

Sun., Sept. 19

Memory Verse: "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." -1 John 4:4

Message: "Behold, I Am Coming Soon!"

Text: "We are filled with hope, as we wait for the glorious return of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." -Titus 2:13

Reading of Scripture: Isaiah 9:2-7

Sermon Scripture: Luke 4:17-21

Blurb: We go back to Narnia again this week to see how to have hope while facing so many defeats and failures. We look to a New King, King Jesus, who brings us victory! We need not get discouraged and overwhelmed. We have hope because our King is with us, "He is mighty to save!" (Zeph. 3:17)

[Recorded Worship Beginning]

WELCOME -Pastor Andrew

MEMORY VERSE: -Pastor Andrew

"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." -1 John 4:4

WORSHIP MUSIC SET -Sanctify

Covenant Song

When We All Get to Heaven

Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

[Live Worship Beginning]

GATHERING SONG: *Lo, He comes with Clouds Descending* -Sanctify

WELCOME -Pastor David

MEMORY VERSE: -Pastor David

"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." -1 John 4:4

WORSHIP MUSIC SET -Sanctify

Ancient of Days

Covenant Song

Hope Has a Name

Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

[Both Recorded & Live Worship]

PRAYERS: -Pastor Cassi

READING OF SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 9:2-7 -Reader:

Our Scripture passage today we normally hear at Christmas. The prophet Isaiah foretells of a coming light, a Messiah who will be a king. Isaiah 9:2-7,

2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned.

3 You have made the nation great; you have increased its joy.

They rejoiced before you as with joy at the harvest,
as those who divide plunder rejoice.

4 As on the day of Midian, you've shattered the yoke that burdened them,
the staff on their shoulders, and the rod of their oppressor.

5 Because every boot of the thundering warriors,
and every garment rolled in blood will be burned, fuel for the fire.

6 A child is born to us, a son is given to us,
and authority will be on his shoulders.

He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

7 There will be vast authority and endless peace
for David's throne and for his kingdom,
establishing and sustaining it with justice and righteousness now and forever.
The zeal of the Lord of heavenly forces will do this.

GROW MOMENT: Grow Groups video

PRAYERS -Pastor Cassi

GENERATIONAL BRIDGE: Lemuel the Lion

MESSAGE: King of Kings (Narnia) #2: "Behold, I Am Coming Soon!"

BUMPER VIDEO

PP#1: King of Kings: "Behold, I Am Coming Soon!"

"We are filled with hope, as we wait for the glorious return of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." -Titus 2:13

We're in our fall message series, King of Kings, where we're seeking to understand how Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords, and what it means that He is our personal King and Lord. Now, we modern Americans don't really understand how to relate to a king, or live under a king, and so we're looking back into the Old Testament, to the kings of Israel, to understand how Jesus is the promised coming Messiah-King, the Savior-King, from the royal line of Judah, for the Bible calls Jesus "The Lion of the Tribe of Judah," whose reign will never end. We're also looking to C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* and particularly at King Aslan, the lion king there, to help us

relate—to see what it means—to live under a good and wise and powerful king. Today we hear the promise, “Behold, I Am Coming Soon!”

PP#2: *Image of the movie poster for The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Narnia is a world that C.S. Lewis created, a world inhabited by all kinds of wondrous creatures, but no humans! The main character in all the books of *The Chronicles of Narnia* is Aslan, the king. In each story, human children get transported into this mythical world. We’re going to be spending the majority of our time in the book and movie titled, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. During WWII, a sibling group of four: Peter (age 14), Susan (age 12), Edmund (age 10) and Lucy (age 10) Pevensie, enter Narnia through an enchanted wardrobe. As the children continue their adventures in Narnia, Christian readers and movie watchers notice striking parallels to the story of salvation in the Bible. Although it is not to be a direct allegory, this is why the Narnia story can help us today come to understand Jesus as our King better.

PP#3: *Image from*

<https://www.jaandrews.com/always-winter-never-christmas-an-overly-dramatic-tale/>

Last week we entered Narnia and discovered it was trapped in winter. For 100 years, as the mythical faun Tumnis tells the girl Lucy, it’s been “always winter, but never Christmas.” Narnia, once warm and green, was put under the chilly curse of the White Witch, who usurped the throne as the phony queen of Narnia. The real king, Aslan, has been away, and the White Witch enslaved the Narnians under her rule of fear.

Always winter. This is a way of describing our reality, when left to ourselves. The human condition, described in the Bible, is that we were made to live and flourish under the benevolent rule and lordship of our good and powerful God. Yet, through human sin, God was pushed aside, and a curse fell over all of creation. We are trapped in a winter of slavery to fear and selfishness. Satan has usurped the throne of earth, and the Bible calls him the false “ruler of this world” (John 12:31). Milton called him the Prince of Darkness. And in Narnia, although the White Witch’s curse brings darkness and cold, she has a white glow around her, much like how in the Bible Lucifer was an angel of light, who fell from glory, and seeks to enslave all people under his grasp.

