



Our Epic Hero

by Dale Fincher

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In verse nine of the first chapter of the book of Mark, he introduces the reader to Jesus for the first time, writing, "In those days Jesus came." The hero steps into view.

There are some books that I enjoy re-reading. I delight in the discovery. I celebrate the battles. I am stirred over the moral caliber of the best characters. One particular series is the Chronicles of Narnia. I am as familiar with these books as I am with the book of Mark. I know what's coming. I know what is said. I know the conclusion. But I just like going there again and again.

For example, re-entering Narnia through the wardrobe with the Pevensie children is a repeated thrill. They discover the whole land has been enchanted by the White Witch. She has cast a spell so that it is always winter and never Christmas. Suddenly, thick in the woods, they encounter a talking beaver who motions to them. He makes a

statement that still burns in my imagination. "Aslan's on the move," he says. "And some say he's already landed." My heart races. The children do not know who Aslan is yet, but they do know it is good news.

Again, in the same series, Lucy finds herself upon a voyage to the unknown Eastern Seas of Narnia. They are caught in a black mist upon the ocean and cannot find their way out. To add to the threat, they discover this is the island where the darkest of dreams come true. The crew scatters throughout the boat, rows in circles, and frantically avoids any thought of bad dreams they have had. But their dreams close in upon them. The darkness grows thicker. Lucy climbs to the top lookout and shouts, "Aslan, if ever you loved us, send us help now!" A light shines ahead; something is flying in. Suddenly, with the whirring of wings, it comes clear: an Albatross. It guides them toward the bright world. But as it circles the mast, it speaks to Lucy and breathes on her. And she knows that it is Aslan Himself.

These moments bring goose-bumps. I try to remember, when I'm beginning the book of Mark, that this is the same kind of drama. A great winter has been laid upon the earth. Darkness has closed in.

The promises of God are made and the prayers of the ancients are heard. "In those days Jesus came." The great winter is about to thaw. Light shines in the darkness. Our epic hero has landed.

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