



The Chasm: A Journey to the Edge of Life

Randy Alcorn

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A Journey He Couldn't Miss... and a Step He Couldn't Take

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Best-selling novelist Randy Alcorn weaves a supernatural interplay of wills and motives, lusts and longings, love and sacrifice. It's a potent mix that leaves every reader wondering: *Do I really understand this world I live in? Do I really understand myself? Is there more to all this than I've ever dared hope?*

INCLUDES 12 ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS

The Chasm: A Journey to the Edge of Life Details

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From Reader Review The Chasm: A Journey to the Edge of Life for online ebook

H.A. Titus says

The Chasm is adapted from Randy Alcorn's book Edge of Eternity.

Nick Seagrave has been brought from our world into another, where spiritual battles can be seen, where a red road holds the secret to eternal life, and a chasm awaits those who try to find Charis, the City of Light.

I read Edge of Eternity several years ago and loved it. The Chasm is quite short, about 110 pages, and it took me a couple of hours to read. It nicely condenses Nick Seagrave's allegorical journey to Charis into something maybe a Bible study group would enjoy reading together and discussing. Enough is told of the backstory that readers new to the story won't feel lost, and those who have enjoyed Edge of Eternity will appreciate the book's focus on the chasm and the way the Woodsman finally makes it crossable. The only thing I missed from Edge of Eternity was how Alcorn fleshed out the other characters besides Nick.

Altogether, The Chasm makes a short, enjoyable read that will introduce readers nicely to Edge of Eternity.

I received this book for free via Waterbrook Multnomah Publishing Group's Blogging For Books program

Shelia says

Allegory or Parody?

This is an allegorical story of "man's redemption" by Christ. However, at times it read more like a parody. I am not certain of the reading level, but it read as if it were geared towards teens and young adults.

The Chasm is adapted from Randy Alcorn's earlier story Edge of Eternity. In these stories, we are following the character, Nick Seagrave. He is on a spiritual quest. It is unclear in the Chasm whether this journey is a mental struggle or if he's walking that thin string balanced between life and death. Regardless, no explanation is given regarding how Nick (our main character) got to this unnamed, God forsaken land.

Throughout the story, Nick is trying to get somewhere – sometimes he wants to go back to the life he had and understood, but most of the time he is struggling to get to the city on the hill, Charis, the City of Light. As Nick travels, he meets up with various characters. Most have names, while a few, following allegory tradition have titles. There is the struggle between good and bad (warriors who are described as dark or light), there is a Shining warrior and a Woodsman. He takes up with one of the Characters, names Joshua. Nick learns you cannot always judge a man's heart based on how he looks. Joshua has some secrets that he's not telling Nick.

The story is packed full of descriptions, however, sometimes the descriptions feel forced. Details seem to be "tacked on" and cause the reader to slow down his/her reading. The result is a jerky eye movement, decreasing the overall reading speed.

At times during the story, Nick's eyesight would zoom in on some object or person—he could suddenly see what others around him could not see. Then at other times, the sizes of the characters changed suddenly. I found this confusing, I wasn't sure at any given time the meaning of the changing of his perspective. The story peaks when Nick, with the help of an old man, reaches the chasm. Here he realizes that there is no way he can cross over to the place he longs to run to, Charis. It is here that there plays out a "crucifixion" scene.

Overall the book was interesting and fun to read. The book became easier for me to read the closer to the ending I got. The final chapters were well written. I'm not sure if this was because I became use to his method of writing or if his writing just smoothed out. However, if the reader wasn't familiar with the gospel story, I'm not sure how well he or she could follow along.

The book presented the crucifixion in a novel way, which may cause the reader to stop and question their life style. With that said, I finished the book and had more questions than answers. How does this experience change the man with the secrets or does it? The question I have is regarding the characters who are lost; How does it work out for them. How are they saved or as the story goes, are they ever able to cross the chasm?

Kogiopsis says

EEP! Of course this happens... the first book giveaway the atheist wins is overtly religious. Okay. Trying new things, trying new things, trying new things, HOW DID THIS HAPPEN, trying new things...

I will get through it, and the review will be interesting indeed.

Oh, and it'll probably offend some people.

So here goes...

One star, according to Goodreads, means 'didn't like it'. I guess you could say that's my general reaction to the book. By way of explanation, though, I should mention that I didn't expect to like it- that I went into it knowing there would be little likeable in it, and that after the first chapter there would be pretty much nothing.

