

The Song of the Emperor's Son

The Chronicles of Christmas - Part I

Selected Scripture

Introduction

On November 29, 1898, an Irish baby boy was born and given the name Clive Staples by his parents. It is no wonder his friends called him either C. S. or Jack. He grew up, along with his brother Warren, in their large home that had lots of interesting places to play and hide. Their home in Belfast, Ireland, was a happy place. Jack's parents loved to read and passed down that love to their two sons.

C. S. would later write, "There were books in the study, books in the dining room, books in the cloakroom, books two deep in the great bookcase on the landing, books in the bedroom, books piled as high as my shoulders in the attic, books of all kinds."ⁱ

Their lives were suddenly uprooted when Mrs. Lewis died of cancer. C. S. was only nine years old at the time. After that, it was off to boarding school for the boys. Their first school was so poorly run, and the students so badly mistreated that the courts eventually closed it down.

When C. S. Lewis was seventeen years old, he wrote to a friend, "I believe in no religion . . . there is absolutely no proof for any of them and, from a philosophical standpoint, Christianity is not even the best."ⁱⁱ

Eventually, C. S. Lewis became a student at Oxford, believing the gospel was just another myth bringing comfort to the weak-minded.ⁱⁱⁱ

Yet, years later, as a thirty-two year old professor at Oxford, C. S. Lewis became a Christian. What happened?

One thing that happened was that C. S. made friends with other professors who challenged his skepticism. One of these fellow scholars wove Christian truth into his fictional fantasies – one of which he named, *Lord of the Rings*.

However, C. S. Lewis would later write that the major influence in his life concerning the gospel was a nineteenth century pastor, named George MacDonald, who was also a story teller. His stories also wove together mythical creatures and the gospel truth. Talking animals and knights and queens all together revealed the gospel story. It may seem ironic, but it was the storytelling of George MacDonald that God used to open the eyes of C. S. Lewis to see the truth of God's word.

Lewis would later write to a friend, "Christianity is God expressing Himself through what we call 'real things,' namely the actual incarnation, [the actual] crucifixion and [the actual] resurrection."^{iv}

Not surprisingly, C. S. Lewis one day picked up a pen and began to write his own stories of mythical places and talking animals and fierce battles between kings and evil queens in a land called Narnia – stories interwoven with biblical themes and spiritual truth. He wrote seven fantasies in all and since the 1950's, more than one hundred million copies have been sold. This is not to even mention his classic work *Mere Christianity*, a book that has been used by the Lord to win countless numbers to faith in Jesus Christ.

Of Lewis' seven fictional stories, the best known is entitled, *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*. In this story, four children enter another world

through an old wardrobe in a country home. If you are like me, you have not seen the movie, but have read the book.

I do not know what came across in the movie version, but there should be no doubt about C. S. Lewis' intention. This is what he wrote in 1961:

The whole story of Narnia is the story about Christ. I asked myself, "Supposing that there really was a world like Narnia and supposing it had (like our world) gone wrong and supposing Christ wanted to go into that world and save it, what might have happened?" The stories are my answers. Since Narnia is a world of talking beasts, I thought He would become a talking Beast there, as He became a man here [in our world]. I pictured Him becoming a lion there because the lion is the king of beasts and because Christ is called "the Lion of Judah" in the Bible.

Just months before his death, Lewis clearly stated the biblical theme for each of his stories as they covered everything from atonement to the antichrist.

Now, I am not going to preach *The Chronicles of Narnia*. As much as I like them, they are not inspired. However, I am going to use them in our next three discussions as a launching point for what the Bible has to say, in clear language, to us today.

So, settle back for a little C. S. Lewis story, and then, get ready to open your Bible. And, do not complain – the alternative is the next verse in Romans 13. I thought I would give you something different for Christmas, so consider it a gift! Go ahead and turn to Colossians 1, John 1, and Genesis 1.

The Song of the Emperor's Son

The Magician's Nephew, though written later than some of the other stories, was intended by C. S. Lewis to tell the beginning of the story.

There were two children, Digory and Polly, who lived next door to one another. One day, while they were exploring attic passageways, they unexpectedly emerged in the private room of Digory's mean-spirited Uncle Andrew, who was thought to be a little crazy.

Evidently, Uncle Andrew dabbled in magic and had fashioned special rings that could transport people to worlds beyond. He had not tried the rings on people, but had sent some of the household pets disappearing into outer space. There were two rings – one ring was for traveling out and the other ring

was for traveling back home – although he was not quite sure if they worked.

Since Uncle Andrew was too afraid to try the journey on his own, he tricked the children into taking the journey themselves. As a result, they disappeared from their London home to a strange world with an evil queen.

