicked impulse which beckons him to sin. Since Adam's Fall, men inherited his original sin. As it is previously discussed, temptation does not come exclusively from Satan, because the desire of sin seduces most of people to behave in wrong way. This sin dwells in people and makes them evil; they bear it all the time in their souls. There are many people who obey this evil impulse inside them and others who do not. In fact, sin is extremely powerful because it has a great ability to tame men and to make them his slaves. The man who cannot resist his desire to do bad acts loses his ability to protect his soul from salvation. Therefore, Bible teaches people how to fight against the evil power of sin inside them in order to free themselves from this burden. Thus, God gives his power to his men through his Holy Spirit to defeat evil, and sent his "Son" as a guide to show people the right way out of sin.

In the light of that, Tolkien conceptualizes the One Ring from the image of sin in the Bible. This object is also the root of seduction towards greed and evil. When a man of mortals wears the Ring, he becomes strongly attached to it. He feels himself linked to its power and unwilling to leave it for any reason. The One Ring affords a sense of power, that power tempts its bearer to use it for evil aims. Therefore, the Ring possesses its owner. Gandalf the Gray says: "in the end it would utterly overcome anyone of mortal race who possessed it. It would possess him" (61).

Isildur, the Gollum and many other creatures that bear the One Ring are tempted by its power. In fact, the One Ring provokes the original greed that exists inside the creature that bears it. As long as they are not able to resist the Ring's charm, they use it for evil sake. Boromir, one of the members of Frodo's fellowship, is inveigled by the power of the Ring. He refuses to destroy the Master Ring because he wants to use it for his own affairs. Therefore,

his greedy leads to his death². Boromir is, indeed, an important example of the effect of the One Ring. His story explains that the Ring does not take people to the way of badness, and that men choose by their own to side evil. Thus, the One Ring symbolizes sin, since both the Ring and sin are powers to transform people from being good to become bad. However, evil is done with people's will; it is neither the Ring nor the sense of sin which do it.

On the other hand, Frodo is never seduced by the malice of the One Ring. In fact, Frodo is a biblical-type character who quarrels against the sin inside himself first, and, then, struggles to destroy the source of evil around him. Frodo is the chosen to destroy the One Ring and its Master, Sauron, as well. Likewise, Christ is also the man who came to omit the sin from people; moreover, Jesus' purpose is to defeat Satan, the source of evil. Christ and Frodo are both representatives of the absolute power of goodness. They fight against evil without weapons, but with love and peace.

To sum up, Bible narrates many facts to prove that Satan is the source of evil. He is the opposite of goodness and the enemy of God and Jesus as well. It tells also how men inherited the sense of sin from Adam and Eve. This sense is also a strong impulse of evil. For this reason, the Christ comes to stand against them both, the Devil and the sin. Moreover, Jesus teaches people to realize how to follow goodness and defeat evil.

Through his story, Tolkien reports, explicitly and implicitly, many biblical concepts related to good and evil. Sauron is the evil. He seeks, by all means, to find his wicked Ring to control the realm of Middle-earth. Indeed, the Dark Lord is the enemy of Frodo and his good fellowship. Tolkien symbolizes the sin through the One Ring. In order to restore peace in his realm, Frodo goes in perilous journey together with a fellowship to defeat Sauron and demolish the evil Ring. Thus, the plot of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, as whole, is about a battle between good versus evil.

The most compelling evidence that emphasizes the influence of Bible on the story of *Lord of the Rings* is the following biblical extract:

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places.] Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. (Ephesians 6:11-16)

We see that the significance of Tolkien's narrative is summarized in an insightful way in the book of Ephesians. Therefore, this passage seems to be the starting point that Tolkien developed to write his masterpiece, *The Lord of the Rings*.

