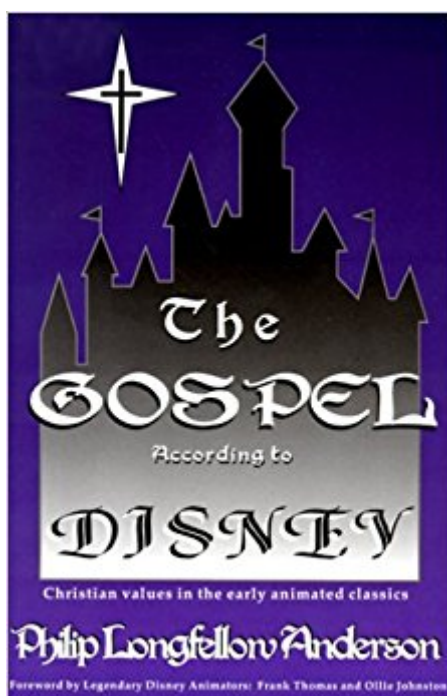


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The Gospel According To Disney: Christian Values In The Early Animated Classics



Synopsis

A Biblically-based, entertaining and inspirational book that explores Christian values in the early Disney animated features (all those produced during Walt Disney's lifetime, from SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS to THE JUNGLE BOOK) with additional chapters on Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. Each chapter concludes with a set of provocative questions appropriate for consideration or discussion by all ages. Foreword by legendary Disney animators, Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston. Unique, engrossing and inspirational reading for adults, families, study groups.

Book Information

Paperback: 264 pages

Publisher: Longfellow Publishing; 1st edition (May 1, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0966956400

ISBN-13: 978-0966956405

Product Dimensions: 9.1 x 6.1 x 0.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,180,342 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #32 in [Books > Humor & Entertainment > Movies > Amateur Production](#) #7082 in [Books > Humor & Entertainment > Movies > History & Criticism](#) #25495 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Bible Study](#)

Customer Reviews

Philip Longfellow Anderson is a descendant of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, tracing his family tree back to Mayflower Pilgrims, John Alden and Priscilla Mullins, whose real-life romance provided the subject for the poet's fictional "Courtship of Myles Standish". He graduated from Pomona College (B.A.) and Yale University Divinity School (M. Div.), and completed additional academic study at UC Berkeley, Hartford Seminary, and Pacific School of Religion. He is an Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ. He was recently named Pastor Emeritus of the Church Of The Lighted in La Canada Flintridge, California. He served as Senior Pastor to that congregation for 22 years. Prior to Ordination into the Christian Ministry, he was employed at various times by the Berkeley Gazette, Hink's Department Store, Disneyland, Tilden Regional Park, and the United States Government. He is Past President of a Rotary Club (Sebastopol, CA) and Past President of a Kiwanis Club (La Canada). He organizes travel groups, enjoys swimming pools, collects "Disneyana", reads

mysteries, has appeared on several TV shows ("Wheel of Fortune," "The Price Is Right," "Card Sharks," "Password," "Today's Religion," "Morning Devotions"). He is married to Patricia and takes pleasure in the adventures of three adult children and one grandson.

The Gospel According to Disney provides a wonderful, authoritative starting point for parents to teach their children Christian morals and values. In each chapter, Rev. Anderson skillfully points out the parallels between the early Disney animated classic movies and the important lessons of Christianity. Included at the end of each chapter are study questions which nicely serve to stimulate and facilitate family discussions. Using the Disney movies, beloved by all children, Rev. Anderson has provided parents with an easy, relevant means to make important Christian teachings a part of their childrens' everyday lives. Thank you, Mr. Disney, for making the beautiful animated classics, and thank you, Rev. Anderson, for showing us their important religious significance!

In his letter to the Galatians, St. Paul decreed a particularly ugly fate for males who proclaimed any gospel, other than the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Rev. Anderson need not worry about that punishment. In fact, the title of his book is a bit deceptive: This is not "The Gospel According to Disney," nor is it a theological treatise of any sort. Rather, it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as seen in bits and pieces, through the work of Walt Disney, et al. In each of the 20 short chapters, Anderson lays out a sermon illustration, Sunday School or Vacation Bible School lesson, as seen in one of Disney's films or leading characters. The book is amusing, engaging, and restates the unchanging Gospel of Jesus Christ in a fresh way that is easily grasped by a modern audience. If there is any short fall to this valuable little book it is that the book can be a bit short on divine grace, and very long on perfectionism at some points. Ironically, sometimes (despite the title) rather than appealing to the Gospel, Anderson appeals to the Law. ...but a book that includes maxims, morals and ethical teachings is still a valuable text. Especially, when paired with opportunities to view the original films, this book can be a wonderful teaching tool for parents, Sunday School teachers, Vacation Bible School teachers, divinity students and clergy.

Rev. Anderson skillfully enlightens the reader to a higher level of Disney animated classics. He lifts up scripture from the Bible and shows the reader how its lessons live on in numerous Disney animated films, created during Walt Disney's lifetime. If Walt were alive, I believe he would highly approve of Rev. Anderson's insights. Exploring Christian values by comparing them to popular stories is a creative and fun way to get the entire family to study and learn from the Bible. Each

chapter is a sermon for modern times; his insights are shared with humor, touching stories and wisdom. Rev. Anderson even includes study questions for adults (children of all ages) to continue their learning, on their own time. This book is a treasure for the whole family, a valuable companion to the Bible and represents a scholarly view into the world of animated art.

I have not read this book, however, I felt that there needed to be some clarification. I do not know the heart of Mr. Disney, but I do know that he grew up the son of a part-time preacher. His father, a carpenter, was a Christian who would, at times, preach at church. Mr. Disney also used to take his daughters to Sunday school when they were young. And finally, he had Disneyland blessed by both Christian and Jewish ministers on opening day. I am not saying that he was a Christian, though he could have received Christ as his Savior when he was younger. But he was open to the Bible and I believe put biblical morality into his works.

I enjoyed reading and discovering the similarities of the Disney classics to some of the most basic Biblical principles. This book will make you think about the movies differently the next time you watch them.

The irony of this book is that the author, and the readers, have completely misinterpreted the intentions of Walt Disney. Disney entertainment was never intended to "promote the ideas of Jesus Christ" it was intended to present an alternative to the Bible as a source of morality. Disney used pagan imagery and stories to present stories of moral guidance that of course have much in common with stories in the Bible because they are parables used to teach a moral lesson. So, I just find it ironic, that Walt Disney, who was not a Christian and who intended to present an alternative to Christian based morality by providing non-Christian moral stories, is being hailed as a promoter of the Gospels. His whole point was to show that Christians don't have a monopoly on morality.

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