Let me elaborate: I'm an atheist. Fact. Getting that one out of the way ASAP. Randy Alcorn is a minister. Fact. There was potential for conflict from the beginning.

But.

It didn't become inevitable until I flipped through my crisp new free book and found the 'reading guide' in the back.

And then I lost hope.

You see, my conflict is not specifically with religion in fantasy. I adore C.S. Lewis, and I can enjoy some L.B. Graham. My conflict is with religion in fantasy that is so incredibly anvilicious that there is NO. QUESTION. if it can be interpreted any other way. It can't. Narnia is a Christian allegory *and* a kick-ass adventure series with great characters and some nice sparkly magic. The Binding Of The Blade isn't as good, but it wraps the religion into a bundle of awesome- dragons, giants, tigers, cities built into rock outcroppings- and makes it part of the whole, not the entirety. It's possible to read both of these as straight-out fantasy series. (I didn't find the Christian symbolism in Narnia for years and years.)

That could have been the case with The Chasm. If so, it might have gotten two or even three stars. I mean, the writing wasn't very good (more on this later) and the plot meandered, but if the reading guide hadn't been

there it still would have gotten at least one more star from me.

Message to all authors out there: I HATE BEING TOLD HOW TO INTERPRET THINGS, HOW TO THINK, AND MOST OF ALL, **WHAT TO THINK.**

So I think maybe you can imagine- or at least conceive of a modicum of- the outrage I felt when I read this last note in the reader's guide:

"To help you understand what the true 'Woodsman' has done for you and how you can respond, find a Bible , and use the table of contents to help you locate the following passages. These are just a few of the passages in the Bible that can help you explore the truth about Jesus Christ: if you have questions as you read them, be sure to talk to a believer in Jesus to help you discover the answers."

Insert nine seconds of Colin Firth swearing very Britishly here.

NO.

JUST NO.

Ironically, I felt like this.

Look, write your allegories. Go for it. But since you've already hit me over the head with something defined as "a short moral story", don't feel the need to drop a grand piano on me to compound the lesson.

Here I must digress and talk about why I was completely hopeless after the first chapter.

The writing in this book?

It is TERRIBLE.

It's loose, lacks flow, has far too little variation and too much 'telling'; word choice is at times questionable and at others downright idiotic; the plot wouldn't make sense if it wasn't being read as an allegory. There are people who are passionate about their religion and they can write so that said passion shows through in every word. Randy Alcorn is not one of those people. After the first chapter I knew that he wasn't, that he wouldn't turn into such a person, and that the only luck I'd had was that this book was so short.

And then a few chapters later I realized that this wasn't luck at all.

Lewis and Graham spread their Christian epics out over multiple books- seven for Lewis, five for Graham- and so they take their time with both the Christian imagery and the non-religious half of the story. But such is not for Alcorn. True, supposedly this book was an excerpt from a larger volume, but that doesn't excuse it unless this is in fact a summary of the excerpt.

Religion is a huge subject, and a complex and important one. If you're going to treat with it, please take time and care to do so. Otherwise it feels rushed and- that word I keep coming back to- anvilicious.

I get the impression that this book was intended as a... well, a conversion tool, to pick the best word. I am not converted, needless to say.

And here's the part where I use internet anonymity to really piss people off. Because not only am I not converted...

I'm over here laughing at these guys.

Averil Pesce says

Ok my thoughts on this book...It took what felt like forever to get into this short book. I finished it but it definitely wasn't a favorite. As allegories go I have read so much better.

Lindsey says

It is very much in the vein of Pilgrim's Progress, which resonated well. The particular reason this jumped from 3 stars to 4 stars was the imagery of the crucifixion. I didn't give it 5 because much of the writing was executed in a rather mediocre manner, but that's not the point of this book. The illustrations were too cartoonish to me. Once I got to the final moments of the crucifixion it was no longer about the bad writing. The Woodsman's (Christ's) dialogue following His resurrection hit me soundly. Especially: "I would have done it for you alone."

Like the slaying of Aslan in The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, the depiction of Jesus in this book shook me spiritually in such a profound way that reminded me yet again that salvation is ENTIRELY a gift of holy, untainted love that only God is capable of. It truly floors me. It is vital that we be reminded of this often. This is a powerful, symbolic telling of salvation.