Mathison confirms that the theme of good and evil in Tolkien's story reflects his way of understanding Manichean. He said: "Tolkien's Roman Catholic faith informed his understanding of the nature of Evil. He rejects two opposite extremes in his story. He rejects the idea that evil is an illusion, as well as the Manichean idea that evil is equally as ultimate as good. Evil, in Tolkien story is the absence of Good. He regularly expresses his understanding of evil by using the concept of 'shadow' to describe it".

Chapter Three

Biblical Imagery in *The Fellowship of the Ring*

An image is the faithful representation of something real. It is the process of making a portrait or a copy of any object. An image can resemble or look like the thing which it portrays directly and tangibly, what we call a picture. Likewise, it can be represented symbolically to make a mental imagery.

Imagery in literature is “to use figurative language to represent objects, actions and ideas in such a way that it appeals to our physical senses” (“Imagery”). In fact, there are two kinds of imagery in literature. First, the literal image: it is the direct description of the thing as it is, to make it easy for the reader to draw it in his mind. Second, the figurative image: it is to describe something with the use of figures of speech, to transport an idea or a situation in abstract way, indirectly and artistically.

Figurative image is, basically, to use words in order to report something and explain it for the reader. This figurative imagery is an important tool used by writers to hook the reader’s imagination. In fact, the author should select carefully the appropriate expressions to stimulate the human senses while describing something. Indeed, the rhetorical figures are highly useful to bring up his world and scenes to the readers, and give them a large scope to create in their minds images similar to the visual ones.

Bible, as a literary text, uses also imagery as one of the techniques of narration. Actually, biblical imagery is the reference to an object or idea with symbolic religious significance. People can grasp the moral of the Bible thanks to the images. It means that ideas are much more understood once they are represented by imagery.

This is the reason which leads Christians, particularly Catholics, to relay on this technique, as Laura Kazlas explains:

Catholics do not worship idols, but have a long tradition of using statues in our churches, because thousands of years ago people were not able to read

and write. The average person could not read and understand the stories in the bible themselves, until the early 1900's. Priests and scribes were the only people in the church who were educated enough to read and understand the Bible. Therefore, the church used statues, painting and stained glass windows to visually portray the stories in the [B]ible and show what people from that time period may have looked like. The stained glass windows in a church often depicted the stories from Jesus' life visually, so that everyone, including little children, could understand who Jesus was.

The Catholic author, J.R.R Tolkien, portrays many symbolic events and stories from the Bible in his narratives. As it has been discussed in the previous chapter, Tolkien is absolutely influenced by his religion and creed. He said: "I am a Christian (which can be deduced from my stories), and in fact a roman catholic" (Letters 303). In fact, biblical imagery is quite prominent in his works, especially *The Lord of the Rings*.

This chapter studies biblical imagery in Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Through an analytic study, we will explain the representation of two main images in the novel which are The Journey and The Burden.

1 The Journey

Voyage or Journey is a significant element in Catholicism. Catholics strengthen their faith through pilgrimage, visiting shrines of the holy Saints and sacred places. They believe that, in addition to their faith in God's grace, they can get salvation through works and sacrifices. Therefore, pilgrimage and journeying is one important work among their sacred rituals.

Hence, a true believer should walk, suffer and get through hard moments and perils to save his soul.

Actually, a journey is a biblical image to the circumstances of life. Man, through his life, is journeying to develop his personality and learn truth and righteousness. He should pass all the hard stages to arrive to his destination and salvation. Furthermore, God has a plan for people and a guide to lead them in their way. Jesus said “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

The Bible narrates about many important journeys made by righteous people through history. We have as illustration, Abraham, the man who leaves his homeland in obedience to God’s command. And Jacob the grandson of Abraham goes in many long journeys. After having cheated his brother Esau and his father Isaac, Jacob leaves Canaan. He walks across the river Jordan and the great desert through mountains to arrive, finally, to Haran. There he settles with his uncle Laban; Jacob works for him for many years. In the land of Haran, Jacob gets married with Laban’s daughters Leah and Rachel, with whom he has eleven sons. After time, Jacob feels homesick; therefore, he makes another journey coming back to Canaan. At last, Jacob moves to Egypt to join his son Joseph. There, Jacob lives till he passes away.

