

Passage to Narnia

Summer Sunday School

05 Aug 2007

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OVERVIEW

PLEASE READ THE BOOK – most of the main points are either more clearly stated in the book, only implied in the movie, or not covered in the movie at all!

Definitions

- **Allegory** - the representation of abstract ideas or principles by characters, figures, or events in narrative, dramatic, or pictorial.
- **Metaphor** – a figure of speech in which an expression is used to refer to something that it does not literally denote in order to suggest a similarity
- **Parable** - a usually short fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle. A parable is the simplest of narratives. It sketches a setting, and describes an action and its results. It often involves a character facing a moral dilemma, or making a questionable decision and then suffering the consequences of that choice.

Introduction

C. S. Lewis said that he wrote *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* to help people realize just how wonderful the truths of Scripture—which we are sometimes so familiar with that we take them for granted—really are. So it is appropriate that the book and now the movie send us back to the Bible.

- **(Luke 24:46–47)** Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

The Man behind the Books

Session 1

Objectives

By the power of the Holy Spirit working through God's Word, participants will

- see how C. S. Lewis, was brought to faith in Christ;
- see what motivated Lewis's fervent desire to reach unbelievers;
- understand the moral and Christian purpose and methodology behind Lewis's use of storytelling.

Readings from God's Word

Matthew 13:34

Luke 14:16-24

Define Apologetics - The term apologetics comes from the Greek apologia, which means "defense" or "answer." Apologetics is the task of defending a particular idea or belief system and answering its critics. The origin of the concept of apologetics lies in the beginnings of Christianity. Between the second and fourth century, a number of Christian teachers wrote defenses of Christianity against pagan critics.

1. Are there legitimate concerns about looking at the author of Christian literature or non-biblical texts? Do you think that these assumptions about Lewis's intentions in writing the Chronicles are correct?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 1:12-17. Why do you think some people revere Lewis so highly? Are there any problems with this attitude?

A Reluctant Convert

Define Atheist - disbelief in or denial of the existence of God or gods. The doctrine that there is no God or gods.

3. In what ways could Lewis's time as an atheist have helped him when he later became a Christian apologist?

4. Why do you think Lewis was so determined to communicate Christian ideas to modern people? Do you think it is appropriate for gifted laymen, such as C. S. Lewis or Gene Edward Veith, to bring theology to the masses, or should all theology be handled by specialists?

5. Read 1 Peter 3:15 and 2 Corinthians 10:5. What do these passages tell us about the proper role of apologetics? Do you think apologetics is neglected today?
 - *Define Systematic Theology* - involves collecting and understanding all the relevant passages in the Bible on various topics and then summarizing their teachings clearly so that we know what to believe about each topic.

Baptizing the Imagination

6. Read Romans 2:14–15 and 1:18, 28–32. Why are Christians confident everyone knows the moral law? Why do some people act as if they do not?

7. Why do you think Jesus told so many parables? Why are they so powerful?

8. Have you read any stories where the marvelous and the transcendent became more believable? Do they also show our need for a Savior?

Past Watchful Dragons

9. Read 2 Samuel 12:1–7. What do we learn about the power of story from Nathan? What do you think would have happened if Nathan had rebuked David directly?

10 What do Macintyre’s observations tell us about the connection between stories and vocation?

- Alasdair Macintyre wrote . . . “Man is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a storytelling animal. . . . It is through hearing stories about wicked stepmothers, lost children, good but misguided kings, wolves that suckle twin boys, youngest sons who receive no inheritance but must make their own way in the world . . . that children learn . . . both what a child and what a parent is, what the cast of characters may be in the drama into which they have been born. . . . Deprive children of stories and you leave them unscripted, anxious stutterers in their actions as in their words.” (After *Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. [University of Notre Dame Press, 1984], p. 216)

11. Read Luke 15:11–32. How does this illustrate Macintyre’s claims? What can we learn about ourselves from both the prodigal son and the elder brother?

12 What are some of the universal lessons we can learn from the parable of the prodigal son? How does the parable apply to C. S. Lewis?

