

WEEK 3: “The Fool has come. Bind him fast.” (#2-*The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, LWW, p. 180)

CONFESSION TIME. This week and next we come to one of the most enduring, endearing, and powerful episodes in the entire series (in my humble—perhaps not so humble!—opinion).

During their time in Narnia, Peter, Susan, and Lucy had grown close to Aslan, the great Lion. Yet Edmund, their brother, had fallen under the spell of the White Witch and had become a traitor. As the Witch declared, “You know that every traitor belongs to me as my lawful prey and that for every treachery I have a right to a kill ...” In addition, without a blood sacrifice “as the Law says, all Narnia will be overturned and perish in fire and water.” Since Aslan knew that this provision of the Law was inviolable, He talked privately with the Witch, and she renounced her claim on Edmund’s blood.

The night after Aslan’s meeting with the Witch, Susan and Lucy couldn’t sleep, so they went out to search for Aslan. He told the girls, “I should be glad of company to-night. Yes, you may come, if you will promise to stop when I tell you, and after that leave me to go on alone.” After he left, Aslan climbed the Hill of the Stone Table alone. There he surrendered to the Witch and her army, who bound Him and “began to drag the bound and muzzled Lion to the Stone Table, some pulling and some pushing. He was so huge that even when they got him there it took all their efforts to hoist him onto the surface of it. Then there was more tying and tightening of cords.”

It should be clear by now what Lewis is describing: the voluntary sacrifice of the Son of God in the place of all of us sinful humans. In spite of the author’s frequent protestations that he was not writing an allegory, the correspondence is totally obvious. Just as Aslan climbed the hill of the Stone Table alone, so did Jesus walk up the hill of Calvary, bearing the weight of the entire world’s sin—past, present, and, yes to be sure—future on his bruised, battered, and bloody shoulders.

[If possible, this would be a great time to play Isaac Watts hymn, *Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed*]

Our Lord was bound, beaten, and mocked by those who did not believe in Him: “If You are the Son of god, come down from that cross, so that we may believe,” not knowing that as the Son of God, He had to stay exactly where He was!

Remember the provision of Narnian law that a blood sacrifice must be made for a traitor? It was the same for the Mosaic law: Without the shedding of blood, there was no remission of sin. As lambs were most commonly used in sacrifices, Jesus was (predictably) called the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.” By His sacrifice, Jesus yielded Himself to a (albeit temporary) death, just as Aslan did in Narnia. Hear these words from the Witch to Aslan before she killed Him. (By the way, for reasons that I’m sure you know, Lewis—and yours truly also—always capitalize any reference to the Lion, just as we would to Jesus the Christ.)

And now, who has won? Fool, did you think that by all this you would save the human traitor? Now I will kill You instead of him as our pact was and so the Deep Magic will be appeased. But when You are dead what will prevent me from killing him as well? And who will take him out of my hand then? Understand that You have given me Narnia forever, you have lost your own life and you have not saved his. In that knowledge, despair and die.

Following Aslan's death, the Witch announced her plan "to crush the human vermin and the traitors now that the great Fool, the great Cat, lies dead." So it was with Satan, we are pretty sure. He must have thought that with the death of Christ his subsequent persecution of the church would eradicate Christianity forever. WRONG!!! As we know from the pages of Scripture and as we will see in subsequent pages of Narnia, both the Witch and the great Adversary (Satan) failed in their endeavor.

What does it mean to us that Jesus, the Aslan of the Bible, laid down his life for us? Let's look at Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." C.S. Lewis commented on Edmund's forgiveness by Aslan as follows: There is no need to tell you (and no one ever heard) what Aslan was saying but it was a conversation which Edmund never forgot. ... Here is your brother," he said, "and—there is no need to talk to him about what is past." Like Edmund, who deserved to die as a traitor to Narnia, our sin should have sentenced us to Hell forever. However, in what is often termed *the great substitution*, God made Jesus, "who knew no sin, sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). We have been forgiven of our sin and are not headed for heaven. Praise God! Amen and Amen.

Discussion question: What does it mean to you that Jesus Christ took your sin on Himself?

NEXT WEEK: All is hopeless, you say. Just come back and we'll see the truth (or *not*) in that statement. More of LWW coming up.