

# OpenTheo

## Book Review 2024

January 2, 2025



### **For The King** - Rocky Ramsey

Best Fiction:

Illiad/Odyssey by Homer

Phantastes/Lilith by George MacDonald

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

Best Nonfiction:

The Consolation of Philosophy by Boethius

Hexaemeron by Saint Basil the Great

The Comographia by Bernardus Sylvestris

Honorable Mentions:

Knowledge is Power by John Henry

Three Treatises on the Divine Images by Saint John of Damascus

History of the Waldenses by J.A. Wylie

Poetic Knowledge, Norms and Nobility, and The Liberal Arts Tradition

The Return of the Dragon by Lewis Ungit

Silmarillion by JRR Tolkien

The Secret Garden / Heidi

Parallel Christian Economy

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## Transcript

Hello, For The King listeners. I am not your host, Rocky Ramsey. My name is Will Drzymyskiy, a brother-in-Christ and friend of Rocky's, whom he has generously invited onto the show in order to verbally showcase my artwork to you in 50 seconds.

As an artist, I strive to accurately reflect the glory of God and everything that I paint, and through that process, I hope to flood as much of the earth as possible with paintings, which accurately proclaim the undeniable fact that Jesus is Lord and the creation which he made commands us to worship him. So if you would like to join with me in distributing clean, refreshing artwork showcasing the creativity of the God who made us, I would be overjoyed to have your help. I run my own website called Reflected Works, where I showcase the artwork I've done in the past, sell original paintings and prints, and take requests for unique commissions.

Once again, that's ReflectedWorks.com, all one word, and I'm looking forward to helping you further the kingdom of God right now here on this earth by putting some of your free wall space to productive use. Thank you very much for your kind attention, and now, enjoy the show. This is your host, Rocky Ramsey, and I am flying solo.

Hello, this episode doing the yearly book review that is just a brief episode going through some of the best works that I either physically read or listened to an audiobook for over this past

year. It was a good year of reading. I got through 125 books, so I just improved upon what I did last year, and I think it's really helping me educate myself.

I'm sure many of you that listen feel you were jaded and disenfranchised with public school and the education that you received. It wasn't a classical Christian education. So I'm trying to catch myself back up by reading some of the great classical works, both theological, historical, literature, fiction, nonfiction, whatever I need to read to educate myself is what I'm trying to do.

So I usually take some time in the past two times I've done this episode the past two years to just encourage everybody to be an avid reader. Reading is really, really important. It's a tried and true method of growing as a person and receiving new knowledge.

God himself has revealed himself through a book, so God is interacting with humans through the written word, and I do think that's important to recognize. He's given us a book. Therefore, books in general are good.

We know Solomon says in Ecclesiastes that we can go overboard with this, and with much learning and knowledge can come much vexation. There's an endless supply of books. You can always find a new book.

There's millions and millions of books printed in the world. So I hope for these episodes to be endless bounty of books that you can go out and mine and explore, and that's good. But these episodes are an encouragement to read and to read really, really good stuff.

Unfortunately, not everything I read is amazing. So this episode is distilling down my top three best fiction and my top three best nonfiction from this year, and then I have some honorable mentions that I think are worth definitely worth reading as well. Okay, so to get into it, I want to keep this episode brief.

We'll start with fiction. So I didn't do as much fiction this year. It's just the way it shook out, but I still did get through some really good fiction.

So the first one I want to commend to you, the best fiction works that I read this year was *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*. I actually read these with my wife. We've started doing this thing where when we're in the car, instead of listening to music, she will just read me a book instead of, you know, listening to an audio book.

I get to listen to the sweet voice of my wife. So if you're married and your wife's willing and that's something you guys feel like would be beneficial to, you know, pass the time in long car rides. That's just something we do.

So we got through *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad* this year, just having her read it out loud to me. She had never read them before. I'd never read them and they were really, really good.

I think a good reason to pick up these books is they're pretty much the best representation of

the classical world, specifically ancient Greece. They're basically the equivalent of the Holy Bible for the ancient Greek culture. If you wanted to enculturate yourself as a young person in ancient Greco life, you're going to read *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* by Homer.