Some years later, the descendants of Jacob, the Israelites who are enslaved in Egypt, were led out of captivity by Moses and Aaron in the journey, known as Exodus. In their turn, the Israelites wander in the desert for forty years before reaching the Promised Land.

The most important of the Bible’s journeys is the one of Joseph. He takes Mary from Nazareth on a quest to Bethlehem, where she gives birth to Jesus. Later on, Joseph was exhorted by God to take Mary and the child on a journey to Egypt to escape from a coming danger. Interestingly, the Bible depicts Jesus’ life in term of a journey. This image is the matter of our analysis in this chapter.

Like the Bible, Tolkien uses Frodo's journey as an image to portray the character's life. Tolkien makes his hero Frodo a biblical-type character. Eventhough there is no obvious reference to a pilgrimage in the novel, the Catholic author, Tolkien, uses Frodo's Journey as an allegory to mean a religious travelling. Frodo and his fellowship's journey is divided into two parts. The first part symbolizes predestination and second free will.

1.1 A journey without a plan.

“The journey is not just necessary for fulfilling God's will for our lives. It is, in many ways, an integral part of God's will for our lives” (“God”).

The biblical character, Abraham, lives in pleasant circumstances and a comfortable home in his country in the kingdom of Mesopotamia. After time, a pagan tradition which is sacrificing by human beings, mainly children, appears in Ur. Thus, the latter becomes a wicked city. This tradition becomes a common ritual in this region. There is no explanation in the Bible about the reasons, but many speculations accounts that what happened in Ur led Terah, Abraham's father, to leave his home town within his family.

Likewise, Frodo used to live a peaceful and a beautiful life in the Shire. “As for the Hobbits of the Shire, with whom these tales are concerned, in the days of their peace and prosperity they were a merry folk . . . Yet it is clear that Hobbits had, in fact, lived quietly in Middle-earth for many long years before other folk became even aware of them” (2.3). His neighborhood at Bag End was, in fact, a very quiet place. However, in the Third Age of the history of Middle-earth, danger comes to it with Sauron and his evil One Ring.

Terah settles in Haran till he dies. Abraham lives also for many years in this land; where he stabilizes and makes his home. Later on, he receives an order by God to leave the town of Haran, without giving any explanation about the journey or the destination. “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went” (Hebrews 11:8).

In similar way, Frodo finds himself suddenly appointed to inherit his cousin and to be the responsible of his dangerous Ring. He receives a command from Gandalf to leave the Shire. As long as, he has no previous will to leave, Frodo has no plan for this journey. All what he knows is that he should leave. He recognizes that in the meanwhile, as long as the Ring is with him, he represents danger to his periphery and to the Shire as whole. He cannot keep the Ring and stay there; he ought to go away. However, Frodo has never been out of the Shire. He does not know the ways out of the Hobbiton. Gandalf informs him that the Ring is too much dangerous and that he should transport it to Elrond, the king of Elves, in Rivendell. The wise Gandalf promises Frodo to join him afterwards, but in the meanwhile he should go in order to fix some issues of his own. Thus, Frodo has no idea about his destination or how to reach it.

Abraham obeys God’s command and leaves to Canaan. In fact, he believes that his Lord has a well done plan for him. And that the divine command is a duty that should be respected. Also, Frodo considers Gandalf’s order as obligation. Therefore, he leaves his beautiful land, home and all his life behind him and goes towards a gloomy adventure in the wilderness. Like Abraham, Frodo trusts the wisdom of Gandalf and assumes his command as a divine one.

Abraham has an option to take the shortest road to Canaan, which is the Desert Road. However, and for God’s satisfaction, he travels through the longer way by River Road. Similarly, Frodo went through the River road of Middle-earth. “He found himself wondering at times, especially in the autumn, about the wild lands, and strange visions of mountains that

he had never seen came into his dreams. He began to say to himself: Perhaps I shall cross the River” (56).

