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Best Books of 2022

December 28, 2022



For The King - Rocky Ramsey

I love books! If you do too, here is a recap of some of my favorite books I read this year. For The King!

Top 3 Fiction of 2022:

1. The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien : The Fellowship of the Ring and The Two Towers
2. Malcom and The Marquis' Secret by George MacDonald
3. Moby Dick by Herman Melville

Top 3 Non-Fiction of 2022:

1. Martin Luther's Commentary on Galatians
2. Paradise Restored by David Chilton
3. Through New Eyes by James B. Jordan

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Transcript

(music) Don't think I will even ask you to make Jesus Lord of your life. That's the most preposterous thing I could ever tell you to do. Jesus Christ is Lord of your life.

Whether you serve him or not, whether you bless him, curse him, hate him, or love him, he is the Lord of your life. Because God has given him a name that is above every name so that the name of Jesus Christ every knee shall bow and tongue confess that he is Lord. Some of you will bow out of the grace that has been given to you, and others will bow because your kneecaps will be broken by the one who rules the nations with a rod of iron.

(music) And I'll not apologize for this God of the Bible.

(music) Friends, welcome to the For the King podcast where we proclaim the edicts of the king, namely and chiefly, that Yahweh reigns. I am your host, Rocky Ramsey.

I am by myself today, so I hope that you are not put to sleep by my voice. And I have a few updates I would like to share with everybody before we get started on the topic today. First order of business, I want to let everyone know I'm desiring to blog more, to write more, be a more prolific writer.

So, on my website for thekingpodcast.com, I have a blog on there. I've already written some articles if you're interested in kind of learning the way I think about certain topics. I'd be more than happy, obviously, to share that with you.

And I am wanting to write more this next year, so keep your eyes peeled. I'll put it on my social media when I do post a blog and you can create a WordPress account and subscribe to that blog because it is a WordPress. So you could use that functionality if you would like to keep up to date with that.

But regardless, you could just go on the website and check it periodically if you want to see what I'm writing and what I'm up to. So I'm wanting to blog more, keep up to date with that for the next year. Also, I want to let everyone know that on the more tab on my website, I added some Christian business owners that I know.

If you live in the indie area and you would like to partner with some Christians in business and give them your money rather than buying cheap crap from people who hate you, you can do that. So I'm going to add a coffee shop on the northeast side of indie in the Geist area. Geist coffee owned by a Christian man.

I'm going to add that. If you would like a cup of joe, you can go support a Christian and go support a brother. At his coffee shop, I am going to add my father-in-law is an accountant and he runs a Christian tax service.

So if you need your taxes done, you know, to file your income taxes, he can do that for you. I'm going to put all of his information on the website and you can check that out. Also, some brothers at church have a construction business.

One of the brothers started it and there's some brothers at church that also work for him. It's called Steadfast Construction Services. They do pole barn homes, timber framing and just conventional construction as well.

If you would like a home built or a barn, a pole barn or a pole barn home, things like that, they can do that for you. They're really good at it. The brother has worked with the Amish for a while.

So he knows all the ins and outs of timber framing. Really, really good at that. So if you'd like to have something built by a Christian and support a Christian brother, God the Christian man, then I also would commend you Steadfast Construction Services LLC.

And last thing, I want to update you on with the podcast. I've been updating and keeping track of a reading list, my personal reading list. It's on the website.

If you go to the more tab and scroll down, you can see all the books that I have read in the past. I read last year. I started keeping track of 2021.

So you're going to have just the bottom list is I don't know when I read it, but it's just all the books I've read and whether they're good or not. Last year I kept track as well. This year I got through about 70 books and kept obviously really good track of that and I rated each and every one of them.

So look for ones with higher ratings that if you want to kind of track with some of the things I'm reading, maybe, you know, I've already read some things and vetted it. So the things that are rated, you know, really good, amazing or stellar. Those are some of my higher ratings that I've come up with.

Some of those books would definitely be worth picking up and getting under your belt and learning about. So, you know, if you look through my list, look for the higher rated ones. If you don't feel like obviously reading everything that I've read, maybe pick some of the best ones that would edify you.

Okay, so on to today's topic. I wanted to share with you guys my favorite books for 2022. I'm going to obviously divvy them up into fiction and nonfiction.

I'll do my top three fiction for you guys and my top three nonfiction and maybe give you a reason why I like the book so much and why it's worth reading. So I'll start with fiction, my top three fiction for this year. I read the first two Lord of the Rings, the Fellowship of the Ring and the Two Towers.

I haven't read The Return of the King yet, hoping to do that turn of the year here. Really, really amazing book. One of the best pieces of fiction I've ever read.

