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The Narnia Code

NEW BOOK BY LEWIS SCHOLAR MICHAEL WARD REVEALS SECRET BEHIND THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

(Carol Stream, IL) – Since they were first published in the 1950s, the books in C. S. Lewis’s Chronicles of Narnia series have been translated into more than thirty different languages, made into major motion pictures, and established as classics of English literature. Despite their wide popularity, readers and literary scholars alike have been mystified by unanswered questions about the symbolism purported to be behind the series.

In *The Narnia Code: C. S. Lewis and the Secret of the Seven Heavens*, to be released in November from Tyndale House Publishers, Lewis scholar and lecturer Dr. Michael Ward reveals the organizing key behind the seven books. Hailed by the *London Times Literary Supplement* as “the foremost living Lewis scholar,” Ward has devoted years of study to reevaluating Lewis’s literary and theological outlook. His academic work *Planet Narnia* was the subject of a BBC documentary.

Drawing on the whole range of Lewis’s writings, *The Narnia Code* takes readers on a journey through Lewis’s mind, revealing the clues that lie in his lifelong passions for the planets and medieval literature. While others have attempted similar analysis, contemporary Lewis scholars are affirming that Ward is the one who has finally proven the link between all seven novels.

Referring to Ward’s *Planet Narnia*, Walter Hooper, literary adviser to the Lewis Estate, commented, “I cannot contain my admiration. No other book on Lewis has ever shown such comprehensive knowledge of his works and such depth of insight.”

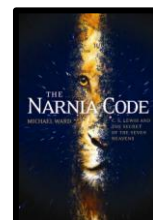
Dr. Alan Jacobs, professor of English at Wheaton College in Illinois, was skeptical when he first heard of Michael Ward’s claim to have discovered a “secret imaginative key” to the Narnia books. But he later said, “My own castle of skepticism was gradually but utterly demolished as I read [*Planet Narnia*.]”

“The Narnia books are mysterious on three levels,” comments Ward. “The basic story with its incongruities, the biblical parallels, and then a third level of meaning that ties together all the puzzling elements. That’s the mystery I wanted to uncover: the Narnia ‘code’ waiting to be cracked.”

Ward has an answer for critics who roll their eyes at the idea of secret codes. “When someone claims to have found a hidden code, it nearly always turns out to be a lot of nonsense,” he admits. “The *Da*

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Vinci Code is the most famous fictional example of this kind of far-fetched silliness. And yet Lewis was interested in codes; he often sent his godchild letters containing puzzles to solve or secret writing to decode.

“Assuming that Lewis did have a plan behind the series, is it really possible that he could have kept the plan to himself and told no one about it?” asks Ward. “Did he have the sort of personality capable of sitting on a big secret of this kind? The most striking example of his secretiveness was when he got married and kept it secret for the best part of a year. And his autobiography *Surprised by Joy* avoided mentioning so many important things that one of his friends joked a better title would have been *Suppressed by Jack*! The more I found out about his personality, the more I suspected there was a hidden meaning to Narnia.”

The Narnia Code explains why Lewis kept this planetary code secret and what it shows about his understanding of the universe and the Christian faith. www.narniacode.com

About the Author—Michael Ward is a minister in the Church of England, Chaplain of St. Peter’s College, Oxford, and coeditor of *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis*. He holds a doctorate in divinity from the University of St. Andrews, an MA in theology from Cambridge University, and an MA in English from Oxford University. He lectures on Lewis and associated subjects all over the world. From 1996 to 1999 he was resident warden and curator of The Kilns, Lewis’s Oxford home.