



A FAMILY GUIDE
TO THE
LION, THE WITCH
AND THE WARDROBE

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A Family Guide to The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

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W E L C O M E T O
NARNIA:
AN INTRODUCTION

The *Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*—I was seven years old when I was given my first copy. Little did I know that it would have a profound and lasting impact on my life. I quickly devoured the rest of the Narnia series—*The Magician's Nephew*, *Prince Caspian*, *The Horse and His Boy*, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, *The Silver Chair*, *The Last Battle*.

As a child, I read each of the books more than a dozen times, until they literally fell apart. Every time I read them, I enjoyed them more. And I discovered, as millions of others have, that there is far more to *The Chronicles of Narnia* than meets the eye. There are stories within the stories. *The*

Chronicles of Narnia are full of hidden truths, deep mysteries, and spiritual treasures.

C. S. Lewis insisted that *The Chronicles* are not allegories, though many people have described them as such. Technically speaking, this is true. In an allegory, every character and event is a symbol of something else. Many of the characters and events in Narnia do not represent anything in particular—they are simply elements of the wonderful and fantastic adventures Lewis created. But many characters and events do represent something else, something from the spiritual realm. And although Lewis did not initially intend to write stories that would illustrate the most vital truths of the Christian faith, that is essentially what he did.

Jesus said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34, ESV). Consciously and perhaps at times even unconsciously, Lewis wove powerful biblical truths through every chapter, every scene in *The Chronicles*. His deeply rooted faith naturally found its expression in everything he wrote.

In *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (Book 5), the great Lion Aslan tells the two 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 meet-

ing 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 *Dawn Treader*, a little girl named Hila wrote to C. S. Lewis, asking him to tell her Aslan’s other name. Lewis responded, “Well, I want you to guess. Has there ever been anyone 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 someone else’s fault to be jeered at and killed by wicked people, 4) Came to life again, 5) Is sometimes spoken of as a lamb (see the end of *Dawn Treader*). Don’t you really know His name in this world? Think it over and let me know your answer.”

Just as Edmund and Lucy’s adventures in Narnia helped them come to know Aslan (Jesus) better, our adventures in Narnia can do the same for us. But sometimes, like little Hila, we may miss the deeper truths behind the stories. This book is written to help readers identify and understand

some of the many spiritual treasures in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

It begins with an introduction to the creator of Narnia, C. S. Lewis. As you read about the life and times of this extraordinary man, you'll find that many of the details of his stories take on a new and special significance. Then "Step into the Wardrobe" to learn more about the book that started it all—*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. (It became "Book Two" when the prequel, *The Magician's Nephew*, was released. At Lewis's suggestion, the publishers later renumbered the series to reflect the chronology of the stories themselves rather than the publication date.)

"The Story Within the Story" takes you through *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* chapter by chapter—highlighting the spiritual truths and scriptural symbolism. This section is meant to be read side by side with the original book. For every chapter you will find a key verse that reflects one of the primary spiritual themes. You'll also find a list of biblical parallels and principles. In some cases it shows which events in Narnia are similar or even identical to stories in the Bible. In other cases it indicates where a particular element of Lewis's story illustrates an important scriptural principle. Each chapter in that section of the book concludes with an interesting fact or point to ponder and some additional Scriptures you can read, related to a previously mentioned topic. You'll also

find a series of reflections or meditations throughout that develop and expand on the biblical truths.

Parents, grandparents, and teachers who are reading along with their children or grandchildren or students may want to use the material to help start thoughtful discussion or extend story time into Scripture reading and family devotions. If you plan to use the book this way, it would be best not to attempt to cover all of the material offered in each and every chapter. Instead, choose one or two points that seem most interesting and meaningful to you, and go from there.

“Continuing the Adventure,” you’ll discover how to have a real English tea party, as Lucy did with Mr. Tumnus. Make your own Turkish Delight, and taste the treat that Edmund found so tempting. Find ways to express your thoughts and feelings about the story. And learn more about the wonderful adventures that await you in the other books in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

It is my hope and prayer that this book will help those who want to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. And that having read this book, you will love the original all the more. Ultimately, may you find yourself developing an even deeper love for the source of Lewis’s inspiration: the Word of God.

—CHRISTIN DITCHFIELD





MEET THE
CREATOR OF NARNIA:
C. S. LEWIS

When his mother told him that he was going to meet the famous author C. S. Lewis, eight-year-old Douglas Gresham could hardly contain himself. *The Chronicles of Narnia* were among his favorite bedtime stories, and now he was about to be introduced to their creator.

