



## CHAPTER 1

# Lord of the Force

The Force will be with you . . . always!

—OBI-WAN KENOBI, TO LUKE SKYWALKER  
(*STAR WARS: EPISODE IV. A NEW HOPE*)

Who then is this, that he commands even the  
winds and the water, and they obey him?

—DISCIPLES, TO JESUS (LUKE 8:25)

**O**ne of *Star Wars*' great contributions to contemporary belief is the reinforcement of the centuries-old teaching, advanced by all religions, that something mysteriously spiritual is at

work in the universe. *Star Wars* creator George Lucas named this phenomenon “the Force.”

The Jedi seeks to master the use of the Force, to be suffused with and fueled by this potent energy that “surrounds us and penetrates us . . . [and] binds the galaxy together,” according to Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi. Yoda expands on Old Ben’s teachings, describing the Force as a strong ally and source of power for the Jedi, but warning Luke Skywalker that this power exists in a delicate balance. Under pressure or in dire circumstances, strong emotions can surge: “Anger . . . fear . . . aggression. The dark side of the Force are they. Easily they flow, quick to join you in a fight. If once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny, consume you it will, as it did Obi-Wan’s apprentice.”

The light-versus-dark dualism of Jedi lore parallels teachings found in Christian scripture. As early as the first century A.D. the Apostle John talked about “walking in the light” as Jesus is in the light and warned against having anything to do with the works of “darkness.” The Judeo-Christian tradition tells stories of wonder workers such as Moses, Samson, David, and Elijah, who were so empowered by God that they worked wonders, parting the waters of the Red Sea and defeating a heavily armed giant with a slingshot and

five smooth stones (in Star Wars terminology, they would be called “strong in the Force”).

“Jedi Christians” believe that over and above the opposing forces of light and darkness there is a Lord over all, including the Force. These Christians call this Lord of the Force God. The first sentence of the book of their sayings (the Bible) reveals that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, an awesome proclamation of a God whose generative power holds the entire universe together. We can liken this, along with the Apostle Paul’s teaching that “in Jesus all things hold together,” to the Jedi idea of an energy field binding the galaxy together, but only if we recognize an important distinction. In Jedi mythology the highest good is achieved by balancing light and dark, whereas Christians believe the highest good is achieved when darkness is defeated. In this Christian lore, the dark side is not just the opposite of light, but an unequal opponent of God, the Lord of the Force.

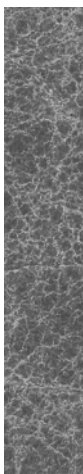
You’ve seen this idea of a Lord presiding over the dualistic struggle in the movies based on J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*, where there are many rings, but “one Ring to rule them all.” Sauron and Gandalf represent the dark and light sides, but Tolkien’s title reveals his Christian belief that above all the rings and all manner of powerful wizardry there is a Lord of the

Rings who rules over all, and who will bring history to a just and good conclusion. Tolkien said of his work, “*The Lord of the Rings* is a fundamentally religious and Catholic work. . . . It is about God, and his sole right to divine honour” despite the fact that “Sauron desired to be a God-King and was held to be this by his servants.”

The idea of God is not foreign to George Lucas, who in an interview with Bill Moyers embraces mystery over certitude in his understanding of God: “I think there is a God. No question. What that God is or what we know about that God, I’m not sure. The one thing I know about life and about the human race is that we’ve always tried to construct some kind of context for the unknown. Even the cavemen thought they had it figured out. I would say that cavemen understood on a scale of about 1. Now we’ve made it up to 5. The only thing most people don’t realize is the scale goes to 1 million.”

Likewise, the Jedi type of Christian embraces divine mystery humbly, professing a similar modesty about our knowledge of God, who though personal and accessible is also surrounded by what one mystic called “the cloud of unknowing.” The church father Augustine agreed: “If you should ask me what are the ways of God, I would tell you that the first is humility, the second is humility, and the third is still humility.

Not that there are no other precepts to give, but if humility does not precede all that we do, our efforts are fruitless.” Even though Augustine agrees God is a mystery to us, he reinforces the Christian belief that the purpose of our being is wrapped up in seeking, knowing, and serving the Lord of the Force. Those who succeed in that quest will be exceptional, like the Yoda and Obi-Wan of Star Wars lore, strong in the Lord of the Force and equipped to do God’s work in the world.



Aspiring Jedi Christian, you hold in your hands an endeavor of love; an attempt to recover the lost sayings of the Jedi, so to speak, in this Christian setting; selections from the collective wisdom of faithful followers who for centuries have pursued the Lord of the Force. May the Lord of the Force be with you.