



Elder Ezra Taft Benson

British Mission

July 16, 1921 to December 24, 1923

One of Ezra's greatest mission experiences occurred when he and his companion, Elder James T. Palmer, were invited to speak at the South Shields Branch. "We have a number of friends who don't believe the lies being printed about the Church, and we feel certain we can fill our little chapel, if you'll come," branch leaders wrote.

The elders fasted and prayed about the meeting. As promised, the little chapel was filled to capacity. Elder Palmer recorded in his journal what happened: "Elder Benson was assigned to speak on the apostasy. . . . He mentioned that he was humbled and nervous about speaking. But he was impressed by the spirit . . . and gave a strong and impressive discourse of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, never once remembering that his subject was to be of the apostasy."

Ezra later recalled, "I spoke with the freedom I had never experienced. Afterwards, I couldn't recall what I had said, but several nonmembers surrounded me and said, 'Tonight, we received a witness that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and we are ready for baptism.' It was the experience of a lifetime. The Lord sustain me. I couldn't have done it otherwise. It was the first experience of that kind I'd had where I knew that the Lord was with me." (Sheri L. Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson: A Biography*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987, p. 55.)