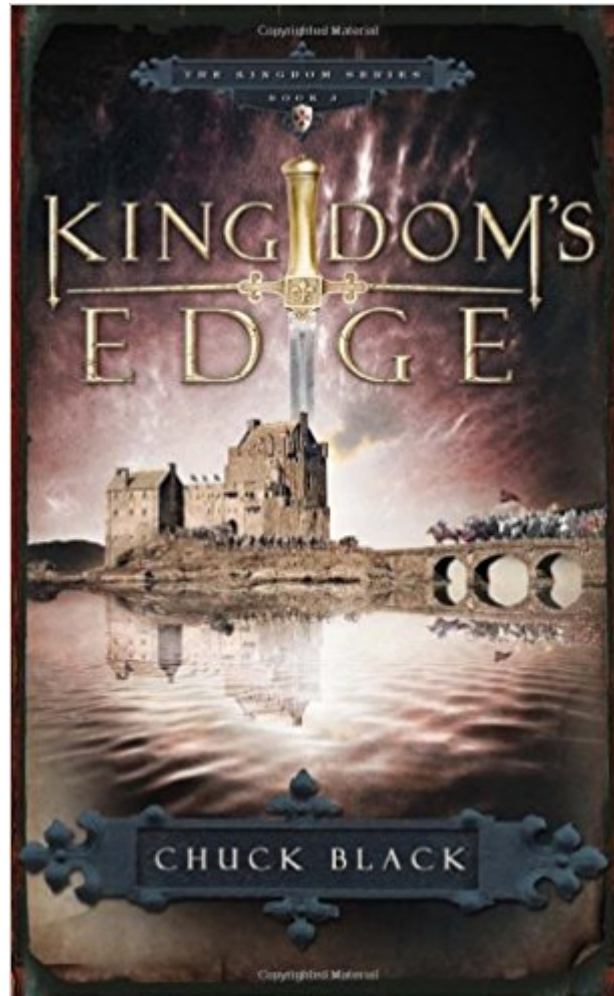




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Kingdom's Edge (Kingdom, Book 3)



Synopsis

A Riveting Medieval Parallel to the Bible Good and evil clash. Leinad and Cedric are determined to not only survive, but claim hope and victory! In Kingdom's Dawn , Leinad and Tess, along with all the king's people, must escape slavery by the powerful Lord Fairos.

Kingdom's Hope finds them free and arriving in the Chessington Valley . But when they forget the king, will Kergon and the Kessons capture them for good? After many years, Kingdom's Edge finds Cedric living a hopeless life until a stranger appears with powerful words of a new kingdom and a grand army. Finally, Kingdom's Reign marches you through the danger of earth's last days as the evil dark knight threatens to defeat the prince once and for all. Swords, knights, and battles define these captivating tales that parallel biblical events from Genesis to Revelation! He was doomed to a life of hopelessness and despair. Then the stranger arrived | For Cedric of Chessington, every day is the same: full of poverty and despair. And he knows that will never change. Or so he thinks. Then a stranger comes to the city. Drawn to the man's mysterious ways, Cedric discovers the stranger's humility belies great strength and wisdom. That's when an astounding truth becomes clear • the stranger is a Master of the Sword, and He is there to train Cedric. Suddenly propelled into a desperate battle against evil, Cedric must rely on the Master's training if he is going to survive. But the ultimate battle is yet to come, for the Dark Knight is at work, implementing his plan to take over the kingdom. Will Cedric be ready to stand in the face of pure evil? Journey to Arrethtrae, where the King and His Son implement a bold plan to save their kingdom; where courage, faith, and loyalty stand tall in the face of opposition; where good will not bow to evil; and where hope and compassion are as powerful weapons as the sword.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS INCLUDED Story Behind the Book “When my six kids' eyes glossed over during a reading from the Bible, I paused to explain the significance of redemption to a sin-sick soul. I was rewarded with patronizing elephant nods and more blank stares. Shortly thereafter, I awoke in the middle of the night with a medieval story enveloping my mind. I wrote it down and later read it to my children. Their waning attention transformed into complete anticipation. I was amazed and disappointed. Why did it take a fictional story, not a Bible passage, to get that response? Then I realized • that is how Jesus taught! Parables are powerful! I penned the Kingdom series to help young people get excited about the supremely significant story of Jesus Christ and His mission to save mankind. • Chuck Black

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Customer Reviews

Chuck Black spent eight years in the Air Force traveling the world as a communications engineer and an F-16 fighter pilot. He has invented or coinvented eleven patented construction products now being sold internationally. He earned his BS in electrical and electronic engineering from North Dakota State University and today, with his wife, Andrea, is in his thirteenth year homeschooling their six children. The Blacks take their family music ministry on the road, singing Christian gospel, contemporary, and traditional songs. Chuck is enjoying his eighth year teaching adult Sunday school classes at First Baptist Church in Williston, North Dakota.