It's a captivating book the whole way through. There's no real build where you're having to kind of get through the book, like, you know, where there's some books. Obviously, there's instances where it's not as interesting.

So you have to kind of get through it. Lord of the Rings is not like that. It is good the whole way through.

It's an amazing, amazing book. You've probably seen the movies adapted from the books. The books are so much better.

They leave out a lot of stuff in the movie. And, you know, when you watch a movie, you're watching the director's artistic expression of that story. When you read a book, you're conjuring up all the images of the setting in your mind, what the characters are doing and how they walk and how they talk and how they do things and how they look.

So it's much more fun to read the book. And Lord of the Rings, the book is just better. It's just better than the movie.

They leave out some stuff in the movie. They leave out Tom Bombadil completely. So The Fellowship of the Ring, that's an instrumental part.

They leave out a lot in The Fellowship of the Ring, actually. Part of their journey to get to Rivendell, they leave out quite a bit of it. So really, really good, fascinating book.

I mean, obviously, if you've seen the movies, you know that the main theme would be the struggle for power, the desire, the evil desire in the heart of man for power, to have power over others. That's really what this book is kind of searching, what it is. It's a possible world, philosophical expression of that idea, the depravity of man.

So it's going to challenge you. If you haven't read Lord of the Rings or heard of it, it's definitely going to challenge you on the way you view yourself. All succumb to the ring.

Nobody is exempt from its impurity. So really, really amazing narrative, amazing story. One thing that I did dislike about the movie that the book picks up on is, Aragorn is much more sure of himself as King, much more sure of himself as what he's done become as

destiny.

As far as I can tell, getting through the first two books. They definitely portray him as very, not passive, but apprehensive about his destiny to be king. You get glimpses in the book of his glorious kingship and in the movie, they don't explicitly have moments like that where you can tell that he's becoming what he's supposed to become.

So I don't know. I really did. I love an Aragorn's character in the book.

Really spectacular. So yeah, I commend that book to you, Lord of the Rings, Fellowship of the Ring and The Two Towers. Moving on.

Second book, second best fiction book I read would be Malcolm and then the sequel, The Marquis Secret. Same story by George McDonald. So Tolkien, J.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and G.K. Chesterton were heavily influenced by George McDonald.

He was a Scottish writer in the 19th century. G.K. Chesterton was a little bit older than Lewis and Tolkien and stuff, but G.K. Chesterton was even influenced by McDonald as well. So George McDonald, although he has some heretical beliefs about universalism and about judgment about annihilationism and things like that.

So he has some weird views on the judgment of God. Regardless, I would still say he is in the Christian tradition broadly speaking, a Christian worldview, Christian ethic, Christian motifs, Christian themes in his book. So Malcolm and then the sequel, The Marquis Secret is a super good book.

Now it's different than Lord of the Rings. Lord of the Rings is captivating the whole way through. Malcolm, Marquis Secret, it's an intricately beautifully woven story and it's a romance too.

So modern day romances, you know, men think are just for girls and they're effeminate, right? So a guy should be reading that. They're basically just, you know, catering to the women's idea of romance. Well, older romances, these kind of gothic, gothic older romances where both sexes could enjoy.

And Malcolm, Malcolm is a masculine man. He's a good, godly Christian man that knows how to treat women and knows how to pursue a woman and to be very methodical and honoring to women. And I really appreciated that, learning just how I can better treat my wife, how I'm supposed to act around women as a man, as a Christian man.

How do I act around delicate women, you know? So really appreciated that in the book. It was a romance, but it wasn't these kind of ooey gooeey modern day female romances. It was a romance that both sexes could enjoy.

The women were portrayed in a very feminine manner, so the women could obviously

appreciate that part of the love story and the men can appreciate Malcolm and some of the masculine characters in the book. So really enjoyed that. I also would say, speaking earlier, although George McDonald has some heresy in this book, there are some beams of light that come out of the narrative of Christian living.

He has some - I'm not going to quote it verbatim, obviously, but he has some statement later on in the Marquis Secret about how obedience is the gateway to holiness. You can't just be holy without obedience. Really good stuff on the Christian living.

So I really appreciated that. I highly, highly recommend Malcolm and the Marquis Secret by George McDonald, which was, by the way, C.S. Lewis' favorite author. One of his greatest influences was George McDonald.

So obviously, this guy's really solid. Worth reading. Please read him.

Last one I want to commend you guys is Moby Dick by Herman Melville. I'm not going to go too much into this because me and Noah did a whole podcast on Moby Dick. You can go back a few episodes and listen to that one if you want to.

Really great book. It's going to be hard to get through. It's a difficult read, big book, difficult read, but Lord of the Rings captivating the whole way through.

