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Thank you. Before I start, I'm gonna give you guys 2 advanced warnings. The first one is that as some of you heard when you first came in, I just got home from being out of town and got home actually hours later that I meant to.

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So I have not looked this over for a couple of days. The other and I apologize about that because I was going to do a clean like draft before this.

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So the other thing is this is actually part of a much bigger project. And so there are pieces of it that are.

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Put together as part of something much bigger. I'm hoping it all makes sense when I put it together.

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We're going to wander around from a few different topics and there may be moments when you're going, why are you even there?

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Hopefully it'll all come back together in the end. Okay, so thank you for your patience and.

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Let me go. Let me get started. Oh, now this is fun.

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Just a moment.

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Okay, so to start with, I think it's pretty safe for us to say that.

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As you know, the topic is image of Satan and evangelicals, children, at evangelical children's fantasy.

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It's pretty safe to say that evenangelical Christianity is one of the current cultures. In which by and large belief in Satan and Hell still exists.

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And as such, it is not surprising that when evenangelical publishers began to dive into the fantasy for children market.

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The stories produced have often included Satan like figures and or hellish landscapes. In order to represent something that the writers and publishers tend to believe is very real.

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In spite of the fact that these stories are fantasy, however, they are presented as conveying a deeper spiritual truth.

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Intriguingly, the image is used to convey this evil often come not from the Bible, as is often claimed, but from more recent fiction.

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Dante's Inferno. John Milton's Paradise Lost. And the late medieval malice malficarium, which yes, I'm going to continue calling it fiction in this for a variety of reasons.

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One, just for shorthand. For those of you who don't know the mallus malficarum is one of the most well respected guides to hunting witches during the witch hunts in.

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The. You know, Renaissance era. Published in the 14 hundreds.

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The paper is going to look at the presence of these images in 3 evangelical fantasy series for children.

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Focusing on how the influence of these ideas can be seen as are from these texts can be seen as well as what the stories are actually doing with their Satan and Hell images.

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While there are currently many evangelical children's fantasy series, it's a niche market, I know, but it's there's a lot of it out there.

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So there are many that could have chosen for the project. I narrowed it to 3 for some very specific reasons.

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So the first one is the series all needed to be. At least 10 years old, but still in print because I wanted them to be things that people are actually reading and continuing to read even if it is in a rather small market.

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The second is that.

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Oh wow. I don't have a second point here. I apologize. So the oldest of these tales, David and Karen Maine's Kingdom Tales, consists of 3 books.

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Tales the Kingdom, Tales the Resistance, Tales the Restoration. It's never been out of print since the first book was published in 1986.

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They've been reprinted with different illustrations and by a variety of different publishers all evangelical, including David C.

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Cook, Lamplighters, my father's world and most recently one called Mainstein Ministries.

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The second series, the Wing Feather Saga by Andrew Peterson, was first the first book of it was published in 2,008 by Waterbrook which is an evangelically oriented branch of Penguin House.

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It has the distinction of being one of the only fantasy series published. Under the name of Evangelical as an evangelical author, to be regularly carried by Barnes and Noble, that is fantasy series for children, I should say.

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Okay. So I chose that one obviously for popularity. The third and final series I will be touching on is called the Son of Angels by Joe Law.

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I chose it because while it's the most recent, it was published in 2,012 by Thomas Nelson, it happens in our world and it carries distinct tones of both Harry Potter and Percy Jackson.

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But before we look closer at these stories, we're gonna need to take an aside step and we're gonna do 2 things.

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The first thing I want to do is actually define the term evangelical. For the context of this paper because it's a word that gets used a lot in our culture and we want to make sure we all know what we're talking about.

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If I'm using it to mean one thing, you're hearing something else that doesn't get us.

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So hopefully this will give a context to frame the discussion. So a working definition of evangelicalism, well, that's complicated.

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It's a movement. Within Christianity, but it's not confined to a specific denomination or tradition.

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It cuts across many denominations and many traditions. And so sometimes we will try to. Box it for example it is not uncommon to think of Baptist or Bible churches as evangelical not all churches with those labels are.

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It's possible to find denominations that have the word evangelical in the title, but that's no guarantee.

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For example, the evangelical Lutheran Church is not evangelical, but the Missouri State Lutheran denomination is.

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At the same time, they're evangelical Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Catholics.

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And if we're not confused yet. Awesome. We should be. Some have tried to define it by pinning down.

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It's exact origins, but that is complicated. Scholars who focus on the evangelical movement will often disagree on its beginnings.

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For example, John Stackhouse, author of Canadian evangelicals in the twentieth century. I use that the whole movement began with Martin Luther, John Calvin, and the Anabaptists during the Protestant Reformation.

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David Bebbington, a British scholar whose definition of evangelicalism is particularly favored by Wheaton College, home of the Marion E.

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Wade Center. Are you said evangelicalism is a product of the Enlightenment.

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John Wolfe on the other hand argues in his book the expansive evangelicalism that it began in the 1,700 revivals in England and America led by people such as Jonathan Edwards.

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If you remember him, Mr. Sinters in the hands of an angry god, in which we're given that unforgivable, unforgettable image of God dangling the sinner over the pit of hell like a spider on a thread.

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Just waiting to let go.

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Even defining its main tenants, however, can be tricky. We've got 3 different times.

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What about what it's about? Scholars such as Stack House and Babington give different weight to various aspects of it.

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Other scholars have thrown out things that, oh no, this has got to be a part of it if you're going to define it.

