



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 27, 2011

Pirates of the Caribbean 4 Deals with Christian Themes

In its fourth installment of the highly acclaimed *Pirates of the Caribbean* film series, *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides* deals with powerful themes of honor, sacrifice, and morality in a world characterized by sin, sexuality, and piracy. This latest installment is an unapologetically Christian film, but its ominous backdrop and debauchery may make it less likely to be viable family fare and perhaps a better fit for older audiences.



In this movie, fan favorite Captain Jack Sparrow (Johnny Depp) accompanies Blackbeard (Ian McShane) and his daughter, Angelica (Penelope Cruz), Sparrow's old love, to discover the Fountain of Youth, and along the way encounters your typical array of pirates, swordfights, killer mermaids, and the like.

In addition to the numerous obstacles plaguing the search, Sparrow must make it to the Fountain before his old rival, Captain Hector Barbossa (Geoffrey Rush).

In order to achieve eternal life, those who reach the Fountain of Youth must bring two silver communion chalices from Ponce de Leon's ship — which unfortunately is teetering on the edge of a cliff. One of the chalices requires a mermaid's tear, while the other must be filled with water from the Fountain of Youth. He who drinks the mermaid's tear will live, as he is awarded the years of life of the person who drinks from the other chalice.

The endeavor requires a mermaid to be taken captive, which adds a layer of adventure to the film, as the mermaids are ruthless. Their beauty allows them to seduce their unsuspecting victims, who are then taken to the bottom of the sea to be eaten.

While this chapter of the *Pirates* series does not include key characters such as Will Turner (Orlando Bloom) and Elizabeth Swann (Keira Knightley), it introduces viewers to new characters such as Christian missionary Phillip (Sam Claflin), whose life is spared at the behest of Angelica, and mermaid Syrena (Astrid Berges-Frisbey), who represents an amalgamation of Chinese and English folklore. Syrena indicates that her tears have power, while her song has the ability to lure sailors to their death.

As entertaining as *On Stranger Tides* is, most of the action is certainly reminiscent of the past films, with viewers encountering the occasional sword fight, explosions, skeletons, and execution. Once again, Jack is taken prisoner onboard a ship, providing yet another opportunity for him to display his humor and ingenuity.

Separating it from its predecessors, however, is the new film's focus on faith and Christianity. Not only does it emphasize Christian themes of repentance and mercy, but it explicitly advocates the belief that



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eternal life comes from a single source: God.

As faith plays a powerful role in this film, Phillip's presence in the movie becomes significant, particularly as it carries the Christian themes to the very end. Not only is Phillip never without his Bible, but he personifies the Good Word throughout the film and proves to be a positive influence for both the characters and viewers.

A strange element of the film is the friendship between Phillip and Syrena, whose dichotomous natures make them an interesting duo.

Likewise, this newest film includes a Spanish general who asserts that eternal life can come only from God, and seeks to destroy what he calls a "pagan temple."

Pirates 4 focuses on the wicked sin of Blackbeard and his dictatorial rule over his crew. As Blackbeard engages in voodoo and is entirely merciless, he seems to represent evil.

Fortunately, Blackbeard's un-Christian-like demeanor is countered by beautiful displays of grace throughout the film, as well as an affirmation that eternal hope and salvation is found in God.

The film does not shy away from the powerful Christian themes, as the symbol of the cross pervades the film. Characters are seen wearing crosses around their necks, while crosses appear also on buildings and maps.

Additionally, there are very clear allusions to the sacraments of communion, baptism, and reconciliation, as well as explicit references to prayer.

Despite the presence of some scandalous content in the film, the overall message is highly moral and the film explicitly denounces behavior that can be characterized as immoral.

Jack Sparrow is his usual humorous and non-committal self. Even as he is in love with Blackbeard's daughter, he rejects his feelings and avoids any commitment, even abandoning her. As disheartening as this may be for some audiences, it is certainly a realistic attribute for a man who has chosen to live the life of a pirate. Despite Sparrow's seemingly unending array of flaws, he remains the same endearing character with whom viewers have become enthralled.

Phillip and Syrena are extremely intriguing characters, and viewers will likely find themselves engaged whenever they are on screen.

The excitement found in the film's action and adventure is undeniable and will maintain audience attention from beginning to end.

Furthermore, the film's score is on point, aptly accentuating each scene.

Overall, *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides* is an exciting film that focuses on the universal themes of love, honor, sacrifice, and good versus evil. It unrepentantly preaches Christian doctrine without appearing too preachy, perhaps making the point even more effectively for that reason. The presence of some frightening elements unfortunately makes the film a poor choice for very young audiences, but it can certainly prove entertaining for pre-teens to adults.

Photo: British actor actor Sam Claflin and Penelope Cruz pose at the Mathaeser film palace in Munich during the German premiere of the film [Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides](#) on May 16 : AP Images



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