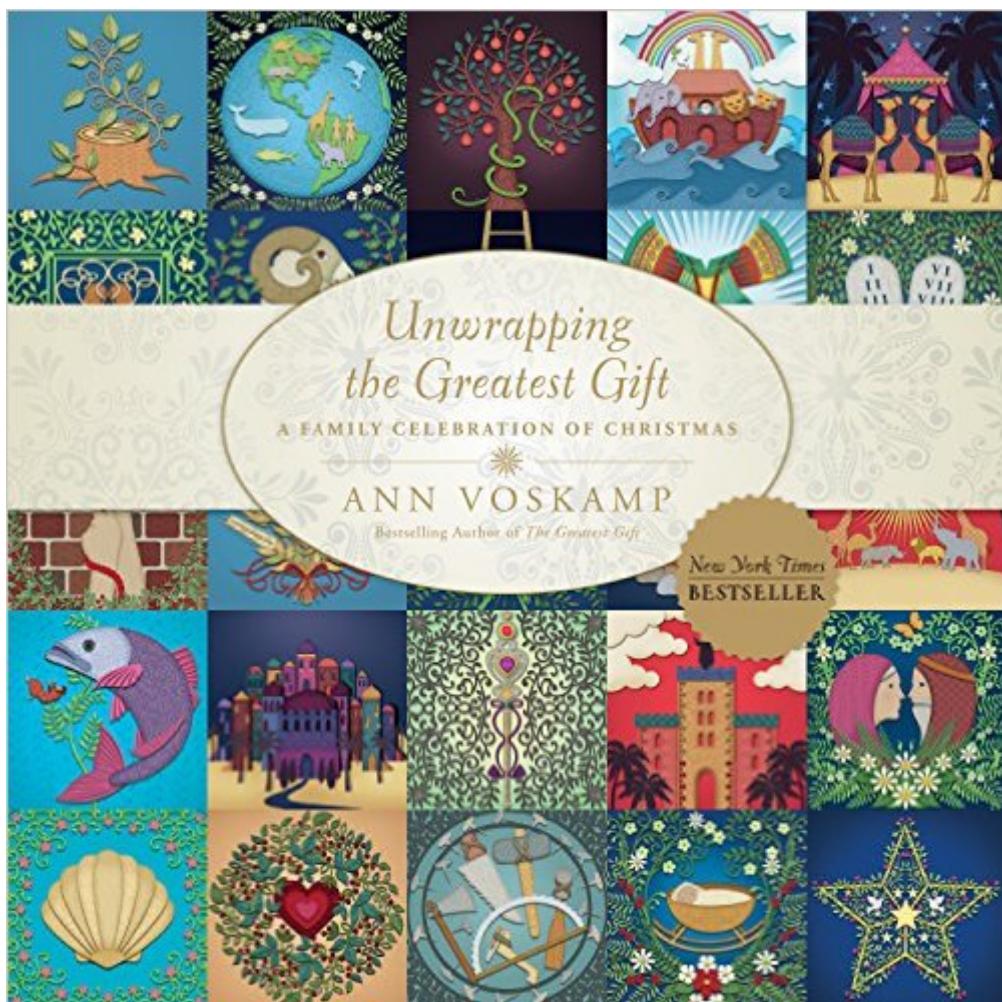


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Unwrapping The Greatest Gift: A Family Celebration Of Christmas



Synopsis

2016 ECPA Christian Book Award winner! Based on the overwhelming success of *The Greatest Gift*, Ann Voskamp has expanded her presentation of the timeless Advent tradition of the Jesse Tree so families can celebrate together. Each day, families can read the provided Scripture passage (in connection with the original book), engage with a specially written devotion to help children of all ages understand the Advent theme for the day, and participate in suggested activities to apply the theme. This special edition is beautifully illustrated. It can serve as a precious guide to help recapture the sacredness of the Advent season and to help the entire family understand and celebrate the epic pageantry of humankind from Adam to the Messiah.

