

# Harry Potter novels and Christianity

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

To begin with, it is important to say that there is not only one true definition of the term children's literature. Certainly, it is much more than picture books and fables. Even adults can enjoy stories and novels intended for children. Children's literature is an important part of every national literature. Nowadays, children have access to different types of media and it is easier for them to approach stories in different ways. They can read stories traditionally from books or magazines, hear them through audiobooks and radio or watch them on television or internet. These days every child can find an interesting book to read, since children's literature is rich with all sorts of genres and types of literature.

It is often hard to determine where children's literature ends and adult literature begins. Therefore, many books intended for children are enjoyed by adults and vice versa. The Harry Potter series of novels is one example of children's literature many adult readers enjoy. One reason for this is an interesting story and characters one can identify with.

This thesis will try to compare and explain some of many similarities between the characters and situations in the Harry Potter series of novels and the Bible. The main reason for choosing this topic for my final thesis is the fact that there are many different opinions among members of the Catholic Church. This topic has been argued upon ever since the first novel was published, in 1997. While one part of believers consider these novels to be against religion and strongly believe it is wrong to read them, others have an opposite opinion and do not see any harm in reading them.

## 2. CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

What is children's literature? In his book *Povijest hrvatske dječje književnosti od početaka do 1955*. Crnković says that three important words are contained in the most comprehensive definition of children's literature: "Children's literature is literature intended for children" (Crnković, M., Težak, D., 2002: 7)<sup>1</sup>. The three words are literature, children and intention. According to Crnković, children's literature is a "specific part of literature that consists of literary works suitable for children (3 to 14 years old), that are either intended for children or became suitable for children over time, even though authors never meant them to become children's literature" (Crnković, M. 1990:5-6). However, children's literature seems to be much more than that. Throughout the years, many authors have provided their own definitions, but they all agree that the term is hard to explain in one definition. Candice Livingstone and Molly Brown defined it as "literature that is exclusively about children or aimed at children. It concerns literature that involves ideas, relationships and language that are often seen as simple and can teach the child a moral lesson. Children's literature denotes ideas related to stories, poetry, rhymes, folk tales, and drama, exclusively created for children as the target audience" (Livingstone, C., Brown, M., 2017). One of the reasons children's literature is hard to define is that literature itself "resists simple and final definitions" (Hameršak, M., Zima, D., 2015: 13).

It is important for children from the youngest age to be familiar with books and to be read to until they learn how to read themselves. Books for children are filled with adventures, different worlds, interesting characters with whom children can identify. They help in the development of children's imagination and creativity and induce curiosity. Nowadays, when technology is all around us, it is even more important to introduce books to children from the earliest age, to let them explore books and create their own stories.

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<sup>1</sup> All the translations of Croatian authors are my own, unless stated differently.



## 2.1. History of children's literature

People have been telling stories to each other ever since they developed the ability to speak. Even before they invented letters, people drew pictures and we have remains of those "stories" all over the world. I would dare to say that those drawings are the beginning of literature as we know it today. Oral transmission continued long after written language was developed due to books being manually copied, until the invention of the printing press, and telling stories was much easier and simpler since not many people knew how to read and write. Stories for children, such as fables, fairytales, myths, legends and short stories, existed even before the 17<sup>th</sup> century and books for children that were published contained mostly educational materials. Nevertheless, children learned about heroes from the past, about their journeys and their lives. They participated in religious ceremonies and listened about saints and their lives.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century cheap books began to be published and they became popular among people. In England they were called *chapbooks*, in France *Bibliothèque bleue* and in Germany *Volksbücher*. "Chapbooks often contained short versions of romances, ballads and popular tales" (Dujmović M., Bančić I., 2014: 18).

However, it was not until the mid-eighteenth century that serious publishing of children's books began. One of the first writers of children's literature was an English bookseller, John Newbery, whose books contained stories written by different authors. Those stories, like most of stories for children, were written to entertain children and help children learn something new. Newberry's book *A Little Pretty Pocket Book, Intended for the Instruction and Amusement of Little Master Tommy and Pretty Miss Polly* was published in 1744 and is considered to be one of the first books ever intended for children (Dujmović and Bančić, 2014.). This century opened a whole new part of children's literature by introducing artistic children's poetry and adventurous novels to the world. Two significant writers from this period, along with John Newberry, are Isaac Watts and Daniel Defoe, whose novel *Robinson Crusoe* is an important part of the history of literature in general.

The nineteenth century is a great century for children's literature. Adults finally accepted the existence of children's books. All genres of children's literature

established themselves and all doubts about it were solved. Children were finally able to easily find and read appropriate books, which was, historically speaking, an enormous success for children's writers and publishers of children's books. By the end of the century, many European countries started producing children's books. However, their success was yet to come in the following century.

The beginning of the 20th century was marked with one of the most valuable children's book till that time, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by Frank Lyman Baum. Baum was a productive and inventive children's writer, whose work derived from the stories he told his own children. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was a huge success and many authors have used it as a basis for their works. "If all the books on Oz were gathered, you could turn them into the longest American film tape." (Crnković, M., Težak, D., 2002:84). Many famous children's writers emerged during this century and it is difficult to say which country contributed to children's literature the most. That was one of the motives for establishing IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People). It was "founded in 1953 in Zürich in order to connect people from all around the world who are involved into literature for children and young adults" (Crnković, M., Težak, D., 2002:117).

## 2.2. Genres of children's literature

The term genre does not apply only to literature. It is used to group or categorize any type of arts (music, film, sitcoms, videogames, theatre plays...). The problem with this categorization is that one work of art can belong to more than one genre. As hard as it is to define children's literature, it is equally hard to define the genres of children's literature. Genre classification in children's literature is the same as the one in literature for adults. The only difference is that some genres are more represented in children's literature than in literature for adults (e.g. picture books) and vice versa (e.g. essay). Also, some genres that appear in literature for both children and adults have different structures. For example, children's novels are usually shorter and they are classified by subject, while adult novels are usually extensive works of literature and can be classified in more ways. What Hameršak and Zima point out as important to stress is the fact that children's literature is not only a genre within literature in general; it is a part of literature with its own genres (2015:127). The authors claim that "different genre classifications circulate among different fields of children's literature" (Hameršak and Zima, 2015:128).

Some authors, such as Livingstone and Brown (2017), write about different types of children's literature instead of talking about genres. Nevertheless, they, too, state that categorization of children's literature is not as simple as it may seem. In their chapter about types of children's literature they write about the following types: fantasy, folktales (which include cumulative tales, pourquoi tales, beast tales, trickster tales, noodlehead tales) and fairytales, fables and animal stories, myths and legends, rhymes and poetry, poems, school stories, plays, religious texts, comic books and graphic novels. Crnković and Težak (2002) classified children's literature in two groups. The first group consists of picture books, children's poetry, stories, children's novels or novels about childhood, and the second group consists of fables, novels about animals, adventure novels, historical novels, science fiction, travel books and biographical works. The difference between those two groups is that the types of literature from the first group belong to proper children's literature, considering the fact that they are written for children, that the characters are mostly children or animals, and that they are declared as children's literature, while for the types from the second

group Crnković and Težak use the term "border types", meaning that these usually lack one, two or even all three criteria for defining children's literature.

For the purpose of writing this thesis I am going to use the categorization made by Dujmović and Bančić in their book *A Handbook in Children's Literature* (2014: 48), which is one of the possible categorizations of children's literature genres.

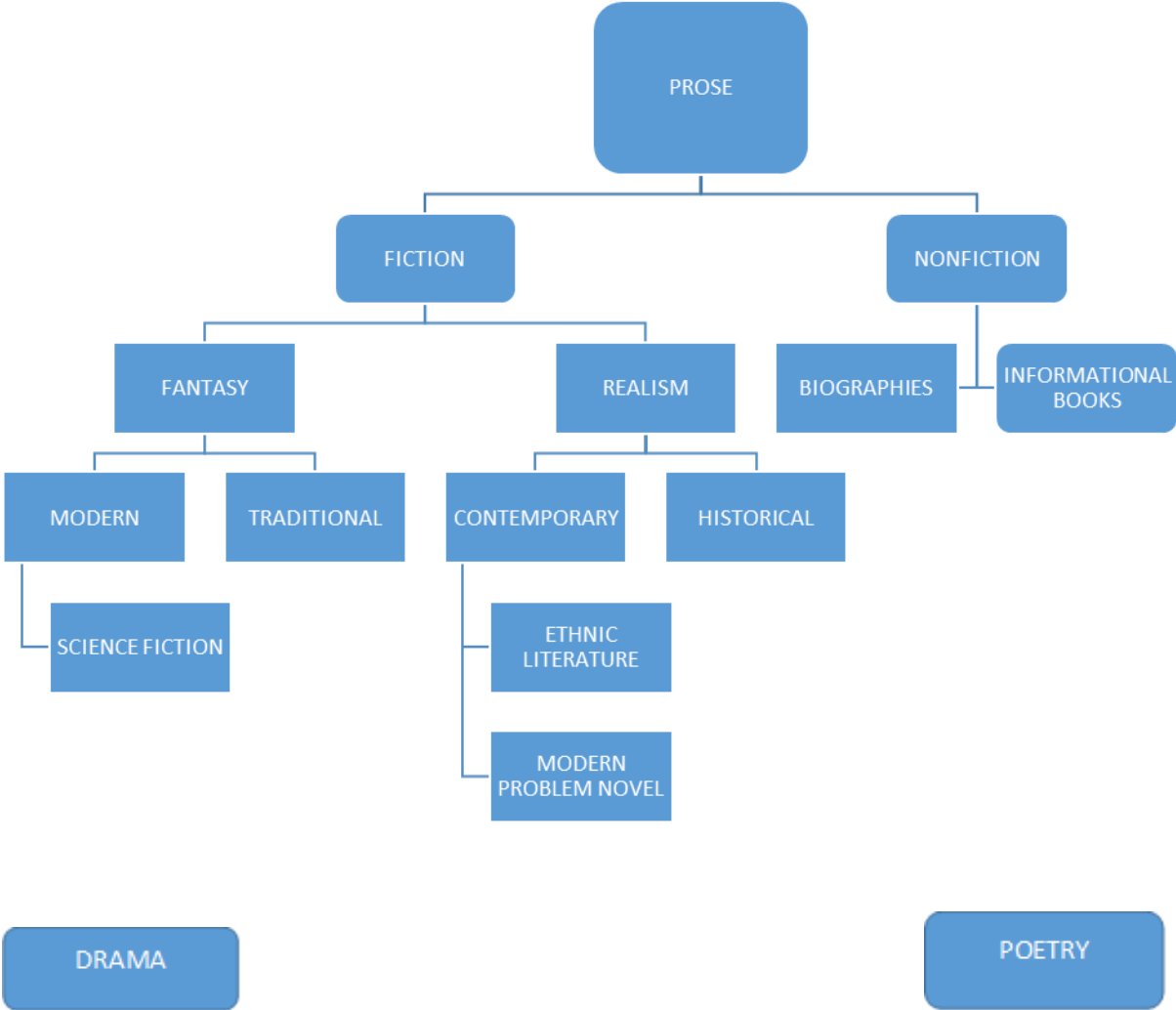


Figure 1. Genres of children's literature

### 2.3. Characteristics of children's literature

In the previous chapters a lot was said about some of the difficulties children's literature went through in the past and researchers having trouble defining what children's literature really is. Nevertheless, every book for children has almost the same features, characteristics which are significant for classifying it as literature for children.

First of all, children learn by repeating different things, imitating adults or words and actions they hear from stories told to them, songs they hear, or cartoons, movies and books shown to them. Repetition is one of the important features of children's literature, especially for very young children. Authors tend to repeat actions, positive or negative, good or bad, so children remember what those actions stand for (e.g. "Three Little Pigs" or "The Cat in the Hat").

Children's books are often full of positive and optimistic endings. Almost all books and stories have happy endings and when reading a children's book the reader expects it to end with "happily ever after". This feature is typical of and the most obvious in fairy tales, where good always defeats evil, but is also encountered in all other types of children's literature.

One of the most obvious characteristics of children's literature are children characters. Adults do appear in books for children, but as minor characters. The main characters are always children, with their own problems, concerns and adventures. As already mentioned in the earlier chapters, children identify themselves with characters because of similar things they are going through while growing up.

In addition to this, children's books have a very important didactic purpose. They are meant to teach children some important lessons about life, how things work in the world, how to deal with some problems they might have and find solutions to them. It teaches children to appreciate honesty, to be fair and responsible because every action has consequences. One of the most important traits of children is children's innocence. No matter how and where they grow up, all children have that childlike incorruptibility, which gets lost as children grow up. This feature also teaches them how to distinguish between good and evil and how to be careful in the dangerous world around them.

Another thing typical of books for children are lots of pictures. Illustrations are a significant part of every children's book because they help children understand the plot. For example, in picture books, illustrations are the ones that tell the story while there are not many words in that kind of book. In fairy tales and novels illustrations complete the story and help children imagine the characters and their surroundings.