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But there are a few points on which all of the scholars agree and that is what we're going to look at as part of the definition of evangelicals for this paper.

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Evangelicals hold a high view of the Bible.

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3, but not always claiming that it is both in errant and literal. They believe that the individual must have a personal conversion experience.

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Just attending church is not enough. You have to have had something happen in sight of you. Language such as born again, getting saved, asking Jesus into your heart, all tries to wrap up that personal experience.

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The third point is activism, working to change God's Word for the better. For example, many cities today still have rescue missions founded by evangelicals to feed the hungry and help the homeless, either during the late Victorian era in England or during the Great Depression in the U.S.A.

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It needs hardly be pointed out, however, that this is an aspect of evangelicalism that at least in some places has changed the most.

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What activism means changes. But that is in the words and that is in the words of Michael and Day and the never ending story.

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Another story for another time. So now that we hopefully have a working definition of what we're talking about, historical, the evangelicalism and its broadest sense, we need to turn our attention to the publishing that happened in or happens in this realm.

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It's kinda got an interesting history. It starts in what I would call an unusual place in the late 17 hundreds in England children as young as 4 years old could work in factories up to 16 HA day, 6 days a week.

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One of the results of this was that many children who worked in factories died very young and lived relatively hopeless lives.

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Pretty much the only way a child factory worker could get out was by learning to read. The only way to learn to read was to go to school.

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But since these children came from poor families, they worked in factories instead of going to school. Then in 1780.

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In evangelical newspaper owner named Robert Rake started a school that met on Sundays, the only day these kids had off.



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Using the Bible to teach these children how to read.

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2 years after Robert Rakes opened what is now considered the first Sunday school, even though it looks very different than what we think of as Sunday school today.

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Sarah Trimmer started her own Sunday school. She not only did that, but she began writing stories for her Sunday school pupils to read.

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She felt that the Bible was a little complicated and a little hard to read. They needed something simpler and that would grab their attention.

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She was particularly influenced. By the popularity of John Newberry's little pretty pocketbook, which had been published 10 years before.

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And you may if you study children's, you may be familiar with a little pretty pocket book. It's got an alphabet that rhymes.

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It's got these wonderful illustrations that are woodcuts. It's even got a letter to the reader from Jack the Giant Killer.

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It's a letter from a fantasy character. But Trimmer felt. That the children in Sunday schools needed the quality of writing and fun experience that that book offered.

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But that book was only available to kids whose parents could afford to buy them books. So she wrote stories like The Story of the Robins.

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In this particular story of her is a group of children are watching a family of robins every day from the moment that they start to build a nest till the moment the baby birds fly away.

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Her Sunday school stories were quickly imitated by others who felt the importance of offering things for children to read at their level.

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Well, at the same time maintaining a high view of scripture. By 1820 both denominational and interdenominational evangelical publishers with names such as the Sunday School Union or the Church Union.

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We're publishing books for Sunday School Libraries as well as prizes for children who accomplished certain tasks in Sunday school like reading well.

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Memorizing a Bible verse or even just showing up on a regular basis. You too can get win a book if you show up on a regular basis.

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And you'll learn to read it. So evenangelical Publishing for Children grew not only out of an interest in the Bible and conversion, but an interest in helping one's fellow person improve their life.

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Surely is concerned for the well-being of children also led her to write for adults about children.

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Intriguingly, one of our favorite topics appears to be the dangers of fantasy and fairy tales.

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Humphrey Carpenter and the Golden Age of Children's Literature actually quotes her as saying that The terrific image which tales of this nature present to the imagination usually make deep impressions and injure the tender minds of children by exciting unreasonable and groundless fears.

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Because she was the one who started? This whole genre of these evangelical stories for children.

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That attitude of hers about fantasy immediately became part of that whole realm. And it remained part of evangelical children's publishing for quite a long time even as the Sunday school movement shifted into something more like what we see today and children were required to go to school instead of work in factories.

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And learn to read. Even in the post World War II era. Evangelical publishers such as Moody Press and Zander Van began publishing entire series to be able to keep pace with the growing children's market.

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But they still avoided any kind of fantasy. The only change that happened after the 19 seventys, there were 2 evangelical institutions and I think some of you will know what they are already but one was Wheaton College in Illinois.

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And the other one was the magazine Christianity today that firmly embraced the writings of 2 non-evangelicals who wrote fantasy.

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So CS Lewis and JRR token. This was done by arguing that these 2 writers were not doing anything.

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Different, then one story that evangelicals have always found to be acceptable. John Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress* first published in 1678.

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Both that texts age and proximity to the Protestant Reformation lent credibility to the stories that were presented as being in its tradition.

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This then led evangelical publishers in the 1970, s such as Inter Varsity Press, attentively begin releasing fantasies that they advertised as in the tradition of Tolkien and Lewis.

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With the understanding that these 2 were reliable because What they're doing is, after all, part of a very old tradition.

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The early evangelical children's fantasy stories attempted to stick to the models presented by Tolkien and Lewis as closely as possible.

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I'm gonna give you one good example. It's John White's *Archives of Anthropos*.

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It's a series that begins with a book called *The Tower of Gabra* first published in 1,978.

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Like Narnia, this series has 7 volumes. It also follows the same basic pattern as Narnia.

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Children from our world visit an alternate world in which they witness its creation, its fall, the sacrificial death and resurrection of its Christ figure, who's even sacrificed with a stone knife on a stone altar.

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It includes a Lucy character named Lisa. As well as boys like and boys who are like Edmond and Eustace who undergo their own conversion experience in this fantasy world.

