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"It is in Men that we must place our hope." -Gandalf

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The Dunadin
Rings

A Monthly Reflection on Tolkien's *Lord of the*

There are so many amazing and wonderful creatures in the Tolkien trilogy: Elves, Dwarves, Hobbits, Men, and many others.

Faramir, that great captain of Gondor, says that there are three kindreds (or kinds) of Men: the High Peoples (Men of the West), the Middle Peoples (Men of Twilight), and the Wild Peoples (Men of Darkness).¹

Translated into Elvish, "Men of the West" or "West-Men" is *Dun Edain* or – in a word – *Dunedain* (pronounced /DOON-UH-DINE/). The *Dunedain*, originally from Numenor, are the Rangers of the North, of the lost kingdom of Arnor (near the Shire) including Aragorn, who is also known as Strider and King Elessar.² The Men of Gondor, such as Faramir and Boromir, also are *Dunedain*.

The other two kindreds of Men also are significant. These are the Middle Peoples or "Men of Twilight" and the Wild Peoples or "Men of Darkness." The "Men of Twilight" consist of the Men of Rohan (the *Rohirrim*), possibly the Hobbits, and others. The Wild Peoples consist of the Men of Bree, the Corsairs of Umbar, the Southrons, and others. Despite the service of some of the Wild Peoples to Sauron, the name "Men of Darkness" does not necessarily denote evil. The term merely means "unenlightened."

The favorite character of the Editor of "The Dunadin" is – beyond any shadow of doubt – the *Dunedain* himself, Aragorn. Aragorn embodies all that is good in the people, i.e. in the *Dunedain*. He is the bravest, the wisest, the kindest, the most noble – he is the king!

By himself, Man has great difficulty doing anything good. "Men are weak!"³ Yet Aragorn shows us that man can be noble. We can practice natural virtue. This is inspiring and beautiful. Yet, it gets even better! With God's help, we can practice supernatural virtue, for grace builds upon nature.

¹ Michael N. Stanton, *Hobbits, Elves, and Wizards* (New York: Palgrave, 2001) 128-129. The information found in this and the next two paragraphs is from this source.

² Interesting to note, the reason that Sauron has left the Shire alone – so far – is because the *Dunedain* Rangers patrolled Middle-earth and thus kept the Shire safe from Sauron's henchmen.

³ Elrond of Rivendell in *The Fellowship of the Ring* movie.