



WAITING AT THE WINDOW

When I was a child, the very best part of Christmas was the arrival of my mother's brother, who would drive once a year from his home in Tennessee to visit our home in Georgia, usually arriving the night before Christmas Eve.

As I counted down the months, weeks, and days before my uncle's visit, the time seemed to pass so slowly that I could hardly bear the anticipation. Each year on the night he was scheduled to arrive at our house, I would press my face against the living room window, waiting to catch the first glimpse of his car. I never had to wait long before he arrived.

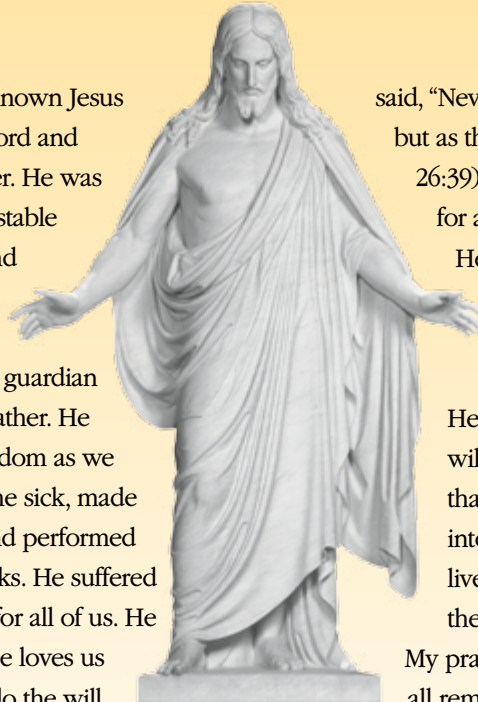
I never realized until I was older how much waiting for my uncle's arrival increased the happiness I felt when his car finally pulled into our driveway laden with Christmas gifts. In a small way, I was reminded of how faithful, righteous people in the Book of Mormon and the Bible must have felt when the Savior finally arrived on earth. Not only had His birth been anticipated for centuries rather than months or weeks, but He brought to the world the most precious gifts imaginable—eternal life and the opportunity to be exalted with our families forever. I imagined the joy and excitement these people would have experienced when they recognized the signs of Christ's birth and knew that the prophecies they had read about were finally being fulfilled.

Though I wasn't on the earth when the Savior was born, I am so grateful for His gifts of the Atonement and Resurrection, which make it possible for me to be forgiven of my sins and live with my family forever. Just as I looked forward to the arrival of my uncle, and as people looked forward to the birth of Christ, today we can look forward to the Second Coming, when Christ will bring even greater blessings and opportunities to the righteous. I know that as we plan and prepare for Christ's coming, our joy will be full.

Ruth M., Georgia, USA

MY SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST

I have always known Jesus Christ is my Lord and eternal Brother. He was born in a lowly stable in Bethlehem and was taught in the ways of both His earthly guardian and Heavenly Father. He increased in wisdom as we do. He healed the sick, made the blind see, and performed many other works. He suffered at Gethsemane for all of us. He did it because He loves us and needed to do the will of the Father. He was desirous that the cup might be removed but



said, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). He died on Calvary for all mankind because He loves us.

I love my Savior and know He lives. I know He is always ready and willing to help us so that we can come back into His presence and live with Him again in the kingdom of God.

My prayer is that we will all remember what He has done for us all.

Jeffrey W., Utah, USA

TOGETHER AT HOME

A few years ago, my older sister Tamara was admitted to the hospital for jaw surgery about a week before Christmas. Since Christmas has always been the time when all my family can come together, it was hard to see my sister away from us in the hospital during this season. My whole family was scared for her, so we all prayed that the operation would go according to plan and that the surgeon and the nurses could give her proper care and restore her to good health soon.

The surgery was successful, and she stayed in the hospital a few nights while she recuperated. She couldn't eat solid food, couldn't speak very easily, and had to take pain

medication. It was hard to see her suffer, but we all knew that Heavenly Father was with Tamara and that she would be home for Christmas Eve. And she was! She came home the night of the 23rd, and my whole family was able to sit together around the fire on Christmas Eve like we do every year.

We all learned to be more grateful that we can have not only each other but also the Holy Ghost and the Lord with us whenever we need Them. That Christmas I learned that love and family are more important than presents and that being with each other and remembering the birth of Christ are what matter most.

Trish W., Utah, USA

MAKING CHRISTMAS LAST

When I was little, I felt that Christmas just didn't last long enough. You wake up early, empty your stocking, open presents, and by 10 in the morning it's all over! The rest of the day seems just like any other, except you have a new movie to watch or a new game to play.

Of course, I knew what Christmas was really about; I'd heard the Christmas story with the star, the angels, the shepherds, and the Wise Men many times. But it wasn't until recently that I started to think past the morning of presents to the rest of Christmas.

Last Christmas was the turning point. My brother was on his mission, and we were all anxiously waiting for the opportunity to talk to him. My parents and I still opened presents, but the best part of the day was later when I got to hear my brother's voice and talk to him. That's when I learned that for me, Christmas is about family, the people I get to spend eternity with. By spending a day doing things together, beyond the opening of presents, we celebrate one of the reasons Christ was born.

I was mistaken when I was younger. Christmas doesn't end when the last present is unwrapped. For me, that's now when it starts,

because that's when we get to start spending the day talking to, being with, and learning about each other.

Whitney H., Utah, USA