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Yeah, because of anthropos followed the Narnia series so closely that when Douglas Gresham renumbered the Narnia books, the Anthropos series was also renumbered so their creation story also came first.

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Just like the magician's nephew.

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But the 3 series that we are looking at represent a shift in the marketing of evangelical children's publishing.

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David and Kieran Maine's Kingdom Trilogy were originally marketed on a radio show called Chapel of the as parables within the tradition of Pilgrims Progress and the Chronicles of Narnia.

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And you Peterson's wing feather saga. Was originally marketed as also being in the tradition of Tolkien and Lewis.

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They added something. They also said it's an alternative to other popular series without naming any other series directly.

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This could be found on their website. Andrew Peterson has a website called the rabbit room that this was on for a while.

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Or this ad was on for a while. There's other places that it has shown up like, Oh, a magazine called Christian Book Distributors, our catalog called Christian Book Distributors that has both of those lines in it.

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Jerusalem's Sons of Angel series, however, the most recent of the 3 will be looking at boldly advertises on the back covers that they are Christian alternatives to Harry Potter and Percy Jackson.

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Names them both. The earlier books were presented as being in the tradition of something perceived to be good.

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The later ones as alternatives to something perceived as bad. Intriguingly, the wing feather saga has been presented as both.

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Throwing shade on the other books. Not only feeds into growing cultural divisions, but also implies that the alternative is going to be better for child than those secular titles.

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At the same time, there's a subtle subject. At the same time, there's a subtle, suggestion, not outright said that parents can trust these books in ways that they cannot trust the others.

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The implication gets particularly interesting when we look at how these books present ideas that can be found in the text that it is at least supposed to be foundational to the movement in which these stories were produced.

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So I'm gonna give you a quick reminder of what that text to the Bible actually has to say about Satan.

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The first thing we wanna notice is that in the Old Testament, the part of the Bible that is also recognized as Jewish scripture.

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There are several passages. That appear to be something about a concrete king or ruler from the ancient world, but today our interpreted as being about Satan.

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To examples include Ezekiel, 28, a prophecy against the king of Tyre, a country that neighboured ancient Israel and Isaiah 14 a more general prophecy about the fall of Israel's enemies.

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This interpretation of both of those passages as being about Satan actually first shows up in first century BCE rabbinic sources.

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Even the connection between the serpent and Eden and Satan is not seen until the Jewish text, the wisdom of Solomon, also written in the first century BC.

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It's a busy century. That being said, the image we get of Satan in these 2 passages is of a powerful person who overreached his boundaries and was therefore thrown down.

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He's described as having formerly been the seal of perfection full of wisdom and perfect in beauty in Ezekiel 28:12.

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The Morningstar, and Isaiah, 14:12. He was a guardian cherub who was blameless in your ways until wickedness was found in you.

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Ezekiel, 14:14, and he said in his heart, I will ascend to the heavens.

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I will raise my throne above the stars of God. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds.

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I will make myself like the most high. Isaiah 14:13 and 14. He was thus expelled from heaven and thrown to earth and is ultimately consumed by fire.

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Ezekiel, 14:17, Isaiah, 14:12. In the New Testament.

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Jesus had plenty to say about. He said he saw him fall from heaven and in Luke 10:18 that Satan has a kingdom in Luke, 10:18, that Satan has a kingdom in Matthew, 12:26, as well as angels, Matthew, 12:26, as well as Angels, Matthew, 25:46, as well as Angels, Matthew, 25:41, that is the prince of demons

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and 3 different passages, one in Matthew, 25:41, that is the prince of demons and 3 different passages, one in Matthew, one in Mark, one in Luke, and the source of demonic possession.

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Then we get, oh, and that finally, eternal fire is prepared for him, Matthew, 25:41.



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Then we get other, I'm sorry, actual New Testament writers describing Satan. Peter says he's a prowling lion seeking someone to divide, devour.

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Paul calls him the prince of the power of air. And also says that Satan fashions himself into an angel of light.

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And the book of Revelation describes him as a great dragon and an old serpent who will ultimately be punished by being thrown into a lake of fire.

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It's a way Jonathan Edwards does get the image, to be fair. As evangelical children's stories it is no surprise that all 3 series have a Satan figure.

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Or all through the series we're talking about. In some instances, the Satan figures reflect the biblical passages just mentioned, but they're also influenced by Milton Dante in the Mouse Malthicarium.

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So, start with Kingdom Tales. In Kingdom Tales, there are 2 ways in which the Satan figure reflects the one in the Bible.

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He's named the Enchanter. He led a rebellion against the rightful King of the City.

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You can guess who that's supposed to be. And set himself up as the ruler in his stead.

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In this way, he is like the Satan of Scripture who decided to make himself equal to God.

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The second way he reflects the state of the Bible is in physical appearance, just as Satan is described as beautiful in Ezekiel, 28:12, entails the kingdom the enchanters described as a handsome man who is tall and wears robes of fire with red and yellow patterns interwoven with orange and white and blue.

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In the second book of the series, Tales the Resistance, the real king is described as ordinary, plain, uncaring like.

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When seen confining the beautiful enchanter. This description of the Enchanters robes may actually be a subtle reference to one of the few descriptions of Milton's Satan in which he's described this way.

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Forthwith, upright, he rears off the pool, his mighty state stature. On each hand, the flames driven backward sloped their pointing spires and rolled in billows.

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I've seen this described as it is or seen this Explained as a description of Satan's appearance in which fire rolls up him.

