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# Foreword

If there is a great conundrum in *Star Trek*, it may be the question as to why Khan Noonien Singh wears a single glove on his right hand during the events of *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. Is it a reference to Adam Smith's invisible hand—the idea that individual actions have latent consequences? Or, does the glove represent Khan losing his “grip” on reality or propriety? Or, is the glove a symbol—like the rest of Khan's tattered clothes—of a leader whose kingdom has sundered? Was his hand injured during his years on Ceti Alpha V? Is it foreshadowing of what would happen to his other hand at the end of the movie, injured so badly in a glove of pain and wounds? Or, could it simply be because it looks cool?

When asked about the meaning of the glove, instead of providing easy answers, writer and director Nicholas Meyer chooses another tack: for him, the audience's interpretation is as valid as that of the creator-artist. “Why do you think he doesn't take off the other glove?” Meyer says in the film's audio commentary, “It's not my job to supply answers. It's your job as the audience to supply answers.” And, according to Meyer, whatever you think (or feel), *that* is the answer. Of course, the resultant conclusion that could be drawn from this statement is either that there are as many “correct” answers to the Khan-glove question as there are interpretations or, conversely, there isn't any such thing as a “correct” answer. It depends on whether the glass is half full or half empty.

This must be at least one of the many reasons that *Star Trek* continues to inspire, fifty years after the premiere of “The Man Trap” on NBC, Thursday, September 8, 1966: the elusive quality of its meanings and narrative morals. *Star Trek* is polysemic. Diverse people, or the same person at different stages of his or her life, view the adventures of Captain James

Tiberius Kirk and crew with contrasting, or evolving, or reevaluating eyes. That *Star Trek* is the result of many hands adds to its polysemic nature: creator Gene Roddenberry especially, but also producer Robert Justman, art director Walter “Matt” Jefferies, writer Gene Coon, story editor D. C. Fontana—and many others—all added to the recipe that baked *Star Trek*. Simply put, there is no wrong way to think about *Star Trek*. Once in the hands of the audience, all interpretations become valid.

This is the journey taken by Kevin C. Neece in *The Gospel According to Star Trek: The Original Crew*. His love of *Star Trek* as an adventure show during his youth reformulates into a spiritual appreciation for the symbolism and meanings behind those special effects and science fiction narratives. Neece avoids the trope (or trap) of using a single line of dialogue (Uhura’s “Don’t you understand? It’s not the sun up in the sky. It’s the Son of God,” from “*Bread and Circuses*,” or Kirk’s “We find the one quite adequate,” from “Who Mourns for Adonais?”) to argue for his interpretation. Instead, there is a more thoughtful and detailed discussion that blends together the ideas of the gospel, added to the dialogue of the scripts, added to interviews and commentary from the creators, added to historical and cultural events. An example is the discussion of whether Spock’s sacrifice in *The Wrath of Khan* is at all a biblical metaphor of Jesus’ sacrifice. If nothing else, the discussion of the date on which the film begins will provide an appreciation for the blending of creative interpretation with historical research.

Most especially, *The Gospel According to Star Trek: The Original Crew* recognizes that both a Christian interpretation of *Star Trek* in general, and specifically which Christian themes should be applied to which episodes, are actually matters of hearts and minds. Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, agnostic, and other spiritual interpretations are equally valid. There is no one way to see *Star Trek*. *The Gospel According to Star Trek* is one way, but a way that uses biblical, scholarly research as its starting point.

What does the Khan glove mean? Maybe it’s none of the explanations previously provided. Maybe it’s something else entirely. Or, maybe it is all of these. The important thing is what we think. Sharing, and perhaps debating, our interpretations is an important aspect of *Star Trek* fandom. Kevin C. Neece tells us what he thinks in this book and in doing so, gives us something new to think about.

—John Tenuto

Professor of Sociology, College of Lake County  
Star Trek Fan