Words to Remember

It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found. Luke 15:32

For Next Time

To prepare for next week’s class, all participants should read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, chapters 1–3. Some important questions to think about are these:

- 1 What does the idea of going through the wardrobe remind us of in the Bible, the Church, or the life of faith?
- 2 What do we learn about faith and goodness from Lucy’s example?
- 3 What do we learn about the cost of being a witness in an unbelieving world?

Through the Wardrobe

Session Two

05Aug07

Objectives

By the power of the Holy Spirit working through God's Word, participants will

- understand how God calls Christians into a spiritual battle;
- see how God manifests the infinite and transcendent within the finite and mundane
- appreciate how trust and goodness can overcome deception and evil.

Readings from God's Word

- Romans 7:4–6
- 1 Peter 3:8–9

13. **Read Ephesians 6:10–13.** What does this tell us about the war that Christians always face?
14. **Read John 14:1–4.** Are there any interesting parallels with Lewis's description of the Professor's house?

The Meaning of the Wardrobe

15. **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:11–12 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6–13.** What do they say to the person who sees a life of faith only as a refuge from the world's struggles?
16. **Read 1 Corinthians 7:20.** Are our callings a matter of preference and choice? Do we control them?

- O **Mystery** – unknown concepts, things not told to us by God
- O **Paradox** - apparent conflicts based on our imperfect knowledge
- O **Conflict** – clearly different teachings or errors

17. **Read Colossians 1:15–20 and John 1:3, 14.** What is remarkable about the fact that all of these verses refer to Christ? What kind of Creator do we have?
- 18 **Read Revelation 1:10–18 and Matthew 28:1–6.** How do these verses communicate holiness? Why do we all, as sinners, fear the holy? What comfort does the Gospel provide?

Trust, Deception, and Goodness

20. **Read Romans 6:3–4 and Matthew 13:3–9, 18–23.** What do these verses tell us about our resistance to faith commitment?
21. **Read 2 Corinthians 11:13–15.** What warning do these verses contain about those in league with Satan? Why are they not always obvious even to Christians?
22. **Read Romans 12:17–21.** How do these verses apply to Lucy? Why should we repay evil with good? How is this response rooted in God’s love for us?
- 23 **Read Luke 17:1–4.** How seriously does Jesus take sin? How willing should we be to forgive it? Read Proverbs 15:1. What can we learn from the fact that Lucy calls Mr. Tumnus to repentance without harsh language?

Edmund and the Wardrobe

24. Read Luke 24:13–27. Are there any interesting parallels between Lucy and the women of verses 22–23, and between the other children and the two men on the road to Emmaus?
25. Read Acts 26:13–29. How are Lucy’s trials similar to Paul’s experience before Agrippa?
26. Review 2 Corinthians 11:14, and consider the description of the White Witch. How is it suggestive of Satan? What is ironic about her use of a sleigh?

Words to Remember

1 Peter 3:14–16. But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

For Next Time

To prepare for next week’s class, all participants should read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, chapters 4–6. Some important questions to think about are these:

1. What do we learn about temptation and Satan’s deceptions from Turkish delight?
2. How does the Professor show that it is not logic, but a secular worldview that blinds people to the transcendent?
3. Beyond the fact that it is cold in Narnia, what do you think is significant about the fact that the children put on the fur coats they find in the wardrobe?

Turkish Delight



Introduction:

This appealing candy is easy to make at home. Rosewater can be found at specialty food stores. When the sugar syrup boils, coat the inside of the saucepan with a brush dipped in water to prevent sugar crystals from forming.

Makes 80 pieces.

Total time: 2 hours.

Ingredients

4 cups sugar

4 1/2 cups water

2 teaspoons lemon juice

1 1/4 cups cornstarch

1 teaspoon cream of tartar

1 1/2 tablespoons rosewater

red food coloring (optional)

1 cup confectioners sugar

Step 1:

Oil a 9-inch square pan. Line with plastic wrap and oil the plastic wrap.