You're just going to read Homer's works. Homer was the propaganda machine. We may call him creating these epic poems to describe what the ideal man is, what virtue is, what the ideal woman is, how to be a virtuous woman, how to be a virtuous man, what to stand up for, how you're supposed to interact with the gods.

That's what these books intended. I think Christians can take a lot away from this because virtue is in the Bible. At the start of 1 Peter, we're supposed to supplement our faith with virtue.

We're supposed to be virtuous people. And that idea of virtue comes from the Greek word *virtus*, which is where we get masculinity from or the ideal man, *virtus*. So virtue is being the kind of man that God has designed you to be.

Now, the ancient Greeks had a different conception of that, of what a good man is. But I do think by being made in the image of God, the ancient Greeks had a very good grasp on what honor is, what courage is, what bravery is. Those kind of virtues are very present in these stories.

They're amazing. *The Iliad* literally means war, so that story is about the Trojan War. There's a lot of protagonists, and it kind of warps throughout the book.

But the main two characters, I guess, that you see would be Achilles versus Hector, one of the princes of Troy, as the Argives, the Achaeans, are sieging the city. Those are the two basically the most intense warriors, most skilled, and they represent their people either well or poorly. A big takeaway from the book is Achilles is not as virtuous as you would want them to be.

You really get to see the humanity of war. There's people on both sides that you resonate with. There's people on both sides that have good intentions, and they're fighting for their homeland and their people, and they love their people.

So there's just a lot of really good quotes, really good depictions of honor and love of people, love of place. So these are great books. Same thing with the *Odyssey*.

It's after the Trojan War. *Odyssey* means a voyage. So in the *Iliad*, we're introduced to one of the generals, you may say, in the Achaean army.

His name is Odysseus, and the *Odyssey* is about his journey back to his homeland, trying to get back to his wife and the gods. The gods impede his ability to get home quickly. There's a great song by Josh Garrels called *Ulysses*, which is another word for *Odyssey* or *Odysseus*.

And Josh Garrels is a Christian artist, and that song *Ulysses* is very, very powerful. And if you read the *Odyssey*, you'll see where he gets a lot of the themes in the song from. I personally

like the Odyssey better than the Iliad, and my wife agreed.

She liked the Odyssey more. There's some really solid stuff about the household. And at the end of the book, this isn't really a spoiler.

This is just a cool picture given in the Odyssey. But the bed of his house back in his homeland is built into the foundation of the home. So it's basically a depiction of the marriage bed where the husband and wife have relations, but also where children are created, where husband and wife, basically their procreation, their progeny, their culture is basically from the marriage bed.

And it's basically a symbol of marriage, how marriage is the microcosm of the macrocosm of your whole people that you're around. So if your marriage is failing, your church is going to be failing, and your nation is going to be failing. That's kind of the picture here.

And I love that in this book. Odysseus's lover's wife, Penelope is his wife's name, and her love for him, her desire for him to come back, her long suffering, great depictions of both masculinity and femininity. These are really good books.

Your children should definitely read these. It really is a must for your children, especially for boys in the Iliad in the reality of war. Okay, so that's the first fiction.

I know that was a little longer, but those books are 500, 600 page books. They're huge, and they're some of the most important books of all time, so I wanted to spend a little bit more time on them. The next two best fiction is going to be *Fantasties* and *Lilith* by George McDonald.

George McDonald heavily influenced C.S. Lewis, G.K. Chesterton, J.R. Tolkien. Lewis has some quotes about *Fantasties*, how it completely opened up his mind to wonder and imagination. These are really, really important books in the genre of fairy and fantasy, basically like a proto fantasy.

It is a fairy tale, but a lot of George McDonald's works would be like kind of the proto fantasy genre because it impacted Tolkien so much. So these are really, really good books. You're basically just taking a trip to Fairyland or Elfland, as G.K. Chesterton would call it.

You're just taking a trip, and you're going to go on a ride and just buckle up because it's going to be wild. It's going to be weird, and you're not going to understand everything, but you're going to learn stuff in a weird roundabout way, which is kind of the point of going to Fairyland. Why do you read a fairy tale? Because you're going to learn something about your own world and this other world in a really odd roundabout way.

