

## **“I WONDER IF WE WILL EVER BE PUT IN SONGS AND STORIES”**

Leland Ryken, Christian academic and author, describes in his book, Words Of Delight: A Literary Introduction To The Bible, several common archetypal plot motifs found in world literature and in the Bible. One of these is related to this blog:

*The Quest*     A hero struggles to reach a goal, undergoing obstacles and temporary defeat before achieving success.

Similarly, Ernest Becker, anthropologist and author of Escape From Evil, describes the quest for significance and immortality found in every culture throughout human history:

Man wants to know that his life has somehow counted, at least in the larger scheme of things...that he left a trace that has meaning...Man cannot feel right unless believes the heroic victory over evil, the assurance of immortality.

Likewise, the sociologist of religions and theologian, J. H. Bavinck, explained the "Five Magnetic Points" of religion observed all over the world. One of these is called "Between Activity and Passivity," dealing with the question of fate or destiny, purpose and identity. Bavinck wrote:

Every person is conscious that he or she does something with and gives an answer to the many factors that shape his or her life. Man has a two-part place in the totality of the universe: he is clearly a particle in the cosmos but at the same time there is something in him that rises above the cosmos and enables him to view it apart from himself, to study it, and manage it to some degree.

But, my favorite expression of our craving for cosmic significance is the commentary by Samwise in the movie, "The Two Towers," from Tolkien's Lord Of The Rings:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kml\\_V9t990](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kml_V9t990)

The Bible teaches and human history affirms that the human soul is hard-wired for cosmic purpose and immortality. God created human beings in His image (Gen 1:26) and He placed "eternity" in their hearts (Eccl 3:11). We have a "factory-installed" GPS linked to God and a "homing device" drawing us heavenward. As Augustine wrote in the fifth century: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in You."

We were designed with a thirst for self-knowledge as God's creatures and to discover our purpose within His divine plan. Each individual is called and equipped to play a role in God's eternal drama. However, as John Calvin wrote in the sixteenth century:

It is certain that man never reaches a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face, and then descends from contemplating him to scrutinize himself.

As Christians we know what happened to Adam and Eve, our parents. They sought independent self-identity and desired to be "like God." As the original players in God's drama, they rebelled and attempted to rewrite the script. They were prideful and "played God." They wanted to be in charge. They did not remain within the limits set for them. They did not want to listen to God's voice or acknowledge His revelation all around them. They ignored God and listened to an alien voice, Satan's. In short, they deified themselves and so they sinned.

Calvin observed: ““While all men seek after happiness, scarcely one in a hundred looks for it from God.” This is the sad story of human history and the origin of religions (Rom 1:18-23). Because we are created in God’s image, we seek meaning and transcendence. But because we are fallen, we search for significance in all the wrong places and in many harmful ways.

Yet, like Samwise, do you ever wonder if your life has a meaning that will survive death? Do you ever ask yourself if your efforts contribute anything to God’s plan for creation? Will your story cause others to celebrate in heaven? Will your quest end well, as a hero who “struggles to reach a goal, undergoing obstacles and temporary defeat before achieving success”? Will you hear Jesus say to you: “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matt 25:21)?

Think about this: Are you fulfilling your destiny? Are you playing the part designed for you in God’s drama? If not, I suggest you watch again the short video and think about the monologue from the biblical point of view.

(You can also watch the short video, “The Biblical Worldview,” and the insightful commentary in the video, “What Is My Purpose?,” by Os Guinness in this site.