Book Information

Hardcover: 160 pages

Publisher: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. (November 1, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1414397542

ISBN-13: 978-1414397542

Product Dimensions: 10.2 x 0.8 x 10.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (390 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #23,385 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #8 inÂ Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Living > Holidays > Christmas #101 inÂ Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Living > Family #116 inÂ Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Living > Devotionals

Customer Reviews

This is hard for me to do. Giving Ann Voskamp a two-star review seems like a bit of a betrayal since I admire her heart for Jesus, and I also admire many of those who recommended this book. She has contributed and encouraged many; however, this book didn't meet expectations. When I received this book, I was thrilled. I mean, it's beautiful. But, that's about it. If you simply enjoy a pretty display on your bookshelf or coffee table, go ahead and get it. It's night three in the advent, and my husband and I both agreed we were done with this book. Here's why--1) Foremost, she is interposing her own interpretation of Scripture. In many cases, it appears to be erroneous. For instance, we read about the flood tonight. There was no mention of God's anger. It was all about love. I know, I know--I haven't read the entire book, but after browsing it, I just see more the

same--lots of commentary and summation of Scripture. And, here's the alarming part--she mixes her words with words from Scripture, and then just puts a reference at the end. So, one (particularly kids) does not know which is which.²⁾ Verbose to the max. Everyone--including my literature-loving self--was distracted within a minute of this reading. The sentence structure is overly complex, as if she's trying too hard to be poetic. It was not very engaging. If you're looking for something that solely seeks the truths of Scripture while engaging little ones, you will find more satisfaction in this humble, yet superbly done book:

http://www..com/Advent-Jesse-Tree-Devotions-Christmas-ebook/dp/B009K6DLU6/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1417744712&sr=8-1&keywords=the+advent+jesse+tree+dean+lambert

I am sooo disappointed, I really wanted to love this book. I thought it would even make a nice gift. My first problem with the book is minor, though it is written to the whole family, most times it seems like it is written for young children, other times the reading seemed geared for adults, as on page 146: "Tonight we're just raggedy manger stragglers who feel the heaviness of our old raggedy clothes from fighting the long battle with evil and badness. With our raggedy rags, we've tried to polish this dark world into something good enough to win our way to freedom. With our raggedy rags, we've tried to patch together our own ropes to somehow climb to freedom. With our raggedy rags, we've tried to disguise ourselves as someone else, as someone better, as someone bigger, thinking we could sneak our way to freedom and back to God." Since most of the book seems written in language appropriate for my young child, the instances of speaking to an adult or older child seem a bit jarring. Not a deal breaker, it just seems strange when coupled with the children's book illustrations and sentences like this one, "The whole blue marble of the world spins happy right now with the gladness of His love." My biggest problem with the book is the interpretation of Scripture that is on page 145, the reading meant for Christmas Eve, it says that the battle resulting in Satan being hurled to earth (Rev 12:7-12) took place on the night of Jesus' birth. I have never heard that interpretation and I was even unable to find that interpretation during a Google search and cursory search of commentaries. Why, oh why, would Ann put a belief in her book that is not widely held? How did this get past the publisher? And even if it were a widely held belief, why mention Satan on Christmas Eve? It ruins it for me, so very disappointed. "But remember how there is always more happening than we could see. God's letter to us, the Bible, tells us that high, high up in the heavens, above the manger, behind the velvet curtain of silent stars, an all-out war flashed angry. Armies of evil exploded in a raging battle against God, the Father-King of the universe. In heaven, when Jesus was born, it wasn't a silent night; it was a cosmic war spinning across space. All of earth held its

desperate, wild breath. Jesus came for you, warring against the darkness to win you back to Him. the evil enemy of God, Satan, who tried to hold us all captive after our sinful fall in the Garden of Eden, fell like lightning from heaven - fell out of the sky in a heap."I'm disappointed, and unsure at this point if I will even use the book. Maybe I'll just mark over page 145.

Oh, how I wanted to love this one. I'm still reading it to my children, determined it will change... The illustrations are beautiful, and I can see her heart for the Lord. There are just a few (rather weighty) aspects that seem disturbing...She tries so hard with her words. The first day or two were simpler writings, and I thought this was a breath of fresh air from her other works. My children understood the words, I was blessed. But here I am, a few days in, and I'm trying to explain half of the sentences I read to them. I really don't like dumbed-down literature, but some of this is just plain confusing. It makes me think of the C.S. Lewis quote about writing plainly so others understand... Especially to children. As others have mentioned, the theology is off a bit. Yes, she emphasizes the love - I am glad for that! Though she leaves A LOT out. The scripture itself is just her interpretation of the actual verses. And the stories - some of them don't get to the point of God Himself, just about us. I haven't read the Christmas Eve reading many seem to have a problem with, but I can tell already many liberties are taken by Day 6. The other strange notice? No one seemed to question the repeated lines sound just like Sally Loydd-Jones wrote them? When she describes God's love, she does her very own spin-off on "His never stopping, never giving up, unchanging, always and forever love." It almost seems like she would have had to ask Sally's permission to write some of her sentences this closely. It's very strange. And we do love the Jesus Story Book Bible. I am grateful for the heart behind the book. I just wish scripture could be enough without changing words, and adding in so many extra words to make one sound over-individualized.

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