



"I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now." – The Unicorn

I have read a whole lot of theology books by this point in my life. Yes, I went to seminary, but I had already been doing bible studies and reading for many years before I did that. Despite knowing Greek and Hebrew, despite attending many a lecture and hearing many a wonderful sermon, I can, honestly, say that the best theology – practical theology – the kind of theology that really matters in life – came from the Chronicles of Narnia, by C.S. Lewis. I have read and re-read those books as an adult. Each time I do, I end up gleaning even more insights into God and our relationship to God. I believe that in a world full of theologians and scholars, C.S. Lewis is a genius, because he is able to explore the most challenging questions about God in a way that a 5th grader can understand.

Narnia is a fictitious land in which animals can talk and all sorts of mythical creatures really exist. In each of the seven books, children from our world find themselves in Narnia, where they meet Aslan, the Lion (Narnia's Christ). They witness Aslan's death and resurrection, they fight the forces of darkness (including temptations within themselves), and they journey to the farthest reaches of the land. In each book, Aslan teaches them the most profound truths about God and love.

The quote above is from the last book in the series, "The Last Battle." I don't want to give too many spoilers, because it is my hope that many of you will read it for yourselves. It is the perfect book to read in Advent, which is the season that we focus on Christ's return. Even as we read stories from the bible and think about Christ's first coming, we are drawn to the imminent return of Christ. This is the purpose of Advent.

In "The Last Battle," all the characters from the previous six books show up again for Aslan. It is in this book that C.S. Lewis gives a beautiful picture of life after death. "Heaven" is what the Unicorn is describing in the quote above. It's like the world they all have known, but *more*. It is deeper and richer than anything in our own world, but, yet, at the same time, recognizable as home. Aslan's return ushers in the deeper, richer, realer world.

Our resurrected selves will also be *more* than we are now. We will be ourselves, but more ourselves than we can even imagine. We will be how God imagines us. This is what it means to be resurrected. It is what Christ's coming means for us.

I will finish this with another quote from "The Last Battle," Digory, who was present for the creation of Narnia is speaking with the others about the New Narnia, "of course it is different; as different as a real thing is from a shadow or as waking life is from a dream." This is the difference between our world and the realm of God. Christ's birth all those many years ago, brought God's realm here to our world. We can experience it, we just need to look for Christ here – in creation, in our neighbors, and dwelling in ourselves.

Blessed Advent to you all!!