Through his journey, Abraham experiences many perils. First, He witnesses the famine, for fear of that, he moves on to Egypt. When he arrives to Egypt, Abraham is menaced to be killed. Actually, his wife, Sarai (later on called Sarah) is a fair and very beautiful woman. Abraham knows that the Egyptians would like her and want her as a wife. Therefore, they would think to kill her husband. For this reason, Abraham asks Sarai to represent herself as Abraham’s sister not as his wife. When they arrive to the land of Egypt, the Princes of Pharaoh notice soon the beauty of Sarai. They take her to Pharaoh’s palace and gift Abraham with servants, sheep and many other donations of gold and silver as a reward. Pharaoh takes Sarai as a wife; forthwith, Lord afflicted him and his house with plague, because Sarai is Abraham’s wife. When pharaoh knows the truth and that he is plagued because of Sarai, he orders Abraham to take her and move on from Egypt.

Abraham journeys back to Canaan with the gifts that he is given from Egypt. He becomes now a very rich man. However, when Abraham and his people dwell in Canaan, another struggle happens with him. Lot, Abraham’s nephew, settles with his livestock and servants near Abraham. Actually, Lot’s people and Abraham’s ones quarrel with each others. Abraham, aiming to solve the problem, finds no other solution but to separate the two nations. Hence, Lot chooses to settle in the east part in the land of Jordan which is the best part. And Abraham dwells in the less desirable land. Finally, and after many hardships, Abraham settles in the land that God promised him to give when he ordered him to leave his homeland.

In like manner, Frodo’s adventure is not an easy one. For this reason he needs companions to go with him. In the beginning of the journey, Frodo finds himself suddenly homeless. He is wandering while danger is around him everywhere. Therefore, he feels all the time lost and homesick, wishing bitterly to go back to the beloved Shire. However, his duty to save his land

from the great peril is more powerful than any other desires. Consequently, he recognizes that his adventure is neither an ordinary nor a pleasant one. He says: “This is no treasure-hunt, no there-and-back journey. I am flying from deadly peril into deadly peril.” (136)

In their way to Bree, Frodo and his companions feel that they are tracked by Black Riders. As long as, they do not know the roads out of the Shire, they enter accidentally to a place called the Old Forest. The Forest is queer, gloomy and full of dark mists. In fact, the hobbits believe that it is a dangerous place that they should avoid. Thus, almost none of the hobbits have been there before to visit it or explore it. When Frodo, Sam, Pippin and Merry enter to the Old Forest, they feel that everything in it is staring at them. Sam sees that the trees of the Forest are moving by their own. Indeed, the trees have an ability to change the roads and many things in the Forest. The trees work under the command of the Old Man Willow, who orders them to attack the strangers who enter to the Old Forest. As the trees block the way for the hobbits to flee out, they find themselves in the River Withywindle, the most dangerous place in the Forest. There, Frodo falls down in the River. He is trapped with the roots of the trees; thus, he is unable to get out from this deadly River. Fortunately, Sam finds him and helps him to get out from the River. Forthwith, the trees attack them again. While the hobbits are struggling in that situation, Tom Bombadil appears to save them. He takes them to his house where he hosts them for many days until Frodo recovers and becomes ready to carry on the journey.

Through his journey, Frodo faces many other perils. When Frodo and his companions set off from the Shire, they glimpse the Black Riders behind them. Ever since Frodo tries to hide from them; however, he is not able. Because of having a great ability is sniffing, they can smell the blood of the mortals from miles. Additionally, the One Ring makes always an alert for them wherever its bearer goes. Aragorn helps Frodo to reach Weathertop to keep as far as possible away from the Black Riders. However, the Wraiths could find the way of Frodo in

Weathertop and comes to kill him. In spite of their fail in killing him, one Rider achieves to stab Frodo in his shoulder. Frodo suffers too much from his enemies' attack. He is able to survive, but he becomes now more vulnerable to the Black Riders. Actually, the Ringwraiths are invisible; for this reason, it is a very hard task to hide from them. Frodo is afraid from everything around him. He knows that they will appear again to kill him.

