

The Matrix and Captain Marvel

America: The Big Picture

Neil Girard

It is probably best to turn now to *The Matrix* and *Captain Marvel* because, sad to say, many people today will be more familiar with these movies than they are with the Bible or even with American history. When one is aware of both the Bible and these movies, however, we can readily see that they can be modern parables of ancient truths. A parable is a “casting alongside,” a comparison of two or more things so that the more difficult or less obvious is brought into better light and thus a better understanding.

“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed,”

“...like a woman who leavened three quarts of wheat,”

“...like a dragnet cast into the sea,”

are examples of the parables Jesus used to describe the rule of God among men. (see Mt. 13:31, 33, 47)

As we can see, these movies, perhaps only because they draw upon the same underlying themes found in the New Testament (redemption, resurrection, empowerment, etc.), become parallel images. It is certain that any similarities are merely coincidental, a concept we will return to later.

The Matrix

The Matrix, as was stated in the introduction, is a 1999 movie starring Keanu Reeves and Laurence Fishburne. The main characters are Neo (Reeves) and Morpheus (Fishburne). Morpheus is convinced that Neo is the human who will be able to destroy the matrix. The matrix is an elaborate prison system in which an alternative reality is injected into the minds of human beings so that they will not even try to escape when, in fact, they are being grown in sophisticated pods by artificial intelligence driven machines so that the humans' bodies' energies can be drained and utilized. The human's reality is that he or she is little more than a battery for the artificial intelligence.

This incredibly parallels the teachings of Christ and the New Testament in many ways. Paul wrote:

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience, among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with (in) Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might

show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”
(Eph. 2:1-7)

Neo, trapped inside a pod and forced to service the artificial intelligence, is a perfect picture of fallen mankind, trapped under the prince of the power of the air (the devil and the demonic) because

1) the human race is contaminated with death because of the choices of Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:16-17, etc.) and

2) the human individual inevitably chooses to disobey at least something of the ways of God. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23)

No one is entitled to an excuse because God created the world in such a way that even His eternal attributes and glory are clearly visible in His creation. (Rom. 1:20)

Again, as was also stated in the introduction, the iconic description of the process of confrontation of personal belief systems comes when Morpheus offers Neo a red pill and a blue pill, saying,

“You take the blue pill – the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill – you stay in Wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes. Remember: all I’m offering is the truth. Nothing more.”

Taking “the red pill” has now become synonymous with embracing difficult truth while rejecting apparently comfortable and seemingly comforting deceptions.

Consider these further similarities:

- Neo, taking the red pill and being flushed from his pod into the reality of personal responsibility and individual liberty, is a perfect picture of the new birth (Jn. 3:3, 5, 1 Pet. 1:23) whereby we are translated from this world’s kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light of the Son of God. (Col. 1:13)
- Neo’s physical rehabilitation is comparable to the steps to spiritual maturity given by Peter: add to your faith first goodness, then knowledge, then self-control, then perseverance, then godliness, then brotherly kindness, then love. (2 Pet. 1:5-7) When Neo finally and truly believes and is able to stop the agents’ bullets in midair by simply saying, “No,” it is a picture of being spiritually mature and able to raise the shield of faith by which we quench the fiery darts of our spiritual adversaries. (Eph. 6:16)
- Neo is able to wield great power inside the matrix and this is a valid picture of the child of God wrestling and standing against his spiritual adversaries. (Eph. 6:12-13)

That few believers' lives resembles Neo's victory over the machines' agents inside the matrix is an indictment against the way "Christians" are grown. Kept safe in their pods (their "churches"), they are usually not "red pillled" and thus never brought into spiritual reality nor prepared for battle. Do not be fooled – the "church" is the primary component of their pod. We will return to this concept later.

Captain Marvel

Let us now examine *Captain Marvel*, Marvel's 2019 comic book fictional movie that may be Marvel's most complicated and sophisticated movie yet. The super-hero is Carol Danvers who absorbs an incredible amount of energy when she destroys an extra-terrestrial energy device to keep it from falling into the hands of what turns out to be another alien (of the domineering Kree race). In absorbing this energy, she loses her memory but is later trained to harness and control this energy by the Kree who took her back to their home planet. After she has been trained, she is sent on a mission (that does not go as planned) to extract a Kree agent before a planet of the supposedly terrorist shape-shifting race (the Skrulls) is destroyed. In a series of events that occur on planet C-53 (Earth, 1990s), Danvers learns the truth about herself as well as the full extent of her powers and drives the Kree away from planet Earth in a spectacular display of power and strength.