Furthermore, stories in children's literature are compiled of fantastic characters which often have abilities such as flying or supernatural powers. They can talk to animals and turn into magical creatures. This aspect makes stories more appealing to children (and adults). Also, fantastic characters and stories provide readers with a lot of action which makes stories more interesting and tempting.

## 2.4. Characters in children's literature

Every story has to have characters. "Characters are persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it – the dialogue – and from what they do – the action" (Dujmović and Bančić, 2014:31). Throughout history literature for children has been written for educational purposes so characters have been depicted in a way that children can look up to them, connect with and learn from them. Depending on the storyline, type of story or genre, characters can be people, animals or things with human abilities (for example characters in fairytales or fables). In children's books, from fairytales and picture books to more serious reading material such as novels, characters are usually interesting and, in many cases, children can identify themselves with those characters. All children go through the same phases while growing up, therefore they have similar experiences and problems to cope with.

Characters of adults appear in children's literature mostly either as parents or teachers, on the one hand, or as villains, the "bad guys", on the other. What we encounter in most stories and novels is the fact that the main character is almost always a boy. Girl characters are also represented, however there are no many examples where girls take the lead and become initiators of some kind of action. This has changed over time as the role of women changed in the real world and nowadays we have many female authors as well as stories which have girls as leading actors.

### 3. CHILDREN'S NOVEL

"Seen outside the professional point of view, the children's novel is seen as a synecdoche for children's literature in general, ..., so it is not unusual that the first association someone outside the field of literature has for children's literature is the novel" (Hameršak and Zima, 2015:197). This does not surprise, since the novel is the most extensive literary type in literature generally. However, the term *novel*, when referring to children's literature, is a relatively new term used more often when referring to adolescent literature as a part of children's literature. One of the reasons for that is probably because in the past these types of longer texts were not considered to be novels, but other terms were used, such as short story or novella (Majhut, 2005: 11-26 qtd. in Hameršak and Zima, 2015).

There are different types of children's novels, just as is the case with adult novels. Historical, adventure, novels about childhood, fantasy and science fiction novels are only a few types most common to readers. Novels about childhood are true representations of children's life. The plots in novels about childhood include games, schooling, adventures and everything children cope with. Throughout history characters are mainly boys or groups of children with boys as leaders, and the reason for that is, as Crnković and Težak (2002) claim, that writers have more freedom if they write about boys misbehaving and going on different adventures than they would have had if the main characters are girls. "The children's novel is usually not really long, the language and sentences are easy to read and endings are happy" (Crnković and Težak, 2002: 28). This is what distinguishes the children's novel from novels for adults. The main reason for that is the fact that the target readers are children, who have to be able to read the novel, follow the plot and connect the events in the book. Nevertheless, children's novels are, considering the fact that they are longer and require more time and concentration from readers than fables, fairy tales and stories, more demanding and more complicated reading so it is not surprising that Crnković and Težak (2002) call them "border types".

In his book *Dječja književnost* (1986) Crnković claims that adventure novels are the most popular genre in children's literature. He claims that they "offer broad themes, take you from the real into the imaginary world in which everyone can easily become a hero, and represent this imaginary world as the real one" (Crnković, 1986: 187). I



would add that the same goes for fantasy and science-fiction novels as well; children read about strange and different worlds with magical creatures, imaginary worlds and heroes with supernatural powers and abilities. These novels give children an opportunity to imagine themselves as belonging to the heroes and become a part of that world.

Nowadays, the children's novel is the most common type read and enjoyed by children and adults. A significant part of compulsory reading for children in schools is made of children's novels of different genres, depending on the children's grade and level of reading.

#### 4. THE BIBLE

The Bible is a collection of texts sacred to Christians and has been translated and published in almost all languages in the world. There are also childrens' versions of it with pictures and drawings to help children understand the text more easily. "The word Bible comes from Greek ἡ βίβλος, 'he bíblos', which represents a scroll of papyrus people used to write on" (Slavić, D., 2016:23). Originally, the Bible was written in three languages: Hebrew (the majority of the Old Testament books), Aramaic (some chapters of the Old Testament) and Greek (two books from the Old Testament and the entire New Testament).

Over time some structural changes were made. Some books it contained are no longer part of the Bible as we know it today. However, not all versions are the same because there are many branches within Christianity. The number of versions is great and so is the number of translations worldwide. Structurally, there are two main parts of the Bible that are the same across all the branches and translations: The Old Testament and The New Testament. According to the Catholic canon, the Old Testament consists of 46 books and the New Testament has 27 books.

There are two ways of reading and studying the Bible: as a holy book of Christians or as literature. The Bible can be studied as any other literary work considering the fact that every book belongs to a certain genre. If the reader knows the rules of the genre, they can understand the text. For example, there are four gospels in the New Testament and all of them tell the same story, the one about Jesus, His life and His wonders. Even though they all talk about the "same" Jesus, they are written in different ways and different styles. Also, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, each wrote with a different level of complexity and details, John's gospel being the most complex and the most difficult to read.

Furthermore, the readers' approach to the Book will also be determined by their beliefs. Inasmuch understanding of the text can differ between believers and those who do not believe. Those who believe tend to interpret the stories from the Bible as a true part of the history of their religion, while those who do not believe are more likely to understand them as fiction or some other form of made-up story. Another thing that

can affect the readers' understanding of the biblical texts is their commitment to details and concentration on the text.

It is important to say that the Bible is not easy to read, mainly because it is full of symbols and images which can be interpreted in many ways. This is one of the reasons why today we have catechisms and similar books to help us understand those symbols and images. "The word catechism comes from the Greek words from *κατηχισμός* ("kata"), which means "down", and *ἠχέω* ("echein"), which means to "sound". The meaning of the phrase could be to pour a sound or to teach someone. The religious precept is called catechesis and its fundamental book is catechism" (Slavić, 2016:50). Catechisms can be very helpful if the reader wants to understand the deeper meaning of the biblical stories. Some stories from the Bible, both Old and New Testament, may seem simple and meaningless when read for the first time. However, every story from the Bible has the purpose to teach the reader some values applicable in everyday life.

## 4.1. The Old Testament

The Old Testament is the first part of the Bible. This part is a collection of books about the history of the chosen people from the beginning of the world to Jesus' birth. The Catholic version of the Old Testament consists of 46 books written from the thirteenth to the first century BC. These 46 books are divided into four big groups shown in the chart below.



Chart 1. Catholic division of the Old Testament

This part of the Bible is almost the same for Christians and Jews. The reason is simple: Christianity was born from Judaism. Therefore, both religions have the same beginning, but differ in their beliefs about the Messiah. While the Christians believe Jesus was born to save humanity, to beat death and provide people with eternal life, the Jews believe the Messiah is yet to come and Jesus was not Him. That is why Judaism does not accept or acknowledge the New Testament.

Each of these groups consists of different books which are all of great significance for the history of Christianity. The following table shows the list of books in each of the groups:

THE PENTATEUCH	HISTORICAL BOOKS	WISDOM BOOKS	THE PROPHETS
▪ Genesis	▪ Joshua	▪ Job	▪ Isaiah
▪ Exodus	▪ Judges	▪ Psalms	▪ Jeremiah
▪ Leviticus	▪ Ruth	▪ Proverbs	▪ Lamentations
▪ Numbers	▪ Samuel 1 and 2	▪ Ecclesiastes	▪ Baruch
▪ Deuteronomy	▪ Kings 1 and 2	▪ Songs	▪ Ezekiel
	▪ Chronicles 1 and 2	▪ Wisdom	▪ Daniel
	▪ Ezra	▪ Sirach	▪ Hosea
	▪ Nehemiah		▪ Joel
	▪ Tobit		▪ Amos
	▪ Judith		▪ Obadiah
	▪ Esther		▪ Jonah
	▪ Maccabees 1 and 2		▪ Micah
			▪ Nahum
			▪ Habakkuk
			▪ Zephaniah
			▪ Haggai
			▪ Zechariah
			▪ Malachi

Table 1. List of the Old Testament books

The Old Testament is written in a way not everyone can fully understand. This means that its style is not something one can come across while reading other books. It is much more complicated and even people who study the Bible and interpret its texts sometimes have problems understanding the meaning of what is written therein. Reading the Old Testament requires a lot of historical as well as religious knowledge, and in order to fully understand the text one has to be concentrated and committed to the reading.

## 4.2. The New Testament

The New Testament is the part of the Bible that tells us about Jesus Christ and his apostles. This part of the Bible is a collection of 27 books divided into five major groups.



Chart 2. Catholic division of the New Testament

The New Testament was originally written in the Greek language, which was the standard language at the time. Unfortunately, none of the original manuscripts exists today, at least none has been found so far. Today, all there is are transcripts and translations of the originals which were found over the centuries in different locations. The books in the New Testament are not arranged in chronological order, but in a logical order, beginning with the life of Jesus Christ in the gospels, all the way to the prophecies of the future in the Revelation. The following table lists the books found in the New Testament:

GOSPELS	ACTS	LETTERS OF ST. PAUL	LETTERS TO ALL CHRISTIANS	REVELATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Matthew</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Mark</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Luke</b></li> <li>▪ <b>John</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Acts of apostles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Romans</li> <li>▪ Corinthians 1 and 2</li> <li>▪ Galatians</li> <li>▪ Ephesians</li> <li>▪ Philippians</li> <li>▪ Colossians</li> <li>▪ Thessalonians 1 and 2</li> <li>▪ Timothy 1 and 2</li> <li>▪ Titus</li> <li>▪ Philemon</li> <li>▪ Hebrews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ James</li> <li>▪ Peter 1 and 2</li> <li>▪ John 1, 2 and 3</li> <li>▪ Jude</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revelation</li> </ul>

Table 2. List of the New Testament books

The New Testament indicates the beginning of a new era in the history of mankind as well as the beginning of a new religion, Christianity. For Christians, the New Testament is the fulfillment of God's promise from the Old Testament about the arrival of the Messiah. However, in the New Testament there are stories about not only Jesus Christ and his apostles, but also about lives of ordinary people, traditions, their beliefs and disbeliefs.

## 5. J.K. ROWLING

Joanne Kathleen Rowling is a British writer born on 31st of July 1965 in Yate, near Bristol. She grew up in England and south-east Wales with her father Peter, mother Anne and younger sister Di. Since she was a child Joanne had always known she wanted to be a writer. The first book she wrote was a story called "Rabbit" at the age of 6 and by the age of 11 she had written her first novel.



Photography by Debra Hurford Brown. © J.K. Rowling 2014

Picture 1: Joanne Kathleen Rowling

In 1986 Joanne graduated from the University of Exeter and over the years changed several jobs while piling notes for her series of novels about the young wizard Harry Potter. From 1997 to 2007 seven novels from the series were published and all



of them were an immediate success. Everyone fell in love with the imaginary world of a wizarding world well-hidden from the eyes of ordinary people. These novels have been translated into over eighty languages and have become popular all over the world. Joanne won multiple awards for the series such as Booksellers Association Author of the Year in 1998 and 1999, Lifetime Achievement Award by British Book Awards in 2008 and Companion of Honour for services to literature and philanthropy in 2017. In 2001 Warner Bros. released a film adaptation of the first novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and over the next decade other adaptations have been released, each of them turning into an immediate success.

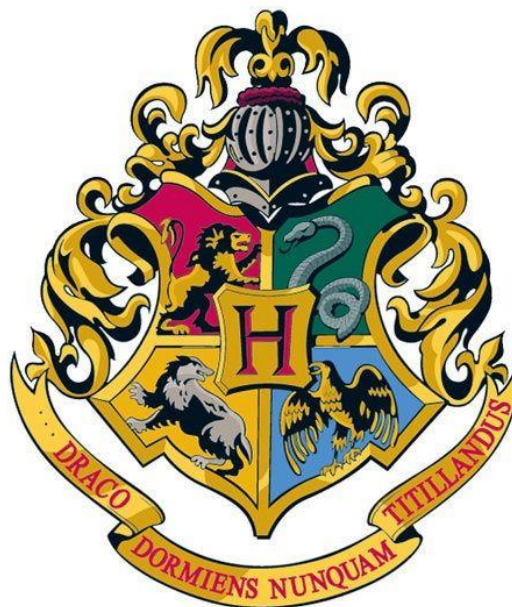
Even though she is mostly popular for the Harry Potter series, Joanne also writes crime novels under the pseudonym Robert Galbraith. These novels are about the private detective Cormoran Strike and have been adapted for a television series. Besides being a successful and globally famous writer, Joanne supports many charities and foundations for children and people with diseases such as multiple sclerosis and cancer. She is the founder and president of the international children's charity Lumos and of The Volant Charitable Trust, which help many people over the world.

## 5.1. Harry Potter novels

The series of novels about the young wizard Harry Potter has become widely popular over the last two decades. The series contains seven novels about the adventures of Harry and his friends and colleagues from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Each novel gained almost immediate success, with critics being also pretty much inclined to them. The novels are easy to read, interesting and it is easy for the reader to imagine themselves as one of the characters.