It's really, really good. So I highly recommend *Lilith* and *Fantasties*. *Fantasties* is more looking at the ideal woman and honor and chivalry in that.

And then *Lilith* is more about death and your final destination. And going to Fairyland, dying can either be a quick and easy process, or you can hang on to things and make it much harder

than it should be, is one of the challenges faced by Mr. Vane, the protagonist. I did write in a book review on my blog, on For the King blog, on Substack about Lilith, if you want to go read that.

I thought it was fascinating to think through, and I think there's some good stuff to draw out there. So if you want more detailed thoughts on Lilith, you can go read that book review on the Substack. So those are really good.

I highly recommend those by George McDonald. I still have more to read by George McDonald, but I've done probably 10 of his works now, and I love his stuff. His stuff is so good.

And the last one for the third best fiction of 2024 is *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. Absolutely spectacular book. She is witty.

I mean, she had a great mind. This is a great book for both young men and young women, but specifically young women. If you've got any daughters or young ladies, I think this is a great book.

My wife has read it multiple times. She loves it. My mom loved it growing up.

Even when I was a pagan, my mom would always talk about it. It's just a really popular book, and even in pagan circles, non-Christian circles. But it has so many amazing Christian motifs.

Basically, so the title of the book is two vices, *Pride and Prejudice*, that these characters, the main characters in the book, exude. And they have to work through those character flaws, those vices. And the way that she draws them out of the characters, the character development, it is actually pretty mind-boggling that she wrote this story.

It's very well done. The social issues that she's exploring in her time in Victorian England is really, really fun. Just to kind of learn about how they acted and what they thought, and how they would climb up the ladder, the social ladder, the social hierarchy.

It's interesting, and she's funny too. Some of the situations she sets up are pretty comical. If you can, as you're reading it, let yourself really get into the characters, then you can see that it's pretty... It's kind of like in *The Office* when Michael Scott does something real cringy.

You're sweating through your hands, like, I can't believe he is making himself look like a fool right now. It's kind of like that, where you're sweating as her sisters or her mom, her dad. Somebody is doing something that's so embarrassing to her, to Elizabeth, who's the main character.

So *Pride and Prejudice* is great. It's funny. I think you'll enjoy it.

It's not crazy long. It's some of the best literature I've ever read. So yeah, highly recommend those.

That is all of the best fiction for 2024. Now we can do nonfiction. Best nonfiction.

So number one, which this book quickly became my favorite nonfiction book ever. It's not just the best of 2024. This is my favorite nonfiction book I've ever read, is *The Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius.

It's a dense book. I'm going to have to revisit it to really wrap my head around it. But the first time around was so good, so many amazing thoughts.

The gist of the book is, so from the title, it's the root word for consolation is just to console, to encourage or to comfort, to give comfort to. That's what consolation is. And then philosophy is it's not philosophy in abstract, but he personifies philosophy.

He basically makes a character called philosophy that represents philosophy. And philosophy is his kind of walking him through his struggles as he is Boethius, the author, is imprisoned. He's imprisoned and is going to be put to death.

So he is being consoled by philosophy. He's being comforted by philosophy as he's contemplating his death and how God's providence works in that and fate and fortune. And what is fate and what is fortune? Why does fortune come to some and not others? And why is fate inevitable? And why do some people have a fate that's good and full of fortune? And some people have a fate that's full of misery and hardship.

And then the very last section of the book is about God's providence and how God is sovereign over all things. And it's definitely one of the best theodices for evil I've ever heard. There's some really great quotes in there about evil and evil not being a thing.

It's very platonic. He'd be a Neoplatonist. He's kind of like the last Neoplatonist of the early church before like Aristotle gets re-found in medieval scholasticism.

So you get this whole like he's like in the same vein as Augustine like saying that evil is a privation. It's not a thing when they say privation. It's like it's not a thing in and of itself.

It doesn't exist. It's a it's a like a parasite. It's not a thing.

So you can't say God created evil because evil is not even a thing. It can't even be it can't be created because it's not a thing. It isn't anything.

It's a lack of good. That's all it is. So that's kind of his.

