



## Christmas with the Prophets

*Laura F. Willes*

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## **Christmas with the Prophets** Laura F. Willes

How did Joseph Smith celebrate Christmas? What did John Taylor say about the pioneers first Christmas in the Salt Lake Valley? What was the heartening message that Heber J. Grant included on his 1945 Christmas cards? **Christmas with the Prophets** provides glimpses into the individual Christmas celebrations of each President of the Church, with recurring themes of missionary efforts, Church work, family, and service. Some of the vignettes are personal, others soul-stirring, poignant, and tender. Often their experiences and messages reflect the world conditions at that time and serve as little snapshots of history. Illustrated throughout with historical photographs and illustrations, each story of a Christmas past reminds us of the wondrous birth of the baby of Bethlehem, the Lord Jesus Christ. Discover how each Church President has celebrated Christmas, from Joseph Smith to Thomas S. Monson Beautifully designed and illustrated A Christmas keepsake for every Latter-day Saint family

## **Christmas with the Prophets Details**

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## From Reader Review Christmas with the Prophets for online ebook

### Emily says

These snapshots from the lives of the sixteen men who have led the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in this dispensation focus on what is most important during the Christmas season. Each chapter highlights a different prophet and contains a handful of vignettes from notable Christmases in his life, closing with a Christmas message he delivered. Themes of family, service, gifts of love and time, and Christ-centered celebrations crop up over and over. After reading Christmas with the Prophets, I'm newly inspired to purposefully incorporate more meaningful activities into our family's Christmas festivities.

Because of their commitment to the Lord, several prophets found themselves occasionally separated from loved ones during the Christmas season. On December 25, 1839, John Taylor was being tossed to and fro during rough weather somewhere on the Atlantic Ocean on his way to serve a mission in England. Joseph Smith and Lorenzo Snow each spent a Christmas in jail. As a young apostle, David O. McKay was assigned by President Grant to tour all the missions of the world, leaving in early December of 1920 and returning on Christmas Eve the next year. He observed Christmas of 1920 in Japan, serenaded by a few Japanese Saints singing "Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam." An unorthodox song selection, perhaps, but how appropriate for a celebration of Jesus' birth!

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### Cami Evans says

This was a wonderful introduction to each of the modern-day LDS prophets. I loved learning about their Christmas traditions and celebrations and learned a lot about not only these men, their lives, experiences, and teachings, but also about history in general. I loved reading about Brigham Young's dances, Heber J. Grant's habit of giving books as gifts, George Albert Smith's huge stocking joke, and Howard W. Hunter's popular band and would like to read more about these men. Every once in awhile the author's "voice" or interpretations would slip in and seemed a little out of place but as a biography lover, this was an enjoyable book that glances the highlights of the Lord's anointed. I have become more deeply acquainted with and fond of each of the prophets from Joseph Smith down to Thomas S. Monson through these short accounts and teachings. I definitely want this book to remain on our family bookshelf.

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### Tandy says

This is a great Christmas read about the LDS Prophets and what their Christmas' were like. The first few prophets it talks about just aren't that interesting because they really don't have exact memories recorded of experiences those prophets did for Christmas, they are assumptions. As you read through on to the more current prophets it gets more interesting and enjoyable. I really enjoyed reading Joseph F. Smith's. I would recommend reading this book leading up to Christmas, reading a chapter a day which works out to be a prophet per day. I look forward to reading this again next year with my children.

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## **Kathy says**

4.5 Stars

This is a wonderful book for the Christmas season. Each of the 16 prophets of the LDS church are highlighted with glimpses into how they spent Christmas. Details are sketchy for some of the earlier prophets and full of detail for the more recent.

I loved hearing the excitement over receiving fruit, nuts and a stick of candy - a vast difference from the Christmas my children are used to. Stories of serving others, Christmas traditions and messages about Christ fill the pages of this book. Some of these stories were familiar to me and others I had never heard.

The quality of this book, Christmas with the Prophets, is incredible. Thick, glossy, full color pages with a glittery cover make this a beautiful book to add to any LDS home

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## **Wade says**

I was excited to read this book because I love LDS Church history, but I was a bit disappointed. The writing was poor, but the presentation was nice; the pages were beautiful and there was a good balance of text and photo illustrations. I knew most of the stories included already, but that may not be the case for the average reader. Don't know if I would read it again as a Christmas tradition, like I'd hoped it might be, but I'm happy I read it at least once.

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## **Krista says**

I loved this book! I started reading just to gain some knowledge of my beloved prophets. I gained some great stories of the prophets at Christmas time. I will treasure this book.

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## **Meagan says**

Such a fun read. History of the saints, traditions and Christmas all in one. It was so interesting to read some of the stories of prophets Christmas past.

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## **Tony Bradshaw says**

The book is beautifully put together with a brief introduction to each prophet, a story or two from childhood, and then examples of how Christmases were spent. I learned more than I expected in vocabulary and how holidays were spent (no idea that the Christmas Day could be spent entirely inside a temple working and serving there; what a day!). I also enjoyed the message at the end of each chapter that was a quote from each of the prophets. It also puts into perspective how much the world and the celebration of Christmas has changed since 1805 to today. Overall, a good read the Sunday before Christmas.

## Linda Orvis says

Our neighbor's mother wrote this book, and it has done really well in our area. It was such a pleasure to read during the holidays. What I liked about it most was to see how Christmas has gradually changed throughout the decades. The children of the 1800s received a stocking with nuts, small amounts of candy, maybe an orange or apple, and sometimes a small gift like a pair of stockings. I was surprised that they didn't get regular gifts as we do today. The stories in this book were taken from the actual writings of the Prophets of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and that made the stories even more interesting. The writing was flawless, and I especially loved the cover. Good book.