Malcolm, you know, takes a while to build up by the end, wraps up so nicely, and you learn so much, and the story just captivates you. Moby Dick is not going to really captivate you the whole way through. It's going to be hard to get through, but by the end, you're going to be taught one of the harshest lessons a man or woman can be taught in this life.

So for that alone, it is very, very worth it. The language is beautiful, but it is going to be very hard to get through. It's a difficult book.

Okay. Moving on to nonfiction. Top three nonfiction for this year.

First one, best nonfiction book I read. Martin Luther's commentary on Galatians. My brother got this for me last Christmas, and I read it about halfway through the year over the summer.

Oh, man. This book was spectacular. Martin Luther, that great reformer, that bulwark against the Catholic Church's teaching of justification by faith plus works, Martin Luther lays out so clearly in his commentary on Galatians that you are justified by faith alone.

You're justified by grace through faith. That is what makes one right in the eyes of God. Catholics will try to disarm Protestants by saying, oh, we mean the same thing, right? You Protestants say that you're saved by grace through faith, and that faith is a faith that produces works.

We Catholics say the same thing. You're saved by faith plus works. There's really no difference.

We just might, we might semantically use the words a little differently and maybe talk about it a little different concerning justification, but we essentially mean the same thing. No, no, they don't. Martin Luther, the Reformation happened because they don't mean the same thing.

In the Council of Trent, one who believes that you are justified by faith alone is anathema. So they would say that we're a heretics, and we would say that they are heretics because they believe that you can be, God likes you more if you do more works. If you're justified before God because of works, that means God likes you more because you do stuff.

That's not Christianity. You're saved by grace alone through faith. And Martin Luther's commentary on Galatians will walk through that so clearly.

You're going to walk away so encouraged. You are going to realize that although we sin, although we fall short of God's glory, God is so tender and gracious towards us. You're going to walk away very encouraged from this book, and you are going to feel the strength of God's grace in your life and walk in that.

Even though we do stumble and fall and sin before God, you are going to get a glimpse of God's grace in a very spectacular way. And because it's a commentary on Galatians, you're going to walk away understanding that book more and what happens in that book and why Paul wrote the things he wrote. So I highly recommend Martin Luther's commentary on Galatians.

The next book I want to commend to you would be the second best nonfiction book of the year, *Paradise Restored* by David Chilton. Chilton is best known for his post-millennialism. He is a post-millennial Presbyterian, early 1980s.

I think he died pretty young. He's not with us anymore. He went to be with Christ.

Some people accuse him of being a fool-preterist by the end of his life. I don't know. I don't know.

Honestly, I haven't seen some of his statements. But regardless, I don't know much about that. I know David Chilton seems like a brother to me.

I was greatly edified by his book, *Paradise Restored*. The goal of the book is basically to present a biblical theology for post-millennialism or this kind of theology of dominion. So you could get post-millennialism systematically by exegeting certain text in the Bible.

This book, *Paradise Restored*, is more of a biblical theology of post-millennialism. It's

going to be tracing themes and motifs, types and antitypes, substances through scripture and not exegeting individual passages, but more maybe getting a larger kind of view of the Bible. That'd be kind of the difference between biblical theology and systematic theology.

Systematics is trying to get proof texts for certain doctrines and systematically placing them throughout the Bible and getting your proof text for those biblical theologies, tracing themes and types and antitypes and things throughout scripture. Both are very important. You need both.

But this book is going to be more like tracing those themes. So the theme that he traces here is Paradise Being Restored. God, creation, fall, redemption, consummation, glorification, all that.

He's going to trace that all throughout scripture and make a case that we're continually looking for paradise being restored and not being lost. It was lost to the guard, but we're not expecting it to be lost anymore, especially now that Christ has done his work. We don't want to say that the kingdom of God is going to be lost.

Like maybe the pre-millennialists would say that Satan will win in the end. They'll still be a remnant. You know, they're still orthodox.

I'm not saying they're not orthodox, but we're talking about paradise being restored, not being lost or diminished in any sense. So David Chilton is going to walk through that really spectacular book. He's going to blow your mind, honestly.

So dense, great biblical theology, highly recommend Paradise Restored by David Chilton. The last book, third best nonfiction book I read this year, Through New Eyes by James B. Jordan. His main, James Jordan, also another post-mill thinker.

I think he's more of the Anglican. I don't think he's a Presbyterian. I am not for sure.

Regardless, really solid post-mill reform thinker. Through New Eyes is the name of the book. The goal of the book was to, you know, he's trying to give you Bible glasses, Bible goggles to see the world through.

So he talks about the Bible speaking in symbols and the world being one, not one big symbol, but being full of symbols for spiritual truths in the world. So for instance, the stars in the sky. He talks about, instead of just looking up and saying, oh, those are flaming balls of gas.