The first reason for the popularity of the series is the school of magic itself. Hogwarts is one the most famous schools in the world of magic. It is located somewhere in the Scottish Highlands, but the precise location is not stated in order to protect the students and their teachers from the eyes of the non-magic people. The school is funded by the Ministry of Magic and is described as a beautiful castle with lots of towers and a fascinating landscape around it. However, to the non-magical people it looks just like an old ruined castle on a hill.

The school has four houses: Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw and Slytherin. Each of them has its own colour, is famous for a particular value and has its own emblematic animal.



Picture 2: Hogwarts School logo

At the beginning of each year the first-year students are sorted into one of the houses by the "Sorting Hat". The Hat decides which house a student will go to depending on their qualities and characteristics. Children start school at the age of 11 and stay there for seven years. Over the years they learn how to use magic for good purposes, defend themselves from dark magic and make potions out of different types of herbs and chemicals. As in ordinary schools, students have classes throughout the day and homework to do after classes. They have extracurricular activities such as Quiddich, Potions Club, Frog Choir or Art Club. As students grow up, their subjects get harder and more complicated, just as with ordinary children in ordinary schools.

Each sequel begins in almost the same way (except the last one): in late summer, while students are still on summer holidays. It continues with their preparation for the new school year and their return to Hogwarts by Hogwarts Express, the train which leaves from London's railway station King's Cross, platform 9 3/4. Throughout each novel Harry and his friends have different adventures, one being more dangerous and interesting than the other. All of these adventures are somehow connected to Voldemort, the dark wizard who murdered Harry's parents when Harry was a baby. At the end of each novel, good defeats evil, students end another school year and summer holidays start again.

The second, and maybe most important reason for the popularity of the series is that the books show imaginary people in a fantasy world living real lives. Wizards and witches have their everyday obligations just like regular people do. They have jobs, talk about politics, play sports, listen to the radio, dance, have weddings, give birth to children, work in their gardens, go shopping and do almost everything else ordinary people do in their lives. The only difference is they do these things with the help of magic. However, they have to be careful when using magic since they must not be seen by the non-magical people, whom they call the Muggles.

Considering all of the above, together with a great attention to details in the description of characters as well as their clothes and houses, it does not surprise that so many people, both children and adults, read these novels.

## 6. CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS AND OTHER ELEMENTS IN THE HARRY POTTER SERIES

A symbol is a sign for something or someone and it is used to represent something else. Objects can be used as symbols for something else if many people connect that object with the same meaning (for example four-leaf clover is a symbol of luck). In literature symbolism is usually used to give a deeper meaning to the story and it is often hard to find the real meanings of literary symbols in order to interpret them

The Harry Potter series has been a subject of research ever since the first novel was published in 1997. Critics, scholars and moralists have been studying these novels and giving their opinions on the topic. The novels have been compared to other novels with similar topics (such as *Lord of the Rings* by John Ronald Reuel Tolkien or *The Chronicles of Narnia* by Clive Staples Lewis), researched from a historical point of view or, like in this thesis, from a religious point of view. Every novel teems with symbols waiting for someone to interpret them.

For the purpose of this thesis the main resources were the Harry Potter novels themselves and the Bible. Some symbols and connections were obvious and easy to find. However, others required a deeper understanding of the texts and were harder to explain. As I have already said, some symbols could be interpreted in another way and I do not state that my opinion is the only correct.

## 6.1. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is the first novel from the Harry Potter series. We read about a soon-to-be 11-year-old orphan boy Harry who lives with his aunt Petunia, uncle Vernon and their son Dudley Dursley. His whole life Harry has been told his parents died in a car accident when he was a baby. This was a lie his aunt and uncle made up to cover up the fact that Harry's parents were wizards. For the Dursleys, this was the biggest secret they hoped no one will ever find out.

Problems for the Dursleys begin right before Harry's 11th birthday when letters from Hogwards start to come. His aunt and uncle try to stop the letters in order to keep their biggest secret safe. No matter how hard they try, it is impossible and eventually Harry finds out everything about his past. He finds out his parents were killed by a very powerful wizard called Voldemort who was not able to kill Harry, also known as "the boy who lived". This phrase is one of the first symbols connecting these novels to the Bible. Harry was not supposed to survive such a severe attack with a spell used only with the intention to kill. However, not only did he survive, but Harry also beat death, just like Jesus did on the cross. Harry is not the only one who can be linked to Jesus: Harry's parents died so that he can live. Lily and James Potter did everything in their power to protect their son doing almost the same thing Jesus did to redeem people. The love they felt for the ones they cared about gave them strength to fight to the very end of their lives. This love is what helped Harry beat death: the strength of his mother's love that protected him was his shield against the deadly spell Voldemort used. One thing Voldemort did not count on is the protection of love. Love does not die, it never ends and in the New Testament there is the quote: "When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.'" (1 Cor. 15: 54).<sup>2</sup> Harry's mother died so he could live. Harry was left with only a scar in the shape of a lightning on his forehead, from the spell which was supposed to kill him. In Christianity, a lightning is a sign of God and His power. "He shot his arrows and scattered the enemy, with great bolts of lightning he routed them." So we read in the book of Psalms (18:14), and Luke writes in his gospel about the greatness of God's power: "The

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<sup>2</sup> The Holy Bible, New International Version. [Colorado Springs]: Biblica, 2011. BibleGateway.com. Web.

seventy-two returned with joy and said, 'Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.' He replied, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.'" (Luke 10:17-20). The fact that the scar on Harry's forehead protected him from evil can be interpreted as God's protection through mother's love.

There are other connections between Harry Potter and Jesus. To begin with, it is important to state that Harry Potter is a fictional character from novels, while Jesus Christ is, for Christians and everyone else who believe in him, a real person who lived and walked on earth 2000 years ago. The first connection is in chapter two of the first novel when we find out that "Harry was used to spiders, because the cupboard under the stairs was full of them, and that was where he slept" (p. 20) . How is it possible for someone destined to become so famous to sleep under the stairs? The reason is his uncle and aunt, who did not believe in magic and the magical world, nor did they believe in Harry and his abilities, were afraid someone from their neighbourhood might find out about Harry's abilities and think they are weird. This is why there was no other place in their home for him. On the other hand, there is Jesus, God's Son, who was born in a shed and slept in a manger "because there was no guest room available for them" (Luke 2, 7), so Joseph and Mary had nowhere else to go. The people of that time did not know Jesus was the Messiah, the one to beat death. Both Jesus and Harry had to prove themselves to people through their lives and their deeds.

Further in the book Harry finds out who he really is and Hagrid takes him shopping for everything he will need for school. They enter a bar called Leaky Cauldron, in an old building in busy London, in order to be able to go to the secret part of London with shops for wizards. This bar is visible to everyone, but regular people, the Muggles, do not even notice it. People ignore it as if it is not there and the magical world is right in front of them. People do not want to know or see that world. We can compare this part with the fact that many people do not believe in God or Jesus. They have no proof of His existence, therefore they do not believe. "In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4). For those who do believe, non-believers are like blind people who do not want to see beyond this world. The same is with regular people and magicians.

When Hagrid and Harry enter Leaky Cauldron, everyone stops talking and they all just look at the two of them. After a moment of silence Harry is surrounded by a lot of people who want to meet him and shake his hand. As Harry is some kind of celebrity in the wizarding world, everyone knows who he is and how he defeated Voldemort. This situation can be compared with the Biblical scene of Jesus entering Jerusalem. Everyone knew who he was and a crowd gathered to greet him when he came. Luke wrote in his gospel: "And as he rode along, the people spread clothes on the road in front of him. When Jesus was starting down the Mount of Olives, his large crowd of disciples were happy and praised God because of all the miracles they had seen." (Luke 19:36-37). For the Jewish people of that time spreading clothes on the road was a way of welcoming a famous person. Jesus was praised for all the deeds of power he had done over time and Harry was praised for the one deed of power he did when he was a baby. Both of them became famous because the word about them spread among people. Jesus performed miracles: revived Lazarus from the dead (John 11, 1-44), changed water into wine during the wedding at Cana in Galilee (John 2, 1-11), etc.

On the other hand, there is one thing, if we exclude magic, that opposes the Christian religion, and this is the celebration of Halloween. For Christians Halloween is a pagan tradition that should not be celebrated. This tradition comes one day before Christian All Saint's Day (November 1st). Over the past years the celebration of Halloween has started to gain popularity all over the world, even though it was earlier never celebrated, especially in countries where Christianity is the main religion. Despite the fact that Halloween has its origins in Europe, this holiday is mostly celebrated in America where people dress in costumes, carve pumpkins and children go trick-or-treating. Halloween is often connected with occultism, Satan and evil spirits. Therefore, Christians should not participate in such celebrations.

In the Harry Potter novels, however, Christmas is celebrated as well. This is the one opportunity for the students at Hogwarts to go home and visit their families for the holidays. For those who stay, school and dormitories are decorated to make them feel more like home. There is nothing in the novel that would suggest which religion characters belong to, but Christmas is important. However, this holiday is celebrated more as a secular holiday than a religious Christian holiday. Nevertheless, for Harry it has significance in his emotional life. For the first time in his life Harry feels that he means something to someone and he gets presents. Even though Christmas is not

about presents, here they are important because of the feeling of acceptance Harry never had with the Dursleys.

There is one more thing about the Christmas presents that is important for Harry. One of them is the Invisibility Cloak that used to belong to his father. With the help of this cloak Harry is able to roam the halls without being noticed and that is exactly what he does. He goes to the restricted part of the library and after being almost caught he enters a room that has only a mirror in it, called the Mirror of Erised. This mirror is special because it shows the deepest desires of the person looking at it. When Harry looks at it, he sees his entire family and his parents who he never had the chance to meet. Few days later, Harry takes Ron with him and Ron sees himself as the Head Boy (having a lot of siblings, Ron never had the chance to be the best and that is what he wishes for). The last time Harry sees the mirror is while fighting Voldemort at the end of the novel. Harry sees himself with the Philosopher's Stone in his pocket and his wish comes true, the Stone appears in the pocket of his cloak. It is written in the Bible, in Proverbs: "What the wicked dreads will come upon him, but the desire of the righteous will be granted" (10:24). Harry's desire is for the greater good, he is not selfish, while, on the other hand, Voldemort wants the Stone all to himself in order to become immortal and his desire destroys him once more.



## 6.2. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

As Harry spends his summer with his cousins, the only fun he has is teasing his cousin with magic. Teasing is all Harry can do because he is forbidden to use magic outside school, but his family does not know that. Harry is not happy to be back to their home, to the place that made his childhood miserable, with people who kept his real world hidden from him and hated everything connected to the world of magic. However, Harry grew up to be a nice boy who treats everyone equally, no matter who they are. There are many things Harry is yet to learn about "his" world, and having house-elves as servants is one of these things. Dobby is one of these elves and he comes to warn Harry not to go back to school since he will be in great danger and awful things will happen. Those terrible things do happen throughout the year. At the very end of the book we find out the source of everything is a basilisk, a serpent that is able to kill just by looking someone directly in their eyes.

The snake, as a symbol, has many meanings, depending on the specific culture and religion. For Jewish and Christian people, the snake has different meanings and is mentioned many times throughout the Bible (both Old and New Testament). In the Book of Genesis, the snake is a trickster who lured Eve with the promise of becoming like God. It comes to Eve and tricks her into eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, even though Eve knew it was the only tree Adam and she were not allowed to eat from in the Garden of Eden. The snake deceived Eve by telling her nothing bad would happen and her gullibility got Adam and she expelled from Eden. God cursed the snake by an eternal rivalry between her and women's progeny. In the Book of Genesis the snake is said to be "more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made" (Gen. 3:1) and it represents a mask for a creature who is against God and an enemy of humans. It came to represent Devil. In the Book of Exodus, the snake is mentioned as one of the symbols of God's warning to the Egyptian people. Moses was chosen and sent by God to free the Israelites from their slavery in Egypt and lead them to the Promised Land. God sent Moses to the pharaoh to ask for his people's freedom, "the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Perform a miracle,' then say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh, and it will become a snake.'" (Ex. 7:8-9). The snake is one of the symbols of God's power. Another example where snakes represent God's power is in the Book of Numbers.

Moses and Aaron led the Israelites through the desert and people got tired of travelling and started to doubt that they would ever reach their destination. God saw that, got angry and sent poisonous snakes as a warning for the people. The Israelites repented having ever doubted God, and Moses asked Him to have mercy on them. "The Lord said to Moses, 'Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.'" (Num. 21: 8). The word *look* is mentioned in this example in the Bible and in the novel as well. The main difference between the two is that, in the novel, if one looks at the basilisk directly in the eyes, they are immediately killed, while in the Book of Numbers one look at the poisonous brass snake would heal anyone bitten. In the New Testament snake is mentioned in Corinthians (1 Cor. 10: 9) as a warning to all the people not to test God because those who tried before were killed by snakes. This is the reference to the Old Testament and the anger God felt towards people. It is also mentioned in the Book of Revelation (12: 3-17) where the Satan is depicted as a dragon or a snake which symbolizes the power of evil which confronts God and his people.