But the way he talks about that in his theodicy in the consolation is really really good. To tie this into C.S. Lewis to get back to or to connect it with what I said earlier with *Fantasties* and *Lilith* and George McDonald influencing C.S. Lewis a lot. *The Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius is one of C.S. Lewis's favorite books ever.

It influenced him greatly. If you love C.S. Lewis *Chronicles of Narnia* if you love his space trilogy

if you love his lectures and his writings his books abolition of man all that stuff. If you like that then you need to read the Consolation of Philosophy.

If you like C.S. Lewis you need to read that because it influences him so much. And a big part of what I was trying to do this year was to read the books that influenced him heavily. So I will talk about another one in a second when we get there.

But that's Consolation of Philosophy. Boethius lived around 700 A.D. At the very very end or 600 A.D. to 700 A.D. at the very very end of the Roman Empire. He was like kind of the last of in the last remnants of the Roman Empire.

Now the second best nonfiction Consolation of Philosophy by the way about 200 pages. Second best here is about 100. It's much more manageable.

This is a very easy book to pick up and I highly highly recommend this book. This also not only was one of my favorite books in 2024 it was easily boosted to one of my favorite books of all time. And that's the Hexamaron of Saint Basil the Great.

Now Hexamaron is a title of many many books in the ancient world and the ancient Christian world and even in the medieval Christian world. And the reason why that's a common title and what it is is it hex is like a hexagon is a six sided polygon. So hexamaron is six and then I don't exactly know what amor like the amaron the ending of it but basically the six is all you need to know because it's a it's a treatise or it's a work talking about the six days of creation.

So there's a bunch of hexamarons by a bunch of the different church fathers and much of medieval writers. It's their take or their commentary on the six days of creation. Now the reason why I'm reading hexamaron because I've read a bunch of them this past year.

I read like four different hexamarons. I'm already a couple more this next year is because I'm teaching a course for Kepler education called the natural philosophy of creation. And the first part of the course is like a survey of Western civilizations view of nature or of creation as a Christian would want to qualify it with creation.

It's not just nature that's left to unwind itself in like a deistic way. But no it was created. It has an origin and the source and a designer and these hexamaron from the ancient world are basically like the ancient commentaries on what is creation.

What is these living ecosystems these things that God has made in the first six days plants animals the waters the light of the sun moon and stars and then finally man. You know what what is their thoughts on those and St. Basil's was really good out of all the ones I read that was my favorite. It was concise and short but that's not I didn't like it just because it was short.

I like it because it was short and sweet you know packed a big punch in such a short short time. So I highly recommend this book if you it'll help you understand Genesis more. You know you don't have to view it in the way I was interacting with it was like you know for my course



thinking about it from like an environmental scientist kind of perspective.

But I think anybody would benefit from it because it's just a commentary on Genesis is just going to help you understand the origins of the scriptures. There's a really cool stuff he talks about there about each of the days of creation especially when he gets to plants and animals and all of the all the symbols that are embedded in God's creation. I can't I can't remember a single one but he talks about all sorts of different animals and plants and how their symbols for Christ.

It was really cool really really good book. Okay now the next one is that my third book and final best nonfiction is the it's called *The Cosmographia* by Bernardus Sylvesterus. Okay he's a medieval dude about twelve hundreds.

This is also one of C.S. Lewis's favorite most impactful books on him as a thinker and on his works. And when you read *The Cosmographia* you will see why in his space trilogy the first book out of the silent planet like you will totally understand where all of it is coming from. If you just read *The Cosmographia* by Bernard Sylvesterus which is so weird that he wrote a science fiction novel and the way he was depicting outer space and space flight and space travel and what life on different planets is like was based on a medieval scholastic Neoplatonist understanding of the six days of creation of creation.

So *The Cosmographia* is sort of a hexameron. So I did read it also because it's it's also for my course because it's kind of a hexameron as well but it's not really a treatise on the six days of creation. It's more just like creation in general from a philosophical Neoplatonist viewpoint.

So he takes a lot of the same ideas that Plato introduces in his book called *Timaeus*. That's where we get like that's where he talks about Atlantis and like that's where we get all of our understanding of Atlantis. But then the rest of the *Timaeus* is about the creation of the world and what are the elements of the earth made out of and how do these elements interact and stuff.