After saving Frodo in Weathertop, Aragorn leads the company to the last road which takes to Rivendell. When they arrive to the Ford of the Buruinen River in the outskirts of Rivendell, soon the Ringwraiths appear again. Frodo tries to cross the River, but the Riders run behind him trying to catch him. Suddenly, the River rises up to overwhelm the Ringwraiths. Frodo enters in the unconsciousness for many days, when he wakes up he finds himself carried by the Elves to Elrond's castle. There he finds also Gandalf waiting for him to receive the One Ring. Thus, the first journey of Frodo ends.

As God made his plan for Abraham, everything was planned and prepared by Gandalf for Frodo's journey. Furthermore, a great company is arranged for him. Finally Frodo arrives to the destination where he is supposed to bring the Ring in Rivendell. "Yes," he said, "I am here. And you are lucky to be here; too, after all the absurd things you have done since you left home" (285). But, another kind of journeys is looming in the horizon, and Frodo still has a great mission to do afterward. Yet, the long voyage did not arrive to its end.

Both Abraham and Frodo make a journey of faith, a journey without a previous plan. Both of them are exhorted by God to set out to face their fate in the wilderness. Frodo starts his journey as an innocent child from a peaceful unknown shire. However, through the perilous ways and the dangerous experiences, and at a given stage, he becomes mature and wise man. At the end, the ordinary hobbit finds a way to overcome the extraordinary circumstances. Tolkien, here, wants to show how peril could shape an individual personality. The latter is a long process which last long years. Martin Luther explains well this point: "This life therefore

is not righteousness but growth in righteousness, not health, but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it, the process is not yet finished, but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory, but all is being purified.”

After ups and downs of his dangerous journey, Frodo becomes now ready to take the hardest of decisions, to go for the greatest mission in the second part of his journey.

1.2 Frodo Chooses His Way

The New Testament tells about the diverse journeys of the Christ, from his childhood till his death. These journeys make great images that Tolkien and many other authors have drawn in their fictional stories. However, Jesus’ life, being the savior of mankind, is itself a symbolic journey. Throughout his life, Jesus has a great mission which is to sacrifice himself for people. Indeed, Jesus chooses to suffer and die for his follower’s sake,

No one forced Jesus to sacrifice himself in order to save humans, including God. He could have chosen another way of salvation, or to leave the sinners for their punishment. However, Jesus chooses to accept the mission and sacrifice himself. He said: “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (John 10:17-18). Therefore, it is clear that the Christ has power and control upon his destiny, but he has chosen to fulfill the prophecy and die for Man’s sake.

Frodo brings the One Ring to the Elf King in Rivendell; thus, he has finished his job and made what he is asked to do by Gandalf. Frodo thinks that the story of the Ring comes to its end and that the Elves, being powerful and immortal, are able now to protect the One Ring. Many Princes and leaders from different nations are gathered in the council of Elrond. There, Elrond narrates again the story of the one Ring and how it comes to Frodo. Moreover, Gandalf explains his plan to get the Master Ring out of the Shire to Rivendell, where he expects that Elrond gathers all the representatives of all the nations of Middle-earth to find a solution how to reach Mount Doom. Additionally, Gandalf informs them that Sauron strength his powers from Mirkwood, and that he is preparing a great army in order to find his lost Ring. Thus, the One Ring becomes more dangerous now. It should be destroyed as soon as possible.

All the members of the council are not brave enough to take the risk to bear the Ring to the fire of Mordor. After a long silence, Frodo speaks: “‘I will take the Ring,’ he said ‘though I do not know the way’” (352). In fact, Frodo decides, by his own, to take the burden of this mission, though he is not obliged and not forced to do. Moreover, he has a chance to change his mind, but Frodo insists to go. “‘If the Ring is to set out, it must go soon. But those who go with it must not count on their errand being aided by war or force. They must pass into the domain of the enemy far from aid. Do you still hold to your word, Frodo, that you will be the Ring-bearer?’ ‘I do,’ said Frodo” (358). Like Jesus, Frodo chooses by free will to sacrifice himself and go for a perilous mission in order to save his world.