Chapter One
A Stranger in Our Midst
“Cedric, if you don’t hurry, we’ll miss the procession,” William called. William was a dreamer. Unfortunately, these were times when not even dreamers could hope for a brighter tomorrow. Although his heart was tender, his features were sharp, giving the false impression that he was a hard man. William was strong and knew where he wanted to be, but he was not sure how to get there. His hair was dark and matched his brown eyes. Taller than average, he was a handsome man. I had known him since I was a boy. He was my friend.
“William, you know I’ve got to check on Leinad first,” I said.
“Besides, what is so grand about seeing not-so-noble Noble Knights pass by when my stomach howls in hunger?”
“If only we were one of them, we wouldn’t be hungry,” William said as we approached an old cottage that matched the age of its lone occupant.
“You’re dreaming again, William. We were not born of noble blood and

will therefore never become Noble Knights. Get that foolish notion out of your head!

Leinad lived just outside Chessington near a small stream that lazily wound its way toward the sea to the south. He was a strange fellow. I had come to know him when I was a young lad. People tend to avoid what they cannot understand or what makes them uncomfortable, and this was the case with Leinad. Although most people avoided him, I was drawn to him and his stories—œstories that seemed too strange to be true and too original to be fabricated. If even a small portion of the tales were true, then Chessington was ignorant of a very gallant man. If the tales were indeed made-up, then Leinad was just as everyone thought him to be: insane. Either way, I had a tender spot in my heart for him, especially since he was now too old to properly care for himself.

“Good day, Sir Leinad!” I raised my voice in greeting as we approached his door. Many of his stories portrayed him as a knight in service to the King. I half-jokingly addressed him as such, but I could never tell if I was humoring him or if he was humoring me by graciously accepting my flippant use of the title.

“Ah, dear Cedric,” came the familiar warm voice. “Welcome to my palace. Please come in.”

We stepped into his home to see Leinad seated at a small table near the south wall. His left hand was resting on the sill of the window he was staring through. His silver hair and brows partnered with his bent frame to paint a picture of a man near the end of life’s journey. He attempted to rise and meet us, but I halted him as I placed my hand on his shoulder.

“It’s all right, Leinad,” I said. “I know you are already standing in your heart.”

“It is good to see you, Cedric and William,” Leinad said with sincerity. He smiled at us with his eyes.

“Hello, Leinad,” William said.

“How are you feeling today?”

Leinad took in a deep breath, and he turned again toward the window.

“They listened once before, but time has defeated the sincerity of truth,” Leinad said, answering a question no one had asked. William glanced my way with a raised eyebrow. I smiled.

“We brought some bread for you,” I said, trying to break his distant trance.

“I will try to bring some fruit on my next visit, but the city is pretty short on food these days.”

Leinad turned to us and gazed into my eyes.

“Time is short,” he said.

“The power of the King is near, and the Dark One is mounted. You must be ready! The people must be ready!”

We were used to Leinad’s odd talk, but today he seemed overcome with his delusions.

“My mission is nearly complete,” he said.

“The Sword of the King sings in anticipation of the One who is worthy!”

“Yes,” I said.

“Your sword has no equal in splendor or beauty, that is certain. You have done well in its keeping.”

I rested my hand on his shoulder.

“Leinad, we must leave you now, but I will return in a few days to check on you. We can talk

