



## Spiritual and Moral Themes in *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*

The research team at The Damaris Trust ([www.damaris.org](http://www.damaris.org)) have identified the following 25 spiritual and moral themes in this film. These do not necessarily represent the views of the Walt Disney Company, Walden Media, The C.S. Lewis Estate, or the filmmakers, but are offered by Damaris specifically for leaders in the education, faith and family community.

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### X1. Kingship and authority

The film contains a number of different types of kings. Four in particular highlight different views of kingship. Miraz has falsely taken the throne and selfishly seeks to control the world for his own benefit; Aslan is the true king (whether or not anyone recognises it), and he wants everyone to live in justice and peace; Peter has forgotten how to be a good king and has lessons to re-learn; Caspian wants to bring justice and peace, but realises that he is not ready to rule – a fact which, according to Aslan, shows that he is.

“ Illustrative quote from the script:

*Caspian*: “I don’t think I’m ready”

*Aslan*: “It’s for that very reason I know you are”

### X2. Faith and proof

The nature of faith and proof is explored in two different sets of characters. Peter and Lucy initially disagree upon whether Aslan is there with them. Once it becomes clear that he is, they disagree on what proof is required.

“ Illustrative quote from the script:

*Peter*: “I wish he’d just given me some sort of proof”

*Lucy*: “Maybe we’re the ones who need to prove ourselves to him”

At the same time different reactions to the evidence that is available are illustrated by the contrast between the three Narnian friends. Trufflehunter is essentially a believer, holding on to his faith. Trumpkin is a skeptic who will not believe until he sees with his own eyes. Nikabrik is a pragmatist who will try anything if it seems to work.

“ Illustrative quote from the script:

*Trufflehunter*: “we badgers remember well that Narnia was never right except when a Son of Adam was King”...

*Nikabrik*: “And I’d gladly do it again [fight alongside the white witch] if it would rid us of these barbarians”...

*Trumpkin*: “Look, I’m not about to jump off a cliff after someone who doesn’t exist.”

### X3. Prejudice and rejection

The Telmarines see the Narnians as sub-human, and attempt to wipe them out. In turn, the Narnians perceive all Telmarines in the same unfavourable light. Even within the Narnian ranks, there are elements of prejudice. Reepicheep needs constantly to prove that a mouse can be a worthy warrior, and Trumpkin finds himself on the receiving end of a number of height-related jokes.

“ Illustrative quote from the script:

*Trumpkin*: “Get treated like a dumb animal long enough, that’s what you become”...

*Lucy*: “Dear Little Friend” *Trumpkin*: “That’s not at all patronising, is it?”...

*Trumpkin*: “They’re Telmarines. That’s what they do”



## ✠ 4. Prayer and response

Caspian blows the horn when he thinks he is about to be killed by either the Narnians or the Telmarines, all of whom are armed and showing signs of hostility. Blowing the horn may seem a strange thing to do: perhaps he would be better to run or fight. Prayer can seem strange like that. And many people's experience of prayer is similar to Caspian's experience of blowing the horn: there doesn't appear to be an immediate answer and nothing seems to happen. But, in fact there is a response, even though he doesn't yet see it, Aslan and the old kings and queens are on their way to help.

“ Illustrative quote from the script:

*Trumpkin*: “Maybe that horn worked after all”.

## ✠ 5. Suffering and the apparent abandonment of God

The Narnians feel abandoned. They know the stories of the great activity of Aslan and the old kings and queens. But they also know that they have been left on their own for many years, and have suffered under the persecution of the Telmarines. They feel abandoned. In the same way, many today say “Where is God in this world of suffering?” – and, indeed, doubt whether he actually exists at all.

“ Illustrative quote from the script:

*Lucy*: “I don't understand. How could Aslan have let this happen?”

*Trumpkin*: “Aslan? I thought he abandoned us when you lot did.”...

*Trumpkin*: “Look around you! Do you really think if Aslan were out there, he'd leave us in here to be slaughtered?”

## ✠ 6. A lost spiritual heritage

When the Telmarines arrived in Narnia it was a magical world where people were familiar with the power of Aslan and the rule of the old kings and queens. However, the Telmarines suppressed this and gradually the stories were forgotten. This parallels our day in which many have lost touch with the past spiritual heritage.

“ Illustrative quote from the script:

*Cornelius*: “If Caspian does know of the Deep Magic, my lord would have good reason to be nervous”.

## ✠ 7. A re-discovery of our history

When the Pevensie children first arrive back in Narnia they don't recognise their old home. Gradually they see items that reawaken their memories of the past: the gold chess piece; the great hall. In the same way, many today who have lost touch with their spiritual history can have those memories reawakened through certain objects and events and that may lead to a rekindling of their spiritual life.

