

Advent SEASON



In our times of grateful meditation, we acknowledge the Savior's priceless gift to us and pledge our love and faith. This is what Christmas is really all about.

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

Our joy at this season is because the Savior Jesus Christ came into the world.

In each of us there is at Christmastime something of our childhood. We all revel in the fun of Christmas—of giving and receiving tinsel presents, of singing favorite carols, of feasting on goodies we never miss at other seasons, of gathering together as family and friends, all having a wonderful time.

But there is something else, something better, and that is to sit together as families and read again the fascinating story of the birth of Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem of Judea.¹

A Season to Remember the Savior

It is proper during this season when we commemorate His birth that we remember the Lord Jesus Christ in reverence and with love. He has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. He has brought meaning to our mortal existence. He has given us the gift of eternal life.²

When all is said and done, when all the legions of the ages have passed in review, when man's terrible inhumanity to man has been chronicled, when God's great love for His children has been measured, then above all stands the lone figure of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world, the Savior of mankind, the living Son of the living God, the Prince of Peace, the Holy One.

Isaiah spoke of Him centuries before His coming: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

Nephi, long before the Master's birth, was given a vision of His coming. He saw in that vision the mother of Christ, "a virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins" (1 Nephi 11:15).

Of her He was born in Bethlehem of Judea, and the angel said unto Nephi, "Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!" (1 Nephi 11:21).

And Nephi "beheld that he went forth ministering unto the people, in power and great glory; and the multitudes were



Isaiah spoke of Him centuries before His coming: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

gathered together to hear him; and . . . they cast him out from among them.” And He “was lifted up upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world” (1 Nephi 11:28, 33).

All of these ancient visions were fulfilled. He came to earth. He walked the dusty roads of Palestine, teaching the people, healing the sick, causing the blind to see, raising the dead, giving His life on Calvary’s cross, and rising on the third day to “become the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:20).

He had been the Creator of this earth, under His Father’s direction, for as John records, “without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). He was the great Jehovah who spoke with the prophets of old.

He was the lowly babe who came to earth in the meridian of time and brought to us the gift of Christmas. He was the Resurrection and the Life, who brought to us the wonder of Easter.³

There would be no Christmas if there had not been Easter. The babe Jesus of Bethlehem would be but another baby without the redeeming Christ of Gethsemane and Calvary, and the triumphant fact of the Resurrection.

I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal, Living God. None so great has ever walked the earth. None other has made a comparable sacrifice or granted a comparable blessing. He is the Savior and the Redeemer of the world. I believe in Him. I declare His divinity without equivocation or compromise. I love Him. I speak His name in reverence and wonder. I worship Him as I worship His Father, in spirit and in truth. I thank Him and kneel before His Beloved Son who reached out long ago and said to each of us, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).⁴

A Season of Increased Love

And so at this Christmas season, we sing His praises and speak our words of faith and gratitude and love. It is His influence in our lives that stirs within us more kindness, more respect, more love, more concern. It is

because of Him and His teachings that we reach out to those in trouble, distress, and need wherever they may be.⁵

What a glorious season is this time of Christmas. Hearts are softened. Voices are raised in worship. Kindness and mercy are reenthroned as elements in our lives. There is an accelerated reaching out to those in distress. There is an aura of peace that comes into our homes. There is a measure of love that is not felt to the same extent at any other time of the year.⁶

Said Jesus: “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” (Matthew 7:12.)

May I remind us at this Christmas season that if only each of us would reflect occasionally on that Christ-given mandate and make an effort to observe it, this would be a different world. There would be greater happiness in our homes; there would be kinder feelings among our associates; there would be much less of litigation and a greater effort to compose differences. There would be a new measure of love and appreciation and respect.

There would be more generous hearts, more thoughtful consideration and concern, and a greater desire to spread the gospel of peace and to advance the work of salvation among the children of men.⁷

A Season of Meditation

Christmas is more than trees and twinkling lights, more than toys and gifts and baubles of a hundred varieties. It is love. It is the love of the Son of God for all mankind. It reaches out beyond our power to comprehend. It is magnificent and beautiful.

It is peace. It is the peace which comforts, which sustains, which blesses all who accept it.

It is faith. It is faith in God and His Eternal Son. It is faith in His wondrous ways and message. It is faith in Him as our Redeemer and our Lord.

We testify of His living reality. We testify of the divinity of His nature. In our times of grateful meditation, we acknowledge His priceless gift to us and pledge our love and faith. This is what Christmas is really about.⁸

For each of you may this be a merry Christmas. But

more importantly, I wish for each of you a time, perhaps only an hour, spent in silent meditation and quiet reflection on the wonder and the majesty of this, the Son of God. Our joy at this season is because He came into the world. The peace that comes from Him, His infinite love which each of us may feel, and an overwhelming sense of gratitude for that which He freely gave us at so great a cost to Himself—these are of the true essence of Christmas.⁹ **NE**

NOTES

1. "To Do Good Always," *Ensign*, Dec. 1994, 2.
2. "A Testimony of the Son of God," *Ensign*, Dec. 2002, 5
3. "My Redeemer Lives," *Ensign*, Feb. 2001, 71.
4. "The Wondrous and True Story of Christmas," *Ensign*, Dec. 2000, 5.
5. "A Testimony of the Son of God," 4-5.
6. "The Wondrous and True Story of Christmas," 2.
7. "Do Ye Even So to Them," *Ensign*, Dec. 1991, 4.
8. "A Season for Gratitude," *Ensign*, Dec. 1997, 4-5.
9. "The Wondrous and True Story of Christmas," 5.

At this Christmas season, we sing His praises and speak our words of faith and gratitude and love. It is His influence in our lives that stirs within us more kindness, more respect, more love, more concern.