The children tried to escape her by traveling back to earth, but she clutched at Digory and traveled back to London with them. Once there, the evil queen began to wreak havoc in their London neighborhood.

In an effort to get the wicked queen away from earth, the children used their rings again. This time, along with Uncle Andrew, the evil queen, and a few others, they traveled to yet another world.

This world was one that was pitch black – a place of total darkness; nothingness. As they were about to use their rings to escape the darkness, they were suddenly hushed by a sound. It was distant and slight at first, but gradually grew stronger. It was music – a voice was singing.

Soon, other voices joined in. As if on cue, the black sky erupted with the blazing light of stars – performing in harmony with the Voice.

After that, colors emerged from the horizon, followed by more melodic instructions of the song until a sun began to rise. The chorus continued, spawning hills and valleys, rocks and rivers – all bursting to life.

Then, the children saw Him – a huge, shaggy Lion, from whose mouth the song came. As He sang, grass, trees, frogs, panthers, beavers, mice, birds and all forms of living creatures blossomed into being.

Finally, to the shock and thrill of the children, the great Lion spoke and said, "Narnia, awake."

And it came to pass.^{vi}

Aslan the Lion would be known as the Son of the Emperor beyond the sea. So, it would be the song of the Emperor's Son which brought the world of Narnia into existence.

Already, however, evil is afoot in Narnia. The evil queen had slipped away, having heard enough of the Lion's song. She will reappear later as the White Witch.

So Aslan says to Digory and Polly, "Before this new, clean world I gave you is even seven hours old, a force of evil has already entered it."

It is not difficult for the believer to understand the imagery. At the very outset we are introduced to

the Emperor's Son, the Creator, the creation of the world and universe, and the presence of hatred and evil.

What C. S. Lewis envisioned as the creation *song*, we know as the creation *story*.

The apostle Paul announced that the Emperor's Son indeed created all that is, when he wrote to the Colossian believers,

He is the image of the invisible God . . . for by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible . . . all things have been created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:15-17)

That word translated "all" several times in Colossians 1, is the Greek word, "panta (παντα)". It refers to all things individually, or all things separately. In other words, it is actually a reference to the infinite detail of creation.

Big things were individually created by Him. He determined, for instance, that one star named Antares, which is one of billions of stars within our galaxy, would be sixty four million times larger than our sun and revolve, along with the rest of our galaxy, at approximately two hundred miles an hour.

The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ has named every one of the trillions and trillions of stars in our universe and has determined their movement and order. We read,

Thus says the Lord, Who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The Lord of hosts is His name: (Jeremiah 31:35)

Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, the One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one of them is missing. (Isaiah 40:26)

He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them. (Psalm 147:4)

Small things were created by Jesus Christ, too. That is what the word "panta" implies, as well.

One drop of water can contain five hundred million microscopic creatures so small that a teaspoonful of water would be the same to them as the Atlantic ocean is to us.^{vii}

In fact, if each of the millions of molecules within one little drop of water were converted into a grain of sand, there would be enough sand to build a concrete highway from the east coast to the west coast, with the highway being one foot thick and one-half mile wide.

Jesus Christ created everything from the massive to the minute.

How did Jesus do this? Why would you ask me a question like that?!

We are not told how He did it. We are simply introduced to Who did it!

Without explanation, and with very little description, Moses simply records these Spirit inspired words,

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

Moses evidently, did not follow the theory of origin that was popular in his Egyptian high school. They believed that a primeval ocean somehow produced an egg. From the egg was born the sun god. The sun god had four children who constantly battled one another, and from their battles, the universe was created.

The Babylonians had their creation story, too. It is the story of plots and counter plots among the gods that ultimately, brought earth and the universe into being.

The Greeks pictured a mythical giant, named Atlas, standing at the borders of the earth upholding the wide heavens on his bent head, shoulders and arms.

The Hindus believe the world rests instead, on the backs of three elephants, which in turn, stand on the back of a giant tortoise, which swims around in a cosmic sea.^{viii}

Since the 1800's, Americans have posted as many as eighty theories of origin – ranging from humanity coming from seaweed to evolving from apes. One theory that seems to grow more believable over time is, as one author seriously contended, we evolved from material left behind by some prehistoric intelligence that visited this planet billions of years ago.

No wonder there is such frustration and despair on planet earth. Deny the creation account of Moses,

now thousands of years old, and you are left to believe in something from tortoises to evil gods.

No wonder Xenophanes, a Greek philosopher who denied the record of scripture, said, "Guesswork reigns over all."