Step 2:

In a heavy saucepan over medium heat, combine the sugar, 1 1/2 cups of the water, and the lemon juice. Stir until the sugar dissolves and the mixture boils. Reduce the heat and simmer gently, without stirring, until the mixture reaches the soft-ball stage (240°F on a candy thermometer). Remove the pan from the heat.

Step 3:

In a second large heavy saucepan over medium heat, stir together 1 cup cornstarch and the cream of tartar. Gradually stir in the remaining 3 cups of water until no lumps remain. Stir constantly, until the mixture boils and is a thick, gluey paste.

Step 4:

Slowly pour the hot sugar, water, and lemon juice syrup into the cornstarch mixture, stirring constantly. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring often to prevent sticking, for about 1 hour, or until the mixture has become a pale golden color.

Step 5:

Stir in the rosewater and tint as desired with food coloring. Pour the mixture into the prepared pan and spread evenly. Cool to room temperature and let stand, uncovered, overnight to set.

Step 6:

Sift the confectioners sugar and the remaining 1/4 cup cornstarch onto a large cutting board. Turn the Turkish delight out and cut into 1-inch squares with an oiled knife. Roll pieces in the sugar mixture to coat well. Store in an airtight container with sheets of waxed paper, dusted with the sugar mixture, separating every layer.

Faith, Doubt, and Logic

Session Three

01Jul07

Objectives

By the power of the Holy Spirit working through God's Word, participants will

- understand the allure of temptation and the addictive power of sin;
- see how secularism truncates the proper use of logic and how a Christian can use logic to defend his or her faith; and
- perceive how Lewis evokes the biblical truth that Christians are called into a royal priesthood.

Readings from God's Word

Romans 1:25

Proverbs 3:5–6

1 John 1:5–7

Opening Prayer

27. Read 1 Peter 5:8–9. What advice does Peter give that would help Christians avoid Edmund's predicament?

Difference between Pleasure and Happiness

Turkish Delight

28 Read Genesis 3:1–19. How is the fruit described (v. 6)? How does Satan deceive Eve? Are there any important similarities with the account of Edmund and the Turkish delight?

29. Read 1 John 2:15–17 and Romans 6:20–23. How do these passages comment on Edmund’s sin and its inevitable consequences, absent a savior?

30 Read James 3:13–18. What does the difference between worldly and heavenly wisdom tell us about our “Turkish delight”?

31. Read John 8:42–47. Why does the devil want to make people liars?

Logic!

32. Read 1 Corinthians 2:14. Why is a secular worldview closed to higher things?

33 Read John 20:24–28. What does Thomas conclude from a fair examination of the evidence?

34 Read 1 Corinthians 15:1–20. How does Paul emphasize that the Christian faith is founded on objective, historical fact that can be checked out? Why is this important in showing that Christianity is not, like many other religions, an unverifiable myth?

A Royal Calling

35. Reread Luke 14:16–24. If the banquet is the kingdom of heaven, what is astonishing about verses 21 and 23? Why do you think Lewis said of his own conversion that, paradoxically, divine compulsion was liberation?

36. Read Galatians 3:26–27 and 1 Peter 2:9–10. How do these verses give a reading of Lewis’s metaphor of the fur coats?

37. Read Ephesians 4:11–16. How do Christians “grow up”?

38. Read 2 Corinthians 5:7. If “sight” means the certainty of our natural reason, what is the role of faith in Christian leadership?

Words to Remember

You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone. Ephesians 2:19–20

For Next Time

To prepare for next week’s class, all participants should read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, chapters 7–10. Some important questions to think about are these:

- 1 Is there a biblical parallel with the loyal and faithful Beavers?
- 2 How do the children react when they first hear of Aslan? Why are there different reactions?
- 3 What is significant about Father Christmas’s gifts? Do they have a biblical parallel?