We have already learned Harry is a special wizard. Even though he bends the rules and disobeys orders quite often, he never uses his powers to hurt anyone. On the contrary, he uses them to help his friends in trouble. From the examples above we can see resemblances between situations and people from the Bible and *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. First of all, talking snakes and talking to snakes. In the Bible and the novel there are examples of people talking to snakes and understanding them. However, the context is a bit different. In the Bible, when the first encounter between human and snake occurs, the snake is cunning enough to persuade naive Eve to do something forbidden. If we look at this from the point of view that Satan is working through the snake, we are able to compare this with Voldemort acting through the basilisk to be able to kill Harry. Voldemort is smart and cunning and he goes through all the means possible to get to Harry. His ability to persuade people to believe him helps Voldemort gain trust of Ginny Weasley, Ron's little sister, and to use her as a bait to lure Harry into the Chamber. Why Voldemort is not able to kill Harry himself? In the first novel we learn that Voldemort was destroyed when he tried to kill Harry as a baby. He became so weak and not able to live on his own, but his followers help him stay alive and gain strength for his return. The fact that for many years he was able to survive through his followers, shows us how powerful a wizard he used to be. Another

similarity between the examples above and the Bible is the fact that both, Harry and Moses, had the ability to control snakes, but at first they do not have confidence in doing so. In chapter 11 of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* we read about Harry and his friends joining the Duelling Club, run by professors Snape and Lockhart. Malfoy and Harry fight each other and Malfoy produces a spell which creates a snake ready to strike.

Harry wasn't sure what made him do it. He wasn't even aware of deciding to do it. All he knew was that his legs were carrying him forward as though he was on castors and that he had shouted stupidly at the snake, 'Leave him!' And miraculously – inexplicably – the snake slumped to the floor, docile as a thick black garden hose, its eyes now on Harry. Harry felt the fear drain out of him. He knew the snake wouldn't attack anyone now, though how he knew it, he couldn't have explained. (p. 205)

This is Harry's second time to be speaking to snakes, and not being aware of his ability being rare, he does not know how special he is. On the other hand there is Moses, chosen by God to lead the Israelites from slavery to freedom. Moses was born into an Israeli family right at the time when the pharaoh (presumably Ramses II) ruled the country. The pharaoh ordered all male children of the Israelites to be killed, so Jochebed, Moses' mother, saved him by putting him into a basket and letting him down the river to be saved, and raised, as it turned out, by an Egyptian: the pharaoh's sister. After killing an Egyptian guard for hurting one of his people, Moses had to run away, only to return as a minister of God to free the Israelites. Just as Harry, Moses was special and when he was sent to the pharaoh to ask freedom for the Israeli people, he was not aware of his abilities.

"Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The Lord did not appear to you'?" Then the Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" "A staff," he replied. The Lord said, "Throw it on the ground." Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. Then the Lord said to him, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail." So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand. "This," said the Lord, "is so that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has appeared to you." (Ex. 4:1-5)

Throughout the novel there are multiple attacks mentioned and all the victims are stiff, with their eyes wide open in shock. As already mentioned, the basilisk had not only deadly fangs, but a deadly look as well. One look at its eyes could petrify anyone to death.

But no one's died – because no one looked it straight in the eye. Colin saw it through his camera. The Basilisk burned up all the film inside it, But Colin just got Petrified. Justin... Justin must've seen the Basilisk through Nearly Headless Nick! Nick got the full blast of it, but he couldn't die again... and Hermione and that Ravenclaw Prefect were found with a mirror next to them. Hermione had just realised the monster was a Basilisk. I bet you anything she warned the first person she met to look round corners with a mirror first! And that girl pulled out her mirror – and –'

Ron's jaw had dropped.

'And Mrs Norris?' he whispered eagerly.

Harry thought hard, picturing the scene on the night of Hallowe'en.

'The water...' he said slowly, 'the flood from Moaning Myrtle's bathroom. I bet you Mrs Norris only saw the reflection...' (p. 307)

For those who were petrified there was a cure: a potion made from the mandrakes. In the novel, Hermione provides a definition of the mandrakes: "'Mandrake, or Mandragora, is a powerful restorative,' said Hermione, sounding as usual as though she had swallowed the textbook. 'It is used to return people who have been transfigured or cursed, to their original state.'" (p. 96). However, the mandrake is not an imaginary plant. It exists, and according to Merriam-Webster dictionary it is "a Mediterranean herb (*Mandragora officinarum*) of the nightshade family with large ovate leaves, greenish-yellow or purple flowers, and a large usually forked root resembling a human in form and formerly credited with magical properties". In the past this plant was believed to have healing powers such as curing sexual disorders. It is also mentioned in the Book of Genesis with reference to Rachel, one of Jacob's wives, who was barren. It is assumed that this plant is connected to the birth of Joseph, however this cannot be proved. One of the reasons this plant was considered to cure infertility is the resemblance between the root of this plant and the human being. In the novel the plant is described as a humanlike plant which grows up in stages akin to human. Both have

human characteristics: at first they are babies who cry a lot, then they become "moody and secretive, meaning that they were fast leaving childhood", and then they are ready to be used in potions. In this particular case the plant was used to cure the petrified students from the school.

### 6.3. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* is the third novel of the Harry Potter series and one of the most significant for Harry because here he finds out a lot about his past and his parents' death. This sequel reveals Harry the real reason his parents died and the real traitor, whose guilt was never proven. Harry finds out that he has a godfather, his father's best friend and the best man at his parents' wedding, Sirius Black, who is a criminal. Sirius is accused of killing 12 Muggles and a wizard called Peter Pettigrew the night Harry's parents died. He has now escaped Azkaban (the most strictly guarded prison in the wizarding world) and is trying to prove everyone his innocence for the crime he is accused of. The main motive of this sequel is betrayal. Harry has already found out the truth about his parents' death, he knows they were killed by Voldemort, but he still does not know the story behind it. Bit by bit he collects all the pieces of this puzzle and finds out the real truth the one which turns his life upside down. When Harry was born, his parents were warned about Voldemort trying to find them in order to kill Harry, so they were advised to go into hiding and use a spell which would keep them safe, Fidelius Charm. Using this charm requires a Secret Keeper, a person of trust. Harry's parents died because their Secret Keeper betrayed them and Voldemort found out their location. However, no one knew that James and Lily changed their Secret Keeper; it was not Sirius Black, whom everyone thought James and Lily had chosen, but Peter Pettigrew, another friend of the Potters', who told Voldemort where they were. The reason why everyone thought Sirius is traitor and the murderer is because people were sure he was the Secret Keeper and a lot of witnesses had seen him at the scene of crime when all those Muggles and Peter had been killed. The real truth is not revealed until Harry finds out that his Defence Against Dark Arts professor, Remus J. Lupin, Sirius Black, Peter Pettigrew and his father were best friends at school. They used to be inseparable and shared a secret that other students were never supposed to find out. Lupin was bitten by a werewolf as a child and became one himself, but his professors allowed him to attend school with special precautions during the full moon. When the other three found out about his secret, they trained themselves to become "animagi", wizards who have the ability to turn into animals. According to the novel, werewolves are dangerous only for humans, and Lupin's friends figured out how to become animals during the full moon when Lupin would be transformed. They had to be careful no one saw them because the Ministry

of Magic kept records about wizards and witches with that ability. This explains how Peter fled the scene leaving Sirius with 12 dead Muggles; he turned himself into a rat, which was his animal shape, and ran away. For 12 years he has lived as a pet rat with the Weasleys.

The symbolics is significant and closely related to the story about Jesus' betrayal. However, the connection here is not between Jesus and Harry, but between Jesus and James and Lily Potter, Harry's parents. Like Jesus, they were betrayed by their friend, someone who was supposed to be guarding them, keeping their secret safe. During the Last Supper, Jesus told his Apostoles: "But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him" (Luke 22, 21-22)! Only a few hours later, Jesus was betrayed. Judas "sold" Jesus for thirty pieces of silver while, on the other hand, Peter Pettigrew revealed Harry's parents secret because he was afraid of Voldemort's power. He feared that Voldemort would kill him if he did not tell him where the Potters were hiding. The only difference between Judas and Peter Pettigrew is that, after realizing what they had done and what happened, Judas committed suicide by hanging himself while Peter went into hiding.

At the very end of this sequel, when Pettigrew's secret is uncovered, he reaches by all means possible to save his life and even though everyone knows who he really is, what he did and for whom he is working, Peter is still trying to find a way out of this situation. It is written in the gospels that Jesus told Peter: "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me" (Luke 22, 34). With almost the same words Peter denied knowing Jesus and Pettigrew denied working for Voldemort and being a traitor.

The following paragraph is a part of Luke's Gospel. Peter disowns Jesus after the latter's arrest:

And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." But he denied it. "*Woman, I don't know him*" he said. A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "*Man, I am not!*" Peter replied. About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." Peter replied, "*Man, I don't know what you're talking about!*" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly. (Luke 22, 54-62)

The following quote is about Pettigrew denying knowing or working for Voldemort:

'What, scared to hear your old master's name?' said Black. 'I don't blame you, Peter. His lot aren't very happy with you, are they?'

'*Don't know – what you mean, Sirius –* ' muttered Pettigrew, his breathing faster than ever. His whole face was shining with sweat now.

'You haven't been hiding from me for twelve years,' said Black. 'You've been hiding from Voldemort's old supporters. I heard things in Azkaban, Peter... they all think you're dead, or you'd have to answer to them ... I've heard them screaming all sorts of things in their sleep. Sound like they think the double-crosser double-crossed them. Voldemort went to the Potters' on your information ... and Voldemort met his downfall there. And not all Voldemort's supporters ended up in Azkaban, did they? There are still plenty out here, biding their time, pretending they've seen the error of their ways ... If they ever got wind that you were still alive, Peter – '

'*Don't know ... what you're talking about ...*' said Pettigrew again, more shrilly than ever. He wiped his face on his sleeve and looked up at Lupin. 'You don't believe this – this madness, Remus –'

'I must admit, Peter, I have difficulty in understanding why an innocent man would want to spend twelve years as a rat,' said Lupin evenly.

'Innocent, but scared!' squealed Pettigrew. 'If Voldemort's supporters were after me, it was because I put one of their best men in Azkaban – the spy, Sirius Black!'



Black's face contorted.

'How dare you,' he growled, sounding suddenly like the bear-sized dog he had been. 'I, a spy for Voldemort? When did I ever sneak around people who were stronger and more powerful than myself? But you, Peter – I'll never understand why I didn't see you were the spy from the start. You always liked big friends who'd look after you, didn't you? It used to be us ... me and Remus ... and James ...'

Pettigrew wiped his face again; he was almost panting for breath.

*'Me, a spy ... must be out of your mind ... never ... don't know how you can say such a –'*

'Lily and James only made you Secret Keeper because I suggested it,' Black hissed, so venomously that Pettigrew took a step backwards. 'I thought it was the perfect plan ... a bluff ... Voldemort would be sure to come after me, would never dream they'd use a weak, talentless thing like you ... it must have been the finest moment of your miserable life, telling Voldemort you could hand him the Potters.' (p. 390-392)

Both Peters denied knowing those they were close to. Both did it three times in a short period of time and both were scared for their own safety. However, there is a big difference between the two: Pettigrew tries to make excuses and justify his actions hoping Lupin and Black would forgive him and spare his life, while Peter the apostle felt repentance after denying Jesus. After the rooster crowed, the biblical Peter remembered the words from the night before and started to cry.

Another thing connecting Judas and Peter Pettigrew is the fact they were both "rats". The word *rat* can be used as a synonym for the word *traitor* and as both of them betrayed their friends, both of them are traitors, rats. Biblically, rats are thought of as unclean animals (Lev. 11, 29). However, there are not many places in the Bible where rats are mentioned. Nevertheless, they are never mentioned as something good or worthy, mostly because of their nature, their way of living and doing harm to people. Peter Pettigrew being an animagus whose animal shape was a rat may be seen as a symbol of him becoming an atrocious traitor and Voldemort's supporter.

In addition to Judas being a traitor there is the symbol of a kiss. The kiss usually represents something beautiful, an act of kindness towards someone one cares about. However, in the novel and in Judas case in the Bible, the kiss represents death. Judas

betrayed Jesus with a kiss which led to his death on the cross. He turned something so beautiful and so intimate into a symbol of betrayal. He gave Jesus the *kiss of death*, which, according to Merriam-Webster dictionary, means "something (such as an act or association) ultimately causing ruin". This kind of kiss is directly connected to the Dementors from the Harry Potter novels. The Dementors are dreadful creatures who feed on people's happiness. They are guards in the Azkaban prison and they cause people to lose hope, become miserable and even go mad if they spend a long period of time around them. The scariest thing Dementors can do is kiss someone. Dementor's kiss is "what Dementors do to those they wish to destroy utterly." (p. 262). The person kissed by a Dementor is not killed, but is left soulless because with that Kiss, ones soul is sucked out of their body and "You'll just – exist. As an empty shell." (p. 262).

