

## **Aslan: Jesus in Narnia – Isaiah 53:1-12**

Jesus is being preached this week by Hollywood and they don't even know it! Disney has decided to put together a religious film and they may not even realize it or care. With the success of the *Passion of the Christ*, Disney decided to take a chance and release a children's tale based on the story of Jesus: *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* tells of a lion who saved the world.

In this story, four children find a wardrobe door to hide inside in the house they are staying in. It is not an ordinary wardrobe with an ordinary inside. Beyond the long fur coats, the smell of mothballs, beyond the place where the back of the wardrobe should be is a land of destiny for Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy Pevensie.

They had come to live at the odd old house to escape the Nazi bombing of London. Unexpectedly, through the back of the wardrobe, they enter another world, a world bewitched, where winter never stops and Christmas never comes; a world where animals talk and plot, where nymphs and fauns live oppressed under the power of an evil witch turned Queen who turns her enemies into stone statues, and where redemption eventually may come for all from The Lion, Aslan, who is a kind and fierce Lion, and who isn't tame at all.

There are horrors and hags, wars and betrayals, dangers and honors. It is a world whose future is balanced on the lives of these four unsuspecting, bewildered children, who must find inside himself or herself courage and, through faith in The Lion Aslan, the will to succeed, for should they fail, they will die. Should they fail, that entire world will remain in the icy fingers of the coldhearted Queen, a land in winter, forever.

This is the world of Narnia, a land created hundreds of years before by Aslan The Lion. It is Narnia, a world envisioned and created by C.S. Lewis, the Oxford University professor, Christian and author. This movie is based on his first book in the series, first published in 1950. I hear that it is worth seeing, but definitely worth reading.

Narnia, as we enter it, in book and film, is a land of bad news, of endless cold and endless snow. Spies are everywhere. It is hard for the honest people of Narnia and for their visitors to know whom to trust, and not to trust, even among members in their own families. The self-proclaimed Queen, who wickedly rules the land, knows of the ancient prophecy about four human children — two sons of Adam, and two daughters of Eve — who will come into Narnia to free the land forever from her icy grip, and who will then sit upon the thrones of the abandoned castle by the sea.

It is terrifying and horrible to be oppressed by the White Queen and to be living in Narnia where goodness is denigrated, and evil elevated. The good and captive people of Narnia, who live in justifiable fear of the White Witch and of her spies and multitude of minions, hope for the prophesied day when Aslan is again abroad in the land and

when the two kings and two queens will come. The faithful people of Narnia hope for Aslan's expected gift, the long promised liberation from evil and anticipate the gladness liberation will bring.

"Always winter and never Christmas; think of that!" - Mr. Tumnus

Let's take our story back to the beginning to get the full picture.

If you were to ask any red-blooded American kid what they'd think of the most special day of the year being permanently postponed: Christmas is on hold; I think you'd get mostly a blank stare and maybe then an expression that says, 'What? Are you crazy?'

I mean, to a kid the coming of winter is the sign that Christmas is near. It's the whole point!

In Narnia, the evil White Witch had made it always winter but never Christmas. It's always winter in Narnia but never Christmas.

But there is a rumor circulating around Narnia. A rumor of hope in the midst of this cold and evil land. Do you know what that rumor is?

"Aslan is on the move!" The mere mention of the name of Aslan the great lion and true King of Narnia causes joy to well up in the hearts of many, and invokes fear in the hearts of those loyal to the queen. "Aslan is on the move".

We too live in a land that is often hard and unloving. We too feel down and out and get depressed. We too see a town that needs something more in their lives. The people are hurting, they have no direction, their marriages are hurting, the people don't have goodness in their lives and have forgotten that we have a king who is on the move! You see, Jesus is on the move!"

There once was a time in the history of the people of God when it was ever winter and never Christmas. 700 years before Jesus ever came on the scene, God's people were hurting. They were spiritually bankrupt with no hope. They thought that God had abandoned them, so they turned to other gods and other people. The people thought that the old religions were of no use to them.

