TOLKIEN, SHAKESPEARE AND THE BIBLE

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Category: Observations

I'm a great fan of Lord of the Rings. It's a phenomenal book and I've lost count of how many times I've read right through it. I thoroughly enjoy dipping into Middle Earth, immersing myself in the world of elves, ents and hobbits. However, much I enjoy Tolkien's creation, I never actually mistake it for reality. I sit by the fire and visit Middle Earth for a wee while, but when I put the book back I am quickly back into the reality of my life. Fiction is smaller than we are. It is a subset of our lives, something we can dip into and then quickly come out of it again. One of the reasons that fiction is so limited is that the stories are finished. Many people have wanted to write a follow up to Lord of the Rings, but in truth, the stories were finished forever when Tolkienn died. The story of the Bible is not like that, it isn't finished yet. Don't get me wrong, the Bible itself is written and can't be added to, but the story it tells is still going on.

Imagine that you have gone to watch a Shakespeare play and have got really immersed in the story. Suddenly, about half an hour before the end, William Shakespeare himself strides onto the stage and tells the actors to stop. Then he addresses the audience, you, and says; "now it's your turn. I want you to write and act out the next part of the play. When you have done that, the ending will be played out". In many ways, this is what the Bible is like, because we are still living in the story.Â God hasnâ€™t stopped doing the things he did in the Bible and as we get to grips with the story, the story grows.Â The Book of Acts ends Paul in prison in Rome but the growth of the church and the work of the Spirit didnâ€™t stop there. We are still living in the Book of Acts. When you read The Lord of the Rings, you never actually get to meet Gandalf.Â However, when you read the Bible, you encounter the central character and you start to learn that the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob is also your God.Â The experiences that Abraham and Isaac and Jacob lived through are repeated in our lives as we grow to know, love and serve God.Â The Bible story goes on with us as participants.