Ed says

This is a great book to give to a person who is lost and not knowing how to come to God. It is a story of one person who wants to come to know Christ, but has many questions that he develops in his own mind to keep from doing that. This book covers those questions and the answers to them. There is a teacher's guide at the end of the book to help a teacher to deal with people that have all kinds of obstacles in keeping them from being saved.

Pamela says

"Throughout my education and upbringing, the retaining walls of my mind had been carefully constructed to deny the supernatural, to explain away the miraculous. Now they fell to the ground like flimsy shacks in a hurricane."

Nick Seagrave finds himself caught up in the supernatural realm where angels and demons are warring for his soul. Somewhat like a prophetic vision. The problem is, Nick can't tell which is which; the demons of darkness are like chameleon changelings, masquerading effectively as light. There's a safe haven city, but a bottomless chasm prevents him from seeking solace within its gates.

Soon, a cloak clothed being named "Joshua" befriends Nick and takes him on a journey through his past and present, and down roads where unlimited desires are his for the taking. Just like in the natural world, though, every thought and every action has a consequence. Moreover, contrary to popular belief, that which is done in Vegas, doesn't stay in Vegas.

"The truth is . . . there's no such thing as a private moment; the whole cosmos is our audience for everything we do in the dark."

From there, Nick's journey only gets worse, as everything he once thought valuable, meaningful, time worthy, status worthy, or enviable, is measured and he is found lacking. And his anger is riled..

Pride goeth before a fall.

Fall we all will, and die we all must. The question remains, on which side of the chasm will it happen.

Intriguing synopsis, one might say. Yipper, four stars. Suspenseful and thrilling perhaps? Yes and no, three stars. A timely message for those seeking truth, yes, absolutely. Five Stars.

So then, why only two stars???? Three reasons:

- 1) The synopsis and themes were larger and more intense than what was allowed in this minuscule book. Therefore, the dramatic impact was lost and the action fell flat - which doused the suspense. Somewhat like trying to condense down Macbeth to a one-act play.
- 2) Randy Alcorn is an accomplished, capable and respected author. I've enjoyed a few of his full-length novels. The Chasm just wasn't up to par. Weak writing. Awkward phrasing. Draft like feel. Something about it was simply off. Then again, maybe I'm the one off. In all fairness, there were some glimpses of exceptionally written passages.
- 3) Okay, I don't like to be a killjoy, but I've got to be honest: The ink illustrations were so juvenile, so sophomoric , so Christian-Tract cartoonish - they detracted from, rather than added to, my overall enjoyment of the book. And perhaps, I've got it all wrong. Maybe the book was created as any oversized tract and/or to be marketed to a young adult crowd. Either/or, it wasn't a selling point for me.

All things considered:

TWO ** Great Message, Okay Delivery, Cartoonish Graphics ** STARS

MC says

When I first received my review copy of *The Chasm*, by Randy Alcorn, I looked it over. At first, I was a tad disappointed since it was obviously a short novella. I had thought it might be a bit longer. It also takes place during the time line of Alcorn's novel, *Edge of Eternity*. Thankfully, *The Chasm* was written in such a way as that one does not need to have read *Eternity* in order to understand it. With reassurances in hand, I settled down to read the book.

The story revolves around a man named Nick Seagrave. He is apparently a wealthy businessman who is estranged from his ex-wife and daughters. He suddenly finds himself in this mystical land, and he must choose between the simple red road, or the multiple other roads, in an effort to reach the beautiful City of Light. In the end, he discovers that the red road, like the others, leads to an infinite chasm. One that hopelessly separates the land where he stands, *from* the shores wherein lies the City of Light. What can he do? The answer is nothing. Nothing but have faith.

That seems to be the theme throughout the little novella. Faith. Only by faith in the Lord Jesus, can we escape the due penalty for our sins. And We ARE culpable for our sins, and thus the punishments of the Cross that our Lord willingly took upon himself. In the story, Nick finds himself joining a gang of others, egged on by their own resentments and demons, driving spikes into the feet of Christ. Then when the armies of Heaven implore the Lord for permission to destroy those who hurt Him so, the Lord denies it, pointing out

that He could stamp the crowd at his feet out with "a thought". When he is asked why he allows such a pathetic, evil rabble to hurt him, he responds, "Because it is the only way to save them."

That struck a powerful chord with me. Not since I read **The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**, have I been so struck by a fictional representation of our Lord's sacrifice on our behalf on that Cross on Calvary. This book drove the point home. The pains and torment he undertook that day so long ago (for us, to His eternal mind, perhaps just yesterday), the hurts we deliver to Him when we hate Him, mock Him, blame Him, question His judgement, or so forth; are **all our fault**.

