

## A CHRISTMAS STORY

### It's A Boy

#### Matthew 1:18-25

**Matthew 1:18-25**~<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.<sup>19</sup> And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.<sup>20</sup> But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.<sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”<sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:<sup>23</sup> “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).<sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife,<sup>25</sup> but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

#### I. The Betroth

The birth of a baby is an amazing thing, much more, the birth of your first-born child. When a couple is found to be pregnant with a child ...

- It becomes the talk of the town. Everybody is talking about it. You post it online. You take endless pictures.
- It is a time of celebration where your friends and family congratulate you on this amazing advent.
- And it is a time of much change in your life.

It is the same with the birth of the Savior. In Matthew's gospel chapter 1, Matthew tells us the story of Jesus' birth. We see that in verse 18.

**Matthew 1:18**~<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way ...

Out of the four Gospels, only two retell the story of Jesus' birth: Matthew and Luke. The difference is that Matthew is telling the birth story from Joseph's point of view.

- It is Joseph's genealogy (Matthew 1:1-17)
- It is Joseph who was visited by the angel (Matthew 1:20; 2:13)
- It is Joseph's dilemma concerning the Baby Jesus (Matthew 1:18ff; 2:13ff)

Luke, however, is telling the birth story of Baby Jesus from Mary's point of view.

- It is Mary's genealogy that was recorded (Luke 3:23-38)
- It is Mary who was visited by an angel (Luke 1:26)
- It is Mary's dilemma concerning the Baby Jesus (Luke 1:34-38)
- It is Mary whom we follow from Nazareth to Jerusalem to visit her cousin, Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-45)

Today, we want to look at the announcement of Jesus' birth from Joseph's point of view, which Matthew will recount. Verse 18 continues ...

**Matthew 1:18~<sup>18</sup>** When his [Jesus] mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

Mary was "betrothed" to Joseph. That one word is extremely important in this narrative. It sets the stage that Mary was still a virgin. She had not had an intimate relationship with a man.

Betrothal is a custom that we do not practice here in our Western and modern society. Betrothal is not dating nor is it courtship where a man and a woman relish in recreational romance. Instead, betrothal is when a man and a woman have made a pledge and a promise to get married to each other. It is a guarantee. And it is done before any recreational romance or intense intimacy is involved.

In fact, the betrothal period is about one year when the man and woman make that pledge to be married to when they take that marital vow. And in that one-year betrothal period, it is a time where they get to know each other, and yet, they do not live together nor do they have any romantic relationship with one another.

Moreover, their commitment to be married is so cemented that they are considered to be husband and wife. We see this in verse 19 where Joseph is known as Mary's husband, even though they have not made that marital vow.

**Matthew 1:19~<sup>19</sup>** And her [Mary] husband Joseph ...

This betrothal to one another is so binding that the man and woman cannot bail out of the pledge unless there is adultery involved. In other words, betrothal is like a marriage where the only way one can break that pledge is through divorce because the other party committed adultery involved. We see this practice in verse 19 where Joseph resolved to divorce Mary quietly.

**Matthew 1:19~<sup>19</sup>** And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

He came to a determine decision to hand her a certificate of divorce and let her go. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. Let's get back to verse 18.

**Matthew 1:18~<sup>18</sup>** ... Mary had been betrothed to Joseph ...

As I have stated previously, this is an extremely essential statement in the narrative because it highlights the teaching that this birth would be miraculous for Mary was a virgin.

And to compound that thought, Matthew adds, “before they came together ...” (Matthew 1:18). It is before they had intimate relationship. It is before they had consummated their union as husband and wife. And of course, unless we forget the significance of this miraculous birth from a woman that had not known a man intimately, Matthew cites a prophesy in verse 22 concerning this “virgin birth”.

**Matthew 1:23~<sup>23</sup>** “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel”

In three different ways, Matthew stresses the fact that the birth of Jesus is a marvelous miracle.

1. First, he says that Mary was “betrothed” to Joseph (Matthew 1:18).
2. Second, he writes that Mary was found to be with child “before they came together” (Matthew 1:18).
3. Third, he notes that this is a fulfillment of prophesy that “the virgin shall conceive and bear a son” (Matthew 1:23).

## II. The Birth

Back to verse 18, Matthew testifies that before Mary had any physical union with a man, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

**Matthew 1:18~<sup>18</sup>** When his [Jesus] mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

This baby that was to be born will be conceived, not from a man, but from the Holy Spirit. Why is that so essential to this birth narrative? Why stress and emphasize that Mary was a virgin and was conceived by the Holy Spirit? Verses 20 and 21 explains. An angel was giving instruction to Joseph in a dream, telling him ...

