



AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

THE POWER OF THE RING: Dominion

“One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them”

This week we encounter both the most powerful and the most sinister dimension over the one ring: its ability to give its wearer dominion of the entirety of Middle Earth. In the first encounter that the reader has with Sauron in the story, it is generations before the birth of either Bilbo or Frodo Baggins. In this time, a great war is raging between Sauron’s hordes and those not yet subjected to the power of the ring. It is only when Sauron is separated from the dominating power of the ring that the people of Middle Earth are able to keep their freedom and push back the dark forces for a time.

However, the lure of having dominion is too great and generation after generation of people fall prey to the promise of power and control. Those individuals who fought so desperately to repel the forces of darkness become enslaved by the very darkness that they sought to eradicate.

And so it is only with the eventual complete destruction of the ring of power that this cycle of dominion and subjugation can be eradicated. It is only when the ability to dominate is totally eliminated that the men, elves, dwarves, and hobbits of Middle Earth are able to experience true freedom.

When we look at our own history, we see a similar pattern to that of Middle Earth emerge. One individual or structure in power is removed from power only to be replaced to another domineering force.

Thankfully, we read in the scriptures that Christ offers us freedom from cycles of oppression and subjugation. To echo the words of Paul, Christ offers a doorway into a

new reality where there is neither man nor woman, Jew nor Greek, Slave nor Free. We are invited into a new community of perfect reconciliation and radical equality.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Sometimes systems of subjugation and domination become so ingrained in our lives that we are unable to even recognize the presence. This week, I challenge you to think about the systems that you participate in (whether they are social, economic, or political) and to dream of ways in which you can help usher in Christ’s radical vision of a place where the marginalized and oppressed can find true freedom.

Additional Resources: On the reverse, take a look at a playful interpretation of what it means to have the freedom to dream up a new reality in Christ.

Jeremiah 34: 1, 7-11: ¹The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, when King Nebuchnezzar of Babylon and all his army and all the kingdoms of the earth and all the peoples under his dominion were fighting against Jerusalem and all its cities: ⁷when the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem and against all the cities of Judah that were left, Lachish and Azekah; for these were the only fortified cities of Judah that remained. ⁸The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to make a proclamation of liberty to them— ⁹that all should set free their Hebrew slaves, male and female, so that no one should hold another Judean in slavery. ¹⁰And they obeyed, all the officials and all the people who had entered into the covenant that all would set free their slaves, male or female, so that they would not be enslaved again; they obeyed and set them free. ¹¹But afterwards they turned about and took back the male and female slaves they had set free, and brought them again into subjection as slaves.

2 Corinthians 3: 17-18: ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

- Scriptures from the New Revised Standard Version -



REFLECTIONS