



Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011

Volume 1 | Number 1

Article 2

1989

Ezra Taft Benson, *A Witness and a Warning: A Modern-Day Prophet Testifies of the Book of Mormon*

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Welch, John W. (1989) "Ezra Taft Benson, *A Witness and a Warning: A Modern-Day Prophet Testifies of the Book of Mormon*," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011*: Vol. 1 : No. 1 , Article 2. Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/msr/vol1/iss1/2>

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Title

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Reference *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 1/1 (1989): 1-2.

ISSN 1050-7930 (print), 2168-3719 (online)

Abstract *Review of A Witness and a Warning: A Modern-Day Prophet Testifies of the Book of Mormon* (1988), by Ezra Taft Benson.

Ezra Taft Benson, *A Witness and a Warning: A Modern-Day Prophet Testifies of the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988. ix + 86 pp. \$6.95.

Reviewed by John W. Welch

This small book is an important volume that casts a very long shadow. These Book of Mormon addresses by President Ezra Taft Benson will have a long-lasting, beneficial effect on Book of Mormon studies and on the Church.

This volume contains eleven talks by President Benson, mostly delivered in General Conferences from April 1975 to October 1987. It is a great service to readers to have these talks collected in one convenient location, attractively typeset and designed. It will be crucial for all who want to understand the ministry of President Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator, to digest the counsel given in these speeches.

The book is complemented by a good subject index. In addition, a scripture index could well be added, since so many Book of Mormon scriptures are integral to these talks. A scripture index would also reveal some key scriptures frequently cited by President Benson, such as D&C 84:54-57. In any subsequent printings, it would also be informative to have notes telling readers when and where each of these talks was given, for it is impressive to know how long-standing and repeated President Benson's emphasis has been on the Book of Mormon and on certain recurring themes about this volume of scripture.

This collection of talks is forthright, hard hitting, direct, and declaratory. It places central importance on the urgency for us to know more about the Book of Mormon and do more with it. Its style is pithy and memorable; its tone unwavering yet inviting; its scope open to all who will remember and take seriously the new covenant—the Book of Mormon. One may wish to augment these passages with further references now also available in *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*.¹

Declared and discussed are such topics as the purposes of the Book of Mormon, the condemnation that comes from neglecting the Book of Mormon, the greater value of certain scriptures for our day, reasons for studying the Book of Mormon, the transforming power of the book, use of the Book of Mormon in teaching and family relations, the central role of

¹ Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, especially pp. 46-65.

the appearance of the resurrected Jesus to the Nephites, the attributes of Christ, and the traits of those who are captained by him.

These subjects, and several more, are taught by example. Each chapter is a model of practical wisdom, a "how-to-do-it" approach for detecting the impressive messages of the Book of Mormon and for putting them to work in our lives. While serious, these messages are constructive and encouraging, for with the warnings comes the witness of promised blessings, something few people should want to miss.