**Matthew 1:20~<sup>20</sup>** ... for that which is conceived in her [Mary] is from the Holy Spirit.

The end of verse 20 ties us back to end verse 18. Then Matthew gives the reason why it is necessary that Mary was to be conceived by the Holy Spirit.

**Matthew 1:21~<sup>21</sup>** She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

There it is right there. It is necessary for Mary to be a virgin and be conceived by the Holy Spirit so that this Baby Boy can save “people for their sins.”

1. Jesus was born to save people from their Sins.

The name “Jesus” is a Greek form of the common Hebrew name “Joshua”. The meaning of the name is “Yahweh saves” or “Yahweh is salvation”.

The angel instructed Joseph to name this Child “Jesus” ... that every time Joseph or Mary or anyone called out his name, they were reminded that through this Child, Yahweh would save His people. Save them from what? He would save them from their sins.

The woe of humanity is sin. The greatest problem that plagues mankind is sin. Your problem and my problem is sin. When we stand before the Judge of Judges, it is our sin that condemns us.

And sin, simply define, is living for ourselves instead of living for the Creator Who created us. Sin is an infatuation for Self instead of adoration and affection for God. This is our problem, and this is why we need a Savior. We need a Savior to save us from our sins.

2. Jesus was NOT born to save people from their Society.

The Jews wanted to be saved ... Yes, that is true. But it is not from sins that they wanted to be saved. They wanted a Messiah Who would save them from an oppressive society. They wanted a Messiah Who would come and deliver them from Roman occupation. They wanted a Son of David Who would sit on the Throne of David and bring back Israel’s glory, where Israel would rule over the Gentile nations.

In fact, in John’s gospel, these people wanted to take Jesus by force and make him King over Israel to lead a revolt against Rome.

**John 6:15~<sup>15</sup>** Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

They wanted a Savior, yes. But they wanted a Savior on their own terms. Jesus would have nothing to do with that. Jesus was not born to save us from our oppressive society. He did not come to redeem our society or our government so that there would be some kind of social justice.

The perseveration of our society is not through the government but through the Church. It is the Church that is to be the salt of the earth and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16). It is through the Church and not through government that a society is preserved in righteousness and moral uprightness. We are that preserving salt for the society as long as we remain salty (i.e. righteous). Jesus put it this way.

**Matthew 5:13~<sup>13</sup>** “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.

Jesus came to save us from our sin and to give us righteousness so that we can preserve our society through righteous living.

Bothers and Sisters, this is why we, as Forgiven Life, make it our commitment to give back to our community each and every month. This is why we go out to our community and share a little love and light.

There are some people who are takers. All they do is take. They come to Church only to take what they can. They do things to manipulate others to give to them so that they can take. This is NOT Forgiven Life. We give for we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. We are here to give to other and our community more than we receive them.

But, we have to come to Jesus on His term and not our terms. We have to follow Him and confess our sins to which He came to save us.

3. Third, Jesus was NOT born to save people from their Sickness.

Some people think that the greatest problem that plagues mankind is physical sickness. They teach and proclaim that God wants everybody physical heal and that healing is in the atonement. In other words, the gospel message includes the deliverance from both sin and sickness.

God is concerned about our sickness, to be sure. And God does heal those who He will. But there is no such promise that God will physically heal everybody. Jesus is not born to save us from our sins and sicknesses. No. Jesus came to save His people from their sins. This is the message of the Gospel.

People who hold to this view of Jesus saving us from both sins and sicknesses spend so much time preaching and teaching about physical healing then they do about personal righteousness. They think that the weightier matter of the Law is “justice and mercy and faithfulness” (Matthew 23:23) AND physical healing.

This is not why Mary was conceived of the Holy Spirit and Jesus was born. Matthew is clear. Jesus “will save His people from their sins.” This is the gospel message and this message is confirmed by ALL the apostles.

Paul, clarifying to the Roman Believer, identifies what the gospel message is.

**Romans 1:16~<sup>16</sup>** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it [the Gospel] is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Salvation for what? Look at verse 17.

**Romans 1:17~<sup>17</sup>** For in it [the Gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

The Gospel is about righteousness NOT physical healing. The Gospel is about the forgiveness of our sins so that we can receive the righteousness of Christ. This is why Jesus came and died. Look at 1 Corinthians 15:3 where Paul plainly tells us why Jesus died.