Think of it! Think of the pain that we must cause Him, though He in His holiness has every right to send the whole lot of us to Hell, and it would not be at all unloving or unjust of Him to do so. So what does He do? He comes down and **dies for us*!!*

We sing songs in church of the enormous holiness and love of God, and His other amazing attributes. These songs do not even begin to cover the truth of the picture. God's attributes and Self are inexhaustible. In eternity, those of us who know Him will NEVER encounter the end of His Being. Randy Alcorn makes that all-too-neglected Scriptural point in his story.

I honestly can not think of any great defect in the slim story. Since it links to the events of the larger novel, **Edge of Eternity**, the length is obviously no real issue. The closest that I can come to a criticism, is that the violence is a bit graphic. Not gratuitously so, but because Alcorn seems to want to show how our struggle is for our eternal souls, and even sometimes our temporal lives. And it is a real battle, with unseen forces that we ought to be taking more seriously than we do.

The part that I liked, on a more minor level than the praise so far given by me, is the way in which the author weaves together beloved authors such as Lewis and Tolkien with **Scripture** in the narrative. Not only is it wonderful to see Lewis and Tolkien properly used and interpreted in another fictional work, but the use of Scripture is quite refreshing. The Word of God is supposed to be our first stop for knowledge and instruction, not a pit stop after some later human authors. I was glad to see Alcorn bring this correct place of the Bible into the novella. He even seems to throw a bit of Bunyan's **Pilgrim's Progress** into the mix, which is also great fun.

This book, despite it's short length at 112 pages, is a must-read. The vivid battles and imagery paint an accurate picture of how we, as sinners and enemies of God, were redeemed by His hand through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ on the Cross at Calvary. It also paints a beautiful picture of what we can look forward to on the New Heaven/New Earth: inexhaustible paradise, with our inexhaustible Lord and God that we were created to worship. Amen and amen! I can not wait!!! HOOAH!!! Highly Recommended.

I received this book for free from WaterBrook Multnomah Publishers. I am obligated to read it and give a review on my blog and on a commercial web site such as Amazon.com. WaterBrook Multnomah emphasizes their desire for honest reviews, whether positive or negative, in order to help them create a better product. The opinions above are my honest viewpoint. I want to thank WaterBrook Multnomah Publishers for allowing me to review this book, and thank you all for reading this.

Marie says

From the Publisher:

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I seriously was looking forward to reading this book. Unfortunately, as I snuggled up and began to read I was struck by a strong sense of *deja vu*. Had I read this book before and simply forgot? But no, that couldn't be it...this is a new release. Right?

Well sort of. What it really is, is a rewriting of "Edge of Eternity." Some of it hauntingly exact in its replication. If you haven't read "Edge of Eternity" it is an allegory of a man that experiences death to self through the cross of Christ (as is 'Chasm' for that matter). Whereas, "Edge of Eternity" is a magnificent book, "Chasm" tends to leave the reader feeling a bit winded by its pace and at some level the reader feels like a chunk of the message is missing. Read the "Chasm" if you must but I much prefer "Edge of Eternity".

"I received this book for free from WaterBrook Multnomah Publishing Group for this review".

Roni Jennings says

A story- more allegory until the end- that speaks to the human condition and humanity's relationship with (a Christian) god. The author reads the book (audio book) and is sometimes too energetic in his reading. Good imagery. A sometimes heavy-handed allegory, but still thought-provoking.

Gail Welborn says

The Chasm, A Journey to the Edge of Life, by Randy Alcorn, Multnomah Books, 2011, Hardcover, 128 pages, ISBN-13: 9781601423399, \$14.99

"...not all is as it appears. Are you ready to walk the red road to the chasm?" Shadrach spoke of the road to "Charis, the City of Light," the road before death, not after.

After a foolhardy detour when he left the cave, Nick Seagrave returned to the red road Shadrach first directed him to, which brought him to the chasm and the "bottomless pit." Where multitudes of terror-filled voices

filled with "...sorrow...regrets and bitterness..." rose into the air. They sounded like "voices of the damned" to him.

Eyes burning with unshed tears, fear and a familiar longing within, Nick entered a "dark night of the soul," and questioning despair. Would he reach the "City of Light" across the chasm or the "City of Darkness" below?