Again, we must recognize that the depth of parallel similarities to teachings of the Bible are almost certain to be entirely coincidental on the part of Marvel. But there truly are an incredible number of parallels. We will see this only if we can see that the purpose of Christ is that

"He might present to Himself a glorious church (Greek, ekklesia), not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish."
(Eph. 5:27)

The transformation of Danvers into Captain Marvel is a ready picture of the transformation of fallen humans into the beautiful, powerful collective body of Christ. This comparison is obscured, however, because very few recognize that there are two expressions of this body of Christ, a genuine and a counterfeit – just as in *The Matrix* there was a genuine existence available on Morpheus' ship and there was the counterfeit existence within a pod.

Let us momentarily divert from the *Captain Marvel* narrative and examine this dual reality. If within the movie's narrative, one of the shape-shifting Skrull truly been a villain and had taken the form of Captain Marvel to destroy her, it would be a closer approximation to spiritual reality but *Captain Marvel* did not go in that direction. In the New Testament, the people of Christ are called wheat and they are infiltrated with tares (weeds). (Mt. 13:24-25, etc.) The genuine – as is demonstrated by the fruit of the Spirit, especially love – Gal. 5:22-23, Jn. 13:35, etc. – the genuine people of Christ are called the bride and wife of Christ. (Rev. 19:7, 21:9) In contrast, there is another woman, named Babylon, who is called the Great Prostitute. (Rev. 17:4-5) When we compare the role and function of a bride versus the role and function of a prostitute, we can see that the counterfeit mimics and usurps the role, position and function of the genuine. This is a very important insight to come to terms with.

Perhaps the easiest way to start to gain an understanding of this contrast is to consider the word “church.” “Church” (the English word as can be found in any worthwhile dictionary) refers to the “Christian”: 1) building, 2) clergy, 3) religion and 4) people.

When we compare these meanings to the New Testament, though, we find that

1) “The Most High God does not dwell in buildings made by human hands” (Acts 7:48) so the “church” building is *not* His house.

2) There is no exalted clergy class whatsoever in the New Testament except to be forbidden (1 Pet. 5:3) yet the clergy derives their name from the Greek word used in this very verse (that originally described *all* the people and not a select, exalted few “leaders”) as God’s heritage or portion. (see *kleros* [2819])

3) “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” (Jas. 1:27) Jesus warned that what we have done or not done to the poorest of His brothers would factor heavily into whether we would be counted as a sheep or a goat. (Mt. 25:32, 40, 45) More money is spent on “church” buildings and clergy salaries than on all outreach, charity and missions combined. More time and effort is devoted to showing how much like the world we can be and still be a “Christian” and this is a very acceptable norm at many, if not most “churches.”

4) The word “church” has historically been used to translate the Greek word *ekklesia*. [1577] This word *ekklesia* is a political (not even religious) word that refers to the political assembly that gathered to attend to the affairs and issues of their particular locale or city. The Christians appropriated the word (just as they had with other words such as *agape* [26] which now refers to God’s unique and transcendent love for mankind and our corresponding love for one another) and thus *ekklesia* refers to the *people* who have been translated from darkness to light and are now to gather according to the Spirit’s guidance to attend to the affairs and issues of Christ’s kingdom as God shows that they need addressed in their particular locale. Thus *people* – the *fourth* definition of the English word “church” – is the **only** sense in which the word “church” has any relationship with *ekklesia*.

Three parts deception, one part truth – tells the story very nicely. When we look more closely at the two words, *ekklesia* and “church,” like this, we discover these serious discrepancies between the meanings – and these discrepancies are so serious that one even wonders how modern translators feel justified in using the English word “church” to translate the Greek word *ekklesia*! “No lie is of the truth.” (1 Jn. 2:21) Those who wish to become the spotless, blameless bride of Christ must forsake all the teachings, practices and even mindset of the prostitute Babylon. Using *ekklesia* to describe the genuine and “church” to describe the counterfeit is a good way to start, at least linguistically and conceptually, differentiating between the two.