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If that is the case, the Enchantress robes of fire may also.

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These sleeves in which flames driven backward slope. Now to be fair, those flames may actually be sloping away from Satan, not up his arms.

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These flames may or may not be of Satan, or on Satan himself are definitely a part of his landscape.

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Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Revelation describe fire as the punishment for Satan.

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But, and Milton's hell is also described as a burning lake. As well as a lake with liquid fire and as one great furnace flamed but yet from those flames no light but rather darkness visible.

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What's interesting though is Satan's Milton. Wow, Milton's Satan!

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Instead of accepting that this is a punishment declares that it is better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven.

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The Enchantress City after the King has been removed is a lot more like St. Milton.

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Milton's Hell, then anything found in the Bible. In fact, the enchanter takes us a step farther than Satan.

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He appears to love fire. He's made a law requiring everyone to sleep during the day and work at night so that they live in a world lit only by fire and not the sun.

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His favorite punishment is fire. And members of his Army police force are called burners. Everyone who dies in the city is cremated in a public ceremony.

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So that orphan children watch the flames as their parents bodies turned ash. Even though it is lit by flames, the Enchantress City is also dark.

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And sometimes ominous complete power outs darken the entire city even more.

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Like Milton Satan. The Enchanter in the Kingdom series believes that it is better to reign in hell than serve in heaven, but he enjoys the fire itself.

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This specific evils that have been assigned to the enchanter also are very interesting. Under the Enchantress rule, poverty and crime rise in the city and all orphans belong to him.

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Some of these orphans he puts to work in various horrible places, such as the city sewers where the likelihood of dying young is quite high.

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In this way, he mirrors the factory owners from the early days of evangelical children's fiction.

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But in other ways.

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He reflex both contemporary concerns and post-reformation witch hunting guides at the same time.

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2 stories from Tales of the Resistance demonstrate this. In the carnival daughter, the enchanter sneaks out of a party thrown by a couple, finds their young daughter's bedroom, and proceeds to do something not described.

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But it is something that haunts her and destroys her childhood. In another story, The Forbidden Princess, a young teen girl has been taken by the enchanter to be one of his many brides.

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In the evenings she stands on her balcony to feel the fresh air. But otherwise lives completely under his spell, which is manifested in a passive submission to the Enchanter's bridal chamber.

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As well as outward signs of depression. While ultimately the king rescues both girls from the enchantress power, the stories reflect a contemporary understanding of the evils of childhood sexual abuse.

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At the same time, however, these 2 stories also reflect the Satan of the malice Malthicarium.

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Written by Heinrich Kramer and James Springer in 1448 in Germany. The first one-third of the mouse malfacareim discusses the various ways in which Satan or his doubles engage within sex with women, making them witches who then belong to him.

08:10:32.000 --> 08:10:40.000

The sex itself seals the connection between Satan and the witches, and even the innocent are sometimes seduced by Satan.

08:10:40.000 --> 08:10:51.000

Like the witch in the malficarium, both the carnival daughter and the forbidden princess are innocent girls who've been preyed upon by the evil enchanter, which in turn causes them to belong to him.

08:10:51.000 --> 08:11:02.000

There is however a big difference. The third section of the malficarium is about how to discover if someone has bad sex with Satanira's demons and then how to punish them.

08:11:02.000 --> 08:11:16.000

Intails of the restoration, however, there's no punishment for these girls. They are instead, again, rescued by the king who breaks through the enchantress spells and brings one to be a princess in his own land while restoring the other to her very worried parents.

08:11:16.000 --> 08:11:22.000

Salvation from the Enchantress Power comes in a very evangelical way through a personal connection to the King.

08:11:22.000 --> 08:11:36.000

The Christ figure of the story. The Kingdom series does take one unique twist of its own. Like many stories in the Narnia tradition, evil is defeated when the Christ figure the king chooses to die and then comes back to life again.

08:11:36.000 --> 08:11:41.000

But in this story, instead of casting the enchanter into a lake of fire, The king himself is allowed or allows himself to be killed with fire.

08:11:41.000 --> 08:11:56.000

He takes the punishment of hell itself to save everyone else from it. And that is what breaks the Enchantress spell over everyone.

08:11:56.000 --> 08:12:03.000

The next series, the Wing Feather Saga, is like the Kingdom Tales, a high fantasy in which the King is been deposed from his throne by Satan like figure.

08:12:03.000 --> 08:12:12.000

The evil nag. Great name, right? Who drools has fangs and is generally unpleasant has led a rebellion overthrowing the beautiful isle of an area.

08:12:12.000 --> 08:12:22.000

And from there, sets out with his army of things to destroy and then rule screen the lands around. Many people in screen now doubt, now doubt that an area even exists.

08:12:22.000 --> 08:12:36.000

And some question whether they even was a king. In this world, NAG the Nameless is responsible not only for defeating the formerly free people of Screen, leaving them to be ruled by fangs, but he's also responsible for breaking the world.

08:12:36.000 --> 08:12:43.000

Submerging the kingdom of dragons underwater. And it is believed, killing the rightful king.

08:12:43.000 --> 08:12:50.000

The series begins in such a way that parents looking for stories in the tradition of Tolkien and Lewis should be able to spot a pattern they can understand.

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Nag must be the Satan figure, the deposed and presumed dead king must be the Christ figure.

08:12:55.000 --> 08:13:04.000

While parents looking for alternatives to popular stories, from non-evangelical publishers will quickly find the special children who are supposed to save the world.

