



**By Elder
Steven E. Snow**
General Authority
Seventy and
Church Historian
and Recorder

Saints:

THE STORY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE LATTER DAYS

In 1861, President Brigham Young (1801–77) urged Church historians to change their approach. “Write in a narrative style,” he advised, and “write only about one tenth part as much.”¹

The story on the next pages follows that counsel. I am pleased to introduce a new four-volume series called *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*. Chapter 1 is included in this issue, and subsequent chapters will be published in this magazine over the next several months. The first book will be available later this year, and the other volumes will follow.

Saints was prepared in response to the Lord’s commandment to “keep the church record and history continually” (D&C 47:3). Unlike past histories of the Church, it is a narrative history written in an engaging style that will be accessible to both youth and adults.

Saints, however, is not historical fiction. It is a true story based on the records of people from the past. Every detail and every line of dialogue is supported by historical sources. Notes at the end of each chapter refer to the records and additional sources. Those who want to read the actual records, better understand related topics, and discover even more stories will find links in the back of the books and online at saints.lds.org.

The Rich Tapestry of the Restoration

These books are not scripture, but like the scriptures, they include both divine truth and stories of imperfect people trying to become Saints through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see Mosiah 3:19). Taken together, the four volumes tell the story of the Lord’s Church striving

This art of Nauvoo will be featured on the cover of Saints, volume 1.



to fulfill its mandate to perfect the Saints (see Ephesians 4:11–13).

Saints has a very different format, style, and intended audience than the two multivolume histories the Church has published in the past. The first history was begun by Joseph Smith in the 1830s and published beginning in 1842.² The second was published in 1930 by assistant Church historian B. H. Roberts.³ The global reach of the restored gospel since then and the Lord’s command to keep the history continually “for the good of the church, and for the rising generations” (D&C 69:8) signal that it is time to include more Latter-day Saints in the story.

Saints tells the stories of ordinary men and women from the earliest days of the Church until now. It also provides new detail and insight into better-known people and events from Church history. Each story will help you understand and appreciate the Saints who came before you to make the Church what it is today. Like you, they sacrificed to establish Zion, and they had challenges and successes as they sought to understand and implement divine direction. Woven together, their stories—and yours—create the rich tapestry of the Restoration.

Our Sacred Past

The Book of Mormon record keepers kept both large and small plates. In the large plates they recorded political and military history. They used the small plates for “the things of God” that were “most precious,” including “preaching which was sacred, or revelation which was great, or prophesying” (1 Nephi 6:3; Jacob 1:2, 4). The small plates were recorded “for Christ’s sake, and for the sake of our people” (Jacob 1:4). *Saints* aims to be a “small plates” history, one that focuses on our sacred past. It thus includes only a small sample of all the stories that could be told to show how the Lord works in the lives of the Latter-day Saints.

Saints is not just about imperfect people in the past who became better with the help of the Lord. It is also for imperfect people now who want to always remember Him. It will help you remember how merciful the Savior has been to His people, how He has made weak people strong, and how Saints around the globe have joined together to further God’s work. ■

NOTES

1. Brigham Young, in Wilford Woodruff, Journal, Oct. 20, 1861, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
2. See *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts (1902–12 [vols. 1–6], 1932 [vol. 7]).
3. See B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Century I*, 6 vols. (1930).

WHAT FORMATS WILL *SAINTS* BE AVAILABLE IN?

The four volumes will be published in 14 languages in book form (available at store.lds.org), online at saints.lds.org, and in the Gospel Library app. They will also be available in e-book and audiobook formats in select languages.

WHAT WILL BE FOUND IN EACH VOLUME?

- Volume 1—available later this year—tells the story of the Restoration, from Joseph Smith’s childhood to the Saints receiving ordinances in the Nauvoo Temple in 1846.
- Volume 2 will cover the Saints’ challenges in gathering

to the western United States and will finish with the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple in 1893.

- Volume 3 will narrate the global growth of the Church, ending with the dedication of the temple in Bern, Switzerland, in 1955.
- Volume 4 will bring the reader to the recent past, when temples dot the earth.

Additional in-depth material on selected topics will be published online to support each volume.