



Historical Summary

The following chronology provides a brief historical framework for the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith presented in this book.

1805, December 23: Born in Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont, the fifth child of eleven in the family of Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith.

ca. 1813:
(age 7) Contracts typhoid fever; complications require surgery on his left leg. At this time, the Smith family was living in West Lebanon, New Hampshire, one of several places to which the family moved between 1808 and 1816 in search of opportunities for work.

1816:
(age 10) Moves with his family to the village of Palmyra, New York.

ca. 1818–19:
(age 12 or 13) Moves with his family from the village of Palmyra to a log home in Palmyra Township, New York.

1820, early spring:
(age 14) Prays in the woods near his home. Visited by God the Father and Jesus Christ. Asks which sect he should join. The Savior tells him that they are all wrong and he should join none of them.

1823, September 21–22:
(age 17) Visited by Moroni, who tells him of the Lord's work on the earth in the last days and of the Book of Mormon. Sees the gold plates, which are buried in a nearby hill, but is forbidden to take them at that time.

- 1825:
(age 19) Moves with his family from the log home to a newly built frame home on their farm in Manchester Township, New York.
- 1827, January 18:
(age 21) Marries Emma Hale of Harmony, Pennsylvania; they are married in South Bainbridge, New York.
- 1827, September 22: Obtains the plates from Moroni, after having met with Moroni on September 22 each year since 1823.
- 1827, December:
(age 22) Moves to Harmony, Pennsylvania, to escape from a mob in Palmyra and Manchester that is trying to steal the plates. Shortly thereafter, begins translating the Book of Mormon.
- 1828, February: Martin Harris shows a copy of some characters from the gold plates to noted scholars, including Charles Anthon and Samuel L. Mitchill in New York City.
- 1828, June–July: 116 manuscript pages of the translation of the Book of Mormon are lost while in the possession of Martin Harris.
- 1829, April 5:
(age 23) Oliver Cowdery arrives in Harmony to serve as scribe for the Book of Mormon; translation resumes on April 7.
- 1829, May 15: With Oliver Cowdery, receives the Aaronic Priesthood from John the Baptist. Joseph and Oliver baptize one another in the Susquehanna River.
- 1829, May–June: With Oliver Cowdery, receives the Melchizedek Priesthood from the ancient Apostles Peter, James, and John near the Susquehanna River between Harmony, Pennsylvania, and Colesville, New York.

- 1829, June: Completes the translation of the Book of Mormon at the Peter Whitmer Sr. farm in Fayette Township, New York. The Three Witnesses see the plates and the angel Moroni in Fayette; the Eight Witnesses see and handle the plates in Palmyra Township.
- 1830, March 26:
(age 24) The first printed copies of the Book of Mormon become available to the public at Egbert B. Grandin's bookstore in Palmyra.
- 1830, April 6: Formally organizes the Church at the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette (see D&C 20:1). At first the official name of the Church is the Church of Christ. On May 3, 1834, the name is changed to The Church of the Latter Day Saints. On April 26, 1838, the name is changed by revelation to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (see D&C 115:4).
- 1830, June: At the Lord's command, begins an inspired revision of the Bible, now known as the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible.
- 1830, June 9: Holds the first conference of the Church in Fayette.
- 1830, September: Moves from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to Fayette, New York. Between December 1827 and this time, Joseph and Emma lived in Harmony, but Joseph traveled periodically to Manchester, Fayette, and Palmyra to work on matters pertaining to the Book of Mormon translation, arrange for the publication of the Book of Mormon, organize the Church, preside over the Church's first conference, and attend to other Church duties.

- 1830, September: Receives a revelation that missionaries are to “go unto the Lamanites” to preach the gospel (D&C 28:8; see also 30:5–6; 32:1–3). In October, four elders depart on a mission to teach in Indian territory west of the state of Missouri.
- 1830, December: Receives a revelation that the Saints are to gather to Ohio (see D&C 37).
(age 25)
- 1831, early After traveling more than 250 miles from February: New York, arrives in Kirtland, Ohio.
- 1831, July 20: In Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, receives a revelation identifying Independence as the “center place” of Zion (see D&C 57:1–3).
- 1831, August 2: Presides as Sidney Rigdon dedicates Jackson County, Missouri, as the land of Zion.
- 1831, August 3: Dedicates a temple site in Independence.
- 1832, January 25: Sustained as the President of the High Priesthood in Amherst, Ohio.
(age 26)
- 1832, March 8: Organizes the First Presidency, with Sidney Rigdon and Jesse Gause as counselors, in Kirtland. On March 18, 1833, Frederick G. Williams replaces Jesse Gause.
- 1832, December 27–28: Receives a commandment to build a temple in Kirtland (see D&C 88:119–20).
(age 27)
- 1833, January: Begins the School of the Prophets.