After the council of Elrond, Frodo becomes aware of the kind of peril which he would face if he bears the Ring. Thus, he knows that he will suffer, and that he is going to a deadly mission. It is equally noted that Jesus knows since the beginning the nature of the mission that he is coming for and the consequence of his sacrifice. It is mentioned in the book of Matthew that Jesus tells to his disciples, that he will go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the

chief priests and scribes, he will be killed, and be raised again the third day. Christ knows that he will experience all this sorrow and pain; however, he accepts to assume it in order to save his people.

As a part of his mission and through his journey in life, Jesus has disciples and faithful Apostles who follow him and stand with his side. The Gospels of the New Testament narrate that Jesus' Apostles are his closest fellows. Actually, Christ selects them from many other followers. They are his disciples who become the primary teachers of Jesus' Message. They are his faithful messengers (except Judas who betrays him). The Apostles obey Christ's command; they go wherever he sends them. The divine plan of God chooses the twelve disciples to be Jesus' messengers. In fact, they are his companions. "And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judaea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases" (Luke 6:17).

Frodo takes a decision to bear the One Ring. His previous companion Sam, Pippin and Merry ask to carry on the journey with him. Additionally, Gandalf the wise, Legolas the Elf, Gimli the Dwarf, the king Boromir and Aragorn gather themselves and announce that they will follow Frodo to take the Ring to Mount Doom. Thus, a fellowship of nine members is arranged for him. Elrond and Gandalf (the wisest persons in the world of Middle-earth) consider the members of the fellowship as the best company that Frodo can have for such a dangerous journey. Just like the Apostles of Jesus, the members of Frodo's fellowship are bound to serve him faithfully

In spite of the great role of the fellowship to fulfill Frodo's mission, he decides, at a given stage in his journey, to continue his way alone and leave the others to find their way by their own. "Come along! It is plain that we were meant to go together . . . may the others find a safe road!" (530). In like manner, Jesus goes alone and left his companions to follow him in the

appropriate time. “Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards” (John 13:36). In fact, Jesus and Frodo are quite wise to discover that there are betrayers in their fellowship. Thus, they took the same decision; they go away and leave the rest followers to discover the betrayer.

Christ comes, not just to lead his Apostles, but, to lead all the human kind. In the same way, Frodo leads the fellowship ““one of you might have fallen in and still be wondering when you were going to strike the bottom,’ said Aragorn to Merry. ‘Let the guide go first while you have one’” (407). He is the only one to find the way for them. “I think this task is appointed for you, Frodo; and that if you do not find a way, no one will” (353).

Jesus is the example for his Apostles; his life is a model for everyman. Christ is, actually, the master. Similarly, Frodo is the master of his fellows and their guide, “we are coming with you; or following you like hounds” (138). Thus, he becomes also their example which they follow. “The others followed his example, putting their packs against the bank and their legs out into the road” (97). Additionally, his friend Sam used to call him “Master” all along the journey.

As it has been discussed above, Christ and Frodo are similar in many aspects. They, both, glorified friendship and are symbols of the faithful mate who makes his life under the service of the others. Frodo decides at the end to risk his life and continue the quest to Mordor alone in order to make his friends out of the danger. Likewise, Jesus is the best example of the good friend. In fact, Jesus is the friend of mankind, he said: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). Their goal is to save and bring light to their worlds. Jesus said: “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (Ibid 8:12). In like manner, Frodo’s mission is,

above all, to bring light to the realm of Middle-earth and to defeat the darkness of Sauron the Dark Lord.