We experience this reality of winter in our own lives. Our own personal reality is that we struggle against the darkness, the cold, the selfishness, the sin. We find ourselves wanting to do good, to be good, to live noble lives, but when left to ourselves, we are bound by our own selfishness. Anger overwhelms all of our attempts to say only constructive things. Our bitterness pushes us to desire evil for others. We use others and love things. We put ourselves at the center of our worlds and envision us as kings of our own destiny...while we ignore that in reality we are slaves to our pride. Paul sums it up perfectly in Romans 7 when he says, “15 I don’t know what I’m doing, because I don’t do what I want to do. Instead, I do the thing that I hate. ... 18 I know that good doesn’t live in me—that is, in my body. The desire to do good is inside of me, but I can’t do it. 19 I don’t do the good that I want to do, but I do the evil that I don’t want to do.”

Always winter, never Christmas. Our world is full of people trying to make a difference, but wherever we look it is also rife with anger, hate, violence, selfishness, bitterness. It’s true when we look outside of ourselves, and it is true when we look inside ourselves. Left to ourselves, we are stuck. Try as we might, we cannot defeat the darkness without or within. We need a powerful, benevolent ruler, a good and mighty Savior-King, to be able to come and break the curse for us.

This is why it is in such hopelessness that Tumnis moaned, “never Christmas.” Now, to kids, that means no presents, no treats, no break from school. But the deeper despair is that “never Christmas” means that they were truly left to themselves. There was no hope, there was no powerful king coming.

But then, when all four kids go to Mr. and Mrs. Beaver’s house, they learn something about hope! I want to show you this clip from the movie.

Video Clip 1: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* - With the Beavers (2:30 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqZmTfVH-G4>

PP#4: *Image for Isaiah 9:6-7*

Did you hear what Mr. Beaver said? Yes, the White Witch is the queen. She has Tumnis. There is nothing they can do. It seems hopeless. But then he said five words that change everything: “Aslan is on the move.” What? Who’s Aslan?

Aslan is the true king of Narnia. He’s been away, but now He’s coming back. And that’s why there is hope! The king is coming! He is powerful and is able to defeat the White Witch and push back the winter. The Narnians are not left to themselves. They are not hopeless! There’s an ancient prophecy that when 2 sons of Adam and 2 daughters of Eve appear in Narnia and become kings and queens, that king of kings Aslan will break the curse of the White Witch.

Our situation, both for you and I, and in our world, is like Narnia. We are *not* hopeless. We are *not* left to ourselves. The ancient prophecies of Isaiah 9 proclaim God’s promise that the people walking in darkness will see a great Light! Light will dawn. A child will be born! Mighty! Eternal! Peace! He will have endless authority, He will re-establish the throne of King David of old, and will reign forever!

At the time Isaiah shared this prophecy, the nation of Israel was under an occupation by the Assyrians. (This was in the century before Daniel and before when the Assyrians were conquered by the Babylonians). The Assyrian army had conquered the northern kingdom of Israel and had taken many of the citizens away to a foreign land as captives. They were living in a time of darkness for them. But Isaiah wrote about a great light... a child who would be born and would set them free from the darkness!

PP#5: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. ... Life itself was in Him, and this Life gives light to everyone. The Light shines through the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. ... The true Light that shines on all people was coming into the world.” -John 1:1, 4-5, 9

And then in the New Testament, John talks about the coming of Jesus. John 1 says, “Life itself was in Him, and this Life gives light to everyone. The Light *shines through the darkness*, and the darkness can never extinguish it.” At the time John wrote those words, Israel was occupied by the Romans.

You and I, we live in occupied territory. We ourselves are slaves to powers stronger than we are—powers inside us and outside of us. But the Bible prophecies that there is an even more powerful King, strong enough to defeat whatever keeps us bound. We have hope! Whatever our situation, whatever is our reality, here these words, “God is on the move!”

Well, one of the children, Edmund, through his selfishness is duped by the White Queen and becomes her prisoner. The others go off trying to find King Aslan for help. Along the way, they are followed by a sleigh. Oh no! The White Witch rides a sleigh! Is it she? Have a look at this clip.

Video Clip 2: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* - Father Christmas (2:57 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EY-fhfuDEUA>

PP#6: “Behold, I Am Coming Soon!”

1. God is on the move!

“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village in Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past.” -Micah 5:2

A sleigh, yes, but not the White Witch. It is, as they call him in England, Father Christmas. “I’ve got in at last!” he boomed! The White Witch had kept him out so long, but now her magic was weakening. In the books, Father Christmas says that spring was finally coming because of the hope that Aslan was on the move. After gifts of tools—not toys—Father Christmas, with so much to do, rides off proclaiming, “A Merry Christmas! Long live the true King!”

The Christmas passage from Micah 5:2 prophesies, “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village in Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past.”