Then he saw the Woodman dressed in a white robe striding toward him in the distance seeming to float above the chasm. His melodious song rang out and he grasped a great sword in rough hewn hands, adorned with ancient inscriptions in an unknown language.

He told Nick about things he'd never heard or thought of, eternal truths—"about himself...life" and about Nick. Then the Woodman said, "I offer a joy that will cost you everything...but gain you everything that matters" with a simple choice. Full Review: <http://tinyurl.com/4qxemhl>

Valentin says

From Publishers Weekly

Alcorn offers a companion to his novel, *Edge of Eternity*, in this Pilgrim's Progress-style allegory about a man who comes to see his own wasted life through a series of misadventures, battles, and sins. These lead him to a chasm he cannot cross without the help of trusted—should he trust them?—guides, most importantly a Christ figure, the Woodsman, and a tempter, Joshua. The end is not utopia, but a life with unexpected joys and faithful companions. For those who appreciate allegory, Alcorn's fills the bill even as it also includes the realities of contemporary life: "I gazed into the emptiness of my daughter's eyes. I started pushing and shoving. I wanted to kill the men who lusted after her—vile men whose daughters I lusted after." Nothing here tops classic Christian allegories, but noteworthy is a "new creation" view of afterlife: "You will live on a new earth—the old earth made new.... I came not to destroy but to redeem my fallen creation." (Feb.)

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Product Description

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Chucky says

Pilgrims Progress this is NOT. I have a bit of difficulty with some of his theology.
WAY TOO WORDY!

Decent story, but is very difficult to find a connection with any of the characters. One would expect that an allegory should stir up emotion. This fell flat for me. Got bored with him repeating himself over & over in endless different ways.

Kate says

An unreachable destination called Charis is a musical city of light that has the ability to draw whomever sees it.

Nick Seagrave on a quest to find the truth, encounters others along his journey. Battling unthinkable obstacles and unfriendly terrain Nick experiences feelings, terror and the like which cannot mimic anything he has felt and witnessed prior. Will he reach his goal or will he be purposely detained?

This book is unlike anything I have read up to this point. Visions, terror, warfare that is kind of sci-fi with a strong faith component expertly woven throughout. Although this is but a short book there is a lot to read within its pages, also has pen drawings that enhance the storyline. Many times I had to stop and reread to stay in focus and understanding. A very deep, creative, thought provoking and unique novel that will grab you and get you to wondering "what if?". Dialogue flowed well, I could just see the characters interacting with one another and scenery was very descriptive, which added to the novel. I did not encounter any dull parts throughout. I was entertained, challenged in my faith and found the overall message to be very inspiring. I will recommend this well written novel to others.

Brandi says

(I'm reviewing this because I received it for free through Goodreads' First Reads program.)

The one thing worse for me than reading a bad book is writing a bad review of it. But I had such a hard time finding anything to like about this book! As a Christian, it's not as if I even had (many) theological objections to the story, and I'm not even opposed to Christian fiction - I like almost everything by CS Lewis, and in my younger years I read and enjoyed Beverly Lewis' books and Francine Rivers' Mark of the Lion trilogy. What I didn't like was the forced allegory. The story seemed to make no sense at all apart from its theological implications - like what motivation did Nick have to participate in nailing the feet of the Woodsman? Really good Christian fiction - or even allegories in general - usually read as good stories in themselves. This one, not so much. One unfortunate effect of the transparency of Alcorn's allegory is that people encounter it like a Bible study, not like a work of fiction - people can't be open-minded about something when the message is constantly being forced on them.

Moreover, even as allegory, what does this book do to make the basic Christian story of salvation seem more real? It seemed to do nothing but provide illustration of some basic Christian concepts, no imagination

necessary.

The characterization, too, was rudimentary at best - but I suppose that's what happens when you write an "everyman" character? Speaking of which, I also had some problems with the main character being, in fact, a man. The section on lust was too, too much for me - if the goal was NOT to see women as objects, then don't portray the only women in the book as objects of sexual lust. All we learned is that lust is harmful to the spiritual life of men, and women don't really enjoy it. I understand that the book was written from the perspective of a male character, and I normally wouldn't mind, except that this book is supposed to be a highly generalizable Christian allegory, and assuming the male perspective in this case is just another way of participating in the mistaken idea that men's spirituality is all that matters.

In sum, I really wanted to like this book, and I tried to give it the benefit of the doubt, but there was just nothing there to redeem it. :/