Through his first trip, Frodo makes a temporal journey where he is but a sojourner in the wilderness. He is seeking for himself and a guide to lead him to a destination which he himself does not know anything about and never planned to go to. Frodo is predestinated as many biblical characters and prophets to go out from his home. By faith, he goes and obeys the divine command. When he arrives to Rivendell, where he is supposed to bring the Ring, Frodo becomes not lost any more, but aware. “Yet I think, Frodo, that you have courage and wisdom enough for the venture, or I would not have brought you here. Do as you will!” (473).

Frodo’s pervious journey is the inner trip which contributes into shaping his character. The importance of his mission makes him aware that he has to bear the burden of saving Middle-earth choosing to be the One Ring bearer to the Hell. “‘Well, Frodo’, said Aragorn at last. ‘I fear that the burden is laid upon you. You are the bearer appointed by the council. Your own way you alone can choose’” (516). Thus, the little hobbit goes with special companions to draw another significant journey.

2 Frodo and the Great Burden

“My burden is light” (Mat. 11:30).

“He is the Bearer, and the fate of the Burden is on him” (Tolkien.526).

As emphasized above, for Christians, God sends his beloved son to save people from sin. The death and the sacrifice of Christ are, overall, to delete the punishment of guilt from people. He bears this heavy burden to make life lighter for his followers. In hope to free the souls of people and bring rest for them, he accepts to load himself of the onus of humanity. “Come unto me, all [ye] that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matthew 11:28-29).

Frodo Baggins loads himself of the hardest of jobs, because his followers are unable to bear the burden. Gandalf says: “Do not tempt me! I dare not take it, not even to keep it safe, unused. The wish to wield it would be too great for my strength” (81). That is to say, no one of the fellowship’s members can be as brave as Frodo to burden himself with such a risky task. “He laid his hand on Frodo’s shoulder. ‘I will help you bear this burden, as long as, it is yours to bear’” (81).

The death is not the only charge of Jesus, through his life and journey he is acquainted with grief and sorrow. Christ suffers inward and outward. The Bible refers to the sufferance of Jesus in two ways. First, he is pained, what means that he suffers bodily. Second, the Bible says that Christ experiences sorrow, which means a mental torture. In fact, Jesus commits no

guilt to deserve such punishment. However, he takes on himself the burden of sin to free his people from it.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were [our] faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:3-5).

In the last days of Jesus, before his death and resurrection, his disciples leave him down. One of his companions betrays him. The Jewish Priests and Pharisees were seeking for Jesus to kill him. They find no way to arrive to the Christ except to tempt one of his disciples. Judas, one of the Christ's disciples and one of his twelve Apostles, betrays Jesus by leading the chief Priests to find him. The Priests give him thirty pieces of silver for this mission. Judas leads the army that the Priests gathered to the garden of Gethsemane. Judas is sure that they will find Jesus and his disciples there. The Priests arrive to the garden at night; so, they are not able to recognize Jesus between the other men who are with him. Judas suggests giving a sign to the army in order to reveal the identity of the Christ to them. He says "whoever is kissed, he is the one" (Matthew 26:48). When Judas sees Jesus, he walks straightly towards him and kisses him. Thus, the Priests' army recognizes Jesus. They bind the Christ and take him down with them.

The following morning after the arrest of Jesus, Peter goes after him to the High Priests House. He stands with people in the courtyard around the fire waiting to see what happens with the Christ. A servant girl from the Priests' house sees Peter and recognizes that he is one

the Christ's companions. The servant informs people who are standing around the fire with him that he is one of the disciples of Jesus. But, Peter denies and says that he is not Jesus' companion. After a while, the girl sees him there and says again that this man is a fellow to Christ, but Peter denies knowing him. Later on, people notice the strange behavior of Peter; thus, they come to confirm that he is really one of the Christ's followers. When they ask him for the third time whether he is one of them, he swears that he does not know Jesus. Thus, Peter denies the Christ thrice.

At last, it is his own people (the Jews), who crucified Jesus. "Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? [They] all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified" (Matthew 27:22-23). Accordingly, Jesus gets hurt physically and spiritually. His body is crucified and pained, as his soul suffers from grief and denial.