“ Illustrative quote from the script:

*Lucy*: “I wonder who lived here”

*Susan*: “I think we did”

## ✠ 8. Finding our place

When the Pevensie children first arrive back in Narnia they don't know where they are. All they see is a beach and some old ruins. They initially run across the beach and play in the water. But soon they want to explore the ruins and find out where they are. In the same way many today don't know their place in this world and ask the big questions “Where am I going in my life?” Perhaps they can't find an immediate answer and so they devote themselves to the pursuit of pleasure. But still the question niggles at the back of their minds, and eventually they will explore other areas and look for answers to the big questions of life.

“ Illustrative quote from the script:

*Edmund*: “where do you suppose we are?”...

*Peter*: “I think it's time we found out what's going on.”



## ✠9. The danger of going it alone

Peter will not wait for Aslan and thinks that the Narnians can go ahead and capture the Telmarine castle themselves. When he fails, the White Witch tells him that he cannot do it alone and tries to seduce him into trusting in her power. The battle is only won when the Narnians place their hope in Aslan, and seek his help.

“ **Illustrative quote from the script:**

*Peter:* “I think we’ve waited for Aslan long enough”....

*White Witch:* “You know you can’t do this alone”

## ✠10. Living in hope

Not everyone in Narnia had lost hope. Indeed there is a contrast between the characters who have lost hope (e.g. Nikabrik who is characterised as having given in to despair) and those who haven’t (e.g. those who hear the horn and gather together).

“ **Illustrative quote from the script:**

*Trufflehunter:* “Nikabrik was my friend, too. But he lost hope. This young one hasn’t.”

## ✠11. Being faithful disciples

Initially only Lucy sees Aslan. The others don’t believe her and she is forced to choose between following Aslan or staying with the others. Discipleship is often like that – and Aslan teaches her that she should not let herself be held back by other people’s unbelief.

“ **Illustrative quote from the script:**

*Lucy:* “I knew it was you. The whole time, I knew it. But the others didn’t believe me.”

*Aslan:* “And why would that stop you from coming to me?”

## ✠12. Making a new start

When the battle is over and all are gathered with Aslan, he makes it clear that the children must return to their own land. The older two will never come back. They must let go and move on with their lives, as indeed all of us must at many different stages: from moving school to burying a loved one.

“ **Illustrative quote from the script:**

*Aslan:* “All things have their time. Your brother and sister have learned what they can from this world. Now it’s time for them to live in their own.”

## ✠13. The power of the voice

Aslan does not join the battle physically this time but acts through his roar. This parallels the biblical picture of the “Logos” – the word of God that brings about creation and restoration.

“ **Illustrative quote from the script:**

*Aslan:* “ROAAAR!!!”

## ✠14. Resisting temptation

When Nikabrik calls in the hag and wer-wolf, they summon dark powers and attempt to bring back the White Witch. The power she offers is very tempting and Peter’s desperation to win the battle is so great that he almost falls under her influence. It is Edmund who breaks the spell, showing how much he has learned and changed since the Pevensie’s last visit to Narnia.

“ **Illustrative quote from the script:**

*Edmund:* “I know, you had it under control”



## X 15. Environmental impact

On returning to Narnia, the Pevensie children find it a much changed place. Some of the creatures have turned wild, and the trees which used to dance have become silent and still. This appears to be due to the influence of the Telmarines. Part of the destructive nature of the Telmarine forces is characterised by their disregard for the environment. They cut down trees to make catapults, tame the rivers with bridges, and are even prepared to burn down a whole forest to find Caspian.

“ **Illustrative quote from the script:**

*Lucy:* “They used to dance”

*Trumpkin:* “Not anymore. It wasn’t long after you left that the Telmarines invaded. Those who survived retreated to the woods. And the trees... they retreated so deep into themselves they haven’t been heard from since.

## X 16. Mercy

When Miraz is defeated in single-combat, Peter offers Caspian the chance to kill him and thus avenge his father’s death. However, Caspian decides to be a different kind of king and chooses mercy. Similarly, when the Telmarine forces are defeated, the Narnians help them out of the river and they are given the option of staying peacefully in Narnia if they wish.

“ **Illustrative quote from the script:**

*Miraz:* “Maybe you do have the makings of a Telmarine king after all”

*Caspian:* “Not one like you”

## X 17. Justice

At the start of the film, there is a lack of justice. In our world, Peter acts unjustly: starting fights when people treat him like a child. In Narnia, Caspian and the Narnians are denied the throne and country that are rightfully theirs. They fight to restore justice to the land.