more than. Leinad smiled. "Very well, Cedric. Thank you for the bread. The King will remember your kindness to me." I bowed and smiled as I winked at William. "Good day then, Sir Leinad," I said as we turned toward the door. Outside William took a deep breath and shook his head. "Someday, William, you and I will be hallucinating fools too," I said as we quickened our pace to make the procession. "I don't think you should humor the old man so much," William said. "What harm can it do? Leinad is old, and if he wants to spend his final years believing in something more than we are living, then why not?" "Yes, but I think you crossed the line with that bit about the sword," William said as we entered the city. "The sword is real," I said. Soon I realized I was walking by myself. I turned around to see William standing still with a perplexed look on his face. "What?" "Yes," I said. "Leinad owns a sword that is more magnificent than any I've ever seen— even more beautiful than any of the swords owned by the Noble Knights. "Where did he get such a sword?" he asked, still not quite believing me. "His story is long and bizarre, William. In truth, I do not know how he came to own it. He keeps it wrapped in a cloth in that old wooden chest in the corner. I fear that someone would kill him for it if they knew it was there. That is why I have told no one about it." William rejoined me, but his gait was slower now, and his thoughts appeared to be deep. "You're sure about this sword, Cedric?" he asked. "It's been years, but I've seen it myself. It nearly glows in its splendor. Why someone would give a sword like that to Leinad is a mystery indeed." At the city's main thoroughfare, we pushed our way to the front of the crowd. Beside us a woman with two small children waited, hoping for a scrap of food the Noble Knights might throw her way. The children's faces were as dirty as their clothes. Poverty overwhelmed the people. The sound of hooves on cobblestone announced the knights' approach. "Their horses prance and snort to match the arrogance of their riders," I said in low tones to William. "Enough, Cedric. After all, these Noble Knights are the chosen, are they not?" "The King has been gone so long that I wonder if He even remembers this dreadful land. A poor old peasant woman was begging from one of the knights as he passed. "Please, good sir, a bit of food for a hungry old woman?" He laughed as he threw a half-eaten apple her way. "Don't eat it all at once," he sneered. The old woman picked up the dirt-covered apple and ate it as though it was her last meal. Maybe it would be. The Noble Knights often passed through the streets handing out tidbits of food to show their goodwill toward the people. I believed they did it to inflate their egos; they loved

their position over the people. But they had been chosen by the King to defend our land, and from all I had heard of the King, He was just and fair. Somehow, since He¹ had left for another country, the welfare of the kingdom had continually declined.² “Here, old man, have a feast today.”³ One of the knights threw a loaf of bread to a bent old man just in front of me. I prepared for my opportunity, fully expecting the feeble old man to miss. I saw his hand reach up for the hurled loaf. The gnarled fingers I expected to see were not gnarled at all. The hand was quick and strong. He snatched the loaf with such ease and purpose that I looked a fool as I grabbed a handful of air. The old man wore rags that covered his head and body. He began to turn around. As he did, his back slowly straightened until I faced a man who was a full three inches taller than I. He was not bent or gnarled or old. On the contrary, this man was close to my age and had shoulders as broad as a horse. His arms were defined and powerful. One could even see strength in his jaw as he removed the cloth that covered his head. A man⁴’s eyes give away the story of his character, my father once told me. I forced myself to gaze into the eyes of the stranger. I felt as though he had already questioned my eyes for my character. His eyes burned like fire. They penetrated into the very depths of my soul. They were not eyes of hate or malice⁵ – a œfar from it. I saw power yet meekness, forcefulness yet gentleness, discipline yet compassion. I had never seen eyes like his! He stretched forth his hand with the loaf of bread and offered it to me. I slowly took it from him.⁶ “Tell me, Cedric,”⁷ the stranger said in a rich voice, “what do you hope for?”⁸ My mind was fuzzy. I heard the hungry cry of one of the children beside me. How selfish I felt. I was ready to rob an old man of his bread, and instead he gave me the very thing I⁹ had hoped to take. I knelt down to the child and gave her the loaf of bread.¹⁰ “I¹¹ am sorry I haven¹² got more to give you,” I told the child¹³’s mother. I turned to the stranger once more. “I am a man of little hope, sir. The kingdom becomes more dreary every day. The people are starving, and the Noble Knights are the only ones who fare well. What is there to hope for? Were I foolish enough to hope, it would be that Arrethtrae was a kingdom free from hunger. A kingdom of truth, justice, and honor. A kingdom where men may serve the King as knights though only common blood flows through their veins, where each man¹⁴’s character, not his family name, determines his worth. No, hopes and dreams you will not find in my heart, for I am too acquainted with disappointment already. If you¹⁵ are looking for dreams, William here is the one to talk to.”¹⁶ “And what are your dreams, William?”¹⁷ the stranger asked as he turned toward him. William seemed as taken aback by the stranger¹⁸’s gaze as I had been. “You are clothed as a peasant, though you hardly look the role. Tell me who you are, sir, and I shall tell you my dreams.”¹⁹ “I am a

