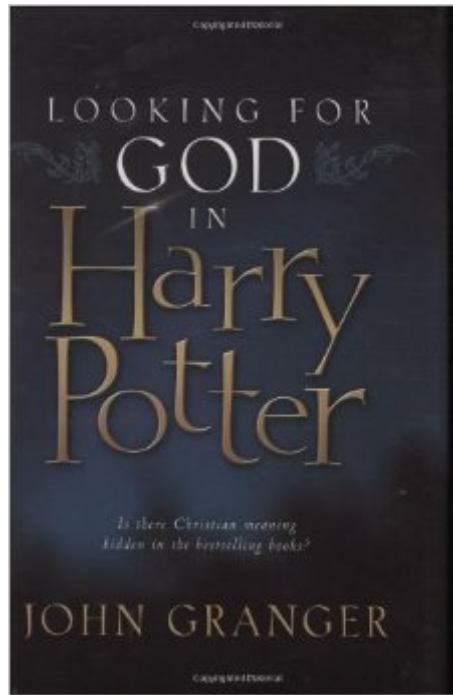


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Looking For God In Harry Potter



Synopsis

Millions of children, even Christian children, are reading the mega-selling Harry Potter book series and are exposed to the Harry Potter movies. John Granger, a devout Christian, teacher of classic literature, and father of seven children, first read the Harry Potter books so he could explain to his children why they weren't allowed to read them. After intense study, however, he became convinced that the books are underestimated as literature--and reflect important Christian truths. In *Looking for God in Harry Potter*, Granger gives parents and teachers a roadmap for using the Harry Potter books to teach Christian truth to children.

Book Information

Hardcover: 224 pages

Publisher: SaltRiver; 2 Updated edition (September 21, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1414300913

ISBN-13: 978-1414300917

Product Dimensions: 8.8 x 5.8 x 0.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (85 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #617,921 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #134 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Books & Reading > History of Books](#) #180 in [Books > Children's Books > Religions > Inspirational](#) #263 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Genres & Styles > Children's Literature](#)

Customer Reviews

Looking for God in Harry Potter is an updated and improved version of Granger's earlier writing on the subject. Not only is this book up to date with reference to every Potter book Rowling has written, it is also edited in a superior fashion. This book succeeds on a number of fronts: 1) It details the important themes of the Potter books extremely well. This has allowed me to enjoy and appreciate the books much more than when I first helped read *Sorcerer's Stone* to my son. The Potter stories are great on their own but *Looking for God in Harry Potter* allows you to see the deep themes Rowling is baking into these stories. I guarantee you will appreciate her writing skill and the books themselves significantly more after reading this guide. 2) This has helped me to reinforce the themes in the Potter books, which are really the great themes we are faced with in life, for my son. It has given me an informed, adult view on Rowling's writing that has created many "teachable moments"

with my son. I consider myself a decent reader but, to be honest, it's amazing how much I missed in Rowling's books that John Granger has captured in great detail. From the themes in each of the Potter books to the hidden meaning of most of the character's names--the detail and analysis will astound you if you are a Potter fan. If you'd like to see a serious treatment of Rowling's world as literature--and benefit from the experience--this is your book. If you are a Christian reader who has felt a bit guilty in your love (or your children's) for the Potter books I urge you to buy this book. The loud, opposing voices in the Christian media have created a dangerous image for Rowling's stories and you may know people who have warned you not to let Harry Potter into your home.

This is not only an excellent answer to any religious relative you have who claims that the Harry Potter series is a demonic plot to misguide Christian youth (well, I've been hearing that), it may also be the first serious academic-type analysis of that series. The author lays out his bona fides early on to be deciding whether books may be pro- or anti-Christian. He is a father who does not even allow television in his house and originally read Harry Potter to screen it when one of his children brought it home. He expected to forbid it and only wanted to be able to say what exactly is wrong with it (if only every modern Pharisee were so thoughtful) and instead found the book in the allegorical tradition of the Narnia series. The characters and settings might be wizards and magic, but he lays out a case that the subtext and underlying story is more New Testament. On the one hand he lays out the differences between the sorcery banned in the Bible and portrayed in the book. I'll shorten it to say the bible condemns INVOCATIONAL magic which CALLS demons and powers from the "other side" as not just profane, but a bad idea because those beings rarely want to do what you want them to. J.K. Rowling's characters do INCANTATIONAL magic by NAMING the thing they want--light, disarm, etc. And the word became flesh. This he argues is different and not the threat the former type of magic poses. Granger explains it much better. And on another track he lays out the similarities between Harry's story and Biblical narratives we are "supposed" to read.

Granger has refined and sharpened his already-potent message of how these phenomenally successful books have such broad appeal and why they deserve to be taken seriously as literature from his first book on the subject (*Hidden Key to Harry Potter*, 2003). Granger's base message is that love conquers death, a fundamental principle of Christian thinking ... but it is a message that has resonance for others as well. Granger shows compellingly how Harry is resurrected from the dead via sacrificial love and/or a clear Christian symbol in each of the 5 books. Accordingly, I thought his writing was at his strongest in Chapter 7, titled "The Triumph of Love Over Death." I

always enjoy hearing (or reading) Granger's explanation of the alchemical imagery and structure in the Harry Potter novels. Once the reader understands the basics of alchemy and its uses in great literature, it is possible to appreciate the rich layers in these novels so much more. I think that appreciation of the alchemical structure and symbolism, following a grand tradition in British literature in particular, is fundamental to really understanding these books, and this is an area of analysis of Rowling's work not previously touched on by many (or any?) scholars. The chapters in Granger's book relating to the symbolism replete in the Harry Potter novels, as well as the name meanings, are also a joy to read. I thoroughly enjoyed the book-by-book analysis, which is perhaps an excellent starting point for Christians who are skeptical or even hostile to Rowling's novels. Granger's analysis of each of these books is so compelling that it should foster questions and reflective thought in even the staunchest of critics.

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