

WEEK 4: “Deeper Magic from before the dawn of time.” (*The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, title of Chapter 15)—perhaps my favorite chapter title of the entire 7 books

Aslan, the great Lion, had been slain in the night. As the sun rose the next morning, Lucy and Susan “heard from behind them a loud noise—a great cracking, deafening noise as if a giant had broken a giant's plate.” Turning around, the girls saw that the Stone Table had been “broken into pieces by a great crack that ran down it from end to end; and there was no Aslan.” Sobbing, Lucy and Susan wondered if this disappearance might be more magic. “‘Yes!’ said a great voice behind their backs. ‘It is more magic.’ They looked round. There, shining in the sunrise, larger than they had seen him before, shaking his mane (for it had apparently grown again) stood Aslan himself.”

“He is not here; He is risen,” said the angel to the women who had come to the tomb to anoint Jesus’ dead body. This talk, and this chapter of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* marks for me the high point and one of the most glorious portions of text that C.S. Lewis wrote in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Let’s hear from Aslan again, as He explained to the girls what he “reappearance” meant:

‘It means,’ said Aslan, ‘that though the Witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic deeper still which she did not know. Her knowledge goes back only to the dawn of Time. But if she could have looked a little further back, into the stillness and the darkness before Time dawned, she would have read there a different incantation. [Hence, the title of this chapter, “Deeper Magic from Before the Beginning of Time.”] She would have known that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backwards.’

Let me make just a few comments about Aslan’s declaration here. Don’t read too much into the references to “magic” and “incantation.” They simply serve to further the story. Remember that this is first and foremost a story of fantasy, explaining to children what it would have been like if Jesus had come to that world. That’s his text at face value, so please don’t think that Lewis is promoting magic or witchcraft. (As the apostle Paul often said over and over again, “May it not be so!”) Read a bit deeper to see what Aslan is really saying, and you’ll see that He is referring to the fact that God Himself is in charge. When His innocent Son died for guilty man, that reversed the whole “normal” course of nature. Satan, a mere created being, could not have had the omniscience necessary to know what God’s ultimate plan was regarding Aslan’s death.

For some thoughts about the cracking of the Stone Table, let’s look at Matthew 27:50-51: “And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split.” If you remember the layout of the Jewish temple, the innermost sanctuary was known say the “Most Holy Place” or the “Holiest of Holies.” It was separated from the rest of the temple by a huge curtain which hung from the ceiling to the floor, indicating a separation between the holy and the common. According to Leviticus 16, only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place and then only once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Yom

Kippur). When the temple veil tore at the death of Christ, that signified that the way to approach God was now open to anyone. No one had to utilize a priest to access the Creator. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (so said the writer of Hebrews, whoever that was).

It is clear from the original Greek text that God is the one who did the tearing, even though His name is not mentioned. For the veil to “be torn” (passive voice) from the top to the bottom indicates that God Himself reached down from heaven and ripped it in half (since the weight of the curtain as such that no human could have ever torn it).

By His death, our great High Priest has enable us to become priests of God as well. “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1 Peter 2:9) We have the authority through Christ to petition the King for anything and for anyone. Remember who you are and remember whose you are, priests of the most high God.

Hallelujah!!

Discussion question: What does it mean to you that you are a priest of the Most High God?

NEXT WEEK: The scene and “actors” change to a “Horse and His Boy.”