

CHRISTMAS ROYALTY, 1JOHN3:1-2; EPHESIANS 2:1-7

Narnia Christmas #5

◆**Intro:** Throughout the month of December we looked at biblical, Christmas and Christian themes hidden in the story The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe, by C.S.Lewis. Lets do a quick review of what we've seen so far.

◆1) Its a fairytale (a magical land with talking animals & witches, adventure, kings & queens), and all fairytales are about human longing; longing for something new, something better, beyond. But this one happens to reflect the True Story we all really want: there is another world, with a great King, where sin is destroyed and Christmas finally comes. We call that God's kingdom, heaven. What we are all looking for is Christ!

◆2) We saw that sin has frozen our world in it's grip and without outside help we are lost. Our fundamental problem is the presence of evil in ourselves. Edmund's betrayal of his family for a bite of Turkish Delight reminded us of Adam & Eve in the garden. We each have the same problem to deal with.

◆3) The good news is that the presence of God (represented by the coming of Aslan the Lion, into Narnia) , the coming of God, is restorative. Even his arrival in the country causes the snow to melt, and forest to bud! Peace and shalom are found in the wake of the Messiah's arrival. He came to bring it! (It's in all the prophecies of Christ's coming!)

◆4) The stone table (place of execution in Narnia) reminded us that the *reason* Jesus brings peace is that he actually paid the price of our death, the prices we've deserved for being traitors against God's

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beautiful commands. Jesus took our place, just as Aslan let the White Witch kill him instead of Edmund who she had rights to. Have you ever known anyone who loved you so much, they would rather get stabbed than let you be? This is what the Child of Christmas came into our world to do!

◆ And this is where we pick up the story. I wonder if we even half realize how amazing it is that Jesus came to our world. And what it says about us, you, humans.

◆ **1. Christmas says God loves us so much he... (read v4)**

◆ Lets stop here and linger for just a moment. Has it really sunk in? We talk about how “God loves us” sometimes the way we talk about how, say Grandpa, loves us. It’s nice and all but it doesn’t make us tingle or open our eyes a bit wider than usual. Fact is, God delights in boys and girls, ladies and gentlemen –more than in anything else he’s made in all creation. Genesis 1 tells us we were made in his own image! All the Christmas accounts in the gospels tell us he became a human. Not an elephant, not an eagle, not a whale.

◆ Lewis helps us feel this simple truth in his book The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe. Here’s the scene just after Aslan comes back from the dead...

◆ “A mad chase began. Round and round the hill-top he led them, now hopelessly out of their reach, now letting them almost catch his tail, now diving between them, now tossing them in the air with his huge and beautifully velvety paws and catching them again, and now stopping unexpectedly so that all three of them rolled over

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together in a happy laughing heap of fur and arms and legs. It was such a romp as no one has ever had except in Narnia.”

◆ You didn't expect that did you? A great king, stabbed to death by an evil witch, then erupting back into life and setting death to work backwards. You expect maybe, trumpets, all bowing, a majestic hush. Instead the ruler romps with the children! This is the celebration of life. The celebration of love. Lewis is showing us Jesus, the Son of God, dead & risen -who died for his children, not as some solemn duty, but as a treasured delight.

◆ [Christmas is a cause for enormous celebration of God's victory! Jesus came to die, to pay our bill of sin. And then to rise, and beat death itself so that humans, of all the creatures and things God made, could live and play with him in eternity!

◆ **2. Christmas says God loves us so much he..... made us alive.**

(read v5)

◆ **A.** Now here's maybe my favorite image in the The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe: The courtyard of the Witch's castle. He heads straight for the witch's castle where he begins to free those captive there, those turned to stone. How he does it is to me the most memorable image of the story. He jumps into the courtyard full of stone animals, and people, like a museum. He bounds up to a stone lion and breathes onto it. Then without even waiting a moment, like a cat chasing it's own tail, he whisks around, and breathes on a stone dwarf standing a few feet away. Then he pounces on another stone figure, and turns aside to a stone rabbit, and jumps off to another.

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◆ Meanwhile, color begins to lick across the stone lion like flame on a piece of paper. In a flash, while his hind quarters are still stone, the lion is shaking his mane as stone becomes living hair. Each creature coming back to life is dancing with joy after and around Aslan and the museum quickly became more like a zoo. **[SHOW CLIP]**

◆ *the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7, NIV).*

◆ It's Eden all over again. The Creator creating!

◆ This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. (Ezekiel 37:5, NIV).

◆ And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. (John 20:22, NIV).

◆ **B.** Do you see? Some people understand Christmas intellectually; that Jesus came to go to the cross, to save us for eternity. They even claim to believe it. But it doesn't seem to free anything in their lives. Why? They think the resurrected Lord is only about heaven, the great "someday". Often we do not expect, or appeal to him for a thawing now. But remember verse 5!

◆ 1John 3 tells us we don't have to go on in the same sinful habits and paths that we have *now*.