He wants you to look at the world the way the Bible symbolically tells you that what the stars are symbolizing, what they are representing. And what they represent are, you know, rulers and principalities and angels. They govern the night.

They're made for times and seasons. He has a very interesting section about zodiacs, which zodiacs are interpretations of constellations, basically, as far as I understand. I might be wrong on that, but that's what zodiac is as far as I understand.

He talks about in Job when it's like Job 40 and 41, 42, somewhere in there. He talks about how God tells Job how he he's the one that binds the Pleiades and can he who can lose the chords of Orion who could do that God alone can. And even there's a song that talks about God.

You know, he's the he's the author or the creator of the Pleiades and Orion. So that is basically his his idea of symbols that God creates the bear in the sky, the Pleiades, Orion. He puts that in the sky and the New Agers that recognize that they're not creating a new religion.

They're actually picking up on true things that God has already put in the world, which is the arrangement of stars. And they're placing it and making an idol out of it when the Christian should look at Orion and the Pleiades and the zodiac signs and not do this this weird, you know, horoscope stuff, this kind of pagan idolatry of it. But give God the glory and say he reigns over it.

He designed it. That's what we should be looking at the world as symbols. He talks about with the sacrificial system.

Why did it have to be an animal that had so sorry, not the sacrificial system, but the well, the dietary laws in the sacrificial system of, oh, which animals can we eat? Which animals are clean? Which animals are unclean? Can we eat? Can we not eat? So, you know, you had you could only pick animals that had the cloven hoof and didn't chew the cud. Sorry, and chewed the cud and had a cloven hoof. So he says that which I thought was pretty compelling and actually helped me understand this better.

The cloven hoof would be like wearing shoes. And the reason why that's important for the animal to, you know, symbolically be wearing shoes would be because the ground was cursed and Adam. If you read in Genesis three, one of the curses that God puts is on the ground.

It's going to be hard to bring forth fruit. So the animals that wear shoes and are unstained by the cursed ground and those that chew the cud that eat grass that the grass would be chewing on the cud or chewing on the meat of God's word. So animals that like to eat healthy things, which would be symbolizing those people that eat and feast on the bread of God, which is his word.

Right. So that's kind of he talks about the fish. Why did it have to be fish with scales? Well, because a protective covering from the waters.

So basically had was wearing clothes, right? An animal that had clothes on and wore

shoes and birds that I forget. I forget what it is with the birds, but the birds had some unique thing that keeps them unstained from the world, the certain birds that could eat. So basically the goal is to look at the world through the symbols that God has put in the world rather than looking at it through an enlightenment, materialistic, atheistic framework and still try to fit your Christianity into that.

Just let the world speak as a symbol the way God made it. Don't try to over over materialize it. So that's that's kind of the books I wanted to commend to you for this year.

My top three fiction books, Lord of the Rings, The Fellowship of the Ring and The Two Towers, Malcolm and the Marquis Secret by George McDonald, Moby Dick by Herman Melville. Those are the top three fiction and top three nonfiction for the year. Martin Luther's commentary on Galatians, Paradise Restored by David Chilton and Through New Eyes by James B. Jordan.

Those are my best books. I read this year. Reminder, check the podcast for more blogs like I told you at the beginning and keep track of the books I am reading if you'd like to join with me.

Like I said, I rate the books and I rate all the books that I read. So look for the really good, amazing or stellar books and maybe read some of those with me. And obviously you can always come on the podcast.

We can discuss the book or an idea in the book or just let me know you read it. I would love to hear you guys reading through some things or if you have any books that you would like to recommend to me that are absolutely amazing. I am always open to that.

I read a ton of books. My goal for next year is to get through at least 50 books. That is my goal.

So with audiobooks that honestly should not be too hard. Audiobooks is a great resource. If you don't tap into that, I highly recommend audiobooks.

Great way to get that information in your head. My goal is next year and try to get through like all of C.S. Lewis's stuff, all of R.C. Spill's stuff, all of R.J. Rastuni. Those are my goals right now and then get through more and more Christian fiction.

So thanks so much for listening, guys. Let me know if you have any comments or inquiries and I always would love to hear from you guys. I honestly wish I'd hear from you more.

So I appreciate those that listen. And yeah, Merry Christmas. Christ was born God.

He was born the king. He didn't become the king. He's always been the king, baby.

So Merry Christmas. Happy New Year. Let's live this next year for the glory of the king.

Let's glorify our great, great king, Jesus Christ. Join me as we do that and look forward to more content next year out of the podcast. Thanks so much for listening, guys, to the king of the ages, a mortal, invisible, the only God, the honor and glory forever and ever.

Amen. Sole deo, Gloria.

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(upbeat music)

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