08:13:04.000 --> 08:13:20.000

Well, yes, Narnia, but also Harry Potter and Percy Jackson. And they can rest assured that the children will go to for at least a while a special school where they're even more special abilities will make them stand out and book 3 the monster in the hollows.

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This reinforced reassurance is reinforced by the descriptions of the fangs and nag the nameless which in some ways reflects the description of Satan and Dante's inferno.

08:13:30.000 --> 08:13:34.000

Dante is Satan, like that of the Bible, was once beautiful, but tried to overthrow God.

08:13:34.000 --> 08:13:42.000

So as NASA, in hell, not ruling it. Dante's hell, however, is an ice so cold that it burns.

08:13:42.000 --> 08:13:53.000

And Satan is bound into it in such a way that he cannot move. Move. He is described as hideous, but still in rebellion against God, because he is still the source from which all afflictions flow.

08:13:53.000 --> 08:14:03.000

He has 3 faces and beneath each face 2 mighty wings did rise. Such as this Ver tremendous might demand, sails of sea ships never saw I of such size.

08:14:03.000 --> 08:14:09.000

Of course, this is Dante describing him. Not feathered were they, but in style they were planned like a bat wing.

08:14:09.000 --> 08:14:19.000

And each mouth has razor sharp teeth designed to tear apart a victim stuck in the mouth. Nag the nameless is like Dante Satan hideous to look at.

08:14:19.000 --> 08:14:28.000

He also has fangs. And rules. And while he does not have wings, many of his demon like servants, the fangs do.

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Intriguingly, while these characters are the closest thing to Satan and his followers that this series has.



08:14:34.000 --> 08:14:44.000

What the reader learns through the series is that they are in fact something more complicated. In the first book, they are slimy and scaly monsters who eat disgusting things.

08:14:44.000 --> 08:14:51.000

Like Maggot loaf and even occasionally human children. While carrying out the will of their evil master nag.

08:14:51.000 --> 08:14:57.000

As the series progresses, the main characters learn, however, that the fangs are actually humans.

08:14:57.000 --> 08:15:11.000

Who have been destroyed by a chosen alliance with NAG? Even though they resemble the image of Satan and his demons, They are more like the witches in the malfakarium who have deliberately chosen to align themselves with Satan.

08:15:11.000 --> 08:15:19.000

By doing something they know is wrong. In this case, the Satan figure definitely pressures them into it.

08:15:19.000 --> 08:15:31.000

But they have to choose themselves to sing a very specific song. And then they become his. Like these witches for most of the series, there is apparently no way out of the alliance.

08:15:31.000 --> 08:15:37.000

Once someone becomes a fang, they have no other option, it appears, but to serve nag until they are killed.

08:15:37.000 --> 08:15:48.000

Too often by the good guys of the story. I'm getting to give away the end because so if you really want to read this on your own and don't want to know cover years and go la la la for a bit.

08:15:48.000 --> 08:15:57.000

In the end, however, it is discovered that the things as well as one half of the as the half things who changed their minds while singing the song.

08:15:57.000 --> 08:16:05.000

Can receive healing by choosing to follow King Kalmar. Who is creating a new kingdom?

08:16:05.000 --> 08:16:16.000

And Nag himself turns out to not be an inherently evil creature. But a human who has been tricked into following the wrong path his whole life.

08:16:16.000 --> 08:16:29.000

When he learns the truth, the truth ends the war. So ultimately in this series. Good versus evil is not a matter of us versus them or a matter of othering.

08:16:29.000 --> 08:16:37.000

Instead, it is something that all humans ultimately are capable of choosing for themselves. They can choose to follow good.

08:16:37.000 --> 08:16:45.000

Or they can choose to follow evil. Of course, following good does mean aligning yourself with King Kalmar.

08:16:45.000 --> 08:16:50.000

The third and final series we will discuss, it's 6 or 4, so I'm going to make it quick.

08:16:50.000 --> 08:17:00.000

Is sons of angels it's a low fantasy instead of a high fantasy it occurs in new york city in an alternate spiritual world or in New York City and in an alternate spiritual world that just happens to inhabit the exact same space as the New York City.

08:17:00.000 --> 08:17:14.000

We all know. The marketing on the back covers of some of the volumes declare that they are a Christian alternative to Harry Potter and Percy Jackson.

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In fact, the back cover, the first volume, Spirit Fighter, describes the series as, whoops.

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Hold that thought. So what happens when you read off the same screen that you're looking at face?

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Thank you guys are still there. Wow. And then, okay, so the back cover describes the series as an imaginative adventure based on scripture in the book of Genesis.

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Well, the back cover of the second volume assures the reader that the series is soundly scriptural.

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The claim that is scriptural, however, is a shaky one at best. The book is based, or the whole series is based in one very specific interpretation of one of the most obscure verses in the entire Bible.

08:17:52.000 --> 08:18:05.000

Genesis 6 4, which reads, The Nuffalo more on the Earth in those days and also afterwards when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them.

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They were the heroes old, men of renown. The word nephalm only appears in the Bible one other time in Numbers 13 3 in which the people living in a certain town are described as descendants of the Nepal.

08:18:17.000 --> 08:18:36.000

So that doesn't really help us understand the Genesis passage. The most common interpretation of what that word means, nephilim, is from the book of first Enoch, an apocryphal text written in the second century BCE that's about the apocryphal text written in the second century BCE that's about the apocalypse Angels, demons, and the According to this

08:18:36.000 --> 08:18:43.000

book, the Nephilim or the offspring of angels and humans.

