

## NARNIA: The Story Behind The Story

Dan Nelson

2005

Settling into our seats, excitement was thick in the air as we waited in anticipation for the movie that had been on the lips of our children for almost six months. Sitting in our middle row seats in this downtown Ventura theater, Shelley and I prepared our youngest two with reminders of what to expect, hoping that they would not be scared by the intensity and special effects that we knew were about to come. But all four of our children knew the story. They often listen to their dramatized audio version on CD before they go to bed and we had even visited a local church that was doing a reading and presentation of the entire thing. This would be different however, this would have all of the flair and magic of a full blown, big budget Disney production. Of course, I am talking to you about The Chronicles of Narnia series': The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe.

The story was written by author C.S. Lewis, a well-known author in certain circles. Many of his books are sold at our local non-profit Calvary Bookstore in Oak View. I do not expect all of his books that we carry will be made into Disney productions however. His writings seem quite diverse. As a college professor, he wrote books to the intellectual. As an intellectual, he wrote books of philosophy. As a philosopher and Christian and student of the Bible, he wrote books of Theology. As a teacher, he wrote books that inspire the imagination. Enter The Chronicles of Narnia: a fantastic story of good verses evil with all of the imagination of a Lord of the Rings or Harry Potter type scenario. The characters are rarely like those you have ever seen before. The story line often takes unexpected turns. You are kept at the edge of your seat the entire time. It is amazing.

But what many do not know is that the whole thing is an allegory. The plot of the movie is the message of the Bible; Genesis to Jesus, in brevity, but in power for those who get it. It describes the treachery of sin and the demand for blood atonement. The position of humanity as unique among creation, being given dominion early, falling from that place and ultimately to be restored beyond expectation because of the sacrifice of the King himself. It tells of humanity's inherited nature, as described in the Bible, in the movies' constant references to "sons of Adam" and "daughters of Eve". It speaks of the fall resulting from deception, delusion and self-exaltation and the path of humility toward repentance, forgiveness, restoration, and beyond that, receiving a true throne that is given freely by the one who earned it. The death and resurrection of the deliverer, the institution of authority and power, and the promise to come again; it's all in there. I might as well tell you; the lion is Jesus, the

witch is Satan, and the wardrobe . . . well you better just go see it for yourself.

It is by no means a new concept to write stories that carry underlying messages. And movies and media have been huge mediums for the transmission of ideas, philosophies, political agendas, religious truths and untruths for decades. This one definitely carries a message. Don't get me wrong. I am not saying that there is a group of Christians that have moved to get this movie made. I don't think that is the case whatsoever. Most Walt Disney classics theme the age-old good verses evil battle; this is no different. This story is extremely well written and surely fits their criteria for a revenue-producing hit. I know that millions will see the film and only a few will understand the depth. But it is there. The same is true when we walk outside each day and look up to the sky or the mountains or the ocean. Billions see the glory of God declared everyday. How many see the truth in it? Jesus described many seeds being scattered through the message and called for whoever might have ears to hear, "let them hear".

Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. This article was published in 2005. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



P.O. Box 1443  
Ojai, CA 93024  
(805) 640-9498  
[www.calvaryojai.org](http://www.calvaryojai.org)

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### **Mid-Week Study:**

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