- 1833, July 2: Completes his initial work on the inspired translation of the Bible, now known as the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. From this work came the book of Moses and Joseph Smith—Matthew, now contained in the Pearl of Great Price.
- 1833, July 20: A mob destroys the press in Independence, Missouri, on which the Book of Commandments is being printed, as well as most of the printed pages. In September 1835 the revelations from the Book of Commandments, as well as other revelations, are published in Kirtland in the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.
- 1833, July 23: Cornerstones are laid for the Kirtland Temple.
- 1833, December 18: Joseph Smith Sr. is ordained Patriarch to the Church.
- 1834, May–July: Leads Zion’s Camp from Kirtland, Ohio, to Clay County, Missouri, to bring relief to Saints expelled from their homes in Jackson County, Missouri. Returns to Kirtland after receiving a revelation that the Saints must “wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion” (D&C 105:9).
(*age 28*)
- 1835, February 14: Organizes the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.
(*age 29*)
- 1835, February 28: Organizes a Quorum of the Seventy.
- 1835, July: Obtains Egyptian papyri containing writings of Abraham.
- 1836, March 27: Dedicates the Kirtland Temple (see D&C 109).
(*age 30*)

- 1836, April 3: Jesus Christ appears to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple and accepts the temple. Moses, Elias, and Elijah also appear and commit priesthood keys to Joseph and Oliver. (See D&C 110.)
- 1837, June:
(age 31) Sends elders from Kirtland and Upper Canada to serve as missionaries in England, the first mission outside of North America.
- 1838, January 12:
(age 32) Leaves Kirtland for Far West, Missouri, to escape mob violence.
- 1838, March 14: Arrives in Far West and establishes Church headquarters there.
- 1838, April 27: Initiates the writing of his history, published serially as the “History of Joseph Smith” in Church periodicals beginning in 1842; later republished as *History of the Church*.
- 1838, October 27: Missouri governor Lilburn W. Boggs issues the infamous “Extermination Order.” This order and severe persecution cause the Saints to leave Missouri for Illinois during the winter and spring of 1838–39.
- 1838, December 1: Imprisoned with other Church leaders in Liberty, Missouri.
- 1839, March 20:
(age 33) From Liberty Jail, writes an epistle to the Saints, portions of which are later canonized in Doctrine and Covenants 121, 122, and 123.
- 1839, mid-April: While being transferred on a change of venue from Gallatin to Columbia, Missouri, is allowed by his guards to escape.

- 1839, April 22: Rejoins his family in Quincy, Illinois.
- 1839, May 10: Moves with his family into a small log house in Commerce, Illinois. Later renames the city Nauvoo.
- 1839, November 29: Visits Martin Van Buren, the president of the United States, in Washington, D.C., seeking redress for Missouri injustices. While there, he also petitions the United States Congress for help.
- 1840, August 15:
(age 34) Publicly announces the doctrine of baptism for the dead at a funeral in Nauvoo. Baptisms for the dead are first performed in the Mississippi River and local streams.
- 1840, September: In an address by the First Presidency to the Church, announces that the time has come to begin building a temple in Nauvoo.
- 1841, February 4:
(age 35) Elected lieutenant general of the newly organized Nauvoo Legion, a unit of the Illinois state militia.
- 1841, April 6: Cornerstones are laid for the Nauvoo Temple.
- 1841, November 21: The first baptisms for the dead in the Nauvoo Temple are performed in a wooden font built and dedicated before the rest of the temple is completed.
- 1842, February–
October:
(age 36) Serves as editor of the *Times and Seasons*, the Church periodical in Nauvoo.
- 1842, March 1: Publishes the Wentworth Letter in the *Times and Seasons*; in March and May, also publishes the book of Abraham in the *Times and Seasons*.

- 1842, March 17: Organizes the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, with Emma Smith as president.
- 1842, May 4: Administers the first endowment ordinances in an upper room of his Red Brick Store.
- 1842, May 19: Elected mayor of Nauvoo.
- 1843, July 12:
(*age 37*) Records a revelation on the new and everlasting covenant, including the eternal nature of the marriage covenant (see D&C 132).
- 1844, January 29:
(*age 38*) Announces his candidacy for the presidency of the United States of America.
- 1844, March: In a meeting with the Twelve Apostles and others, charges the Twelve to govern the Church in the event of his death, explaining that he has conferred upon them all the ordinances, authority, and keys necessary to do so.
- 1844, June 27: Martyred with his brother Hyrum at the jail in Carthage, Illinois.
- 1844, June 29: Buried with Hyrum in Nauvoo, Illinois.



At the time of the First Vision, Joseph Smith was living with his family in a log home in Palmyra, New York.