“ **Illustrative quote from the script:**

*Caspian:* “Keep your life, but I’m giving the Narnians back their kingdom”.

## X 18. Honour

The film celebrates honour and highlights dishonour. In the duel between Peter and Miraz, Peter treats his opponent honourably, while Miraz employs dishonourable tactics in an attempt to win. Further dishonourable tactics by the other Telmarine lords lead to Miraz’s death. Reepicheep, however, is rebuked by Aslan for caring too much about his honour when he bemoans the loss of his tail. There are more important things, Aslan suggests.

“ **Illustrative quote from the script:**

*Glozelle:* “Perhaps they intend to surrender.”

*Miraz:* “They’re much too noble for that”...

*Aslan:* “Perhaps you think too much of your honour, friend”

## X 19. Leadership and loyalty

The Narnians are more numerous than the Telmarines suspect. However, they are scattered and disorganised. It takes Caspian to unite them under his leadership and help them clarify their goals. The talking mice also show great loyalty towards their leader, Reepicheep, when he is injured. Ultimately all the Narnians are called to be loyal to Aslan and unite under his command.

“ **Illustrative quote from the script:**

*Caspian:* “Beyond these woods, I am a prince. The Telmarine throne is rightfully mine. Help me claim it, and I can bring peace between us.”...

*Trufflehunter:* “A common enemy unites even the oldest of foes”



## X 20. Betrayal

The flip-side of loyalty is betrayal, and we are shown who the real villains of the film are by their acts of treachery. Caspian is betrayed by his uncle, just as Caspian's father was before him. Later the Narnians are betrayed by Nikabrik, who attempts to change their allegiance from Aslan to the White Witch. Miraz eventually gets a taste of his own medicine, when his generals betray him on the battlefield, sacrificing him for their own ambitions.

“ Illustrative quote from the script:

*Trumpkin:* “You may find Narnia a more savage place than you remember”

## X 21. Love and relationships

There are many different types of relationships explored in the film. The bond between the Pevensie siblings is prominent, with the relationship between Edmund and Peter being particularly interesting. A different kind of love is explored in the feelings which grow between Caspian and Susan. And the love which is shown for and by Aslan, especially in his relationship with Lucy, provides an interesting comparison with the way Christians relate to God.

“ Illustrative quote from the script:

*Peter:* “You know, you've always been there for me... and I never really-”

## X 22. The avoidance of religious ritual

In *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, Aslan made his presence powerfully known to the Pevensies, and played a decisive role on the battlefield. However, in *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* he chooses to do things differently. He explains to Lucy that things never happen the same way twice. There are similarities to the story of Moses who is told how to get water from a rock in the desert, and then assumes that he should just do the same thing next time, rather than following God's command. (Exodus 17: 1-7, Numbers 20:1-13).

“ Illustrative quote from the script:

*Aslan:* “Things never happen the same way twice, dear one”

## X 23. Faith for the future rather than regrets for the past

Things don't always go smoothly for the Pevensies and Caspian. When they fail, it is tempting to get discouraged, or start blaming each other. However, Aslan encourages them to have faith for the future, rather than dwelling on regrets about the past.

“ Illustrative quote from the script:

*Lucy:* “If I had come earlier... would everyone who died... could I have stopped that?”;

*Aslan:* “We can never know what would have happened, Lucy. But what will happen is another matter entirely”

## X 24. Growing up in our understanding of God

When she gets to see Aslan close up, Lucy realises that he is significantly bigger than last time they met. He does not diminish as the children grow up. Instead, they find that the more they understand, the bigger and more majestic he appears to them. The same is true of Christian faith: rather than being a childish thing that recedes as we grow up, it grows with us as we grow to Christian maturity.

“ Illustrative quote from the script:

*Lucy:* You've grown”

*Aslan:* “Every year you grow, so shall I”



## X 25. Rescue and thankfulness

During the course of the film, many people are rescued, along with the land of Narnia itself. However, responses to being rescued vary. When the Pevensies rescue Trumpkin, he doesn't appear particularly grateful. The theme of rescue has obvious links to the cross, but also prompts us to think about how we respond to being rescued, and how we can help to rescue others.

“ **Illustrative quotes from the script:**

*Trumpkin:* “Drop him!” That’s the best you could come up with?”

*Susan:* “A simple “thank you” would suffice”...

*Trufflehunter:* “You can’t leave, you’re meant to save us!”...

*Cornelius:* “You have a chance to become the most noble contradiction in history... the Telmarine who saved Narnia”

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