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## Amy says

I enjoyed the chapters on Lorenzo Snow, Howard Hunter, Ezra Benson, Gordon Hinckley, and Thomas Monson. Some of the lessons important to me are highlighted here for my own memory....

The chapter on Lorenzo Snow was very touching. He was worried about Pres. Woodruff whose health was failing. He prayed earnestly that the prophet would recover because he knew he was next in line to be the prophet. He attended the temple and plead with the Lord that the great responsibility of church leadership would never fall upon his shoulders. Yet he promised the Lord, he would devotedly perform any duty required at his hands. When he received word of the prophets passing. He traveled to the temple and prayed to the Lord for guidance and instruction after he reminded the Lord of his earlier prayers. He expected a reply. None came. He left the alter and went out of the celestial room disappointed. Then a glorious manifestation came to him. The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him! Elder Snow, saw the Savior and talked with him face to face. He was given instructions (his prayer was answered). He knew then with a perfect knowledge that Christ guided His church and still lived. His patriarchal blessing had been fulfilled, he was promised to have power to stand in the flesh and see Jesus Christ.

Pres. Hunter advised us to strive to give as Jesus gave. To give of oneself is a holy gift. Mend a quarrel, seek out a forgotten friend. Dismiss suspicion and replace it with trust. Write a letter, give a soft answer, encourage youth. Manifest your loyalty in word and deed. Keep a promise. Forgo a grudge. Apologize, try to understand, think of someone else first, welcome a stranger, gladden the heart of a little child, speak your love and then speak it again.

Pres. Hunter also played Santa Claus for Jon Huntsmans family for 3 years.

Pres. Hinckley remembers his mission. His mom died 3 years before and he often felt her while on his mission. He wrote a letter to his dad thanking him and remembering their family Christmases together. Family was very important to him.

Pres. Monson shared memories about how his ward helped a family immigrating from war-torn Germany. How they worked hard to make an old apartment like new and even decorate it with a Christmas tree. The people arrived and after visiting the apartment they asked the members with them to take them to their home and were surprised to find they were already there! Also, Pres. Monson's example of taking care of the widows was shared. It seems that is mentioned quite a bit - must be something to it? Right?

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### **Alisha says**

We received this last year for Christmas and I read it this week in preparation for a RS class I am teaching next week. I found it generally to be enjoyable, with some great stories. I appreciated getting to know more about the prophets' experiences at Christmastime and how varied they were, even for a single prophet.

My main complaint is that it was not all that well written--there were some awkward parts--and after looking through the notes, it was clear that she didn't do much research. She generally just quoted research that other people did, which is fine, but it is not as impressive as it first might appear.

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### **Jennifer says**

I great series of vignettes about Christmases from the youth and ministries of modern LDS prophets. Heart-warming and charming. ♥?

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### **Jennilynn says**

I loved this book! The stories are wonderful and the historical content of the lives of the prophets was fascinating. Fantastic illustrations! The pages are glossy and thick. My favorite story was of Pres. George Albert Smith and the church's 1945 Christmas card; it was a picture of the lit spires of the Salt Lake Temple with the phrase "the lights are on again" denoting that the blackout restrictions were over. The picture and phrase meant so much more to me than just that the lights could be turned on, but that Christ's light is available to all and in every condition.

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### **Heidi says**

I read this book to my children during the Christmas seasons. We loved all the short stories about how the prophets celebrated Christmas. It was wonderful to read their testimonies about our savior. It really Brought the spirit of Christmas in our home.

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### **Teri says**

Christmas With The Prophets by Laura F. Willes

This wonderfully written and heartwarming collection of Christmas vignettes by all sixteen of Our beloved Prophets is a must for every Latter-day Saint library. Each chapter is devoted to little vignettes in each prophet's life during Christmas.

Joseph Smith's Christmas of 1838 was being incarcerated in Liberty Jail that had a ceiling so low, the few men couldn't even stand. Brigham Young doing Temple Ordinances all day on Christmas 1845, shows how much he cared for his people. John Taylor spent a Christmas hiding with members and one mother made him a pair of socks. Wilford Woodruff spent Christmas Day 1836 in the Kirtland Temple, which was common in those early days. Lorenzo Snow staged a play in his small log cabin on Christmas Day while in Mt. Pisgah in

1846. Joseph F. Smith, son of Hyrum Smith, felt so bad one Christmas because he couldn't afford even a dollar for his family, sobbed, then realized that his love for his family is the best Christmas gift he could give. Heber J. Grant, a man after my heart, loved to give books as Christmas gifts. George Albert Smith learned when he was quite ill how very important tithing was, so that Christmas became a "Tithing Christmas." David O. McKay spent one Christmas talking to some Japanese members, esp children, who sang "Jesus Wants Me For A Sunbeam." Joseph Fielding Smith's fond Christmas was when one of his daughters, fearful of being caught coming down the stairs to see what Santa had left, hid underneath a table in the den while he kept reading. Harold B. Lee spotted a young boy walking in the snow without much in the way of clothes and helped this boy's family to have a good Christmas. Spencer W. Kimball started giving fifty dollars to a special member in need. Ezra Taft Benson loved to go into the canyon to cut their family tree and he had to find one that would reach the ceiling. Howard W. Hunter spent one Christmas as a boy going "Hookeybobbing" with his sister, fixing a sail to his "pushmobile." Gordon B. Hinckley made a make-shift chimney out of wood, as they didn't have a fireplace when he was growing up. Pres. Thomas S. Monson has always remembered the widows during the Christmas season, and started visiting each one in his ward when he was bishop.

At the end of each vignette, each prophet leaves a special message to stay close to the Savior, as He is the Reason For the Season. I absolutely love the cover of this special book on our beloved prophets.

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