

Elevenses with C.S. Lewis, *The True Myth*: October 22, 2017

1. Fact vs. Truth

- a. What is the difference between “fact” and “truth”?
- b. Romans 3:24-25a: “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (*hilasterion*) through faith in his blood” (KJV)
 - i. Is this a truth or a fact?

2. Lewis: “Myth became Fact” essay

- a. Why, according to Lewis, can myth not be jettisoned? (cf., p. 2)
- b. How does myth transcend thought? (cf., p. 3)
- c. How does incarnation transcend myth? (cf., p. 4)
- d. Letter to Arthur Greeves, 1931
 - i. “Now the story of Christ is simply a true myth: a myth working on us in the same way as the others, but with this tremendous difference that it really happened: and one must be content to accept it in the same way, remembering that it is God’s myth where the others are men’s myths: i.e., the Pagan stories are God expressing Himself through the minds of poets, using such images as He found there, while Christianity is God expressing Himself through what we call ‘real things’. Therefore it is true, not in the sense of being a ‘description’ of God (that no finite mind could take in) but in the sense of being the way in which God chooses to (or can) appear to our faculties.” (Letter to Arthur Greeves, October, 18, 1931, in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, Vol. 1, p. 977)

3. Lewis and Tolkien

- a. Meeting 11 May 1926 of Oxford English Faculty (Literature vs. Philology)
- b. Conversation concerning myth 19 September 1931 on Addison’s Walk key to Lewis’ conversion
- c. Tolkien’s “On Fairy Stories”
 - i. What does Tolkien mean by “sub-creation”? (cf., Humphrey, *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography*, Chapter 4: “Jack”, p. 151)
 - ii. “But this story has entered History and the primary world; the desire and aspiration of subcreation has been raised to the fulfillment of creation...[T]his story is supreme; and it is true. Art has been verified. God is the Lord, of angels, and of men—and of elves. Legend and History have met and fused...But in God’s kingdom the presence of the greatest does not depress the small. Redeemed Man is still man. Story, fantasy, still go on, and should go on. The Evangelium has not abrogated legends; it has hallowed them, especially the ‘happy ending.’ The Christian has still to work, with mind as well as body, to suffer, hope, and die; but he may now perceive that all his bents and faculties have a purpose, which can be redeemed...” (Epilogue of “On Fairy Stories”, pp. 23-24)

4. Three Consequences of Lewis’ View on Myth

- a. Christianity is the fulfillment of ALL myths
- b. Christianity is primarily myth and only secondarily doctrine
- c. Christianity cannot be demythologized