#### 6.4. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire is the fourth sequel of the series. Readers are already familiar with Harry, his best friends Hermione and Ron and the school of witchcraft and wizardry they attend, Hogwarts. The school starts at the beginning of September, but the novel, the same as the sequels before, starts late in the summer, during the summer holidays, which Harry spends with his aunt and uncle, who are Muggles and fear and dislike everything about Harry and his magic world.

There is one thing Harry is looking forward to. He was invited by the Weasleys to go to the Quidditch World Cup with them and spend the rest of the holidays in their company. The Quidditch World Cup is real fun for Harry because he has never seen so many witches and wizards in one place. When the game ends and everyone goes back to their tents, something weird happens. The wizards dressed in black robes capture a family of Muggles. Those wizards are called the Death-Eaters and they are Voldemort's followers. The thing that disturbed everyone is the conjuring of the Dark Mark by an unknown wizard. The Dark Mark is shaped like a skull "with a serpent protruding from its mouth like a tongue" (p. 109). In Christianity, the skull is mostly connected with death, actually it is the place where Jesus died. "They came to a place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull")" (Matt. 27:33). It does not surprise that the Dark Mark resembles death and evil. Voldemort and his supporters are evil magicians whose main goal is killing everyone who is not a pure-blooded wizard or who disagrees with their opinion. Voldemort has a special way of distinguishing his followers. "Every Death-Eater had the sign burnt into him by the Dark Lord. It was a means of distinguishing each other, and his means of summoning us to him." (p. 597). And the Dark Lord summons them once more.

At the beginning of this sequel the reader is informed of Voldemort's whereabouts. After having been beaten by Harry Potter once again, when Harry was only a first year student, and not being able to steal the Philosopher's Stone which would grant Voldemort eternal life and his return as a powerful Dark Lord, Voldemort became as weak and powerless as an infant and was not able to take care of himself. However, after escaping from the hands of Dumbledore, Peter Pettigrew, the traitor who betrayed Harry's parents, went back to serve Voldemort and to help him gain strength to rise again. Voldemort returned to the house where his father used to live.

This house was once the most beautiful house in the village, but since the Riddles were killed in it, it was mostly vacant and that is the reason Voldemort thought of it as a perfect shelter until he is ready to rise again.

Harry is different from his peers for having a special bond with Voldemort, the scar on his forehead in the shape of a lightning. This scar hurt him when he is near Voldemort. It hurt him only once before in his life, and that was when Voldemort was in Hogwards during Harry's first year. Harry dreams of Voldemort and how he has just killed someone and is planing to kill Harry. When he wakes up, his scar hurts him the same way it did that time in Hogwards. For Christians scars represent a symbol of a struggle survived. They are like vivid symbols God leaves on their bodies to remind them how strong they can be. For Harry, his scar was a constant reminder of the struggle he survived when he was a baby and a source of protection against Voldemort.

Harry has no idea Voldemort plans to use him to regain his own power and rise even stronger than he was before. Voldemort found out that during the school year a special tournament would take place in Hogwards. This tournament is called the Triwizard Tournament and is a competition between the three largest European schools. Each school has one representative who must be over seventeen years old. Harry wants to enter the competition, but he is underage, being only fourteen.

The competitors from the three schools are chosen by the Goblet of Fire. In Christianity, goblets (also called chalices) are objects treated with great respect. They are a crucial part of the Christian liturgy during the Eucharist celebration, containing what Christians believe to be the body and blood of Christ. In the novel the Goblet of Fire is of great significance for it decides which students would compete in the tournament. Each student (over seventeen) has the oportunity to qualify for the tournament by placing their names in the Goblet. This act is similar to the act of the priest before the Holy Communion. Before the Holy Communion the priest breaks off a small piece of the Communion bread and places it into the chalice with the wine.

The tournament is divided into three tasks, occuring at different times during the school year. Each task requires different skills and knowledge from the contestors and each has its own risks, challenges and obstacles they have to overcome. Harry's name ends up in the Goblet, even though he is not old enough, and he becomes the fourth

champion. His life becomes a horror after that. No one believes him he did not place his name in the Goblet, even his best friend Ron is against him. Once again Harry is a target of everyone's hatred. Once again he has to relive the horror of being judged by everyone around him. This situation is one more example how Harry finds himself in a situation similar to Jesus's entry into Jerusalem when everyone glorified him like a king (Luke 19:28-40), though not long afterwards he was turned to his judges (Luke 23: 1-25). No matter how hard Harry tries to prove his innocence, the majority of the school does not believe him.

Hogwards students are taught to be honest, brave and hardworking people. However, during the contest each champion has a little help by adults revealing them clues which would help them finish the task. This is one of the things contrary to the Bible and Christianity. "Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out" (Prov. 10:9). The Bible is strict about doing what is right even if it does not help you achieve your goal. "You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another" (Lev. 19:11). However, it is normal in these competitions for everyone to cheat in order to win. Winning and proving yourself the best is the most important thing for everyone, except Dumbledore. Dumbledore does not know Harry got help from Hagrid, and if he found out, he would not appreciate Hagrid helping Harry cheat. Hagrid shows Harry what the champions, he among them, will be facing in the first task and Harry is frightened. They are going to have to fight a dragon. Dragons are popular creatures in the world of magic. Ron's older brother, Charlie, works with dragons, explores the species and takes care of them. For this competition Charlie and his colleagues provided four dragons, one for each champion. On the other hand, dragons in the Bible usually represent something fearful and dreadful, not necessarily evil, but dangerous and people worshiped them. They are mentioned in both Old (Isa. 14:29; Dan. 14: 23-27) and New Testament (Rev 12; Rev 13). In the book of Revelation, the dragon is associated with the snake and Satan (Rev 20:2), who has to be defeated so the good can live. In the present task in the novel, the champions have to deceive the dragon and steal the golden egg from its nest. Their fight with the dragon is like the fight between David and Goliath (1 Sam. 17:40-54). The champions have to be inventive in order to approach the dragon and steal the golden egg. Just like David defeated Goliath, each of the champions manages to get hold of the egg.

The second task takes place at the lake near the castle. Again, Harry, like the other champions, has help in figuring out what the task will be. The golden egg that the champions had to steal in the first task contains the clue about the task. The champions will get one hour to save the one they would miss the most. They do not know what or who they will have to save, only the fact that it is important to get the task done within one hour. This is a really hard task because the champions have to find a way to breathe under water. Ron and Hermione spend days and hours in the library with Harry trying to find a way to hold his breath for one hour, but it is Dobby (the house-elf Harry helped get freedom) who really helps Harry and gives him a kind of seaweed which gives him gills so he can breathe. The thing Harry is not aware of is that even if the champions do not accomplish their goal and finish within the one-hour limit, none of their friends will be hurt. Dumbledore would not let that happen. This situation is similar to the one from the Bible when God wanted to test Abraham's loyalty (Gen. 22:1-19). Abraham and his wife Sarah were quite old when they had their son Isaac. God wanted to see how loyal Abraham was and what he was ready to do to please God's will so He told Abraham to take his son and offer him as a sacrifice to God. Abraham did what God wanted him to do, but when God saw Abraham was ready to sacrifice his one and only son, he stopped Abraham and promised him great offspring because of his loyalty. Almost the same thing happened here. Harry does not know, no matter what, that no one would be hurt. He dives into the lake and is the first one to find the loved ones. Each champion has to save only one person. However, Harry cannot leave the others under the lake not knowing when the other champions would arrive. In the end, Harry fights with the Merpeople to let him save the other champion's little sister and for that deed Harry is awarded extra points.

The third task seems not to be as hard as the two before it. At least that is what the champions thought when they heard what they would have to do. Their task will be to go through the maze set on the Quiddich pitch and reach the Triwizard Cup placed in the centre of the maze. The champion who reaches and touches it first is the winner. The maze represents life: everyone has their ups and downs, right and wrong turns, their difficulties and obstacles to cope with. Even though the Bible does not mention mazes or labyrinths, there are many places where following the right path is mentioned. For Christians, God is in the center of the maze, and to get to God one has to follow Jesus's path. "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father

except through me" (John 14:6). In Christianity everything is possible when there is faith. Even if one goes the wrong way, the Bible says "in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" (Prov. 3:6). It seemed simple for Harry and the other champions, go through the maze, touch the Cup and that is it, but the labyrinth is full of obstacles and creatures the champions have to pass to get to the center. Harry seems to have an easy way through the maze, not many obstacles or dangerous situations. Fleur Delacour, a girl from the school called Beauxbatons, is the first one to give up. Viktor Krum, a boy from Durmstrang, is the second. Cedric and Harry, both from Hogwards are left in the maze. They reach the centre and find what they are looking for. As they are both from the same school, their school wins either way, so Cedric and Harry agree to touch the Cup at the same time and they will both be winners. As soon as they touch the Triwizard Cup, it takes them to the place from the beginning of the novel. The Cup is a Portkey and this is a part of Voldemort's plan. The Portkey is an object used for fast travelling in wizarding world. It makes people disappear from one place and appear at another place. However, Voldemort does not need Cedric and did not count on both of them winning, so he kills Cedric the same way he killed Harry's parents. The reason Voldemort needs Harry for his return is Harry's blood. He needs blood for the special potion which would help him return his human shape. Wormtail (Peter Pettigrew) has already prepared the potion after Voldemort's instruction and in the end needs "Bone of the father, unknowingly given" (p. 539), "Flesh – of the servant – w-willingly given" (p. 539) and "B-blood of the enemy ... forcibly taken" (p. 540). This ceremony is like a twisted and reversed ceremony of the Christian Last Supper when Jesus set the foundations for the sacrament of the Eucharist by giving his apostles bread and wine as a symbol of his flesh and blood (Matt. 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-23). The sacrament of Eucharist is sacred to Christians and practised as a part of everyday mass.

After Voldemort's resurrecting ceremony has finished, he duels Harry, gives Harry an opportunity to fight him. Harry has almost no experience in duelling, but he would not let Voldemort kill him without a fight. Voldemort attacks Harry and when Harry counterbacks the spell, their wands connect with a thin line. Their wands were made out of the same wood with the same core and that is the reason they connected. That line connecting them is a thin line between good and evil. Harry as a symbol of good, a Jesus-like figure, on one side, and Voldemort, a Satan-like figure, on the other

side of the eternal fight. This fight has no winner in the end, Harry manages to escape and return back to his school using the same Portkey that got him, and Cedric to Voldemort. After his return to the school Harry tells his teachers and some members of the Ministry of Magic what has happened and that Voldemort has returned. Dumbledore and other teachers believe him and start plotting a plan to protect the innocent and defeat Voldemort again. Dumbledore warns all the students at the end of the school year that the fight against the evil continues.

Another thing connecting this novel and the Bible is the use of curses. The Bible is full of examples of people using curses or being cursed (Josh. 7:13; Josh. 9:23; Dan. 9:11). In Hogwarts, students are taught curses and countercurses as part of the Defence Against Dark Arts class. They are considered Dark Magic and no one is supposed to use them unless inevitable. There are examples in the Bible where God cursed people because of idolatry. Prophet Jeremiah writes (Jer. 44:11-14):

Therefore this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I am determined to bring disaster on you and to destroy all Judah. I will take away the remnant of Judah who were determined to go to Egypt to settle there. They will all perish in Egypt; they will fall by the sword or die from famine. From the least to the greatest, they will die by sword or famine. They will become a curse and an object of horror, a curse and an object of reproach. I will punish those who live in Egypt with the sword, famine and plague, as I punished Jerusalem. None of the remnant of Judah who have gone to live in Egypt will escape or survive to return to the land of Judah, to which they long to return and live; none will return except a few fugitives.

This is only one of the examples of God's punishment, when it was inevitable. Luke's gospel teaches to "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you" (Luke 6:27-28). In the novel the students are taught that there are "unforgivable curses" used to torture and kill people, and for those curses one is sentenced to life in Azkaban. Both the Bible and Hogwarts teach avoiding the use of curses unless necessary.

Harry finishes one more year of Hogwarts, having to deal with the Dark Lord once again. This time, he did not defeat Voldemort. However, the wizarding world knows Voldemort returned and has the opportunity to prepare to fight him again.



## 6.5. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix is the fifth part in the series. This part is significantly different from the previous four because of the turn that happened in the fourth part. While the first four parts talk about Voldemort and his attempts to rise again as the Dark Lord, the fifth part marks the beginning of a war against Voldemort and his followers, the Death Eaters. Voldemort managed to rise again and he wants to resume his plan of clearing the world of Muggles and half-bloods (wizards and witches whose one parent is a Muggle). His return happened during the Triwizard Tournament and Harry survived to tell everyone about it. Even though Dumbledore announced it during the feast at the end of the school year, not a lot of people believed him. Harry, Dumbledore and everyone else who claim it is true are seen as crazy people who seek attention.