PP#7: Luke 4:17-21

17 The synagogue assistant gave Jesus the scroll from the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me.

He has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed,

19 and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. [Isaiah 61:1-4]

20 He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the synagogue assistant, and sat down. Every eye in the synagogue was fixed on him. 21 He began to explain to them, “Today, this scripture has been fulfilled just as you heard it.”

Father Christmas is like John the Baptist, who proclaims that a new King is coming. And as this King-Savior, Jesus quotes Isaiah 61 describing what His kingdom is all about. “17 The synagogue assistant gave Jesus the scroll from the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed, 19 and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. [Isaiah 61:1-4] 20 He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the synagogue assistant, and sat down. Every eye in the synagogue was fixed on him. 21 He began to explain to them, “Today, this scripture has been fulfilled just as you heard it.” To those walking in darkness, to those trapped in sin: good news! Release! Sight! Liberation! God’s favor!

PP#8: “Behold, I Am Coming Soon!”

1. God is on the move!
2. There is a new King!

“Choose ye this day whom you will serve....But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!” -Joshua 24:15

Whatever king or powers you are trapped in, there is a new king coming! You can have hope. You can have release from your occupying power. Your sin need not keep you bound. There is a new King, and He is on the move! The cold winter of your heart can thaw. Your hardened bitterness of defeat and failure can soften. Your despairing hopelessness can break. Your resignation to life as it is now can be liberated to dream again!

But not *just* for you! Your eyes that scan the headlines and scan the horizon, that have grown foggy and dim by seeing only violence and anger and hate and selfishness in the world, they see a light dawning. Winter, with its icy grip on humanity, is pushed back. There is hope for our world. We are not left alone—you and I, *and* the rest of creation!

The power of the prince of this earth is crushing, yes, but it is weakening. We can switch our allegiance, we can put our trust instead in the powerful New King. Like the children in Narnia who go off to join Aslan, so we can put our allegiance in the Good King.

The kings of Israel all failed or died. But that kingdom sets up the expectation for a new kingdom, a restored kingdom, ruled by a good and powerful King who can push back the darkness, push back the cold, push back the death, push back the sin. Joshua’s proclamation rings from antiquity, “Choose ye this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord!” (Joshua 24:15)

PP#9: “Behold, I Am Coming Soon!”

1. God is on the move!
2. There is a new King!
3. Live in hope now!

“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” -1 John 4:4

To choose the new King means live differently now. The children in Narnia join forces against the White Witch. They have to fight. But they fight with hope. They have to remain faithful, to avoid temptation, to work on their inner temptations and demons and failings. They have to stand strong against ridicule, and setbacks, and betrayal, and against vast enemies as far as the eye can see. But their eyes looked instead for their king.

So do *our* eyes. We live in hope now, because we see beyond the powers of this world. We have joy even as part of a groaning creation, because we trust in what we know is true. We claim victory, because “He who is in [us] is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). We remain steadfast and faithful because our King fights our battles for us, with us, and in us.

PP#10: *Images of the White Witch from TLTWATW movie showing her crown smaller and smaller*

Watching the movie *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, it’s easy to miss a telling detail. The White Witch starts off with a magnificent ice crown. Yet, as Aslan brings spring in Narnia, the White Witch’s crown subtly shrinks. Her power may be still formidable, but her reign is shrinking.

Same with the powers of this world. We live in a world where the powers of darkness are formidable, but when we put our trust in Jesus, we see that the powers' reign is shrinking. We can have victory over the sins in our life. We can be faithful in serving our King. We can defeat the temptations we face. We can be steady and true day by day. We do NOT claim that evil will win. We look at the overwhelming headlines and do not despair. Instead, see a shrinking crown!

PP#11: *Image for Jesus' return, subtitled, "Behold, I Am Coming Soon!"*

The Israelites lived in occupation under Assyria and heard the prophecies of hope. The Jews lived in occupation under the Romans and heard the proclamation of hope. We right now live in occupation under sin and hear the promise of hope. In joy we proclaim, "Long live the true King!"

Our New King is coming back. He will finish what He started. The prince of this world may have power now, but the prophecies proclaim that our King will return. He will defeat the false ruler of this world, take His rightful throne, and banish our winter forever. Paul says to Titus, "We are filled with hope, as we wait for the glorious return of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

And when He returns, He will set us up with crowns and thrones, and we will rule with our King. Jesus says in Revelation 3:11, "Behold, I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown."

"Aslan is on the move." God promises a Savior-King who will establish a never-ending Kingdom. Jesus is the new King in whom we put our trust. We live now in hope, and we look for His full return.

God is on the move!

Amen.

[IN-PERSON WORSHIP ONLY] CLOSING SONG: *When We All Get to Heaven* -Sanctify

OFFERING: -Pastor David

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ANNOUNCEMENTS -Pastor David

Next Sunday's message: King of Kings: A New King!

Wednesday night: Echo & Youth Group

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David

"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." -1 John 4:4

BENEDICTION -Pastor David