In spite of having a fellowship, the liability of bearing the One Ring is nominated to Frodo. "I fear that the burden is laid upon you. You are the bearer appointed by the council" (516). Actually, he walks in a long journey bearing this onus.

Similarly to Christ, Frodo suffers a lot because the burden is a sorrow upon his heart. "A heavy weight was settling steadily on Frodo's heart" (148). On the other hand, the mission's tonnage was heavily loaded on his back. Indeed, the luggage of the journey is also a painful burden. "[A]nd by that time their cloaks, blankets, water, food and other gear already seemed a heavy burden" (95).

In addition to the responsibility of the One Ring, Frodo's body suffers from the weight of this journey. "The burden is heavy. Give me an hour longer, and I will speak. Let me be alone!" (516.571). Moreover, Frodo suffers physically; he has been wounded dangerously at many stages in his trip. He is stabbed by the Ringwraiths and hurt by the trees of the Old Man Willow in the Forest. Also, he falls in the Ford and lost his consciousness for many days. In

fact, he recovers hardly after receiving many cures in the house of Elrond. Frodo is pained and tortured all along his journey.

The hardest of Frodo's burdens is, in fact, the responsibility of leading his team of companions. He struggles too much to find a way for them. "They decided to attempt the climb, but it proved very difficult. Before long Frodo was obliged to dismount and struggle along on foot. Even so they often despaired of getting their pony up, or indeed of finding a path for themselves, burdened as they were" (265). Additionally, the liability of the whole realm of Middle-earth, within all the kinds of creatures in it, is between his hands. He is the entire time careworn while watching his friends struggling with him and suffering. Accordingly, it is obvious that Frodo anguished also spiritually. At last, he prefers to take the charge alone.

Like Jesus, Frodo is betrayed by one of his fellows, Boromir. Actually, Boromir's intention behind following Frodo and the fellowship is to steal the One Ring of power. As he could not get the Ring, he tries to tempt Frodo. Boromir explains to Frodo that the Master Ring is not made to be destroyed, but to afford power. He asks Frodo to give it for him and he promises that he will protect it from Sauron. As long as he receives an absolute refuse from Frodo to give him the One Ring, Boromir tries to take it with power. Frodo wears the Ring and becomes invisible; thus, he is able to flee from Boromir. As a result Frodo decides to carry on the rest of the journey to Mount Doom alone. He leaves his companion at the end of the book of *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

Both Jesus and Frodo endure the pain to bear the heavy burden of responsibility on their shoulders: Jesus sacrifices his life to save his followers and disciples, Frodo accepts to carry the burden to destroy the One Ring to restore light and peace to Middle-earth.

General Conclusion

For this study, we choose the first part of Tolkien's trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Fellowship of the Ring*. To introduce the reader to our research, this thesis starts to overview the close relationship which exists between religion and literature.

The second chapter discusses the theme of good versus evil through the characters of Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring*. If Sauron is the representative *par excellence* of Satan, Frodo stands for the biblical character, Jesus. The long and diverse struggles between Sauron and Frodo embody the perpetual conflict between good and evil, an undeniable central theme in the Bible.

The third chapter analyzes two biblical images, journey and burden, in Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring*. This part accentuates the similarity of Jesus (and other biblical characters) and Frodo. Both of them endure the suffering to bear a heavy burden during a long and perilous voyage.

End Notes

¹*The Letters of J.R.R Tolkien* (selected and edited by Humphrey Carpenter with assistance of Tolkien's son, Christopher Tolkien. London: GEORGE ALLAN & UNWIN, 1981). All references belong to this edition and are in the text of this research are referred as (Letters).

²Tolkien, J.R.R, (*The Fellowship of the Ring*, London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009). All the subsequent references are cited parenthetically in the text.

³Boromir's death is mentioned in the second part of the trilogy entitled *The Two Towers*.

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