As they walked through the door of Mr. Lewis's cottage, called The Kilns, Douglas heard a big, booming voice welcoming them: "Aha! Here they are. Here they are!"

Before them stood a slightly stooped, balding gentleman in baggy trousers and a rumpled tweed jacket, with the elbows worn away. His teeth were yellowish, and his large face was rather red, though alive with warmth and expression.

At first Douglas was terribly disappointed: "Here was a man who was on speaking terms with King Peter, with the

Great Lion, Aslan himself. Here was the man who had been to Narnia; surely he should at least wear silver chain mail and be girt about with a jewel-encrusted sword-belt. This was the heroic figure of whom Mother had so often spoken?”

But Douglas’s disappointment did not last long. Over the years, as he got to know the man who would become his stepfather, he discovered him to be every bit the hero he had imagined—a funny, clever, kind, and generous man who touched the hearts and minds of countless people around the world.

According to a recent estimate, C. S. Lewis’s books have been translated into more than thirty languages and have sold over two hundred million copies worldwide. He is routinely quoted by preachers and professors, presidents and prime ministers. Many of the most prominent leaders of the Christian faith today readily acknowledge having been profoundly influenced by Lewis and his writings.

Clive Staples Lewis was born on November 29, 1898, in Belfast, Northern Ireland. He never did like his name. When he was barely four years old, the precocious little boy announced to the family that his name was Jacksie—and he absolutely refused to answer to anything else. So from then on, that’s what everyone called him: Jacksie or Jacks. And later on, just Jack. Jack’s older brother Warren—whom he nicknamed Warnie—was his constant companion and closest friend. The two boys spent hours exploring the gardens

and forests and fields around their country home. On rainy days they climbed up into an old wardrobe and told each other stories about talking animals, magic kingdoms, and the knights and dragons that inhabited faraway lands.

When Warnie was sent away to boarding school, Jack was very lonely. He had to find new ways to spend his time. “My father bought all the books he read and never got rid of any of them,” Jack said. “In the seemingly endless afternoons I took volume after volume from the shelves.” Jack was allowed to read whatever he wanted, and he chose some very grown-up books: histories, biographies, books of poetry written in Latin and French. But some of his favorites were the children’s stories written by Edith Nesbit and Beatrix Potter.

It wasn’t long before Jack began writing poems, plays, and stories of his own. “I wrote about chivalrous mice and rabbits who rode out in complete mail to kill not giants but cats,” he later recalled. Jack illustrated his work with drawings of important characters and scenes or detailed maps of the lands in which they lived. Warnie could hardly wait to get home during the holidays to see what Jack had done—and Jack could hardly wait to show him.

Albert Lewis, the boys’ father, was a kind but distant man—consumed with the pressures of work and the demands of his career. Jack was only nine when their beloved mother, Flora, was diagnosed with cancer. The thought of losing her terrified Jack. He fervently prayed for a miracle, pleading

with God to heal his mother. But Flora did not get better. In fact, not long afterward she died. Albert fell into a deep depression. His two young sons felt abandoned and alone. It seemed to Jack as if “all settled happiness, all that was tranquil and reliable, disappeared from my life.” Believing he had been betrayed, Jack turned his back on God completely.

Soon after, Jack was sent off to boarding school. It was, for the most part, a miserable experience. Nearly all of his classes emphasized math skills, which Jack wasn't particularly good at and didn't like. His classmates were cruel, his teachers were insensitive and unkind, and the principal of the school was literally losing his mind. Eventually Albert realized that his youngest son would do better in a different environment. He sent Jack to study with a private tutor. It was Professor Kirkpatrick who discovered that Jack was a brilliant student with a special gift for language and literature. He greatly encouraged Jack in his studies.

As a teenager, Jack was still very bitter over his mother's death. He delved deeper and deeper into the world of academia, dismissing God and religion and the teachings of the church as foolishness. At the same time he was desperately searching for something to fill the emptiness—the longing—deep within him. “I was at this time living, like so many atheists and anti-theists, in a whirl of contradictions. I maintained that God did not exist. I was also very angry with God for not existing.”

At the age of eighteen, Lewis received a scholarship to the prestigious University College at Oxford. He was not long in the classroom, however, before duty called him to enlist in the armed forces. World War I had begun, and Jack was sent to the front lines in France. Wounded in battle, he returned home less than a year later. But the horrors of war would stay with him all of his life.