*The Cosmographia* is like a new version of that but like synthesized with Christianity and it was beautiful. I actually was really really impressed with just how he set it up and all the characters in the book are like God's providence is called noise I think n o y s noise. And then there's like *Silva* which is a God's reason or something.

There's all sorts of like these personifications similar to how Boethius personified philosophy. Bernard Silvestris personifies like different aspects of God's attributes and how these attributes are interacting with one another during creation. At one point like providence has to go to like one of the spheres of the heavenlies which is like on a different planet and get this other character this other attribute to come help create mankind.

Then the creation of mankind the account of that is really really beautiful. He breaks it up into two sections called the macro cosmos and then the microcosmos. So he starts with the macro

and then then he zooms into the microcosmos which is the creation of man insinuating that mankind is a microcosm of the whole world.

So C.R. Wiley talks about a lot about this in his book the household the war for the cosmos that like the household is like just a mini version of the cosmos each individual human is a little mini version of the cosmos. That's kind of what Bernard Silvestris is getting at and it's really really fascinating. It's actually a short book.

It's not long. You would think some of these medieval works and these old hexamers are like church fathers. They're usually stinking short besides like City of God by Augustine like that's like a thousand pages that's super long and some of them are long.

I'm not saying all of them are short but there are some of them that are very manageable like Basil's Saint Basil's hexameron and the Cosmographia by Bernard Silvestris. I mean they're not crazy long. So I picked those up.

I mean they're beautiful. I think you'll love them. So honestly all three of these made the top 10 best ever for me.

They were that good. So I highly recommend these books. That's my best nonfiction and I will just rattle off some honorable mentions and talk about them briefly just to kind of entice you to want to read them too because I think you should.

I mean I don't do this for no reason. I think you guys should definitely read these books. I think they will help you understand the world.

Okay. So the first one is Knowledge is Power. This was a book by John Henry.

I don't know exactly where he's coming from. Like he's it's like part of a series of like called icon science where it's like a history of the philosophy of science basically. Now this book was definitely blowing my mind.

It was I was just hanging on every word. The subtitle. I think the subtitle will help you understand why this book is so stinking cool.

So it's called Knowledge is Power. How magic the government and an apocalyptic vision inspired Francis Bacon to create modern science. And it's by John Henry.

This book is definitely worth picking up if you want to understand like the history of science. Like why why do we see scientism rising. Why do we see just the way the modern person view science.

Where does it come from. What comes from Francis Bacon. And in this book he does I think a good job of showing that Francis Bacon was a Christian.

He was an Anglican Puritan. He was a Calvinistic Anglican dude. He's not a pagan.

A lot of like atheists try to make him out to be one of their own. But you can see how they took his ideas that he was not going past like a Christian conception of science. You can see how the after the Enlightenment they basically piggyback on his toolkit basically.

And what they construct with the tools that he gives is not a Christian utopia. You know what they're doing is they construct this like rationalistic modernity in Western civilization. That's what that's what they use with this with this tool.

So he is definitely presenting Francis Bacon as he is neutral. He's not a pain. He's not sadistic or has ulterior motives or he's not malicious.

But he's basically expanding and synthesizing natural magic. So not magic like casting spells but natural magic and synthesizing that with the historic conception of what was called natural philosophy. Which is why I called my course for Kepler that I'm going to be teaching next fall.

A natural philosophy of creation because I think natural philosophy got things a little bit better. But what Francis Bacon was doing was trying to synthesize magic with natural philosophy. Now it's not magic like you would think but it's it's called natural magic and he goes in the book of what that means.

It'd be very difficult for me to now try to like parse all like magic of like casting spells and doing seances and alchemy and all that stuff versus what's called natural magic. I think you would get it when you when you understand the book. He does a good job explaining it.

It's very very fascinating and it really expanded my understanding of the history of science. So I think you should pick it up. It's really really good and it's a pretty cheap book.

It's only about it's 200 pages but the fonts pretty big. It's not that it didn't take me that long. Now the next one is called Three Treatises on the Divine Images by St. John of Damascus.