Aslan Is on the Move

Session Four

08Jul07

Objectives

By the power of the Holy Spirit working through God's Word, participants will

- see how faith opens our eyes and hearts and sustains the hope of those who endure trials patiently;
- understand the aptness of Lewis's choice of a lion to represent the king and savior of Narnia; and
- discern the difference between the self-deception of sin, which tries to go it alone without God, and the wonderful gifts God provides His faithful servants so they may carry out their assigned work.

Readings from God's Word

Romans 8:5–7

Isaiah 43:19

Opening Prayer

39. **Read Hebrews 4:12–13.** How do these verses suggest an interpretation of the children's reaction?

40. **Read John 3:16–21 and John 8:34–36.** How do these verses explain the different reactions the children have to Aslan's name and that people have to Christ and the true meaning of freedom?

The Last Prophets and the Lion of Judah

41. **Read Romans 8:5.** How does it serve to explain the difference between Edmund's mindset and that of his siblings?
42. **Read Luke 1:67–80 and 2:25–32.** How are the Beavers like Zechariah and Simeon?
43. **Read Hebrews 3:12–15 and Ezekiel 11:19.** What do these verses tell us about the hearts of believers and unbelievers?
44. **Read Genesis 49:9–10; Hosea 5:14–6:2; and Revelation 5:1–10.** How is the image of God as a lion both terrifying and comforting? How can God have both of these dimensions?
45. **Read Isaiah 40:13–31.** How do these verses destroy human arrogance and restore humility before God?

Self-Deception and Betrayal

46. **Read 1 John 2:9–11.** What is the connection between Edmund's rejecting his siblings and rejecting God? What remedy is provided by the well-known verses in 1 John 1:8–9?
47. **Read Galatians 6:7–8.** How do these verses comment on the futility of Edmund's actions?
49. **Read Ephesians 4:20–27.** What are the connections between deceitfulness and sin, truth and holiness? How is Edmund's self-deception leading him into worsening acts of betrayal?

Equipped to Serve

50. **Read Proverbs 8:1–21; Matthew 10:16; Romans 12:2; and 1 Corinthians 14:20.** What do these verses tell us about the importance of wisdom and prudence in the life of Christians?

51. **Read Ephesians 6:10–18.** What specific spiritual armor does God provide? What interpretation is there for Peter’s shield and sword? What interpretations could we suggest for Susan’s and Lucy’s gifts?

52. **Read Romans 12:3–8.** What do we learn about God’s distribution of gifts?

Words to Remember

There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord. 1 Corinthians 12:4–5.

For Next Time

To prepare for next week’s class, all participants should read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, **chapters 11–14**. Some important questions to think about are these:

1. **What do we learn about the difference between God and Satan from the contrasts between the characters of the White Witch and Aslan?**
2. **Why does Peter have to win his spurs?**
3. **What is the significance of the Deep Magic?**
4. **What biblical truths are conveyed by the portrayal of the death of Aslan?**

Promise Breakers and Promise Keepers

Session Five

15 Jul 07

Objectives

By the power of the Holy Spirit working through God's Word, participants will

- understand the dynamic of repentance;
- see the various ways in which God brings new life to a fallen world;
- understand how God upheld His Law yet saved us from the condemnation we deserved by sending His Son to fulfill the Law and take our punishment on Himself.

Readings from God's Word

Isaiah 40:

Hebrews 9:27–28

Opening Prayer

53. Read Matthew 7:24–27 and 16:26. What do these verses tell us about the importance of building our faith on the right foundation?

Repentance

54. Read Matthew 27:1–5. How is Edmund like and unlike Judas?

55. Read Matthew 3:1–12. What is the relationship between repentance and faith? How does John the Baptist “prepare the way”?

56. Read Romans 3:10–20. How do these verses show that even those, such as Peter, who are upright by human standards still need a savior?

57. Read Romans 3:21–31. How can Aslan treat Peter as righteous even though he is a sinner?

Signs of Change

58. Read Romans 8:22–23. How could this passage provide a commentary on the account of the new spring?

59. Read Joel 2:21–22. Although this passage refers to the recovery of the land from the invasion of locusts, how does it tie in with the renewal of creation in general? Why do you think the Old Testament writers used the idea of the renewal of the land as a picture of our salvation?