Eventually Lewis completed his education and became a college professor, teaching Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Oxford. He published several volumes of poetry and was well on his way to being recognized as a distinguished scholar and literary critic. Yet his intellectual and academic accomplishments did little to quell the turmoil within. In the stimulating environment of the university, surrounded by some of the greatest minds in the world, Lewis couldn't help but recognize the contradictory and illogical nature of his unbelief.

“My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line.”

For some time Lewis fought hard to hold on to his atheistic worldview. He engaged in heated intellectual debates with other professors who were devout Christians, most notably fellow author J. R. R. Tolkien (*The Lord of the Rings*). Over time, in spite of himself, Lewis began to see that there were

answers—logical, intelligent answers—to his most critical questions. In the language he could relate to, using mythological, philosophical, and theological illustrations he was familiar with, these friends and coworkers challenged Lewis to rethink his beliefs. They helped him grasp the reality of the faith that had confounded him.

Finally, at the age of thirty-one, Jack could not hide behind his flawed and empty arguments anymore. “I gave in and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed; perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England.” His conversion from avowed atheist to committed Christian was not an overnight event. In fact, it was a lengthy process that took place in steps and stages as he came to terms with divine truth on a profoundly intellectual level. But in the end, it dawned on him as quietly, as gently, as surely as a sunrise.

“I know very well when, but hardly how, the final step was taken,” Lewis once said. “I was driven to Whipsnade one sunny morning. When we set out I did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and when we reached the zoo I did. Yet I had not exactly spent the journey in thought. Nor in great emotion.”

Somehow as simply as that, the battle for Jack’s heart and mind was over. He surrendered himself completely to the Lordship of Christ. Much later Lewis would write a spiritual autobiography that detailed his journey to faith.

He called it *Surprised by Joy*. For as a Christian, he did find the joy and peace and hope that had eluded him in his youth. He would go on to become the greatest Christian apologist of the century. With his genius, Lewis could convincingly articulate the case for Christianity like no one ever had—ably defending the faith and refuting the arguments of the most clever atheists and agnostics. With crystal clarity, he explained some of the most complicated concepts in Scripture, those that had baffled and befuddled theologians for ages. Lewis's approach was so effective—he led so many members of the intellectual and academic community to faith in Christ—that the media dubbed him “the apostle to the skeptics.”

During World War II Lewis addressed matters of faith in a series of radio programs broadcast all over England. These talks were collected and compiled into a book entitled *Mere Christianity*. This was followed by *The Problem of Pain* and *The Screwtape Letters*. By now Lewis had achieved worldwide fame. A popular speaker as well as a best-selling author, he was featured in hundreds of magazine and newspaper articles. He participated in numerous lectures and debates on university campuses.

While teaching at Oxford and later Cambridge, Lewis continued to write books on literary criticism. He experimented with a science fiction trilogy. And drawing on the fantastic stories and imaginary worlds he had invented as a child,

he completed a series of seven books for children he called *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Today Lewis's fairy tales are widely regarded as classic literature, consistently ranked among the greatest children's books ever written. Children everywhere have immediately recognized what Lewis called the "stories within the stories." They have correctly identified the central character—the Great Lion Aslan—as a beautiful representation of Jesus Christ. With *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Lewis has helped generations of children to understand the powerful, life-changing truths of the Bible in a whole new way.

Lewis never had any children of his own. He remained a bachelor until the age of fifty-eight, when he was once again "surprised by Joy." That is, he met and married American writer Joy Davidman. Sadly, their happiness did not last long—Joy died of cancer only four years later. Lewis helped raise her two sons, Douglas and David. He kept a journal vividly describing the pain and suffering he endured at his wife's passing (*A Grief Observed*). Though he felt the same hurt and anger and bitterness he had experienced after the loss of his mother, this time Lewis did not turn away from God. Instead he turned to Him and found the strength to carry on. His faith grew even stronger as he experienced God's mercy and grace in a whole new way.

Lewis kept busy writing and speaking and—with help from his brother Warnie—answering each one of the thousands of letters he received from fans around the globe.

On November 22, 1963, the world was reeling over the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. That same day, after a long illness, C. S. Lewis passed away. In an instant he found himself in the presence of the God he had once tried so hard to escape. The God whose love finally overwhelmed him and completely conquered his resistance. The God who humbled him and surprised him with joy.