John's Gospel says, "There's no need to guess," as he further supports the message delivered by Moses centuries earlier. John declares both the deity and the creative occupation of the Son of God, as he wrote,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overpower it. (John 1:1-5)

Darkness . . . but now light!

He, the Word of the triune God, communicated through His creative voice – all there is.

This is the song of the Emperor's Son.

According to ***Genesis chapter 1***, the crescendo of the song reached its highest peak when the triune God said, in ***verse 26***,

. . . Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

In other words, "Let's create a king and a queen to rule earth. And let's create them differently than any other creature we've created thus far."

The text says, "Let's make both male and female in our image."

The word for "image" is the Hebrew word "tselem," which comes from a root that speaks of carving.

Ladies, you now have proof that your husband really is a block of wood!

"Let's carve mankind out to look like us."

What does that mean?

It means that humans are not the result of some random mutation in the genetic code. Humans are not creatures brought about by a deviation or evolution of some higher primate's DNA.

The truth is, we have a number of biological features that are common to other animal creatures. We share the same environment and it is reasonable to expect that we would have many of the same biological and physiological characteristics in common with animals.^{ix}

We are mammals. Our internal organs work in similar ways; our skeletal structure has similarities; our DNA shares similar construction – frankly, humans look similar in many ways to primates.

So how do we know humans are special or unique in the created order? Because we are made in the image of God and that has nothing to do with how we look, or how our organs operate, or how our DNA is constructed, or what kind of expressions we have on our faces. In fact, being carved in the image of God cannot refer to anything biological because,

God is Spirit . . . (John 4:24)

and,

. . . a spirit does not have flesh and bones . . . (Luke 24:39).

Being made in the image of God is something way beyond physical. It is that part of us that scientists will never discover in our DNA. It is not programmed into our chromosomes. It is spiritual!

Man has been given unique spiritual attributes that animals do not have. God carved into us self-awareness, a moral consciousness, a consciousness of others, a consciousness of God Himself.^x

We are capable of fellowship with God. We alone among the creatures of earth make goals; commune with God; feel the guilt of sin; communicate ideas; pursue holiness, truth and goodness; feel the emotion of zeal and sorrow and joy. We alone can worship the Savior, for above and beyond all of our attributes, created by God Himself, we have a Redeemer who bore our sins on His body on the tree, that we might live forever unto righteousness (I Peter 2:24).

According to the apostle Peter, all of creation – animals, the planet; in fact, the entire universe will,

. . . pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. . . . the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat. (II Peter 3:10-12)

In other words, everything that was created will be incinerated in judgment; everything will cease to exist, except God and humanity and the angelic hosts.

For these, God will create a new heaven and a new earth – a new Garden of Eden, if you please. It will be filled once again, with everything from fruit trees to animals, for us, in our glorified eternal state, to enjoy.

One author put it this way:

Creation is merely God's theater on which God's great redemptive drama can be played out. This is the purpose for which the entire universe was created – so that God's grace, mercy and compassion could be lavished on this creature whom God had created in His own image. In the end, the theater is destroyed . . . and a new one, this time unending, will be created.^{xi}

This means, in other words, that the creation song is going to require the Christmas story. The creation story demands the Christmas story!

Why? Because there is evil afoot in the Garden of Eden! Like Narnia, this new world is barely seven hours old, and evil is being planned. Mankind will soon fall and need to be rescued.

That is the reason we discover in the Bible that even before creation, the Son of God has already planned to become a man, and die on a cross (Acts 2:23; Revelation 13:8).

Creation will demand a crucifixion. That means, my friend, you must not only believe by faith that the Emperor's Son is your Creator, you must believe by faith that He is your Savior – He, who was your Designer, must become your Redeemer too.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God . . . (John 1:12)

I invite you to join His family by faith in your Creator –

who descended to a cradle –

who went to the cross –

who now wears the crown . . .

and worship with the apostle Paul who wrote,

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? . . . For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:33-36)

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 12/11/2005 by Stephen Davey.

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ⁱ James Baehr and Ted Baehr, Narnia Beckons (Broadman & Holman, 2005), p. 13.

ⁱⁱ Kurt Brunner and Jim Ware, Finding God in the Land of Narnia (Tyndale House, 2005), p. xi.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Baehr and Baehr, p. 122.

^{vi} Brunner and Ware, p. 2.

^{vii} Ibid., p. 44.

^{viii} John Phillips, Exploring Genesis (Loizeaux Brothers, 1960), p. 37.

^{ix} John MacArthur, The Battle for the Beginning (Word, 2001), p. 163.

^x Ibid., p. 163.

^{xi} Ibid., p. 157.