

Book Review of *Not A Tame Lion* by Bruce L. Edwards (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers), 2005

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Bruce Edwards is a noted C.S. Lewis expert, having published four books on Lewis. This book is a meditative study on various aspects of Narnia. Its subtitle is “Unveil Narnia through the eyes of Lucy, Peter, and Other Characters Created by C.S. Lewis.” It proceeds to discuss the spiritual world of Narnia by addressing such themes as: its origins, the character of Aslan, the transformations of its character, the nature of evil there, and the culmination of the story in *The Last Battle*. The book contains a study guide for personal or group study. Here are some of the interesting insights contained in this work:

- Without Aslan the Narnia stories would have “little meaning, less value and certainly no spiritual poignancy or potency.” (p. xv)
- Our world shares with Narnia the themes of creation, catastrophe, treachery, sacrifice, grace, redemption, love, judgment, and consummation. (p. xvi)
- That Lewis would be noted as a Christian apologist in a time of ostentatious religion, postmodern posturing, and New Age mysticism, is one of literary history’s great ironies. (p. 4)
- Friend Owen Barfield said of Lewis, “Somehow what Lewis thought about everything was secretly present in what he said about anything.” (p. 10)
- Lewis said to Tolkien, early in their friendship, “Tollers, people don’t write the books we want, so we have to do it for ourselves.” (p. 25)
- *The Magician’s Nephew* parallels the biblical story of Genesis just as *The Last Battle* parallels the book of Revelation. (p. 57)
- Aslan’s “undragoning” of Eustace in *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* is symbolic of repentance and restoration. (p. 96)
- Novelist Walker Percy says, “If you’re a big enough fool to climb a tree and like a cat refuse to come down, then someone who loves you has to make as big a fool of himself to rescue you.” (p. 119)
- The White Witch (Jadis) has already destroyed the world of Charn (in *The Magician’s Nephew*) and would settle for destroying Narnia if she could not execute Edmund or Aslan. (p. 128)
- Both Jadis and Uncle Andrew think in their own pride that they are above the common rules that apply to other human beings. Digory sees through this and

says: “All it means,” he said to himself, “is that he thinks he can do anything he likes to get anything he wants.” (p. 138)

- In *The Screwtape Letters* the demon advises, “Prosperity knits a man to the world. He feels that he is finding his place in it, while really it is finding its place in him. His increasing reputation, his widening circle of acquaintances, his sense of importance, his growing pressure of absorbing and agreeable work, build up in him a sense of being really at home in earth which is just what we want.” (p. 142)
- In *The Last Battle* Susan is no longer a friend of Narnia. She regards Narnia memories as “childish games.” She so desires to be grown up that she has rejected the fellowship of Narnia. (p. 170)
- Our contemporary secular world regards our cosmos as a “grand mechanism,” an impersonal process. We need re-enchantment. (p. 188)
- Lewis says, “Do fish complain of the sea for being wet? Or if they did would that fact not strongly suggest that they had not always been, or would not always be, purely aquatic creatures? If you are really a product of a materialistic universe, how is it that you don’t feel at home there.” (p. 192)

Overall, Edwards’ book is a profound meditation on all the Narnia books, and the spiritual themes contained in them. It helps you to see how profound Lewis’ imaginative fiction is for very real problems in our world.