man from a distant land, the stranger said. "What are your dreams, William?" William paused. "I dream of becoming a knight and serving my King as the Noble Knights do." "And would you also pass out scraps of food to the poor as the Noble Knights do?" "I am the poor, sir. I would never forget these people or their demise. I would defend my King and serve His people." "Well spoken, gentlemen. Do not despair. The King knows the plight of His people in Arrethtrae. I bid you farewell," Cedric of Little Hope and William of Dreams. "With that, the stranger turned and disappeared into the throng of people." "Well, William, I said, "it looks as though you are not alone in your dreamworld." "That man is more than a dreamer, and you know it. His peasant clothes don't fool me. There was something about that man!" "Yes, yes, I'm sure he runs a dreamers guild you could join." I laughed and slapped William on the back. There was something about that man, I thought.

My kids and I absolutely LOVE this book series! It is similar to the Pilgrim's Progress in that it is an allegory, but it spans from the Old Testament to the New Testament, and is filled with adventure, godly character, lots of sword battles and much Biblical truth. (My kids are always asking me "Just ONE more chapter, please?") They are really the kind of books that you don't want to put down! There are questions for each chapter and they show how it mirrors the Bible. I purchased all 6 as I know we will read them all again, and that I will want to read them with my grandchildren too, one day!

I did not know what to expect from Chuck Black book. Biblical allegories are often lame and you get the feeling the author is trying too hard to make a point. That is not the case here. These books are fun to read. Chuck Black is the author of many novels including the popular Kingdom Series and The Knights of Arrethtrae series. Each story is strong enough to stand on its own. I have 10 kids, and each of the readers enjoy the books. Even kids who are not familiar with the different Bible stories will still be on the edge of their seats. My wife has read all of them aloud. Our children are familiar with Bible stories, and they "get" what is going on. It adds another whole level of interest as they try to link the story they are hearing with the stories they already know. But, that usually happens after each episode, since some of the segments are so tense they are completely lost in the story. Then, after reading to them we hear "Please! One more chapter!" This is a refrain I hear nearly every night.

As we once again go back in time, Cedric of Chessington gives us the prologue. Time has moved on a little in the main book with Leinad, the major character of Books 1 and 2, now being an old man. Cedric, a peasant at that time, is not sure whether Leinad's tales of old are true or if Leinad is insane like some others believe. The Noble Knights of the time are comparable to the Pharisees. Poverty is everywhere and so is hypocrisy. Cedric and William meet an old man. Who is he? Although he looks poor he doesn't act like it. When a girl is caught stealing and her hand ordered to be cut off, the stranger steps in with his sword! Who is he? The son of the King! Who does the Prince call? The Noble Knights? No! He calls Cedric, William and others willing to serve him. Allegorically we are now in the New Testament. The opening is definitely not as exciting as the first two books plus we have to deal with the sadness of losing Leinad to his well-earned place across the sea. The book does pick up though. The Prince is training his knights (disciples). He starts with the sword and then on to the shield (Ephesians). Very easy to see the allegorical symbols for Jesus: little children coming to him, feeding the thousands etc. Following the Prince's death and resurrection there is despair on behalf of the knights. Commissioned to train more knights, Cedric and William are nearly killed in the city of Chandril where the people are extremely hostile. Saved by two Silent Warriors, Keef and Ramon, this is where Keef tells the story of the Dark Knight's fall and the fight between him and the Prince. What happens when Alexander Histen, the governor, takes control of the people? Most people believe him when he says it is necessary! Well-written, third book in the series for youngsters. Plenty of action to keep a high elementary/middle schooler wanting to read more. Yes, there is violence but that is the nature of the story. It is made very clear who has won the ultimate victory. We read this aloud on our Kindle. There are questions (and answers) available for each chapter. In the paperback version these are very easy to access BUT on the Kindle it is a pain as there is no link at the end of each chapter so you have to go to the beginning of the section and scroll through to the chapter that you want. It would be great if this feature could be improved. Thanks, Liz

Love reading this book with my ten year old son. He enjoys the book and learns a bible lesson related to the story. It is really fun to see if he can tell where the story is from in the bible. Then in the back of the book you can read the lessons associated with the book to further your knowledge and associate it with the bible verses. Not only is he learning and remembering the story and the association with the bible, but he is getting valuable reading time done in a fun way. I even enjoy the stories and can't wait to see what happens next. We have loved the entire series so far.

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