

A Mormon Chronology

Circa 600 BC	An Israelite named Lehi travels with his family from the Middle East to the Americas. His descendants become the ever-warring Nephites and Lamanites.
AD 33	Jesus Christ appears to the Nephites immediately after his resurrection. This leads to several centuries of peace between the Nephites and the Lamanites before conflict resumes.
AD 385	Mormon, a prophet among the Nephites, gives a nearly completed work of his people to his son, Moroni, who finishes the work in AD 421, imprints them on plates of gold, and buries them in a hill named Cumorah.
1801	June 1: Brigham Young is born to a farm family in Whitingham, Vermont. He is the ninth of eleven children.
1805	December 23: Joseph Smith is born in Sharon, Vermont, the fifth child of Lucy and Joseph Smith.

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<p>1811</p>	<p>After difficult years, the Smith family moves to Lebanon, New Hampshire, where their financial condition improves and the Smith children are able to attend school.</p>
<p>1812</p>	<p>During a widespread typhoid epidemic that kills more than 6,000 people, Joseph Jr. develops a painful leg infection, which he survives only after a traumatic surgery and months of recovery. He walks with a limp the rest of his life.</p>
<p>1816</p>	<p>After three years of devastating crop failure, the Smith family moves to Palmyra, New York. The town of 4,000 is in the “burned-over district” where waves of religious revivals have left both spiritual excitement and theological confusion in their wake.</p>
<p>1820</p>	<p>Spring: While Smith is praying in a grove one morning, God the Father and his son, Jesus Christ, appear. They forgive Smith’s sins and tell him that all Christian churches are abominations and corrupt and that he should not join any of them. Mormons call this “The First Vision.”</p>
<p>1823</p>	<p>September 21: The angel Moroni appears to Smith and tells him of a book imprinted on gold plates buried in a nearby hillside. The next day, Smith discovers the plates three miles from the family farm but is told he is not ready to receive them yet, that he must return each September 22 for four years.</p>

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<p>1827</p>	<p>January 18: Joseph Smith marries Emma Hale.</p> <p>September 22: His four-year wait concluded, Smith receives the gold plates from Moroni along with distinctive spectacles that allow him to translate the “Reformed Egyptian” language in which the narrative on the plates is written.</p> <p>December: The Smiths move to Harmony, Pennsylvania.</p>
<p>1828</p>	<p>Joseph begins translating the plates with the aid of Martin Harris.</p> <p>July: Smith first records a revelation.</p>
<p>1829</p>	<p>May 15: During the months required to translate the golden plates, Smith and Oliver Crowderly, a schoolteacher who assists Smith, receive a visitation from John the Baptist. He confers on Smith and Crowderly the Aaronic Priesthood and tells them that the Melchizedek Priesthood will also be conferred soon, leading to the creation of the true church over which Smith will be First Elder. After the visitation, Smith and Crowderly baptize each other in the Susquehanna River.</p> <p>June: The translation of the Book of Mormon is completed.</p> <p>Several days after John the Baptist’s appearance, the apostles Peter, James, and John appeared to Smith and Crowderly, ordained them to the Melchizedek Priesthood, and bestowed on them the gifts of the Holy Spirit.</p>

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<p>1830</p>	<p>March 26: The Book of Mormon is published.</p> <p>April 6: In Fayette, New York, Smith, Crowder, and four others organize a new church and name Smith “Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”</p> <p>June: Moses appears to Smith in a vision.</p> <p>October: Smith receives a vision instructing him to move the church to Kirtland, Ohio, where missionaries have already won numerous converts.</p>
<p>1831</p>	<p>June: Keeping his headquarters in Kirtland, Smith moves bands of Mormons west to Independence, Missouri, the “New Jerusalem” where the faithful are to build a Temple. The cornerstone of that Temple is laid in August.</p> <p>July 20: Jackson County, Missouri, is designated as “Zion.”</p>
<p>1832</p>	<p>March 24: Smith is tarred and feathered in Kirtland.</p> <p>Brigham Young joins the Saints as a convert in Kirtland.</p> <p>April to June: Smith visits Jackson County, Missouri.</p>
<p>1833</p>	<p>The <i>Book of Commandments</i>, a volume of Smith’s revelations, is published.</p>

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<p>1833</p>	<p>July 23: The cornerstones for the first Mormon Temple are laid in Kirtland.</p> <p>July: Mormons told they must leave Jackson County.</p> <p>November: Missouri Mormons are expelled from Jackson County.</p>
<p>1834</p>	<p>April 24–30: Rumors of a great Mormon army move a Missouri mob to burn 150 Mormon houses.</p>
<p>1835</p>	<p>July: Smith purchases Egyptian mummies and papyri, the latter of which, once translated, becomes <i>The Book of Abraham</i>.</p> <p>August: The Church issues the first of a number of denials that it is practicing polygamy.</p> <p>February 14: “The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles” is organized.</p> <p><i>The Doctrine and Covenants</i> is published. It incorporates the sixty-five revelations of <i>The Book of Commandments</i> into its 138 revelations and includes seven Smith lectures.</p>
<p>1836</p>	<p>March 27: A week of dedication of the Kirtland Temple begins.</p>
<p>1837</p>	<p>The first mission to Great Britain begins.</p>