So God sent them a prophet named Isaiah to tell them a message: God is on the move!

Turn with me to ISAIAH 53:1

Isaiah showed up on the scene to tell them one thing: when the time is right, God will send His Son. Even though you don't see God moving at all, God is on the move. Even though it is winter, God is on the move. He is coming. He is coming!

I believe that this is what the first Christmas is all about. Jesus came and fulfilled exactly what the prophet Isaiah said.

1. Isaiah 53:1-3 – The Messiah would come from a lowly position, but also suffer and be rejected by his own people  
 He was a carpenter's son!  
 John 1:11 (NLT) - *Even in his own land and among his own people, he was not accepted.* JESUS IS ON THE MOVE!
2. Isaiah 53:4-6 - God's servant would be wounded and whipped FOR US  
 Romans 4:25 (NLT) - *He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised from the dead to make us right with God.* JESUS IS ON THE MOVE!
3. Isaiah 53:7 - God's servant would be silent before His accusers  
 Matthew 26:62-63 (NLT) - *Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Well, aren't you going to answer these charges? What do you have to say for yourself?" But Jesus remained silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I demand in the name of the living God that you tell us whether you are the Messiah, the Son of God."* JESUS IS ON THE MOVE!
4. Isaiah 53:8-9 - God's servant would be buried in a rich man's tomb  
 Matthew 27:57-60 (NLT) - *As evening approached, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea who was one of Jesus' followers, went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. And Pilate issued an order to release it to him. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long linen cloth. He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance as he left.* JESUS IS ON THE MOVE!
5. Isaiah 53:12 - God's servant would be numbered with the transgressors  
 Matthew 27:38 - *Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.* JESUS IS ON THE MOVE!

The message of hope comes at the end: *For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

Jesus went through all of this. He fulfilled all of these prophecies to deal with your sin, with your winter!

Both Jesus and Aslan bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, release the prisoners, and proclaim a time of favor. They come to break the power of evil rampant in the land, and for those good creatures with sadness in their hearts, and for those who mourn — they give joy. They come loving justice and hating wrongdoing. They also come forgiving those who repent.

The good news Aslan brought was, first of all, was that the prophecy has been fulfilled: Aslan has come back. There were joyous rumors that he was amongst his people again in the land. Just like when Jesus preached in his the Temple of God, proclaiming in his reading of the prophet Isaiah that he was there to announce the good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, a release of the prisoners and a time of favor, what joy there was throughout the land. The people heard and saw him, and knew that just at the right time, God sent His Son. The people felt the power of God come through him, and they had hope that he was indeed the one to set them free.

That hope is our hope — that Jesus sets us free; it is the hope of the people of Narnia for Aslan, that he will set them free; it is the hope of all people in Christ who are brokenhearted, who are held captive literally or figuratively, who are prisoners in jails, or at work, or in relationships, or in their bodies through illness. Jesus comes and we are set free when we hear and live the good news of salvation. Aslan comes and the people rejoice, and willingly do battle, sacrificing themselves for the liberty of others, and are set free from their captivity.

If you read “The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe” you will see that although Aslan was in the land and was appearing here and there and giving help as needed, folks didn’t understand him. He was a mystery to them; especially to the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve.

In The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, one of the children asks Mr. and Mrs. Beaver about Aslan The Lion: “Is Aslan quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.” “That you will, dearie, and no mistake,” said Mrs. Beaver. “If there’s anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they’re either braver than most or just plain silly.” “Then he isn’t safe?” said Lucy. “Safe?” said Mr. Beaver, “Don’t you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? Of course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”

Jesus isn’t safe: He challenges us to be different, take risks, think dangerously. But oh, he’s good!

“I’ve come at last,” said Aslan. “She has kept me out for a long time, but I have got in at last. Aslan is on the move. The Witch’s magic is weakening.”

John 10:10 - *I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.* DECISION