Through most of this novel Voldemort's return is still being disproved despite a lot of strange things that start to happen. The first strange thing that happens after Voldemort's return is the attack of Dementors while Harry is still on summer holidays at the Dursleys. Dementors attack Harry and his cousin Dudley one night when they are going home. Dudley, being a Muggle, is not able to see them, but he feels their presence and gets scared. Harry manages to produce Patronus and save both of them from Dementors. However, as Harry is under age and therefore forbidden to use magic outside school, especially in the presence of Muggles, he is immediately contacted by the Ministry of Magic and scheduled a hearing to justify his actions. No one in the courtroom believes his story about Dementors attacking them because there was no record of Dementors being outside of Azkaban (the prison for magicians). Harry's hearing becomes a trial. His trial is, the same as Jesus's, unfair. It is rescheduled in the last moment and relocated to another courtroom in their attempt for Harry to be late. Luckily, Harry comes earlier to the Ministry and is able to make it just in time. Just like Jesus, Harry is mocked and laughed at by everyone in the courtroom. Both Jesus and Harry made the authorities angry because they broke the law: Jesus taught and healed people on the Sabbath (Luke 6:6-11), which was forbidden by the Jewish law, and Harry used magic while under age and in front of Muggles; Jesus challenged the authorities by protesting outside the Temple because of the traders and money changers (John 2:13-16), and Harry is known for breaking the rules at school. Both of

them were represented as liars in court when they tried to defend themselves. However, due to the testimony of a witch who lives in the same street as Harry and who has seen what has happened Harry is cleared of all charges.

After the attack and before his hearing Harry is taken from the Dursleys to the secret location, the Headquarters of the Order of the Phoenix. This house belongs to Sirius's family and Sirius is the only Black left so the house belongs to him. Harry finds out that many members of Sirius' family were Voldemort's supporters and his servants. Sirius is the only member who fought against him and everything he stood for. Harry is introduced to everything the Order has been doing over the summer and to the fact that Voldemort is gaining power and recruiting the Death Eaters in secrecy. Voldemort does not want to show himself to the world. It suits him to work in the shadows while the wizarding community fight among themselves about whether he has or has not returned. He is represented as a trickster who uses black magic and blackmails people to become his followers. In Christianity Voldemort would be a representation of Satan, who works secretly, gains followers and is both cunning and evil. There are multiple occasions through the novel where Voldemort possesses someone in order to get what he wants. He usually does it by using the Imperus Curse, which gives him complete control over another's body, while those who are possessed have no memory of their actions. The Bible mentions possessions on many different occasions, as well as Jesus casting out demons and freeing people of their obsession (Matt. 8:28-34; Matt. 9:32-34; Luke 4:31-37). Christians believe that Satan lurks everywhere and that only strong faith can protect one from evil.

Harry has a very special connection with Voldemort. The scar on Harry's forehead is Voldemort's imprint, a mark Voldemort left on Harry's forehead. This imprint protected Harry from Voldemort's attacks, it was the reason why Voldemort could not hurt Harry. Voldemort tried to "play" God, tried to kill Harry and that resulted in his destruction. The similar sign God left on Cain to protect him if someone wanted to hurt him.

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. <sup>11</sup> Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which

opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

But the Lord said to him, "Not so; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden. (Gen. 4: 9-16)

However, the scar the spell made on Harry's forehead is more than a symbol of destruction of evil. It is a signal which warned Harry about Voldemort's feelings, and when his feelings are strong Harry's scar hurts. Another thing starts to happen to him after Voldemort returned, and it scared Harry a lot. He starts to have unusual dreams about places he has never seen before. Dumbledore explains that to him as another connection he has with Voldemort. Harry is able to enter Voldemort's thoughts and see through his eyes. It usually happens in his dreams and Harry would wake up in screams as if he has had a nightmare. After a few of these "dreams" Harry is forced into taking lessons in Occlumency. According to the novel, Occlumency is "The magical defence of the mind against external penetration. An obscure branch of magic, but a highly useful one." (p. 479). It is important for Harry to learn how to close his mind before Voldemort finds out he can manipulate Harry into doing something reckless. Harry refuses to learn it and one of the reasons for that might be the fact he dislikes professor Snape, who is supposed to teach him how to do it. Because of this Harry's mind is susceptible to Voldemort's influence once he finds out he can control it. This results in Harry's attempt to save Sirius, who is, in Harry's dream, attacked by Voldemort in the Ministry of Magic. Harry, together with Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Luna and Neville, escapes Hogwards and goes to save Sirius. They come to the Ministry, only to fall into a trap set up by Voldemort and his Death Eaters. Voldemort lures Harry into the Ministry to steal the prophecy about the two of them. Harry and his friends are forced to fight the Death Eaters until other members of the Order come to help them. This fight takes place in the Death Chamber of the Department of Mysteries. This chamber has a stone archway covered in black veil and it stands on a stone dais

in the centre of the room. The veil over the archway is believed to divide the world of the living from the world of the dead. Life after death, eternal life, is one of the things Christians strongly believe in. Christians believe that lives they live are only preparation for the eternal life which they earn by obeying God's commandments and following Jesus's path. Jesus said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Harry's godfather, Sirius, falls through this arch to the other side and Harry has difficulty accepting that he, again, has lost someone from his family. He tries to find a way to get Sirius back and has even tried asking a ghost from the school how to do it. The answer Harry gets is not the one he has expected. The ghost tells him Sirius "will have ... gone on" and that "He will not come back" (p. 792). Another Christian association of afterlife is Harry's conversation with Luna, whose mother died when she was a child. As the following paragraph explains, she strongly believes in life after death:

'I still feel very sad about it sometimes. But I've still got Dad. And anyway, it's not as though I'll never see Mum again, is it?'

'Er – isn't it?' said Harry uncertainly.

She shook her head in disbelief.

'Oh, come on. You heard them, just behind the veil, didn't you?'

'You mean ...'

'In that room with the archway. They were just lurking out of sight, that's all. You heard them.'

They looked at each other. Luna was smiling slightly. Harry did not know what to say, or to think; Luna believed so many extraordinary things ... yet he had been sure he had heard voices behind the veil, too. (p. 794)

At the very end of the novel, Harry finds out why Voldemort wants him dead and why he has tried to kill him. Before Harry was even born, Dumbledore witnessed one of the professors having a prophecy about Voldemort. At that time Voldemort was a powerful dark wizard everyone feared. Together with his army of Death Eaters he tortured and killed everyone who tried to confront him. His biggest fear was death and his greatest wish was to become immortal so he was doing everything in his power to

accomplish his goals. One of his followers heard the prophecy and told Voldemort about it. The prophecy said:

The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches... born to those who have trice defied him, born as the seventh month dies... and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not... and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives... the one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies... (p. 774)

It is this prophecy Voldemort has been after through the entire novel. This is one more connection between Harry and Jesus. For both of them great things were foreseen before they were even born. The Old Testament contains a lot of stories about the Messiah who will come from God to rescue His people and defeat death. The novel's prophecy sees Harry as the one who will have the power to defeat Voldemort and end his terror. Voldemort even says that "There is nothing worse than death" (p. 749) because he never cared much for anyone. Not understanding "that there are things much worse than death" (p. 750), for example losing a loved one or living without a soul, is Voldemort's greatest weakness.

Dumbledore is the only one Voldemort ever feared. He is the only wizard Voldemort is afraid to fight. As Headmaster of Hogwarts, Dumbledore represents a God-like figure in this novel. Christians believe that Satan only fears God. The closer one is to God, the stronger is Satan's will to try to destroy one. Christians see Satan as a very intelligent and cunning person who will do anything to turn people away from God. The same thing is with Voldemort. He is a very intelligent and capable man who uses his intelligence to gain trust from other people and persuade them into doing wrong things for a greater good. Dumbledore, on the other hand, is a protective figure, full of trust and confidence. He would do anything to protect his students and teachers at school because he cares for every one of them. One of the best examples is the situation when Dumbledore is demoted from the headmaster office for protecting Harry and his friends and lying to the Minister about their actions. Many things have changed at school during the year and one of them is reducing the subject Defence Against the Dark Arts to only its theoretical part. With a little bit of persuasion from Hermione, Harry agrees to secretly teach a group of students the practical part of that subject. One of those students reveals this secret to professor Umbridge, their Defence Against the

Dark Arts teacher and the Minister's spy at school, who wants Harry and all the other students expelled. Dumbledore stands in their defence, lies about him starting a rebellion against the Ministry, and so gets himself dismissed. After that he disappears from the school and most of the students and professors are afraid what would happen to them without him. Even though he is gone, Dumbledore never stops looking after them, which he proves by showing up in the middle of the fight between the members of the Order of the Phoenix and the Death Eaters and helping Harry fight Voldemort once again.

Harry found out a lot of new things about his past and his destiny. He found out that his fight against Voldemort is not over and that they will meet again. The school year and exams are over and holidays begin. Harry has to return to Privet Drive to his aunt and uncle's once again. However, this time it is different because he knows the reason he has to go back is the protective charm which keeps him safe at home. Another thing that is different is the fact that the wizarding community has finally accepted that Voldemort is alive and that the war against him and his followers has started again. This time, however, they are ready and prepared for what was coming.

## 6.6. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*

The sixth novel of the series brings even more darkness and riddles Harry has to cope with. During the summer, which Harry had to spend with his aunt and uncle, many things have changed in the wizarding world. The witches and wizards have finally believed that Voldemort is alive and everyone is instructed to pay much more attention to the people around them since Voldemort is a powerful wizard well-known for his past. The entire wizarding community is on alert, no one goes out of their houses alone and people fear for their lives and the lives of their families.

At the end of the previous sequel a lot of Voldemort's supporters were imprisoned due to the crimes they had committed. One of the imprisoned Death Eaters is Draco Malfoy's father, Harry's least favourite colleague from Slytherin House. Draco, being the only child, gets a task from Voldemort himself, which is up to Snape, Harry's least favourite teacher to execute, if Draco would fail. Snape, who is Head of the Slytherin House, used to be one of Voldemort's followers but then decided to cross over to Dumbledore's side and fight against Voldemort. He has Dumbledore's full confidence. However, at the very beginning of the novel, Snape makes an Unbreakable Vow with Draco's mother which obliged him to protect and help Draco with his plan. An Unbreakable Vow binds the two who make it and it cannot be broken. If any of the two of them break the Vow, they die. For Christians, vows are sacred and children are taught from a young age not to swear by anything. Christians are allowed to break vows only in certain circumstances (for example a marriage vow can be annulled if one of the spouses lied about their past marriage). "When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said" (Num. 30:2). There are numerous places in the Bible, both Old and New Testament where God made vows, covenants or oaths with people, and those people were always given a warning what would happen if they broke them.

'But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant, then I will do this to you: I will bring on you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and sap your strength. You will plant seed in vain, because your enemies will eat it. I will set my face against you so that

you will be defeated by your enemies; those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee even when no one is pursuing you. (Lev. 26: 14-17).

Every vow made has its consequences if broken and that is why people who make them have to be fully aware of possible outcomes. For Snape, the consequence would be his death and he is aware of it when making the Vow.

Harry Potter once again becomes praised for what he has done and who he is. The truth about Voldemort is revealed and no one thinks of Harry as an attention-seeking teenager anymore. People start to refer to him as the Chosen One. "People believe you are tge Chosen One, you see,' said Scrimgeour. 'They think you quite the hero – which, of course, you are, Harry, chosen or not! How many times have you faced He Who Must Not Be Named now? Well, anyway,' he pressed on, without waiting for a reply, 'the point is, you are a symbol of hope for many, Harry.'" (p. 287). Harry becomes a symbol of hope for the wizarding world, just as Jesus is for Christians. Jesus was the one to defeat death and redeem people for their sins, and Harry is to defeat a death-fearing Voldemort and provide peace for the wizarding world. Harry, just like Jesus, knows what the prophecies said about him and that his path will be difficult and dangerous. Harry wonders what his life would have been if Voldemort did not find out about the prophecy or if he chose Neville instead. What would his life be like if his parents have still been alive and why it was him Voldemort made his equal?

