

## A Summary of The Golden Compass

By Pastor Gerry Galbreath

The *Golden Compass* is the story of a girl, Lyra, who tries to save her friend Roger who has been kidnapped by a group called the *Magisterium*. The *Magisterium* is kidnapping children from all over the world in order to perform experimental surgery on them. Along the way Lyra is guided by her "*Golden Compass*". This compass (very similar to a Ouija board) can predict the future, give advice, and warn of danger.

This book, and soon to be released movie, is the first story in a Trilogy called "His Dark Materials" written by Philip Pullman. This series is full of adventure and fantasy. The world that Pullman writes about is supposed to be a parallel universe to the world that we live in, similar to "Narnia" in "The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe." But unlike Narnia, the world he describes is so similar to our world that it appears that the story takes place here.

The first book starts out fairly tame. It is not much different than most other fantasy books written for children. In fact, it is not until the last three chapters that Pullman reveals what some of the imagery in the book stand for. The next two books further develop the message and make it very clear.

The author, Philip Pullman, is a professing agnostic who has a definite agenda with this series. In an interview Pullman is quoted as saying, "My books are about killing God." In another interview with the *Sydney Morning Herald* he said, "I wanted to reach everyone, and the best way I could do that was to write for children."

When asked about himself and what he believes Pullman said, "Atheism suggests a degree of certainty that I'm not quite willing to accede. I suppose, technically, you'd have to put me down as an agnostic, but if there is a God, and he is as the Christians describe him, then he deserves to be put down and rebelled against." Another quote from his own website says, "I don't know whether there is a God or not. Nobody does, no matter what they say. I think it's perfectly possible to explain how the universe came about without bringing God into it, but I don't know everything, and there may well be a God somewhere, hiding away. Actually, if he is keeping out of sight, it's because he's ashamed of his followers and all the cruelty and ignorance they're responsible for promoting in his name. If I were him, I'd want nothing to do with them."

And that is the message that Pullman wants to get out to children through his books. At the end of "*The Golden Compass*" we learn that the "*Magisterium*", the group that has been kidnapping children and performing surgery on them, is the church. The church is taking these children and separating them from their daemon (pronounced the same as demon). Pullman says that these daemons are a person's soul but they are on the outside instead of the inside. In the stories these daemons have an animal form. These daemons are an individual's spiritual guide and the source of wisdom.

In the stories a person's daemon cannot live without a host. When the person dies their daemon dies with them. That is Pullman's way of saying that there is no life after death. When we die our soul dies and is buried with us. In chapter twenty-eight of "The Golden Compass" Pullman gives what is supposed to be a direct quote from Genesis chapter three. This is how it reads:

*And the serpent said unto the woman, "Ye shall not surely die: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and your daemons shall assume their true forms, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."*

*And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to reveal the true form of one's daemon, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

*And the eyes of them both were opened, and they saw the true form of their daemons, and spoke with them.*

*"But when the man and the woman knew their own daemons, they knew that a great change had come upon them, for until that moment it had seemed that they were at one with all the creatures of the earth and the air, and there was no difference between them.*

To further understand what Pullman is trying to say we need to look at another of his quotes. According to him, *"the book depicts the Temptation and Fall not as the source of all woe and misery, as in traditional Christian teaching, but as the beginning of true human freedom something to be celebrated, not lamented. And the Tempter is not an evil being like Satan, prompted by malice and envy, but a figure who might stand for Wisdom."*

Pullman applauds Adam and Eve for listening to the serpent. He says that Adam and Eve had the choice to either obey God and remain ignorant, or to listen to the wisdom of their own personal daemon and be as wise as God.

At this point we need to stop and find out what Pullman teaches about God. Here is a quote from the third book of the series "The Amber Spyglass:

The Authority, god, the Creator, the Lord, Yahweh, El, Adonai, the King, the Father the Almighty - those were all names he gave himself. He was never the creator. He was an angel like ourselves - the first angel, true, the most powerful, but he was formed of Dust as we are, and Dust is only a name for what happens when matter begins to understand itself....The first angels condensed out of Dust, and the Authority was the first of all. He told those who came after him that he had created them, but it was a lie.

Pullman says, that God was never really God. He was created from dust just like everyone else but since he was the first to be created he told everyone that came after him that he was God and people believed it. Here is another quote from the third book "The Amber Spyglass".

*...I met an angel: a female angel....She said that all the history of human life has been a struggle between wisdom and stupidity. She and the rebel angels, the followers of wisdom, have always tried to open minds; the Authority and his churches have always tried to keep them closed.*

And now we understand the real meaning of the symbolisms in this series. In all three books the villains are the church people. The church wants to separate people from their souls (daemons) so that they will keep believing the lie that there is a God. Essentially Pullman is teaching that the church wants to brain wash everyone and has in fact been doing so for thousands of years.

This message is brought out loud and clear in another quote from the third book, "The Amber Spyglass".

*There are two great powers....and they've been fighting since time began....Every little increase in human freedom has been fought over ferociously between those who want us to know more and be wiser and stronger, and those who want us to obey, and be humble, and submit.*

On the surface the first book and movie look very entertaining and if everything stopped with the first book it may not be worth sounding an alarm. But, the goal of both Pullman and the movie producers is to get people hooked on the first story so that they want more. This is a deliberate attempt to turn people against the church and against God.

I will close my summary of this trilogy with a quote from Annie Laurie Gaylor, co-president of the atheist advocacy group, the "Freedom From Religion Foundation". She says, "Philip Pullman and I would say it is religion that poisons everything..What this book is about is casting off Church authority. I think it's very, very, positive. There should be something for free-thinking children. It's a very good yarn."

There is nothing wrong with fantasy but this fantasy has an evil agenda and we would be wise to keep our children away from it.

For more information on this series of books and the author check out the following websites:

[www.philip-pullman.com](http://www.philip-pullman.com)

[www.snopes.com/politics/religion/compass.asp](http://www.snopes.com/politics/religion/compass.asp)

[www.pluggedinonline.com/cultureclips2/a0003495.cfm](http://www.pluggedinonline.com/cultureclips2/a0003495.cfm)

[www.goldencompassmovie.com/](http://www.goldencompassmovie.com/)

[www.truthquest.net/newsletter/newsletter-goldencompass07.html](http://www.truthquest.net/newsletter/newsletter-goldencompass07.html)

<http://www.randomhouse.com/features/pullman/author/qa.html>