**1 Corinthians 15:3~** <sup>3</sup>For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,

According to Scriptures ... that is, according to the Old Testament writings since the New Testament cannons have not been compiled at the time of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. The Old Testament teaches that the Messiah would die for our sins, not our sickness (and this includes Isaiah 55).

But Paul is not the only apostle who identifies what the Gospel message is. Take a look at what Peter says about Jesus' death.

**1 Peter 2:24~** <sup>24</sup>He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

For those who believe that healing is in the Gospel message, here is a good verse to memorize. Gospel does provide healing. But healing of what according to Peter? It is the healing of our sins so that we may live to righteousness.

Let's not forget about John who tells us what the message from God is.

**1 John 1:5, 7~** <sup>5</sup>This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you ... <sup>7</sup>and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

The Bible tells us that Mary had to be a virgin and conceived by the Holy Spirit so that Baby Jesus would be born to save His people of their sins. What an amazing birth narrative!

### III. The Bewilderment

Back to the biblical birth story of Jesus in Matthew chapter 1. Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant with a child. Most likely, Mary must have told Joseph. Mary had found favor in the eyes of the Lord, so the Lord chose her to bear "the Son of the Most High" (Luke 1:32). It is unlike to assume that Mary kept this witness from Joseph as though she had committed some heinous crime. It was a wondrous and magnificent news that Mary must have shared it with her betrothed.

The outcome of finding out Mary was with Child is written in verse 19.

**Matthew 1:19~** <sup>19</sup>And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

Joseph resolutely resolved to divorce Mary. Some scholars think that Joseph wanted to divorce Mary because he was hurt by her adultery. He felt rejected by her because she chose to be intimate with another man out of wedlock. The evidence of her crime was in full view. Although Mary testified that she was still a virgin and the Child was conceived by the Holy Spirit and not by another man, Joseph did not believe her. How could he? This was unheard of.

So fearing the shame and the shunning that were associated with adultery, Joseph determined to divorce Mary. Moreover, the Bible says that he was a just man ... he was a righteous man who, like God, did not take pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23). And since the punishment for adultery in the Law of Moses was death,<sup>1</sup> Joseph chose to divorce Mary quietly because of his love for her (of course, one would assume that “just” means “love” because justice to the one who committed adultery would be death according to the just Law of Moses).

But I do NOT think this is the correct understanding of why Joseph resolutely resolved to divorce Mary. I think Joseph believed Mary’s story when she told him that she was with Child through the Holy Spirit. After all, he probably chose to betroth Mary because of her virtues. Knowing that she was a virtuous woman, he believed her story. So if Joseph believed her story, why did he want to divorce Mary?

Let me give you two thoughts on why.

1. First, Joseph was a Righteous man.

**Matthew 1:19~** <sup>19</sup> And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

The word “just” is the same word as “righteous”. This is seen in the NASB translation.

**Matthew 1:19~** <sup>19</sup> And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. (NASB)

Joseph being a “righteous” man, not wanting to disgrace Mary, made a determine decision to divorce her. What does it mean to be righteous? Does righteous mean to be morally outstanding? Well, yes, but it is more than that. Does righteous mean that one shows justice to those around him or her? Well, yes, but it is more than that.

In the Old as well as in the New Testament, a righteous person is one who trust in God’s word and promises. It is one who anticipates the fulfillment of God’s word and promises. Take for example, Simeon in Luke 2. Notice what the Bible says about this man.

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<sup>1</sup> **Deuteronomy 22:22~** <sup>22</sup> “If a man is found lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman. So you shall purge the evil from Israel.

**Leviticus 20:10~** <sup>10</sup> “If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

**Luke 2:25~<sup>25</sup>** Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout ...

The Bible describes Simeon as being righteous and devout. Why? Because ...

**Luke 2:25~<sup>25</sup>** ... waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

The “consolation of Israel” is the time when Messiah comes to console and comfort Israel. Simeon was righteous because he believed in the promise of God concerning the coming Messiah. He believed and acted upon it.

The same thing with Anna.

**Luke 2:36, 38~<sup>36</sup>** And there was a prophetess, Anna ... **38** ... waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Anna, the prophetess, was waiting for the coming Messiah and the redemption of Jerusalem when the Messiah came. She believed in the promise of the coming Messiah.

The Bible says that Joseph was a righteous person. He was righteous because he believed in the promise of the coming Messiah, like Simeon and Anna. He was waiting for the Messiah to come. So Joseph must have believed Mary when she told him that the Child she carried was conceived by the Holy Spirit. You see, during this time, people were expecting the Messiah to appear. I think they were looking and waiting for him to come.

Unlike Joseph, how slow are we to trust in God’s word and promises? The real test of our trust is when we walk in His word when things get tough. We read His word and His promises, but when it comes time for Him to fulfill His word, we have a difficult time believing in it.

2. Second, Joseph was not to Fear marriage with Mary.

As Joseph was contemplating on his choice to divorce Mary, an angel appeared to him. Please note what the angle told Joseph.

**Matthew 1:20~<sup>20</sup>** But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not [be angry] to take Mary as your wife.

Nope. That was not what the angel said. Joseph was not angry with Mary. It is natural to be angry with someone if we think they have been unfaithful to us. But anger is not Joseph’s feeling toward Mary. Joseph was not upset, so it may be possible that Joseph did not think Mary committed adultery.

**Matthew 1:20~** <sup>20</sup> ... “Joseph, son of David, do not [be bitter] to take Mary as your wife.

Nope. The Bible does not say that either. You see, Joseph was not angry with Mary nor was he bitter with her (a likely response when someone committed adultery against you). On the contrary, the angel told Joseph not to “fear” to take Mary as his wife.

**Matthew 1:20~** <sup>20</sup> But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

Joseph wanted to divorce Mary because of fear, not because of anger or bitterness or any other emotions. Joseph was afraid marry Mary and be her husband.

Here is what I think happened. Joseph wanted to marry virtuous woman. However, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Mary told Joseph and he believed her because he was a righteous man. He was righteous because he was looking and waiting for the coming of the Promise Messiah. So when his betrothed, virtuous woman told him that she was with Child through the Holy Spirit, he believed her. He knew that the Messiah would come.

Now he had a dilemma. He was betrothed to this righteous woman, but God had chosen her to bring the Messiah into the world. God had become like a “husband” to her. Who was he to step in the way? He was afraid to take Mary as a wife because she was specifically selected by God. So, he sought to quietly divorce her as not to step in the way.

However, an angel paid him a visit and told him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife. This too was in God’s plan. He was also chosen to care and provide for them. The end result ...

**Matthew 1:24~** <sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife

From the biblical narrative, Joseph was a man who believed. He was righteous and wanted to do the right thing. He took Mary to be his wife and kept her chaste until she had given birth to a beautiful baby boy ... the Messiah.

**Matthew 1:25~** <sup>25</sup> but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Joseph “knew her not” ... that means, he did not have romantic relationship with her until the Messiah was born. On the side note, Joseph ended up having four sons and at least two daughters with Mary after the arrival of the Messiah as Matthew recounts in the thirteen chapter of his Gospel.

**Matthew 13:55-56**~ <sup>55</sup> Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? <sup>56</sup> And are not all his sisters with us?

#### IV. Conclusion

During this season, it is easy to forget the birth of this marvelous and miraculous baby boy who would be the Messiah of the world. He was born to die so that we may live. He carried our sins so that we may have his righteousness.

#### V. The Blessings

**Presider:** May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. May the love of our Lord Jesus Christ be unto you.

**Congregation:** And also to you.

#### VI. Forgiving Life Living

##### 1. Jesus was born to save people from their sins

a. Take a look at the Tasty Tidbits in the next section. Which ten tasty tidbits can you identify with in your life? \_\_\_\_\_

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b. Read Romans 8:1-11. Romans 8:1 says "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus". Are there any burdens from the sin you have in your life that are holding you back from your walk with God? \_\_\_\_\_

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Will you allow Jesus to heal you from the sickness of sin? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Jesus was not born to save people from their society

a. Other than the various types of outreach that we do at Forgiven Life currently (Thanksgiving Outreach, Star of Hope), what are some other ideas you have on how we can serve the community and be the "salt of the earth"? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Read 1 Peter 2:24. Why is it essential that we understand that healing from sin comes from Jesus - not from good works, our own effort or being a good person? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Read Mark 2:1-12. Why is saving people from sin more important than healing them of their physical sickness? \_\_\_\_\_

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## VII. Tasty Tidbits<sup>2</sup>

The Chronicles of Narnia has been a wonderful children's book for over 50 years, but it also has many Christian aspects to it. It was written by CS Lewis, Even though the books were later renumbered, the 1st one in the series was The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, which is also going to be a big movie in December. Today I'd like to look at

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<sup>2</sup> It is unknown where I got these tasty tidbits. If someone knows, please send us an email so we can properly give credit to the ones who wrote them

one aspect of the book/movie that, besides being entertaining, would encourage us to see the dangers of sin. I'd like to look at the truths of the scripture, and at the same time tell a story from LWW.

Now, the wardrobe is, if you didn't know, a large walk-in closet. Over the course of the book, 4 siblings walk into it and end up in a different world called Narnia. But before all 4 children end up in there, one of the boys, Edmund, ends up in Narnia. Let me tell you about Edmund.

Edmund is the sort of kid you just want to smack upside the head. He's rude and arrogant, and enjoys teasing his younger sister to the point of tears. He has a chip on his shoulders about where he fits into the family, and he generally is disagreeable.

Now, at this point, Narnia is under the spell of the White Witch Jadis. It is always winter in Narnia. What's more, it is never Christmas. Narnia is constantly under a spell of cold and snow, with never any chance of improvement, as far as people can see. So, when Edmund steps through the door, into the snow-covered forest, he is cold. All of a sudden, he hears sleigh-bells. Which would normally be a good thing in winter, but not this time. The sleigh is driven by 2 reindeer, but is led by a nasty dwarf, and the sleigh is the transportation for the White Witch.

You have to understand, she is evil. Besides keeping Narnia under perpetual winter, she instills fear into the hearts of all the Narnians, and she turns her enemies to stone. When she first sees Edmund, she is abrasive and vile, insulting and demeaning. However, once she realizes he is not just a beardless dwarf but rather a human, she changes her tune. You see, there is a prophecy that says 4 human children would come and rule Narnia. So if Jadis can capture one of those children, or better yet all 4, she would not need to be afraid of that prophecy.

So she softens towards Edmund. She gives him a hot drink, and then asks if he would like anything to eat. Edmund's thoughts go to a traditional chewy candy eaten at Christmas that British children have enjoyed over the years – Turkish delight.

By giving Edmund this Turkish delight, she is able to manipulate him into trying to get his siblings to go to her castle. This Turkish delight is even slightly narcotic, addictive and deceptive. Turkish delight leads Edmund to go places he never imagined.

Well, let's tie this together a little. I suppose a person could look at Jadis' Turkish delight as either temptation or sin. It is used as a temptation to do some pretty horrible stuff. But it is not a sin to be tempted. I would hate people to think that they are not spiritual if they face temptations. No, I believe a better way of looking at Turkish delight is that it represents sin. Edmund gives into it. It escalates in its consequences, yes, but he still gives in.

So today, I would like to spend the rest of the time looking at sin, illuminated by the stuff called Turkish delight. Today I would like to give you Ten Tasty Tidbits about Turkish Delight – 10 troublesome truths about sin that we would do well to remember next time we are tempted.

**Tasty Tidbit #1** – Sin is most appealing when we are weak. When Edmund stumbled into the wardrobe, he was already grumpy and unpleasant. And by the time he found the Witch, he was cold, lonely and scared. He was ripe for giving in to something.

I think of Cain, who killed his brother Abel. He was angry that Abel's sacrifice was considered better than his own. And the very first mention of the word "sin" is found in Genesis 4, when the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

Sin was ready to pounce on Cain because he was holding on to bitterness. It's no wonder that Psalm 4:4 says, "In your anger do not sin." Because when we are angry, or weak, or tired, or frustrated, or lonely, that's when sin seems the most appealing to us. Recognize this in your own life. Notice when you are the most vulnerable, and be alert.

**Tasty Tidbit #2** – Sin clouds how evil evil really is. At first Jadis was very rude and cruel to Edmund. Then, all of a sudden, she changed her tone, and became very nice to him. And though he noticed the change, he didn't seem to question why. And once the Turkish delight arrived, he threw off all inhibitions. You see, he couldn't see how evil she really was.

Sin clouds reality. Sin makes things look not nearly as harmful as they really are. I'm of the opinion that Judas didn't really think he was going to wind up killing Jesus. I think Judas thought Jesus was the Messiah, and Judas was just trying to force Jesus' hand to act against the Romans. And although Judas was dishonest, I don't think he meant for Jesus to die. But he listened to the wrong voice for too long, and sin clouded his view of how evil his betrayal would be. Sin clouds how evil evil really is.

**Tasty Tidbit #3** – Sin appears as what you want. Jadis asked Edmund this question: "What would you like best to eat?" What do you want? The only sins that really tempt us are the ones that offer what we want. If we want company, sin can offer us ways not to be so lonely. If we want money, sin can offer us ways to get or keep it. If we want power, sin can offer us ways to rise to the top.

Bryan Duncan sang many years ago, "Whatever makes you stumble will be your only test." Simon the magician in Acts 8 wanted the Holy Spirit because he liked power. He saw the Holy Spirit as a further way to make money and be famous. He didn't care about grace or ministry or responsibility. All he wanted was power, and he was willing to pay for it. And he missed the point because of it. Sin shows up as what you want.

**Tasty Tidbit #4** – Sin clouds your judgement. When Edmund started eating, he started talking, and what he said put his family and their friends in great danger. He didn't notice how eager she was to meet his brother and sisters. Sin made Edmund not see clearly, and he lost common sense because of it.

I think often of David, who stayed at home where it was easy, instead of going off to war, which was his responsibility. He saw Bathsheba, and wanted her. He committed adultery with her, and then had her husband killed to cover it. Clearly, he lost common sense way back, and made a series

of bad judgements. Listen: when a person is overcome by sin, don't expect good judgement from them. They just want to survive.

**Tasty Tidbit #5** – Sin's pleasure doesn't last long. Let me quote p37-38 of LWW: "At last the Turkish Delight was all finished and Edmund was looking very hard at the empty box and wishing that she would ask him whether he would like some more." Edmund quickly ate it all, and immediately wanted more. Like drinking seawater to quench your thirst, it just didn't satisfy for long.

Hebrews 11:25 describes Moses' attitude: "He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time." Anyone who tells you sin isn't fun probably never did it. Sin is fun, and it has pleasures. The problem is, the pleasure doesn't last. Sin doesn't satisfy for long. Remember that next time you're tempted.

**Tasty Tidbit #6** – Sin will eventually kill. You see, this Turkish delight was enchanted, and Edmund did not know that if he had been allowed, he would have kept eating it until he died of it. Eventually, the candy would have cost him his life. I think of our passage tonite, from James 1: "Sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." What we earn from sin is death. It causes our spirits to crumple up, it snuffs out our prayers, and it mortifies our desire for God. Which is a lethal disease. Sin kills.

**Tasty Tidbit #7** – Sin promises better days ahead. Jadis wanted to get Edmund's siblings to her castle, where she would turn them to stone, and she told Edmund he would rule as a king. Sin promised Edmund that things would be better if he just gave in.

Sin lies to us, too. It says that we will be better off if we do this or that. We will feel better about ourselves if we do some other thing. We will feel more important if we put others down, but it's all lies. Sin may promise better days, but it just can't follow through. Sin makes things worse.

**Tasty Tidbit #8** – Sin lies about your importance. Jadis told Edmund that he was the cleverest and handsomest boy she'd ever met, but his face was red and his hands were sticky. He wasn't particularly clever or handsome at that point, but he believed the lies.

Sin loves to say you are the most important person you should think of. Sin says that everyone should listen to you and do what you want. Sin says what you think of yourself is most important. Of course, none of this is true. What matters most is what God thinks of you. Romans 12:3 says, "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought."

**Tasty Tidbit #9** – Sin leads to the betrayal of others. Edmund promised to bring his siblings to the witch, even though he didn't know the full extent of her plans for them. But still, he planned to turn them in to her.

Listen: your sin betrays others. Achan's sin betrayed his people. David's sin betrayed Uriah. Judas' sin betrayed Jesus. An adulterous pastor betrays a whole church. When you sin, it costs other people as well. Sin is horribly selfish that way, to make you think it doesn't hurt anyone else.

**Tasty Tidbit #10** – Sin spoils good things. Let's skip ahead in the story. Edmund had gone back to this world, and eventually all 4 kids end up in Narnia. They are all eating dinner at Mr. and Mrs. Beaver's, but Edmund wasn't enjoying the meal at all. The book says: "There's nothing that spoils the taste of good ordinary food half so much as the memory of bad magic food." Once Edmund tasted the magical Turkish delight, nothing else would taste good.

And so it is with sin. Sin steals the joy out of worship, which should taste wonderful. Sin steals the joy out of marriage, which should be fantastic. Sin steals unity out of a church, which should be a warm and friendly place to be part of. Sin steals, sin robs, sin cheapens, sin molests... sin spoils good things, to the point that bad things seem better than the good.