



God, the Devil, and Harry Potter: A Christian Minister's Defense of the Beloved Novels

John Killinger

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"The Potter stories, far from being 'wicked' or 'Satanic,' ... are in fact narratives of robust faith and morality ...

"What Ms. Rowling has furnished us, besides what the Brits call 'a good read,' and a whopping good one, ... is a modern interpretation of the gospel, the wonderful news that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself' and making sure that the goodness of creation would never be obliterated by the forces of darkness and evil."

Since their first publication, J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter novels have brought joy to children and adults alike. Many conservative Christians in the United States, however, have decried the books as wicked, as preaching witchcraft and the occult, and as glamorizing dishonesty. A minister in New Mexico held a "holy bonfire" on the Sunday after Christmas 2001, at which he publicly torched the Potter books, declaring them "an abomination to God and to me."

John Killinger, a Congregationalist minister and an academic in the field of contemporary literature, beautifully demolishes the objections of right-wing Christians to this bestselling children's series. He compellingly argues that, far from corrupting children's morals, the Potter stories actually influence young readers to follow the teachings of Jesus. He cites passage after passage to illustrate how the world of Harry Potter would be inconceivable apart from the strictures of Judeo-Christian theology and the way human existence should be approached by every follower of Jesus. Additionally, he reflects on the possibility that Harry Potter, like Dostoevsky's Prince Myshkin and others, is a witting or unwitting Christ figure who actually battles the forces of darkness for the souls of the faithful.

All through this extraordinarily well-written, compelling, and very entertaining little book, the author points out that stories like this are worth more than any sermon toward producing people who truly follow the lessons of Jesus.

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