

Ezra Taft Benson

President of the Church, 1985–94

President Ezra Taft Benson placed renewed emphasis on the Book of Mormon: “The Book of Mormon is the instrument that God designed to ‘sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out [His] elect’ (Moses 7:62). This sacred volume of scripture needs to become more central in our preaching, our teaching, and our missionary work. . . . Indeed, I have a vision of flooding the earth with the Book of Mormon” (“Flooding the Earth with the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 4, 6).

“Let us continually reread the Book of Mormon so that we might more fully come to Christ, be committed to Him, centered in Him, and consumed in Him” (“Come unto Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 85).

“There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. . . . This is my prayer, that the Book of Mormon may become the keystone of our lives” (“The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 7).

He is remembered for his condemnation of pride: “Pride is the universal sin, the great vice. . . . Pride is the great stumbling block to Zion” (“Beware of Pride,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 6–7).

Elder Mark E. Petersen wrote this tribute to President Benson: “ ‘What is best for the kingdom?’ The answer to that question has been the deciding factor in every important matter that has come before [him] throughout his life” (“President Ezra Taft Benson,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1986, 2–3).

- 1899 Born August 4 in Whitney, Idaho, to George T. Benson and Sarah Dunkley Benson
- 1907 Age 8, baptized on his birthday in the Logan River Canal in Whitney, Idaho
- 1921–23 Ages 21–24, serves a mission to Great Britain
- 1926 Age 27, marries Flora Smith Amussen on September 10; she dies in 1992
- 1943 Age 44, ordained an Apostle by Heber J. Grant on October 7
- 1946 Age 46, begins service as president of the European Mission; distributes needed supplies to the Europeans after World War II
- 1953–61 Ages 53–61, serves as United States secretary of agriculture under President Dwight D. Eisenhower
- 1964–65 Ages 65–66, serves as president of the European Mission
- 1968–71 Ages 68–72, supervises missionary work in Asia
- 1986 Age 86, sustained as President of the Church on April 6 (having been ordained on November 10, 1985), with Gordon B. Hinckley and Thomas S. Monson as counselors
- 1986 Age 87, dedicates the Denver Colorado Temple on October 24
- 1987 Age 88, dedicates the Frankfurt Germany Temple on August 28
- 1994 Age 94, dies on May 30 in Salt Lake City after eight and a half years as President of the Church

Summary

Ezra Taft Benson, 13th President of the Church, encouraged every member to read the Book of Mormon. He testified that the Book of Mormon will help us come unto Christ. He said: “There is a power

in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. . . . This is my prayer, that the Book of Mormon may become the keystone of our lives.”

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS