

youthESource Bible Study

A Visit to Narnia

by Matt Behrens

About This Study

In C. S. Lewis' classic children's book, *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, World War II is raging, and London is oppressed by air-raids. Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy Pevensie are sent to the country for safety, to the home of an old professor who has more rooms than people to fill them. One day while exploring the house, Lucy, the youngest Pevensie, discovers a room with a large wardrobe in it. She steps inside it to see what secrets it might hold and discovers the greatest secret of all. The wardrobe is a door to another world, Narnia, where animals talk and live side-by-side with fairy tale creatures like fauns, centaurs, nymphs, and dryads (as well as other, more horrible, creatures). But Narnia has been under the rule of the evil White Witch for a hundred years, and she has made it so that it is always winter but never Christmas. The Pevensies' arrival in Narnia is the answer to an old prophecy that states that when two sons of Adam and two daughters of Eve sit on the Narnian throne, the time of evil will end. Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy aren't the only ones to arrive in Narnia at this time. Aslan, the great Lion, the King, the Lord of the whole wood, who has been absent from Narnia for longer than anyone can remember, has returned to Narnia, and means to set things right.

In this story, we are confronted with issues of good and evil, and with characters who remind us of ourselves in so many ways. While Edmund is often the least likable of the Pevensie children, it is his story of redemption that is most like ours, and it is his story we will examine most closely in this Bible Study series.

Ways to Use This Study

This study is best used as a series over a few weeks, at a retreat or on a trip with youth. Each part is designed to take about 20 to 30 minutes to complete. You can conclude the study with a viewing of the movie, but be sure to get the appropriate permissions so no copyright laws are violated!

Materials Needed

All you need is a copy of the book, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Page numbers given in this study are from the HarperCollins 2005 edition of the book, but first and last sentences are quoted here so that you can use any copy of the book.

Part One: Turkish Delight

Introduction

The character of Edmund in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, by C. S. Lewis, represents us in many ways. In this part of the story he is led astray by the White Witch. We face similar tactics and temptations from Satan. Students will discuss the lies Satan uses against us. They will also hear that God is more powerful than Satan and know that by faith we share in His victory over Satan.

Study

In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, read from the beginning of chapter four on page 31 to the end of page 35. The last line is, "'I'll try,' said Edmund, still looking at the empty box." Then ask the following questions:

- As this scene opens, how does Edmund view the White Witch?
She is intimidating, possibly because she is an authority figure. She's scary and demanding.
- What does the Witch offer to Edmund?
Warmth, food and drink
- The Witch offers warmth to Edmund. We usually think of temptations as things we want. Warmth is a need instead of a want. How can something we need be a temptation?
Sometimes our needs can be prioritized poorly. Sometimes we desire to have our needs met before they are actually needs.
- How does Edmund's opinion of the Witch change during this encounter?
He becomes more comfortable around her.

- What causes this change?
She gave him things he wanted and needed, making herself a "provider" for him. She allowed him to believe in his own importance. She told him what he wanted to hear.

Read I Peter 5:8:

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (NIV, 1984 version)

- In the story, the character of Edmund is meant to represent you and me. Considering this, how are the actions of the White Witch like the work of the Devil in our lives?
Satan wants us to believe in our own importance. He tells us what we want to hear, even when it's not the truth (or not the full truth). He makes us crave those things we don't really need.
- What are some of the lies and half-truths the White Witch tells to Edmund?
*She wants to meet Edmund's siblings, but makes no mention of why (which is that she wants to destroy them).
She offers him food and drink without mentioning that it is enchanted so that he will crave more and more.*
- What are some of the lies and half-truths which Satan uses against us?
Allow the group to come up with their own examples, but be prepared to share an example to get discussion started. Examples might include Satan telling me I'm not good enough to be a Christian (not true because faith is a gift despite my sinful and unworthy condition). Another example is the lie that small sins don't really matter since other people sin a whole lot more than me (not true because every sin has the same consequence of separating us from God).
- How does our God guard us from the lies Satan uses against us?
God gives us the truth of His Word by which we can recognize these lies. We also have brothers and sisters in the faith who remind us of God's truth, and point out Satan's lies when they take root in our lives. God's grace and forgiveness are ours as well when we find that we've been taken in by Satan's lies.