Back in school, Dumbledore made sure that everyone was safe by strengthening the security and warning students not to wander inside the school alone. This year Dumbledore offers Harry private lessons which should prepare him for Voldemort by getting to know Voldemort as he was in the past and what led to him becoming the darkest wizard of all times. Dumbledore provides fragments of his and other people's memories to show Harry what Voldemort used to be like. Harry finds out Voldemort was raised in an orphanage, where his mother died shortly after giving him birth. His entire childhood he spent bullying other children and making them do things for him. Tom Marvolo Riddle, which was Voldemort's full name, was not surprised to find out he was a wizard when Dumbledore came to offer him a place in Hogwards. When he came to school, he was an exceptional student with great grades, one of the best in school. He was particularly interested in the Dark Arts and by the time he was sixteen he knew a lot more than an ordinary student would at his age. Dumbledore and Harry manage to get the memories of one of the professors who has taught Tom back



in school. These memories prove to be very important because they confirm the theory Dumbledore has had about Tom. They prove Dumbledore that Tom was trying to find out more about Horcruxes and how they work when he was still in school. The Horcruxes were part of Dark Magic, an object which contained a part of someone's soul. Practicants split their soul "and hide part of it in an object outside the body. Then, even if one's body is attacked or destroyed, one cannot die, for part of the soul remains earthbound and undamaged." (p. 413). One can do it "by an act of evil – the supreme act of evil. by committing murder. Killing rips the soul apart." (p. 414) Christians are taught that our body is our temple, and our soul is the kingdom and that both should be cherished and taken care of. Christianity teaches that everyone is created in the image of God and God breathed a soul into everyone. It is the deepest, most important part of each person. Voldemort found out he could preserve parts of his soul by splitting it into pieces so he could become immortal. Christians believe that no one and nothing can live when torn into pieces. "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come" (Mark 3:24-26). Therefore, if Voldemort is seen as another Satan, from the Christian point of view, he is destined to fail in his attempt. Harry is provided with the memories of young Voldemort and has insights into parts of his life. Dumbledore and Harry can only guess what objects Voldemort used for Horcruxes. They know it would be difficult to find them, and complicated and dangerous to destroy them. The first Horcrux was the diary Harry destroyed when he battled Voldemort in the Chamber of Secrets. Dumbledore manages to trace and destroy the second one. It was a ring that used to belong to Voldemort's grandfather and Dumbledore manages to destroy it together with a part of the soul it contained. There are other Horcruxes they will have to trace down and destroy in order to destroy Voldemort. He split his soul into seven pieces because seven is thought to be the most powerful magical number. Number seven is spread throughout the Bible. First it appears in the Book of Genesis (Gen. 1-2:1-3), when the creation of the world is described in seven days; God created the world in six days and then rested on the seventh day. Noah was instructed to take 7 pairs of every kind of animal (Gen. 7:1-4). There are seven deadly sins (pride, greed, wrath, envy, lust, gluttony, and sloth) and these are only a few of examples in which the number seven is important for Christians.

Once more, a symbol of love appears in this sequel. The prophecy about Harry and Voldemort says that the one who will defeat Voldemort will possess the power Voldemort does not have. It is the power of love. Voldemort is not able to love, he has never felt love and has only known about hatred. Harry, on the other hand, is guided by love. Even though his parents died when he was a baby, and he did not feel loved by his aunt and uncle, Harry has not lost the ability to love and care for others. Voldemort's lack of love and care has led him into splitting his soul. When Harry discovered what Voldemort had done and that without his Horcruxes it would be possible to destroy him, he was determined to do so but uncertain of his abilities. The next quote tells about this:

'Never forget, though, that while his soul may be damaged beyond repair, his brain and his magical power remain intact. It will take uncommon skill and power to kill a wizard like Voldemort, even without Horcruxes.'

'But I haven't got uncommon skill and power,' said Harry, before he could stop himself.

'Yes, you have,' said Dumbledore firmly. 'You have a power that Voldemort has never had. You can –'

'I know!' said Harry impatiently. 'I can love!' It was only with difficulty that he stopped himself adding, 'Big deal!'

'Yes, Harry, you can love,' said Dumbledore, who looked as though he knew what Harry had just refrained from saying. 'Which, given everything that has happened to you, is a great and remarkable thing. You are still too young to understand how unusual you are, Harry.'

'So, when the prophecy says that I'll have "power the Dark Lord knows not", it just means – love?' asked Harry, feeling a little let down.

'Yes – just love,' said Dumbledore. (p. 423)

It is strange that Harry does not believe that the only thing necessary to defeat something or someone so evil like Voldemort is love. Especially because it is his mother's love that saved his life and kept him safe all these years.

Christians believe in the Holy Spirit as one of the three Divine persons. If one submits to His will, the Holy Spirit guides one's life and directs one's path. God gave people free will to make their own choices. However, sometimes Christians believe it

is important to let God lead their lives and let Him help them make choices. The Holy Spirit is similar to the potion from the novel called Felix Felicis. This potion is supposed to make everything easier for a certain amount of time and the one who drinks it becomes very lucky. Harry drinks this potion to be able to extract a very important memory about Voldemort's past from one of his professors and he succeeds in his attempt. When Harry drinks it, nothing unusual happens to him, nothing changes but he feels like he could do anything, everything seems possible. He lets this potion lead his way and chooses to trust his feelings regarding his path and his actions. Christians do not believe there is a potion containing the Holy Spirit, but if people believe, if they truly believe that God can help them, they are able to submit their lives in the hands of God to lead their ways. The Holy Spirit and Felix Felicis are great depictions of the phenomenon of free choice.

When Dumbledore has told Harry about the Horcruxes, he has promised to take Harry to help him destroy the next one he finds. Dumbledore finds one in the cave far away from school where Voldemort has taken his first victims when he was just a young boy. He asks Harry to join him and help him destroy it and Harry joins him. They manage to find a way into the cave and find a basin in the middle of the cave on a small island surrounded by water which is full of dead bodies waiting for someone to touch the water. Dumbledore tells Harry not to be scared of or worried about the dead, the body. "It is the unknown we fear when we look upon death and darkness, nothing more." (p. 471). Christians believe that the soul is immortal and that Jesus's death on the cross secured them the eternal life and protects them from death and darkness. Dumbledore points out that the fear of death and darkness is one of Voldemort's greatest weaknesses. Dumbledore's words comfort Harry and he manages to focus on their goal. When they manage to take the Horcrux, Dumbledore is exhausted and tired and Harry tells him not to worry and that he would take them both home. "'I am not worried, Harry,' said Dumbledore, his voice a little stronger despite the freezing water. 'I am with you.'" (p. 481). Dumbledore trusts Harry with his life and feels safe in his presence. In the Bible, words of comfort like *do not fear* or *do not be afraid* appear on many occasions in both Old and New Testaments. Christians are thus warned: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isa. 41:10). Harry knows

he is more than just a student for Dumbledore. Dumbledore has told him on multiple occasions that he is special and they have had a special bond.

Harry takes Dumbledore back to school and there they find the Dark Mark, the sign Death Eaters leave in the place where they have killed someone. They hurry back to the castle, where the members of the Order of the Phoenix are fighting the Death Eaters who managed to enter school with the help of Draco Malfoy. Draco has a mission to fulfill, a task Voldemort made him do or else his family will be killed. His task has been to secure entrance to school for the Death Eaters and to kill Dumbledore, the one Voldemort feared the most. Dumbledore is too weak to fight and Draco manages to disarm him easily. However, he procrastinates with the murder. After a while, Dumbledore is surrounded by the Death Eaters and has no way of escaping, when Snape appears. Snape uses the same spell Voldemort used to kill Harry's parents and his other victims, and kills Dumbledore. Everyone in the school is shocked to find out Snape has betrayed their trust and killed the person who trusted him the most. Harry decides not to come to school next year but to go after Voldemort, find his Horcruxes and destroy him once for all.

## 6.7. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*

The seventh, and last, part of the Harry Potter series brings the conclusion. When Dumbledore died, Harry is left with a task: the important mission of defeating Voldemort and restoring the peace in both, wizarding and non-wizarding worlds. Harry, Hermione and Ron decide not to go back to Hogwarts but to try and finish what Dumbledore and Harry have started. Harry is coming of age, which means that the charm that has protected him over the past years will stop at the moment he turns seventeen. It is very important for the Order of the Phoenix to move Harry's aunt and uncle to a safe location, and to move Harry to the Headquarters in the Weasleys' house before Harry's birthday. Voldemort has infiltrated all the institutions and is informed about the plan of transferring Harry. Harry is picked up by the members of the Order, some of them disguised as him, and moved to the Weasleys'. However, they have had problems on the way because Voldemort and his people have been chasing them and they have barely escaped them. Harry, Hermione and Ron have stayed with the rest of the Order at the Weasleys' for a short period of time until Harry's birthday and Ron's brother and Fleur's wedding, a day after Harry's birthday, and having packed everything they will need and with a general plan, they have set off on a quest to find and destroy the remaining Horcruxes. Horcruxes are objects which wizards and witches could use to store a piece of their soul so they could live as long as there is at least one of them left. Harry and Dumbledore have already destroyed two of them and now it is up to Harry, Ron and Hermione to find and destroy the remaining four. The last one is still inside Voldemort's body. The three of them found out that there is a way for Voldemort to reunite his soul, but he would have to feel sorry for the things he has done. Christians believe that God forgives and forgets our sins if one feels remorse for their sins. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). However, Voldemort would not do it, he cannot feel remorse without caring for others and being ready to suffer pain till the parts of his soul join back together.

Harry, Hermione and Ron have set off without saying goodbye. They spend their days hidden from everyone else because Voldemort is eager to find Harry and kill him and to stop everyone who tries to help Harry. The third Horcrux is a locket which used to belong to Slytherin. They manage to find out that their former professor Umbridge

has the locket and they have to break into the Ministry to steal it from her. To be able to do that, they have to disguise themselves as people who work for the Ministry in the hope their plan would work. With a lot of trouble they manage to steal the locket and to escape the Ministry's people who were after them. They have to find a way to destroy the locket and the part of the soul within it because it causes the three of them to fight and has eventually caused Ron to go away from Hermione and Harry. All the leads take Hermione and Harry to the place where Harry used to live with his parents. The place is a small village called Godric's Hollow. Harry and Hermione have gone there on Christmas Eve and they have visited the grave of Harry's parents. They are buried at the graveyard behind the church. There is no mention of the religion Harry or any of his friends belonged to, but a lot of signs indicate that Harry and Dumbledore might be portrayed as Christians. One of the reasons for this conclusion is the fact that Harry's parents are buried at the cemetery behind the church and when Harry and Hermione approach it they hear music coming from the church from the Christmas Eve Mass. While they have been searching for his parent's grave, they found the grave where Dumbledore's mother and sister are buried. And the tombstone above it has had a quotation from Matthew's Gospel (Matt. 6:21) "*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*". For Christians this means to live their lives the best way they can and not to be possessed by material things, but to live honouring God and earning for themselves a place in Heaven. Another quote from the Bible is engraved on the tombstone above the grave of James and Lily Potter. This quote is from the 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 15:26) and says: "*The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death*". Christians are taught not to be afraid of death because there is an eternal life waiting for their souls after their bodies die. Christians believe the Messiah will come again to destroy all the enemies and death would be the last one to be conquered. The life after death is mentioned a couple of times in the novel, which proves that they believed death was not the end. When Harry and Hermione read the script on his parents' grave Harry thought it means the same thing the Death Eaters are after, what Voldemort is after: becoming the master of Death. But Hermione explains to him: "'It doesn't mean defeating death the way the Death Eaters mean it, Harry,' said Hermione, her voice gentle. 'It means ... you know ... living beyond death. Living after death.'" (p. 267) Harry cannot understand that, the concept of eternal life is not something he finds convincing. However, he believes in it after fighting Voldemort back in the Forbidden Forest. While Harry, Hermione and Ron (who returned after realising he was wrong) are searching

for the Horcruxes, the war between Voldemort's supporters and those who are against them is raging. They find out that one of the Horcruxes is hidden in the bank in one of the Vaults. With the help of one of the goblins who used to work there they manage to get into the vault and steal Hufflepuff's cup which Voldemort used as a Horcrux. Having been surrounded by the other goblins, they have barely escaped from the bank on the back of a dragon which used to guard the vaults. The dragon is one of the biblical depiction of Satan, something to be feared because of its size and abilities. However, Harry, Ron and Hermione manage to use this evil against evil and it leads them to freedom. The last Horcrux is hidden in the school, in Hogwards. The three of them do not know what it is, but they assume it has some connection with Ravenclaw. They go back to the castle, where the other members of the Order join them, accompanied by numerous colleagues from school. Everyone is ready to fight against the Dark Lord and the Death Eaters. Severus Snape, Harry's former teacher, is now the headmaster of the school and everyone blames and accuses him for betrayal and Dumbledore's death. When Snape finds out what is happening he flees from the school and joins Voldemort. Voldemort is hiding in the Shrieking Shack, an abandoned house near school where Lupin and his friends spent time during the full moon when they were back at school. Harry goes there under his Cloak and witnesses the death of Severus Snape, who gives him his memories just before he dies.

While Harry, Ron and Hermione have been searching for the Horcruxes, they found out about the story of three brothers who managed to trick Death and in return Death gave them gifts known as the Deathly Hallows. One brother wished for the most powerful wand in the world and he got the Elder Wand. The second brother wished for the power to bring back the dead and he got the stone which was able to do that. The third brother wished for something which would help him leave without being followed by Death and he got the Invisibility Cloak. This wand's last owner was Dumbledore, and after his death the wand has been placed with him in his grave. Voldemort desecrates his grave by opening it and stealing Dumbledore's wand, which, however, cannot belong to him because he is not the one responsible for Dumbledore's death. This is the reason why Voldemort killed Snape. However, when Harry takes Snape's memory and looks at it, he finds out that the entire time Harry has been at school Snape has been keeping him safe, not trying to get rid of him as Harry used to think. Harry's mom, Lily, was Snape's friend from childhood, his best friend. They went to

school together and Snape had strong feelings for her. And he never stopped loving her, not even when she married James, and this is the reason he switched sides and became Dumbledore's spy. Snape felt sorry because he was the one who heard the prophecy. Not knowing who the prophecy was about, he went to Voldemort. When he found out it was about the Potters, Snape went to ask Dumbledore to protect them. After their death Snape decided to help Dumbledore take care of Harry while he was at school and to try to keep him safe. Harry has also seen one of the last of Snape's memories and it has been the night Dumbledore has nearly died. Dumbledore was on a quest to find the Horcruxes and the night he destroyed the second Horcrux he got injured by Dark Magic. Snape tried to heal him but could not do much. Dumbledore and Snape made a plan which ended with Snape killing Dumbledore and Harry continuing his quest for Horcruxes. Harry finds out that one part of Voldemort's soul is inside him. This is the reason Harry could see things about Voldemort and this is the connection between them which could be broken only by Harry's death.