I also read his on Orthodox the or sorry the Orthodox faith as well and that that was a good book. But I want to hone in on the three treatises on the divine images because it's his book on images and icons the use of iconography. Now as a Protestant it was definitely interesting to learn about and to be opened up to that but I'm I'm fairly convinced of it right now.

And it was kind of comforting to know that you know Anglicans and Lutherans use icons. It's actually is a processing as well iconography is not just a an Eastern Orthodox or Catholic thing. There's also Protestants that do so I felt pretty a lot better knowing that it is a part of Protestantism.

The Seventh Ecumenical Council authorizes iconography. St. John of Damascus is writing around that time and around 700 A.D. around the time of Boethius. It's a really good book.

I think I think it would challenge your notions a lot. I've heard non-tenant who co-authored. It's good.

It's good to be a man with Michael Foster. He uses a lot of the exact same arguments that St. John of Damascus uses for iconography. And I anticipate that he has read it which is why he's using the same arguments.

And when you read John Calvin on a lot of the stuff on the Second Commandment he is totally fine with with images of divine things. Now I don't think he's fine with images of Christ which St. John of Damascus explicitly argues for but he is at least fine with images of like cherubim angels saints things like that. I don't think John Calvin would have been against.

Yeah. So that was an interesting book. I highly recommend that.

It'll definitely. It's just good to read Church Fathers and to get a wider perspective of what Eastern Orthodox Catholics with the wider Christian tradition. Speaking of getting an understanding of the wider Christian tradition.

The next honorable mention is the history of the Waldensies. That is a book by J. A. Wiley written in like the 1860s. But it's about a people group called the Waldensies and from like the 1100s up to the Reformation.

And they're basically proto reformers. That's why I think this book is really cool. It's not like John Calvin and Martin Luther and you know Jan Hus and Wycliffe and Pierre Vareil and Martin Butzer and for Miggly and all these dudes all these Heinrich Bollinger.

They're not just coming out of nowhere. All of these continental magisterial reformers. There were people before them thinking these same things.

The church is always reforming and the Waldensies is one of them. They actually started to be persecuted by the Catholics because they rejected all of the potpourri and all the nonsense. And they fled to Geneva.

And when they got to Geneva or when there were pastors in Geneva that were interacting with the Waldensian pastors they were like oh yeah we believe all this stuff you guys are doing right now in the Reformation. We've already been doing this for like hundreds of years. This is actually what the the apostle that came and planted our church in the mountains in northern France.

This is actually what we've always just done. We were just discipled into this. So they have a trace the lineage all the way back to the early church.

They claim that they were planted in the mountains in northern France or sorry not northern France southern France northern Italy. I'm sorry that's what I meant to say the northern Alps in Italy. They claim they were planted there by the early church and they've been doing the faith once handed all or once handed down to the saints.

And it looks a lot like Protestant Christianity. And I found that interesting as a historical point.

So the book's really good.

History of the Waldensians by J.A. Wiley. Now the next three I'm just going to rattle these off because I think you can just read them all together and I'll tell you which one I think is the best too. But these are my books on education.

I was trying to learn more about classical Christian education and how to properly administer it and to do what's required of me as a teacher in the classical tradition as a Christian. And these books did that for me. So poetic top poetic knowledge by James Taylor norms and nobility by David Hicks and the liberal arts tradition by Kevin Clark and Ravi Scott Jane.

OK. These three books are like if you're looking to like figure out how you want to homeschool your kids or just like a philosophy of education that's robust and in the classical Christian classical tradition. These are really really good.

Now if I had to pick one that's going to like set you on the right path it's definitely the liberal arts tradition. But they're really these are really really good books. Poetic knowledge is talking more about how we think about we acquire knowledge and his use of the word poetic there is talking about innate knowledge.

I forget the exact word Thomas Aquinas uses but he goes through St. Augustine all the way to Thomas Aquinas to modern day. This this view of how we gain knowledge in a poetic way which is just by virtue of being made the image of God how we can pick up on data in the in the world through sense perception and just experiencing things. It's like an experiential knowledge basically and how we can get that and using that in the development of children and teaching them.