◆ *But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No-one who lives in him keeps on sinning. (1 John 3:5,6, NIV).*

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◆ The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No-one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. (1 John 3:8,9, NIV).

◆ Question: what is the devil's work? Isn't it to drag you down? Make you sin. Make you miserable? He can't change your destiny, but he can help you be depressed on the way there. But if you have really been born of God, you have within you his spirit of power to do the right thing, to live in good and fulfilling ways. It does not have to wait until heaven! Why are we so often content to wait? It just doesn't fit! Why let your life be frozen when God can breathe on you?

◆ **3. Christmas says God loves us so much he..... made us kings and queens**

◆ **A.** At the end of The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe, the four Pevensie children do sit in the four thrones at Cair Paravel. They will ever after be known as King Peter, King Edmund, Queen Susan, and Queen Lucy!

◆ **[SHOW CLIP 2]**

◆ Now here's a strange thing! What right do four ordinary kids have to walk into Narnia and become its rulers? Only a right that is *given* to them! The same right we have as followers of Jesus.

◆ *"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."* Ephesians 2:6, 7, NIV.

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◆The background to this text is in chapter 1(1:20-21).

◆“which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,” Ephesians 1:20-22, NIV.

◆Can you imagine? Human followers of Jesus have a unique and special place in all of creation! A follower of Jesus Christ, of Christmas, has a new identity –God’s child, an heir and co-ruler of his kingdom! No ... way...!

Waaaay! Listen...

◆How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! ...what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, (1 John 3:1,2, NIV).

◆Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17, NIV).

◆Did you know that in heaven, we (human followers of Jesus) will govern angels! (Heb.2:5-8)

◆“And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and now all the promises God gave to him belong to you.” Galatians 3:29, NLT.

◆Are you hearing this? (Turn to someone, find out their name, and try this, “How do you do, King/Queen ____.”) Every human being has the dignity and majesty of a king or queen. In The Weight of Glory, Lewis

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writes that we must “remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare.” (note that last part: we’ll have to come back to it.)

◆**B.** But now followers of Jesus, ponder it anew. It would have been good enough just to not have to die! To get spared of the lava of hell. To not be stabbed on the Stone Table. To live in a shack off in the corner of heaven. But Nooooo! Jesus says, “Come christian, come sit by me. Over here. Yup, on thrones. Come on now.”

◆Why God? Why should you love me so? Why should I get all this grace? I know I don’t deserve it. I never could, not in a 1000 lifetimes, in a 1000 worlds like Narnia. Paul provides the answer in verse 7f.

◆*“in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no-one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*
Ephesians 2:7-10, NIV.

◆You are loved so that you can rule, and bring God’s good kingdom into your world good work by good work!

◆Look at your life. Look at all the things you hide, and pretend about. Ever feel like an actor? Put on the professional face at work. Come home and pretend to be the faithful spouse. But you know there’s an invisible wall up.

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Tell your children how to behave (even when you don't). Act the role at church so everyone thinks good of you. We're kids, children, all of us. We haven't a clue how to rule a kingdom. Hey, we can't even rule ourselves. There is no reason why God should bother with us anymore than with squirrels. But he does. Christ's coming was his gift to you!

◆ **Conclusion:** In the Voyage of the Dawnreader, (Book 5 of the Chronicles of Narnia) the Great Lion, Aslan tells two of the Pevensie children that their adventures in Narnia have come to an end. They will not be returning to this country again. Edmund and Lucy are horribly upset.

◆ "It isn't Narnia, you know," sobbed Lucy. "It's you. We shan't meet you there. And how can we live, never meeting you?"

◆ "But you shall meet me, dear one." said Aslan.

◆ "Are-are you there too, Sir?" said Edmund.

◆ "I am," said Aslan. "But there I have another name. You must learn to know me by that name. This was the very reason why you were brought to Narnia, that by knowing me here for a little, you may know me better there."

◆ Years ago, after reading this passage in the Dawn Treader, a little girl named Hila wrote to CS Lewis, asking him to tell her Aslan's other name. Lewis responded, "*Well, I want you to guess. Has there ever been any one in this world who*

◆ *1) arrived at the same time as Father Christmas*

◆ *2) said he was the son of the Great Emperor*

◆ *3) gave himself up for someones else's fault to be jeered at and killed by wicked people.*

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- ◆ *4) came to life again*
- ◆ *5) is sometimes spoken of as a lamb (as in the end of Dawn Treader)*
- ◆ *Don't you really know His name in this world? Think it over and let me know your answer."*
- ◆ In the end, all the Narnia stories are meant to help you and I know the love of our Creator, Jesus. It is to chose the destiny of royalty! All do not chose the destiny of royalty. And for those who do not, the picture that awaits is not a happy winter wonderland, but more a foreboding, frozen world. But for those who do, what awaits far outweighs our light and momentary troubles.
 - ◆ *How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! ...what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, (1 John 3:1,2, NIV).*