After seeing all of that, Harry decides to go to the Forest and fight Voldemort. He is ready to sacrifice himself if that meant restoring peace to the world and destroying Voldemort once and for all. Once again Harry resembles Jesus. Just like Jesus, Harry was sacrificing his life so others could live. On his way to the Forbidden Forest Harry has his doubts: he wants to live but he has to die so others could live, and that makes him go on. Something similar is described in the Bible. Jesus knew he was going to be arrested and killed and while he was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, he asked his Father to remove that burden from him, but only if He wanted to (Matt. 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42). However, both of them surrendered and died for others. When Harry approaches Voldemort, he does not even try to fight and Voldemort's spell hits him. Harry finds himself sitting in the light facing Dumbledore. Dumbledore explains why everything has to be that way and the reason why he has never told Harry the entire story. If Harry has known the entire truth, Dumbledore feared he would not be able to complete the mission. This way, by sacrificing himself, Harry has let Voldemort destroy the Horcrux inside him. Harry did not die, he has risen again. Just like Jesus, Harry rises from the dead and defeats the greatest evil. He manages to destroy Voldemort who is left dead, killed by his greed and lack of humanity. Harry manages to finish his quest and defeat Voldemort, which means restoring peace to the world.



Another similarity between the Bible and this sequel is the way the traitors die. Peter Pettigrew, who betrayed Harry's parents and was responsible for their death, is comparable to Judas, who betrayed Jesus by surrendering him to the authorities. Both of them died in a similar way. When Judas, who sold Jesus for a bit of silver, realized what he had done, he hanged himself (Matt. 27:5). Peter Pettigrew, on the other hand, was choked to death by his own silver hand, which was Voldemort's gift after Pettigrew helped him rise again.

The novel ends with the scene at Kings Cross nineteen years later. Harry is married to Ginny and has three children with her. Ron is married to Hermione and they have two children. Peace is restored to the world and Harry's scar has never hurt him again. Everyone is happy and their children go to school just like they did when they were students.

## 7. DIFFERENT OPINIONS AMONG CATHOLICS

"If you want to start an argument in a roomful of Christians, say "Harry Potter." Ever since J. K. Rowling's series about a school for young wizards and witches hit the shelves, Christians have debated whether the books and movies are acceptable material for their children to consume" (Hoover, 2020). The Catholic Church has a strict opinion on occultism. The Bible itself says that God prohibits the practice of the occult. It is written in Deuteronomy:

Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord; because of these same detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you.(Deut. 18:10-12).

However, the novels about Harry Potter are not only about the occult. They are much more than just witchcraft and magic. It is true that the story is about a school for young wizards and witches and they do teach magic in that school, but there is a much bigger idea beneath the surface, which is teaching children about life and everything good or bad, easy or difficult, positive or negative that life provides. This bigger idea is probably the reason why the Catholic Church does not have a defined opinion about the Harry Potter series. As the Church has not stated its official position regarding these books, there have been more than a few arguments and disagreements among Catholics, and the same goes for both lay believers and clergy. Everyone has their own opinion, which is in most cases subjective, whether it is for or against these children's books. While researching this topic, I found lots of newspaper articles, scholarly articles and even books written by Catholics which differ in opinions, to the extent of forbidding reading novels about this young wizard, on the one hand (the example of a Polish priest burning up the books about Harry Potter in 2019), to encouraging children to read the novels in order to learn about friendship, success and hard work, on the other.

Many authors have written books and articles about the effect the novels like the series about Harry Potter have on children and adults. Their opinions are different and show the readers' ways of understanding such novels can be mutually opposed. Not only one of them is true and right. Those Catholics that are against these novels

often quote the same lines from Deuteronomy I quoted at the beginning of the previous chapter and say reading books such as these is against God's will.

One of the authors who claims the novels about Harry Potter are bad for Catholics, especially children, is Toni Collins. In her article titled "Harry Potter: Agent of Conversion" she talks about her experience with the occult and her fight against it. She was born into a Catholic family, but growing up through her parents' divorce, in her teenage years, she lost the sense of God's presence in her life and turned away from Him. She started regularly going to stage hypnotist shows, where she had the experience of being hypnotised. That was fun for her and she refused to listen to her friends who tried to talk her out of such things, but she did not see any harm in them. Later on she tried witchcraft and she experienced, as she says, "something beyond this world" which made her question her life choices and return to God. Her experience made her suspicious of everything connected to occultism, even as innocent as reading horoscopes. Toni is concerned about children reading these novels because of her past. Her article was written in 2001. By then the first four books had been published and she says she found questionable motives in the first two books she read. The reason why she, and others who experienced the "other side", have concerns about the plot is that they, people who had experience with the occult, had "something like a fingerprint of it on their soul. It gives us a kind of sensitivity to the occult that others don't have." (Collins, 2001). Further in the article the author provides experiences of other people with the occult who share her opinion about the Harry Potter novels. All of them agree that everyone should be careful with witchcraft and all the other things mentioned in them, since there are real witches who perform real rituals all over the world.

In the book titled *War for our childrens' souls* by Michael D. O'Brien the author provides readers with his own opinion on these novels from the Christian point of view. His opinion is that the novels, actually all the literature like these, are written in a way that turn people away from God and faith in general. Throughout his book, the writer provides examples of the ways occultism affects readers of such novels, especially how it affects children's minds. He states that children realize the world from the novels is not real, that it is only fantasy, however they accept it as reality emotionally and subconsciously.

O'Brien claims the books about Harry Potter open the door to the mystical devilish world. Human imagination, especially children's, can be very vivid and even though children are aware of the fact that world is not real, children could emotionally accept it as real and easily go the wrong way.

On the other hand, while the novels about Harry Potter could affect children in a wrong way, opening their mind to the occult, O'Brien claims that Tolkien's and Lewis's novels teach children and warn them about the dangers magic brings in its wake. In their novels magic belongs to those beings with supernatural powers given to them by God and humans are destroyed by misuse of such powers. In Rowling's novels, magic is something people are either born with or without and that is one of the things O'Brien sees as a problem. According to O'Brien, the world depicted in these novels is gnostic: magic is shown as something people are born with, and in the hands of "good" people it serves good purposes, while in the hands of "bad" people it serves evil purposes. Harry is shown as one of the "good" characters even though he often disobeys authority, lies and uses magic when he is not allowed to. This is one example of how young readers can be trapped into thinking that if everything is all right in the end, the way one reaches the goal is not important (the goal justifies the means). He compares this kind of literature with poison: if we knew there is poison in the food our children are supposed to eat, we would not give it to them; why do we then let them read this kind of novels? The author does not want people to become fanatics of any kind, to burn books like these or something even worse. His goal is to try to explain his reasons for disliking them. Children will not involve themselves in the occult just because they read such books, but parents should be careful with books and movies surrounding their children. However, O'Brien expresses his concern about the future of Catholics who see no harm in reading these novels because they are, in fact, full of religion, but the wrong kind of religion. The Sorting Ceremony at the beginning of each year is an example where some kind of supernatural power defines the students' characters and places them into one of the four houses. Also, each of the houses has its ghosts representing a spiritual dimension which has nothing to do with God. In O'Brien's opinion, these novels actually kill God neglecting the spiritual depth and remaining superficial and people become materialistic *Homo sine Deo*, who think they are abandoned and rely only on themselves. Such human beings become limited and see nothing beyond this life.

In the few chapters about Harry Potter O'Brien gave his point of view and one can choose to agree or disagree with him. He sees that imaginary world as a world without spiritual values and a world without God. In that world killing is justified if you are one of the "good guys", and those you kill are "bad guys". The Christian values are distorted and this is the main reason for Christians not to accept the novels about Harry Potter.

On the other hand, there are Christians who think there is nothing wrong with the Harry Potter novels. "Christian faith is built on a story, and stories require imagination" (Reiser, 2017), just like any other piece of literature. In his article "A Jesuit perspective on Harry Potter" Reiser claims he knows how hard it is to teach and to get students to read books nowadays. He does not look at these books strictly as books about magic, spells and teaching against religion, but he sees them as a story about "friendship and loyalty, courage and transparency, sacrifice and mortality, separation and loss, failure and remorse, destiny and providence—and love, life's most powerful magic" (Reiser, 2017). This world has a lot to offer to children, but adults have to be careful the books are appropriate for their age. This, however, is the case with any book.

Chris Bray, Catholic speaker and musician, has the YouTube channel *All That Catholic Stuff*, where he posts videos explaining some controversial topics in Christianity. The Harry Potter series is one of these. In his video "Catholics & Harry Potter" (Bray, 2020) he explains the reasons some Catholics are against these novels and why most of them are wrong. What he claims to be the greatest problem with people who are against these novels is the fact that most of them have never even read any of them. Bray used to be one of those Catholics who did not like the books and thought Catholics should not read them, until his daughter asked him if she could read them. Not being able to give her a proper reason why she should not, Bray decided to read one himself first to get an idea of what the books are about and if they were really about the occult and sorcery. After having read the first novel, he realized it was nothing more than a typical fantasy children's book with imaginary characters and good triumphing over evil. Truly speaking, if Catholics were to ban these novels, they should also ban Tolkien, Lewis and even some books of the Old Testament.

One of the things every Catholic who likes the Harry Potter novels states is that these novels are just stories with an imaginary world of magic and friendship. To

paraphrase Bray's words, by the logic of banning and restricting these novels Christians should not read or watch the vast majority of fairy tales or movies containing magic and spells.

The debate will probably never end. As it is important for every debate to have people who have arguments based on their knowledge and personal experience, Christians who want to debate about these novels and their influence on children should read the novels first.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Children's literature is a relatively new term in general literature. In the past, children were told stories to entertain them and to educate them. Nowadays children are surrounded by all sorts of different genres of books intended not only to educate them, but to entertain them as well. It is very important for children's development to be read to and later to read books. Reading to children from the early age develops their ability to be an active listener, especially if the reader interprets the story in a way which makes it interesting for children (making noises which interpret animal sounds, changing voices when reading lines of different characters helps in keeping child's attention).

The Harry Potter series contains seven novels which follow Harry and his friends as they grow up. It is full of extraordinary creatures, witches and wizards to whose world they belong. With each new sequel the troubles and problems Harry and his friends face become more and more serious as their greatest enemy, Voldemort, gains power again. Children's novels usually describe the eternal battle between good and evil and these novels are no exception. At the end, after all the struggles and battles, Voldemort is defeated.

In the Christian society these novels are a controversial topic and there is not one correct answer to the question if Christians should or ought not to read them. While some think there is nothing wrong with them, others think it deprives people of God and leads them towards Satan. The question whether Christians should read these novels or not remains unanswered and liable to subjective decision making.

My opinion is that before judging these novels everyone should read them. It is true that some things and situations from these novels might be "too much" for younger children, but those sequels they can read later as they grow up a little bit. If these novels can deprive children of God, then others like these ought not to be read by Christian children, too, including lots of fairy tales which children enjoy from a young age.

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## ABSTRACT

Children's literature is not an easy term to define. There are many different definitions, but they all agree about the fact that it is literature appropriate for children of a certain age to read, stimulating their imagination. It is important for children to have contact with books from an early age and to be read and told stories.

In the Christian world Harry Potter novels have been fought over ever since the first novel was published, in 1997. While some question the morality of the sequel, others find it an interesting and amusing collection of children's novels with lots of lessons about friendship and loyalty.

The present thesis highlights some of the similarities between the stories and characters from the Bible and the ones from these novels.

Key words: children, children's literature, children's novel, Harry Potter, Bible, Christianity.

## SAŽETAK

Pojam dječje književnosti nije lako definirati. Mnogo je različitih definicija, ali sve se slažu oko jedne činjenice, da je to književnost primjerena djeci i da kao takva pobuđuje dječju maštu. Važno je da djeca od malena budu u kontaktu s knjigama, da im se čitaju knjige i pričaju priče.

U kršćanskome svijetu romani o Harry Potteru tema su rasprava otkako je prvi roman objavljen, 1997. godine. Dok jedni smatraju moralnost romanā upitnom, drugima je to zanimljiva i zabavna kolekcija romana za djecu koja sadrži puno pouka o prijateljstvu i odanosti

Ovaj rad naglašava neke sličnosti između priča i likova iz Biblije i priča i likova iz ovih romana.

Ključne riječi: djeca, dječja književnost, dječji roman, Harry Potter, Biblija, kršćanstvo.