Read II Thessalonians 3:3 & John 10:27-30:

But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. (NIV, 1984)

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one. (NIV, 1984)

- What promise is given concerning the attacks of Satan in our lives?
God will strengthen and protect us. He cannot be overcome by Satan.

Read Psalm 91:9-13:

If you make the Most High your dwelling—
even the Lord, who is my refuge—
then no harm will befall you,
no disaster will come near your tent.
For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways;
they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.
You will tread upon the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the great lion and the serpent. (NIV, 1984)

- There are two animals the Bible associated with Satan which are well-known. Both are mentioned in these verses. Which animals are they?
The serpent (Genesis 3) and the lion (I Peter 5:8).
- Because of our faith in God, what promise do we have concerning Satan?
God will protect us. We are victorious over Satan because of Christ's victory given to us.

Part Two: Who's Afraid of Aslan?

Introduction

We can relate to Edmund's insecurity. We have a need for an identity as people who are loved by God. In this study, students will discuss how they react to insecurities and they will be reminded of the value and identity they have in Christ.

Study

In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, read in chapter nine, beginning on page 95 with the last paragraph, which begins with, "Edmund crept up to the arch and looked inside..." Read to page 95, ending with the sentence, "He turned away and began to cross the courtyard."

Ask the following questions:

- In the scene from *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* we looked at last time, Edmund went from fearful to comfortable in the presence of the White Witch. What emotions is Edmund experiencing at the beginning of the scene we just read?
Fear & worry.
- How does Edmund's demeanor change throughout the scene with the stone lion?
He is relieved, and then becomes confident and boastful.
- What prompts the change in Edmund?
He realizes that the lion is a statue.
- Why is it that Edmund is not simply relieved? Why do you think he goes so far as to mock this statue?
Edmund is still afraid of something. He is trying to convince himself of his superiority and strength over Aslan.
- How does Edmund's behavior reveal insecurities about himself?
Edmund feels a need to demean this inanimate object in order to give himself more confidence.
- What is the connection between these Bible verses and what we see in Edmund in this scene?
Galatians 6:3: If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.
Edmund is lying to himself about why he should feel safe (he's trying to tell himself that he is stronger than Aslan)
Luke 18:11: The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: "God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector."
Edmund is talking and boasting to convince himself of his position, but he is misguided.
- Edmund is struggling with his own value and identity. We all struggle with our own value and identity from time to time. How would you complete this statement for yourself?
When I am struggling with my own value I tend to...
...brag?
...gossip?
...use sarcasm?
...shop?
...shy away from others?
...put others down?
..._____?
- We struggle with our own value and identity when we lose site of the identity we have in Christ. What do the following verses tell us about the identity we have been given in Jesus?
II Corinthians 3:5: What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task.
Our value comes from God, not from ourselves.
Romans 12:3: For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.
We should be humble in how we think of ourselves.
Zephaniah 3:17: The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.
God loves us. He celebrates over us as he makes us His own.
Ephesians 2:4-9: But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 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. 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.

God's grace and love are ours, given to us in Christ Jesus.

Part Three: It Will Be Harder Than You Think

Introduction

There are times when we lose sight of the cost of forgiveness. Aslan hints at this cost in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Students will be reminded of the extent to which God went in order to win them back from sin. They will be reminded of the extent of God's love for them.

Study

In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, read in chapter twelve, beginning on page 130 with the paragraph, "But as for Aslan himself, the Beavers and the children..." and ending on page 132 with, "'All shall be done,' said Aslan. 'But it may be harder than you think.'"

Then ask the following questions:

- What had Edmund done that was so bad?
He betrayed his brother and sisters. He betrayed Aslan and went to the side of the White Witch.
- In another part of the story, Edmund is called a traitor. The name traitor indicates that he is working for the wrong side. Which side is Edmund supposed to be on?
Aslan's side
- Who is hurt by Edmund joining the White Witch—Edmund or Aslan?
Edmund is hurt. Aslan is disappointed.

Read Genesis 2:15-17 & 3:6:

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.... When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, she took some and ate. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

- Who is the traitor here? How does this traitor compare to Edmund?
Adam and Eve are traitors. Like Edmund, they're following lies and working against the side they're supposed to be on. They are meant to be on God's side.

Read Psalm 14:2-3:

The Lord looks down from heaven
on the sons of men
to see if there are any who understand,
any who seek God.
All have turned aside,
they have together become corrupt;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.