Norms and nobility is just talking about we need norms and nobility in education in passing on and enculturating the next generation. And if you don't have that then you don't really have an educational system to pass on. The liberal arts tradition is just talking about that that tradition of using the liberal arts in education and that's that's distinct in classical education whether it's Christian or not.

But they're they're writing from a classical Christian perspective and that that's going to be your playbook if you're wanting to homeschool your kids in a classical Christian way. It's really really good. And the last nonfiction honorable mention is the return of the dragon in this book.

It's well I'll read the subtitles you get a better grasp the return of the dragon the shocking way drugs and religion shaped people and societies. This is a really short book is by Louis. I'm get it won't take you long to read but it's about drugs and can we you know our drugs are good for society.

Our drugs good for humanity. How do how have drugs and religion been married since the very beginning. He doesn't really work on that.

Then the last two honorable mentions and will be done here is the Silmarillion really really good fiction. It's the history of Middle Earth from the first second all the way up to the third age in Tolkien's Middle Earth that he created. It's really really good.

It's just a lot of its dense history. So you're going to want to get a copy that has a good like index in the back so you can learn the names and understand what's going on. But it's really really good.

A lot of really good stories in there. It's like kind of a compilation of short stories in history. And you can it'll be fun to kind of see for you if you like where the rings will be fun to see you know how the dwarves got there.

How men came out where the elves come from all that. And the last two books here for fiction. They're very very similar books.

The first one is The Secret Garden by Francis Hodgkin Burnett and Heidi by Johanna Yohanna Spirey. Now these are two books you have to read to your daughters. These are amazing books for little girls.

I have a daughter. She's definitely reading these books. They're going to teach the virtues of what a what a girl what a woman should be really well.

And both of them are very similar where you have this this girl that starts off kind of like sickly and she's not happy. She's a little punk. She's causing problems.

She's causing trouble. She's super annoying. Nobody likes her.

And then she busts out of it grows out of it and becomes like a good noble woman. This is just a sweet story. They're very Christian and they're very explicitly Christian stories.

They're written in like the 1800s I think. And they also have some good implications for like health and how you should view human health. That how your attitude and your disposition your stress levels is also impacts your health.

And people can just see it. So yeah those are those are those are some some goodies from this year. You're always welcome to go.

I have a on the sub stack there's a page for a reading list. If you click on that you can see my whole reading list for the for every year. You can see everything I've read and I have like my best books my favorite books of all time on there.

And I try to highlight the ones from each year that I think are really really good. So go on there and look if you want to join me in reading anything. For this next year I will be reading Will Durant's The Story of Civilization the entire volume.

It's 11 volumes really really big books but I really want to get a good basis for history now. I've

read a lot of fiction and nonfiction on other topics in history. But I've started to get into history and I'm loving it and I want to keep doing that.

So if you want to join me in reading that there's 11 books and I'm just going to try to read one a month. And you know 12 months in a year should be able to get it done. And I'm going to read a bunch of other stuff too but not exactly sure yet.

But would love to have you join me whether you join me with Will Durant or not. You should pick up some books and pick out a few that are worth reading. Hopefully I gave you some some good suggestions.

There are some really really good books out there and you just got to find them. You got to mind the depths of all these books that in God's providence we have. But as always you know be in the Word be reading God's Word first and foremost.

You know be in that book every day. That's the glory of Scripture is we come back to that book every day. But we don't come back to other books every single day.

God's Word is always going to be the most cherished most knowledge most wisdom that you could ever hope to get is going to be that book. But God has given us other good books too. So go and enjoy them and look forward to this next year with you.

I hope you had a good New Year's and Christmas. We're still in Christmastide. So enjoy your Christmas season up to Epiphany and may the Lord be with you.

May the word bless you bless you in your endeavors this next year. Would you know the Lord grow his church and flourish us. Would we be faithful.

You know that's my hope and prayer for this next year. I'm sure it's yours too. I think God's given us a mercy.

With Trump being elected. So we need to just get to work. We need to get down and plow and get some work done and be faithful where we're at.

So join me in that. I'm going to try to do that by God's grace. You do the same in the ages of the world.

This building is going to be our glory forever and ever. Amen. Thank you.