

CHRISTIAN THEMES-VDT

The Voyage of the Dawn Treader reunites readers with the two younger Pevensie children, Lucy and Edmund, who are catapulted back into the land of Narnia via a painting of a ship on a bedroom wall. As they stare at the painting, suddenly the ship begins to move, the sea waves spray the children with briny foam, and they are pulled into the painting and back into Narnia. Aboard the ship are King Caspian, from the second book, *Prince Caspian*, and his entourage, who are on a quest to discover the fate of the seven lords of Narnia who sailed west and never returned. This quest and the ensuing adventures form the outline of the book.

1. Drawn into Narnia along with Lucy and Edmund is their cousin, Eustace Clarence Scrubb. If ever a child deserved such a name, it is Eustace, an insufferable brat who is quarrelsome, arrogant, greedy and jealous, a character ripe for Lewis' brilliant thematic portrayal of sin and redemption. Having landed on one of the Lone Islands, Eustace wanders off to avoid helping refit the ship and takes refuge during a storm in a dragon's cave, where he finds a vast treasure of gold and jewels and lies down to sleep on a pile of coins. When he awakes, he finds that through his greediness and selfishness, he has himself become a dragon, the outer form manifesting his inner self. He eventually tries to shed his skin, along with his dragonish nature, by bathing himself in the pool, but to no avail, a clear picture of the self-effort of man to cleanse himself of sin through works of some sort

Galatians 2:16

2. When he is finally confronted by Aslan, the great lion of Narnia who is the picture of Christ in the series, it is Aslan himself who must remove the rough, scaly dragon skin with his claws. "The very first tear he made was so deep that I thought it had gone right into my heart," Eustace explains. Aslan then dresses him in new clothes, the whole process being symbolic of the Christian becoming a new creation in Christ. From that point forward, Eustace begins to be a better boy. He still has lapses, but his transformation has begun. Here is a picture of the Christian life.

2 Corinthians 5:17

3. Aslan reappears in times of need throughout the book, which is reminiscent of the presence of the Holy Spirit who guides and directs the believer. At one point, Caspian and Edmund nearly come to blows when they are temporarily blinded by greed and lust upon discovering a pool that turns everything to gold. It is only the appearance of Aslan pacing slowly on a nearby hill that brings them to their senses and convinces them that this is a place with a curse upon it. They name the island Deathwater and determine never to return.

John 16:13

4. Later, when Lucy opens the Magician's book on the island of the Dufflepuds, she finds a spell which will give her beauty "beyond the lot of mortals." She sees a vision of her beautiful self lording it over her less attractive sister and is overcome with the desire for the preeminence such beauty would bring her, even though her conscience is pricked. "I will say the spell. I don't care. I will." But as she looks back at the book, she sees the face of "the great Lion, Aslan

himself...He was growling and you could see most of his teeth. She became horribly afraid and turned over the page at once.” Clearly, Lewis is depicting Aslan as the Holy Spirit who indwells, sanctifies, and instructs believers convicts us of sin and reminds us not to let sin reign in our lives. Romans 8:9-11

5. Aslan, the embodiment of the Spirit of God, appears to Lucy again later, not to convict of sin, but to encourage and sustain her faith. The ship is engulfed in a terrifying darkness from which there seems to be no escape. In her despair, Lucy whispers, “Aslan, if you ever loved us at all, send help now.” Suddenly, in the distance a light appears in the shape of a cross. Then it takes the shape of a bird that circles the mast and leads the ship out of the darkness. Lucy hears the “small, still voice” (1 Kings 19:12) of Aslan whispering to her, “Courage, dear heart,” and she feels his warm breath on her face. Here is a picture of Christ (the bird) who leads His people (the ship) from the darkness of the evil one into the light of His gospel.

(John 8:12).

6. The Lion appears for the final time in the last chapter of the book, where he emerges as a Lamb who feeds them the most delicious meal they have ever had, a foreshadowing of the marriage supper of the Lamb in Revelation 19:19. Here we see the depiction of Jesus, the Lion of the tribe of Judah as well as the Lamb of God.

John 1:29