- Who is the traitor in this passage? Compare this to Edmund.
All people are traitors. This includes you and me. Because we are born sinful, we are on the wrong side. We weren't meant to be sinners. Like Edmund, we're meant for something far better.
- A key sentence in the excerpt we read from *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* was Aslan's statement, "All will be done, but it may be harder than you think." Discuss the significance of this statement both as it applies to the story and as it applies to our lives according to Psalm 14:2-3.
The children in the story don't know yet what needs to be done in order for Edmund to be saved from the White Witch, but it will be very costly. We sometimes lose sight of the cost of our redemption. We sometimes lose sight of the great cost of our sin. Christ had to die.

Read Matthew 27:11-23:

Meanwhile, Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied.

When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.

Now it was the governor's custom at the Feast to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him.

While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."

But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

"Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor.

"Barabbas," they answered.

"What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked.

"They all answered, "Crucify him!"

"Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

- How does this fit the quote from Aslan?

Jesus, who is true God, allowed Himself to be judged and condemned by men. He allowed the crowds to choose Barabbas over Himself. He was sentenced to death in order to save those who sent Him to die. We have trouble understanding the depth of His love. We have difficulty knowing how hard this was.

Read Romans 5:6-11:

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

- What has God done for traitors?

Christ gave His life in order to save those who were counted as traitors, including you and me. All has been done...Christ died and rose again for traitors including Adam and Eve, including sinful people... including you and me. It was harder than we sometimes think. But, all has been done...for your sake.

Part Four: What Lucy and Susan Saw

Introduction

In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* Aslan gives his life for the sake of Edmund. This is a picture of Christ, who gave His life for our sakes. Students will understand that Jesus was really dead and is truly alive. He suffered in this way because of the great love He has for each of us.

Study

In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, read in chapter fourteen on page 157 beginning with the paragraph, "And both girls cried bitterly..." and ending on page 161 with, "They couldn't bear to look and had covered their eyes."

Then ask the following questions:

- What images from this scene are the strongest in your mind?

Read Isaiah 53:1-9:

Who has believed our message

and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
 and like a root out of dry ground.
 He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
 nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
 He was despised and rejected by men,
 a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.
 Like one from whom men hide their faces
 he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
 Surely he took up our infirmities
 and carried our sorrows,
 yet we considered him stricken by God,
 smitten by him, and afflicted.
 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
 he was crushed for our iniquities;
 the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
 and by his wounds we are healed.
 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
 each of us has turned to his own way;
 and the Lord has laid on him
 the iniquity of us all.
 He was oppressed and afflicted,
 yet he did not open his mouth;
 he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
 and as a sheep before her shearers is silent,
 so he did not open his mouth.
 By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
 And who can speak of his descendants?
 For he was cut off from the land of the living;
 for the transgression of my people he was stricken.
 He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
 and with the rich in his death,
 though he had done no violence,
 nor was any deceit in his mouth.

- What is the significance of silence in this text and in today's story?
The silence indicates submission and acceptance of the situation. It also reveals a holding back when we recall that Aslan could have broken free from his bonds and Christ could have freed himself from his captors. For these reasons, silence also shows a strength of character and commitment to a purpose.

Read in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* in chapter fifteen, page 166, beginning with the paragraph, "It was quite definitely lighter by now," and ending on page 168 with, "'Not now,' said Aslan."

Ask these questions:

- Lucy asked a yes or no question. Why would Aslan respond with the words, "Not now?"
The answer had been yes, but that has changed. Aslan wanted her to know the truth of both.

Read Matthew 28:1-10:

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.

- What images from this scene are the strongest in your mind?
Aslan died in order to take Edmund's place. Edmund was deserving of death because he was a traitor, but Aslan offered his life instead. This is a picture of Christ who died to take your place.
- What is the importance of the fact that Christ actually died?
We are deserving of death—real death—because of sin. Christ paid that price on our behalf. Because of this we will live beyond death. Death is no longer eternal for us, but temporary. Christ rose and we will rise to new life in Him.

Read Isaiah 53:10-12:

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.
After the suffering of his soul,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.

Aslan died in order to win Edmund's life from the White Witch. Christ died in order to win your life from sin, death and the Devil. Verse 10 tells us that this was God's choice, for your sake. God loves you and would spare nothing to win you back to Himself.

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