08:18:43.000 --> 08:18:44.000

INAC reads the statement about the sons of God and daughters of men as defining the term before it.

08:18:44.000 --> 08:18:57.000

Remember it said in this. the Nephilim lived at the time when the sons of God and daughters of men.

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We're getting together. We'll say it that way. The problem is, is that might not have actually been the intention of whoever it was who first wrote this sentence.

08:19:06.000 --> 08:19:11.000

Yes, I did cite intentional fallacy. I apologize. I'm gonna stand on it for this one though.

08:19:11.000 --> 08:19:18.000

It may be that one statement was simply a time marker for the other. And not connected by cause and effect.

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The original author would have assumed that their intended audience would know exactly what time frame we're referring to by naming either naming the Nephilim or the sons of God and the daughters of men, in the same time we would in the same way we would recognize a statement such as that was the time of Pew.

08:19:36.000 --> 08:19:42.000

Or that was the time of Bob Ross. The NFL may then simply be the name of a tribe of people.

08:19:42.000 --> 08:19:43.000

On the other hand, the napalm may have mythic origins that have simply been lost in time.

08:19:43.000 --> 08:19:59.000

Either way. While these half human half angels is the most common interpretation of the word Nepal, it is not necessarily the most accurate.

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It is however the one that this series says is biblically accurate and that's why they're, you know, it's based in the book of Genesis.

08:20:09.000 --> 08:20:13.000

So the story itself is about Jonah, an average boy who learns that he's one-force nephalism.

08:20:13.000 --> 08:20:21.000

That is nephalon. Let's try that again. One fourth, Excuse me, you know what I'm trying to say.

08:20:21.000 --> 08:20:27.000

That is one eighth angel. As such, he and his siblings discover that they have special powers.

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He, for example, can run extremely fast. He can pull arrows out of the air and shoot them.

08:20:33.000 --> 08:20:38.000

And also has the gift of being a prophet in the manner of the Old Testament. But there's a catch.

08:20:38.000 --> 08:20:48.000

The baton and his demons want to destroy the descendants of the Nepalum because they appear to all be joining the angels, the ongoing battle between the angels and the demons.

08:20:48.000 --> 08:20:57.000

Because of this the children are sent to a special angel school or does this sound familiar where they learn to fight not so much to be part of the angel army as much as to simply stay alive.

08:20:57.000 --> 08:21:06.000

They're using literal tools that are named after concepts in the New Testament, such as the sword of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and so forth.

08:21:06.000 --> 08:21:15.000

The series utilizes not only the book of Genesis. And letters of Paul to get those lovely items, the sort of truth.

08:21:15.000 --> 08:21:24.000

But also the book of Revelation in which Michael and his angels go into battle against Satan and his army and Satan is ultimately cast into hell.

08:21:24.000 --> 08:21:30.000

For the characters in the story, the battle is raging in the here and now and has been continuing throughout the history of humanity.

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The use of the Bible in this series is sometimes downright painfully obvious, but so are other sources, whether directly borrowed or culturally inherited.

08:21:39.000 --> 08:21:43.000

While the angels in the series are beautiful and buff, not unlike the description of Satan or the king of Tyre and Ezekiel, the demons are ugly.

08:21:43.000 --> 08:21:55.000

They drool and they all have fan things and bat wings like Dante's Satan. The biggest difference is that they only have one head.

08:21:55.000 --> 08:22:05.000

Intriguingly, Satan himself never appears. Because you stuck somewhere. Catch it, but a baton one of his highest servants directs most of the battle.

08:22:05.000 --> 08:22:12.000

And in case the reader misses the connection between laws demons and Dante Satan, the author actually spells it out.

08:22:12.000 --> 08:22:22.000

At 1 point, at bad and wears a janitor's disguise to get into a building, the nametag he wears reads, Dante.

08:22:22.000 --> 08:22:38.000

Thus, even while the series is marked, marketed as biblically accurate alternatives to wildly popular children's books, the author understands that he is writing in an old tradition and is borrowing from it.

08:22:38.000 --> 08:22:47.000

And I'm gonna go ahead and say that really sums up that bit. So I'm going to jump to the end here.

08:22:47.000 --> 08:22:54.000

All 3 stories, as we said, publish. They're published by evangelical publishers.

08:22:54.000 --> 08:23:09.000

They present Satan as and as minions as rebels against all that is good and right. There's a physical battle between Satan and his minions and then Even though they do rely on patterns from the Bible.

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They tend to use imagery and ideas from the 3, other 3 sources that we named earlier. So I'm gonna go ahead and close that out.

08:23:18.000 --> 08:23:22.000

Thank you guys for listening.

08:23:22.000 --> 08:23:23.000

Yeah.

08:23:23.000 --> 08:23:28.000

Thank you, Melody. Great job. Thank you. And thank you for keeping an eye on the clock yourself.

08:23:28.000 --> 08:23:39.000

Okay folks we have about 10 min for questions and discussion. So if you have a question, please feel free to just chime in with it.

08:23:39.000 --> 08:23:46.000

You can also put it in the chat box if you don't feel comfortable reading it, I'd be happy to read it for you.

08:23:46.000 --> 08:23:50.000

And, yeah, it looks like has her hand up. Go ahead.

08:23:50.000 --> 08:23:58.000

Alrighty, so yeah, I don't know does it just seem like There's too much pressure to conform to these.

08:23:58.000 --> 08:24:05.000

Tight evangelical standards. There's too much pressure to do that, so that's why nothing actually good and creative.