Let us return to examining the parallels that do exist in *Captain Marvel*.

- When Danvers destroys the alien power source, she fires a weapon at it and the power from the device, instead of destroying her in an explosion, is absorbed into her body. This is a perfect picture of the main story of the New Testament. The ultimate power source for all of life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), Jesus Christ, came into the world. He came to His own (the Jewish people who had been told for many years their Messiah would come) but His own received Him not. (Jn. 1:11) Instead, they crucified Him. But instead of this destroying the human race, this became the mechanism by which the human race could overcome its contamination with death, the destructiveness of sin and the power of the devil and the demonic which lures them into sinful ways. Christ, especially with the outpouring of His Holy Spirit, enveloped His people and they soon spread out across the planet and changed the world.
- When Danvers shakes off the deceptions the Kree had programmed into her, she has to fight to become free from their control. She is forced to summon up all the resolve she learned from all the times she fell and got back up – fell off a bike, wrecked a go cart, hit by a baseball, fell from rappelling ropes, etc. Perhaps the most important lesson in the genuine life lived following Christ is summed up in the adage: “To thine own self be true.” This must be understood in the light of the new creation, the new self, created and being renewed into the life-giving likeness of Christ Himself, and not of the old self, the flesh dying in the likeness of the first Adam. To this newly created creation in Christ we must be true. Then we will know the power to overcome whatever obstacles and difficulties we face in life.
- Ronan, a powerful villain, the Chief Accuser of the Kree, comes to Earth with four battleships and promptly launches a missile bombardment. Captain Marvel catches one of the missiles, explodes it into the rest, then quickly destroys the fleet of small ships Ronan unleashes against her and then she quickly destroys one of Ronan’s battleships. She stands in front of Ronan’s ship, warning him to leave (which he does). This is a perfect picture of what we are capable of in the spiritual realms. James wrote, “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts you double-minded.” (Jas. 4:7-8) We can overcome the power of the prince of the air with the strength that Christ gives us. (Phlp. 4:13)

That so few claimants to following Christ walk in this kind of victory and power (which must be evaluated according to the scope of each individual’s life and circle of influence and not according to some nebulous, ultimately false “theological” standard), is again an indictment against the “church’s” failure to bring its adherents into genuine spiritual maturity – all quite comparable to the condition Danvers was in while she still believed she and the Kree race were “warrior heroes” and (to return to *The Matrix*) that Neo was in while living in the matrix but blissfully unaware of his reality in the pod.

Inspiration

In closing this discussion, let us examine a possible cause behind the depth of comparisons that exist between the New Testament and these two movies. There are some who, in spite of all the evidence that points toward the Bible's divine inspiration, will dismiss outright even the possibility that God's Holy Spirit aided in the writing of the various letters and documents that now comprise the New and Old Testaments we call the Bible. Yet, when we look at the movies *The Matrix* and *Captain Marvel*, it is indeed a strange, inexplicable coincidence that they provide such deep comparisons to the foundational messages of the Bible – and without any cooperation with God on the part of the writers and producers of the movies. Consider this however: If God is able to embed His concepts in these two movies without the active cooperation of the writers and producers of the movies, how much more could He do with people who were consciously submitting themselves to His inspiration?

God spoke the world into existence. God accomplished His purpose to save mankind from destruction with the life, death and resurrection of one man, the God-Man Christ Jesus. God inspired others to write down what they saw, experienced and understood and, as a result, their writings influence countless millions of people to this day. Imagine what He could do with your life if it were submitted entirely to Him. Better still, simply surrender to Him and experience what He wants to do with and through you for the world around you. This is the only way in which we will grow to experience the beauty and power the New Testament lays out before us.

Let he who has ears hear.

Zeitgeists: A Clash of Titans

http://paidionbooks.org/girard/abp/abp_pdf/abp01.pdf

City of Refuge

http://paidionbooks.org/girard/abp/abp_pdf/abp03.pdf

Neil Girard
Paidion Books
P.O. Box 327
Capitan, NM 88316

Website – www.paidionbooks.org
Email – paidion@paidionbooks.org