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<p>1838</p>	<p>June: To resist persecution in Missouri, the Mormons organize the “Sons of Dan,” or the “Danites,” who gain a reputation in the press as “Destroying Angels.”</p> <p>August 6: After a skirmish over voting rights, Governor Boggs of Missouri orders that the Mormons must be “exterminated or driven from the state.” It is the only extermination order against a religion ever issued in the United States.</p> <p>October 30: Incited by the Missouri governor’s extermination decree, a mob kills seventeen Mormons at Haun’s Mill. Children number among the dead. Joseph Smith is arrested and sentenced to death. He is saved only by the commanding officer’s refusal to carry out his sentence. Smith spends five months in prison.</p>
<p>1839</p>	<p>April: Smith is allowed to escape. Soon after, he establishes the city of Nauvoo on the banks of the Mississippi River in Illinois. Within five years Nauvoo rivals Chicago in population. The Mormon militia, 5,000 strong, inspires fear among non-Mormons in the region.</p> <p>November 29: Smith meets with President Martin Van Buren and demands compensation for Mormon property losses in Missouri.</p>
<p>1840</p>	<p>December 16: The Illinois legislature grants Nauvoo a charter allowing for exceptional local control and political liberty.</p>

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<p>1841</p>	<p>Smith marries Louisa Beaman, the first of many “plural wives.”</p>
<p>1842</p>	<p>March 15: Due to Freemasonry’s influence upon Joseph Smith, a Masonic Lodge is built in Nauvoo. Smith devises the Temple ordinances, later known as “endowments,” that are central to Mormon practice and reflect the distinct Masonic worldview and practice.</p> <p>March 17: The Relief Society, a women’s social aid organization, is organized.</p>
<p>1843</p>	<p>May 28: Smith is “sealed” to his wife Emma Hale Smith for eternity.</p> <p>July 12: The Prophet teaches two new doctrines—baptism for the dead and polygamy—which prompts some to leave the Church.</p>
<p>1844</p>	<p>January 29: Smith declares himself a candidate for president of the United States.</p> <p>March 11: The Council of Fifty is organized.</p> <p>April 7: Smith gives his famous “King Follet Discourse,” in which he proclaims that God has a physical body, that God was once a man, that men may become gods, that matter is eternal, and that the dead may be saved by the “sealing power” of the Latter Day Saints.</p>

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<p>1844</p>	<p>April 11: The Council of Fifty anoints Smith “King, Priest and Ruler over Israel on Earth.”</p> <p>June 25: Smith surrenders himself to authorities after ordering the destruction of an opposition newspaper, the <i>Nauvoo Expositor</i>.</p> <p>June 27: Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, are killed in their jail cell by an anti-Mormon mob. The Latter Day Saints number 26,000 members.</p> <p>August 8: Brigham Young, the president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, assumes leadership of the Church.</p>
<p>1845</p>	<p>January: The Illinois Legislature revokes Nauvoo’s charter.</p> <p>September 4: Young and the Twelve agree to leave Illinois “as soon as grass grows and water runs.”</p>
<p>1846</p>	<p>February 4: Thousands of Mormons begin moving west to escape persecution.</p> <p>April 30: The Temple at Nauvoo is dedicated. In the months that follow, vast numbers of Latter Day Saints receive their “endowments” and many polygamous marriages are “sealed.”</p> <p>August: Winter Quarters are established near the present site of Florence, Nebraska.</p>

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1847	July 24: The Latter Day Saints first enter the Great Salt Lake Valley. The day is celebrated as Pioneer Day by later generations.
1848	Thousands of Mormons arrive in the Great Salt Lake Valley to create a “kingdom in the tops of the mountains.”
1849	The territory of Utah is established by the US Congress.
1850	Brigham Young is made the governor of the Utah territory.
1852	Polygamy is first proclaimed outside of the Mormon Church, which leads to fierce condemnation of the Latter Day Saints and urgent calls for government intervention.
1853	April 6: The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is formed by Mormons who reject polygamy and believe the Church should only be led by members of the Smith family. Headquartered in Independence, Missouri, it is supported by Joseph Smith’s first wife, Emma, and eventually led by Smith’s eldest son. February 14: A groundbreaking ceremony takes place for the Temple at Salt Lake City. Construction will take forty years.

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<p>1857</p>	<p>September: The Mountain Meadows massacre, in which 120 members of an Arkansas wagon train are killed, stains the reputation of Mormons nationwide and raises lasting questions about Brigham Young's complicity.</p>
<p>1858</p>	<p>Federal troops march into Salt Lake City, ending what President Buchanan calls "The Mormon War." It is a war largely over polygamy, which continues in the territory for decades more.</p>
<p>1862</p>	<p>The Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act criminalizes polygamy in US Territories. Abraham Lincoln refuses to enforce it.</p>
<p>1866</p>	<p>The Latter-day Saints grow to 60,000 members.</p>
<p>1877</p>	<p>March 23: John D. Lee, the instigator of the Mountain Meadows massacre, is executed.</p> <p>August 29: Brigham Young dies. More than 50,000 people attend his funeral. The Latter-day Saints now number over 100,000 members.</p>
<p>1887</p>	<p>The Edmunds-Tucker Act disincorporates the Mormon Church and allows the US government to confiscate all church property valued above \$50,000. The US Supreme Court upholds the Act.</p>

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1890	September 25: LDS president Wilford Woodruff renounces polygamy.
1894	The Mormon Church numbers well over 200,000 members.
1896	January 4: Utah becomes the forty-sixth state in the American Union.
1904	<p>The LDS church excommunicates polygamists and aids the US government in prosecuting offenders.</p> <p>Reed Smoot, an LDS Apostle, is elected to the US Senate.</p> <p>Anti-Mormon sentiment inflames confirmation hearings that stretch over three years. Smoot's ultimate confirmation is an early sign of growing acceptance for Latter-day Saints in American society.</p>