08:24:05.000 --> 08:24:10.000



Gets done in the evangelical children's world.

08:24:10.000 --> 08:24:18.000

I think I'm gonna say yes. That that's part of it is that there is a standard that these writers are working towards and these publishers are looking for something specific.

08:24:18.000 --> 08:24:22.000

That's a really good, yeah, really good way to say it.

08:24:22.000 --> 08:24:33.000

Definitely that was case with Sandra Van, a friend of mine. Written a fantasy that he tried to get.

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Actually did have it published through Zander Van, but they They requested so many changes. In it that he was not happy with that.

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He got the right back. And he's done a rewrite on it to put back the things he wanted in it.

08:24:52.000 --> 08:24:53.000

That's just.

08:24:53.000 --> 08:24:58.000

And it's self publishing this year. But. That was the thing that frustrated him no end was.

08:24:58.000 --> 08:25:07.000

The structures that the publisher put on him on what How things could be presented.

08:25:07.000 --> 08:25:19.000

You know, one of one of his. Motifs is how beautiful evil can appear. And that was very crucial to his story.

08:25:19.000 --> 08:25:27.000

And he had a problem convincing. Publishers to go with. Even part of what he wanted.

08:25:27.000 --> 08:25:33.000

Fascinating. Thank you for sharing that. That's really interesting.

08:25:33.000 --> 08:25:34.000

What else? Okay.

08:25:34.000 --> 08:25:38.000

I mean, Melody, it looks like Paul has. Question for you. Let me put in the chat.

08:25:38.000 --> 08:25:43.000

I don't know if you can see it. He says, you said this was part of a larger project.

08:25:43.000 --> 08:25:51.000

Is that a project in progress? Or is there somewhere I can find it? I would be very interested in looking at it.

08:25:51.000 --> 08:25:52.000

Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay.

08:25:52.000 --> 08:26:08.000

It is a project in progress. That is turning into a book length project about Well, the thing I originally proposed was, about evangelicals in children's literature.

08:26:08.000 --> 08:26:09.000

Okay.

08:26:09.000 --> 08:26:13.000

It is turning into It is narrowing. But, Yeah, it is part of a larger project, definitely.

08:26:13.000 --> 08:26:22.000

You've read these books that are product in a way. Are they good? Should we read them?

08:26:22.000 --> 08:26:26.000

That is an excellent question.

08:26:26.000 --> 08:26:34.000

I'm going, hmm, let me think about that for a minute. Some of that depends on you obviously and what your interests are.

08:26:34.000 --> 08:26:42.000

I would say the tales of the kingdom I actually enjoyed very much. The. Andrew Peterson ones.

08:26:42.000 --> 08:26:47.000

Part of them, sometimes they were enjoyable. Sometimes I was.

08:26:47.000 --> 08:27:07.000

Probably for me for that series, the biggest problem I had with it had nothing to do with the ideology or anything else like that it was that so many of the names were just so goofy and everything was a little bit tongue in cheek even at times when it felt like it shouldn't be.

08:27:07.000 --> 08:27:20.000

It's like there's, I mean, there's a point even early on in the series where child's dog dies, but there been so many silly things that happen that you're like, wait, it's a little bit jarring.

08:27:20.000 --> 08:27:23.000

Okay.

08:27:23.000 --> 08:27:24.000

Okay.

08:27:24.000 --> 08:27:29.000

Like there's Evil critters called toothy cows. They're not just cows, they're toothy cows and I mean, the bad guys name is Nag.

08:27:29.000 --> 08:27:30.000

Okay. Okay.

08:27:30.000 --> 08:27:36.000

Really? Nag? So I know several people who really enjoyed the series, which is actually why I picked it up.

08:27:36.000 --> 08:27:40.000

I think a lot of people would like it. I guess I struggled a little bit with that part of it.

08:27:40.000 --> 08:27:46.000

The third one. I'm not recommending. Even if you really like that kind of story. I'm not recommending it.

08:27:46.000 --> 08:27:49.000

Oh

08:27:49.000 --> 08:27:56.000

So good question.

08:27:56.000 --> 08:28:01.000

Janet, I can't hear you.

08:28:01.000 --> 08:28:04.000

I'm a computer mic.

08:28:04.000 --> 08:28:05.000

Oh, I can. Thank you.

08:28:05.000 --> 08:28:19.000

Can you hear? I think I must have loosened up my my mic there. I'm familiar with arguments against Harry Potter from the kind of the evangelical and fundamentalist side.

08:28:19.000 --> 08:28:25.000

I am not as familiar with the Rick Reorten series. What's the objection there? Il have not.

08:28:25.000 --> 08:28:30.000

Hmm. That's actually really good question. There's 2 big objections I've seen. The first is that, oh my goodness, these are ancient gods.

08:28:30.000 --> 08:28:39.000

So you've got, you know, Percy Jackson, his dad is, it's been so long since I read it.

08:28:39.000 --> 08:28:47.000

Which Greek god is Percy Jackson's dad? I don't remember.

08:28:47.000 --> 08:28:48.000

I believe it's Poseidon.

08:28:48.000 --> 08:28:58.000

Anyone? Poseidon, okay, thank you. So you've got some. Extremely I shouldn't.

08:28:58.000 --> 08:29:15.000

I'm sounding condescending, but I am gonna say it anyway. So extremely conservative people who will say, that you shouldn't read those because people really did worship those gods at one time and therefore they're going to always be able.

08:29:15.000 --> 08:29:27.000

Obviously CS Lewis would disagree with that. There's also there is a concern on the behalf of some people that oh my goodness these books are talking about who had sex with whom for children.

08:29:27.000 --> 08:29:40.000

The funny thing is, so does the Sons of Angel series. So even though it's technically marketed as an alternative, that actually is part of the conversation.

08:29:40.000 --> 08:29:41.000

Hmm. Yeah.

08:29:41.000 --> 08:29:45.000

It's like, how did you end up being an Ephalom? Or partner. So that's, yeah, it's a really good question.

08:29:45.000 --> 08:29:51.000

Interesting. I see there's a good question there about George McDonald in the chat.

08:29:51.000 --> 08:29:52.000

Okay.

08:29:52.000 --> 08:30:01.000

Yeah, I'll read it for Craig. Just may ask for George McDonald this and all of this, maybe as background.

08:30:01.000 --> 08:30:11.000

Craig, that's fabulous. George McDonald. So keeping in mind that what I'm looking at for this project is specifically things from evangelical publishers.

08:30:11.000 --> 08:30:19.000

George McDonald was never part of that world, even though he is a Christian writer. And has a lot of spiritual things in his texts.

08:30:19.000 --> 08:30:31.000

Eric, I believe you took a recent George McDonald class. Do you wanna add anything to that?

08:30:31.000 --> 08:30:47.000

Well, George McDonald was basically forced out of the church that he was hired to be a pastor of because his views didn't necessarily line up well with the views of the church at the time.

08:30:47.000 --> 08:30:52.000

He remained. Evangelical Right? But his views didn't match to church at the time.

08:30:52.000 --> 08:31:08.000

So, He made more money off of writing books, but he continued to be religiously active for the rest of his life.

08:31:08.000 --> 08:31:11.000

So Melody can correct me there, I'm sure.

08:31:11.000 --> 08:31:16.000

You're doing great. That was great. Thank you. Thank you.

08:31:16.000 --> 08:31:17.000

Does that help? What?

08:31:17.000 --> 08:31:30.000

Yeah, I don't. The people I know that are evangelical and into That kind of literature.

08:31:30.000 --> 08:31:31.000

Right.

08:31:31.000 --> 08:31:35.000

Are not really that familiar with Will. With McDonald. I mean, they barely allow themselves to put up with Narnia.

08:31:35.000 --> 08:31:44.000

In some cases. The witch in the wardrobe, they'll say, okay, because you got the crucifixion there and it's quite obvious but the others are sort of like.

08:31:44.000 --> 08:31:56.000

You know, and definitely. They are the people that. Do not get the hints that JK Rowling put in the books.

08:31:56.000 --> 08:32:05.000

You know, it's like. He leaves from Kings Cross. Hello, why not, you know, any of the other famous stations?

08:32:05.000 --> 08:32:15.000

And he even has 2, Bible verses dropped in the last, Harry Potter book.

08:32:15.000 --> 08:32:16.000

Yeah.

08:32:16.000 --> 08:32:27.000



So that's interesting. Good point. Good points. What's interesting, Sarah, about that is, okay, part of this project I've ended up reading more histories of evangelical publishing that I knew existed or that I would have wanted to read if I had known they existed.

08:32:27.000 --> 08:32:29.000

Okay.

08:32:29.000 --> 08:32:39.000

What's fascinating is in the 19 seventies Jeanette Okay is the first person that and she wrote romance.

08:32:39.000 --> 08:32:47.000

Sorry everybody, but, she's the first person that even junkie publishers looked at her stuff and said, wait, we can make a lot of money off of this.

08:32:47.000 --> 08:32:58.000

So the same publisher that published her first book and made a fortune. Turnaround and published a whole bunch of George McDonald's books next.

08:32:58.000 --> 08:33:06.000

So they were doing genetically and George McDonald's modest or rewritten stories for a modern audience.

08:33:06.000 --> 08:33:07.000

Oh.

08:33:07.000 --> 08:33:14.000

So at one time, those people that you're talking about, Sarah, would have been reading George McDonald, but that was a few years ago now.

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We don't need to say quite how many.

08:33:16.000 --> 08:33:21.000

Yeah, I'm sorry to cut in, but we are just about out of time here, folks.

08:33:21.000 --> 08:33:29.000

6 20 central time. So we'll wrap things up here, I guess. Thank you so much, Melody, for the presentation.

08:33:29.000 --> 08:33:37.000

And thank you all for the, wonderful discussion. Leslie is gonna be kind enough to share a link to the Discord.

08:33:37.000 --> 08:33:41.000

Where we can continue the conversation about melody's paper. We do wanna leave the room.

08:33:41.000 --> 08:33:46.000

Yes. I will be putting that in shortly. So give me about 1 min and that'll be there.

08:33:46.000 --> 08:33:48.000

Thank you. Thank you, Leslie. Thanks everybody. Thank you, Melody.

08:33:48.000 --> 08:33:51.000

Yes, thank you, Leslie. And thank you. Thank you. And you guys were awesome. Thanks for all the good questions.

08:33:51.000 --> 08:33:52.000

Wonderful job. Okay.

08:33:52.000 --> 08:33:58.000

It was very helpful. Okay.

08:33:58.000 --> 08:34:09.000

Leslie, I've left track for and that's ready for you to take over when you're done here.

08:34:09.000 --> 08:34:13.000

Got it, David, give me 1 s.

08:34:13.000 --> 08:34:14.000

Okay.

08:34:14.000 --> 08:34:17.000

Good to see everybody. Thank you, Melody.