60. Read Mark 2:19–20. What does this text suggest is the reason for a feast? How does it capture both the joy and sadness of the occasion?

61. Read Romans 7:14–25. What does this text tell us about a Christian’s struggle with sin?

62. Read 1 Samuel 16:6–7. What does God know about our suitability for a vocation that we do not?

The Deep Magic

63. Read Matthew 5:17–18 and Hebrews 9:22. How do these passages show that a holy God will always uphold His Law?

64. Read Psalm 51:1–12. How do these verses reveal the proper understanding of sin that Edmund discovers?

65. Read Matthew 26:36–39. What parallels do you notice?

66. Read 1 Corinthians 1:25–30. What does the Witch fail to understand about divine wisdom?

67. Read Isaiah 53:1–7. What parallels do you find?

68. Read Philippians 2:5–8. Why doesn't Aslan use his tremendous power to fight the Witch's monsters? What is the parallel with Christ?

Words to Remember

But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes we are healed. Isaiah 53:5

For Next Time

To prepare for next week's class, all participants should finish *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (chapters 15–17). Some important questions to think about are these:

- 1 What do we learn about the Deeper Magic?
- 2 How is Edmund transformed by his justification?
- 3 What is significant about the way Aslan revives those turned to stone?
- 4 In what ways would you expect the Pevensie children to be changed on our side of the wardrobe?

A Deeper Magic Still

Session Six

22Jul07

Objectives

By the power of the Holy Spirit working through God's Word, participants will

- see the glorious bodily resurrection on the other side of the cross;
- better understand the sense in which all Christians are kings and queens; and
- see how ordinary life is charged with spiritual meaning and purpose.

Readings from God's Word

Hebrews 1:3–4

I Thessalonians 4:11–12

Opening Prayer

The Deeper Magic

69. Read Mark 15:38; 16:4; Hebrews 10; and Romans 8:1–4. What interpretations do these verses suggest for the cracking of the Stone Table?

Aslan the Glorious

70. Read 1 Corinthians 15:42–49. What does Paul tell us is different about the resurrection body?

71. Read Luke 24:36–43. How does Jesus reassure His disciples that He is not a ghost?

72. Read Romans 8:1–4. How do the Deep Magic and the Deeper Magic compare with “the law of sin and death” and “the law of the Spirit of life”?

73. Read John 20:19 and Luke 24:31. How is our risen Lord’s body different from an ordinary man’s?

74. Read Romans 8:9–11 and Hebrews 2:14–18. What insights do these passages provide on our new life with Christ and His concern for humanity?

Kings and Queens of Narnia

75. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17–21. What do we learn about the peace that God brings to us and that He calls us to share with our brothers and sisters in Christ?

76. Read Ephesians 2:1–10. How can this be read as a commentary on Edmund in particular? How does it also apply to all Christians?

77. Read James 1:12. How does this reveal a helpful interpretation of the coronation of the Pevensies?

78. Read Romans 13:1–7 and Hebrews 13:17. What do these verses say about the connection between divine authority and human authorities? Does this mean that human authorities can do as they please?

79. Read Isaiah 28:29; Galatians 5:22–23; Romans 1:17; and Psalm 108:13. How can these four passages be applied to Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy respectively?

Back on This Side of the Wardrobe

80. Read Ephesians 4:14–16. What do these verses say about growth in the faith? Do you think the Pevensie children will be different after their time in Narnia?

81. Read Ephesians 4:1–6. What resources do Christians have for harmonious and unified families and communities?

82. Read Hebrews 12:1–3. Where should the faithful fix their attention to help them follow their vocation?

Words to Remember

May the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:20–21

Further Up and Further In

On completion of this Bible class, it is hoped that many participants will go on to read or reread the other Chronicles of Narnia and other works by C. S. Lewis. For those who want to do further reading *about* C. S. Lewis's life and works, here is a select bibliography.

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