

Religions of 2025 America

Chester ARP Fall 2025

Mormons

- Are Mormons a sect of Christianity?
 - No, the LDS Church is a business.
 - Here's why?
 - Belief about Jesus.
 - Eldest Son of Elohim. Brother of Lucifer. Not God. Polygamist. Example for Obedience.
 - Origin Story.

Mormons

- History/Origin
 - Joseph Smith was born in Vermont on December 23, 1805.
 - He moved with his family to upstate New York in 1816 after a series of crop failures.
 - His father was a mystic treasure hunter who dealt in seer stones and folk magic.

Mormons

- Early 19th Century America
 - New Country
 - New World Order
 - Frontierism
 - New Religious Fervor (2nd Great Awakening)
 - Talk of last days, fire and damnation, and eternal glory.

Mormons

- History/Origin
 - At 14, Joseph Smith was a spiritually sensitive seeker who couldn't find a Church to join.
 - He had a vision in the woods while praying in 1820.
 - First, he saw the Devil.
 - Second, he saw Elohim and Jesus.

Mormons

- History/Origin
 - Jesus didn't believe any of the established churches were true.
 - Joseph was instructed to start his own church to prepare “god's people” for the Second Coming, Great Tribulation, and Millennium.

Mormons

- History/Origin
 - Joseph Smith had a second vision in 1823 when the angel Moroni appeared to him.
 - Moroni revealed the location of the buried golden plates, written in “reformed Egyptian,” which contained further revelations from god.
 - Moroni also instructed Smith to wait 4 years before digging up the plates.

Mormons

- **History/Origin**

- In 1827, Joseph Smith dug up the golden plates and two stones — urim and thummin — to help him interpret the words on the plates.
- The Egyptian characters mysteriously turned to English when he viewed them through the stones.

Mormons

- History/Origin

- For 3 years, he worked to translate the golden plates and record any other revelation he received from god.
- In 1830, he published his translation of the plates as *The Book of Mormon*.

Mormons

- History/Origin
 - How did he translate?
 - Where did these plates come from?

Mormons

- **History/Origin**

- Oliver Cowdery recorded the translation from across the room behind a curtain.
- Smith also used his personal seer stone in his hat to receive the revelation from god.
- Did it in 90 days — 588 pages.

Mormons

- History/Origin
 - The plates came from the extinct Nephite (light-skinned) people who died out when the Lamanites (dark-skinned) defeated them.
 - Who were the Lamanites and Nephites?
 - Israelites who fled to the New World at the Babylonian Captivity in 600 BC.

Mormons

- History/Origin
 - The two groups descended from two sons of Lehi, a prophet the Judeans rejected for preaching repentance during the reign of King Zedekiah.
 - He was a descendant of Joseph, son of Jacob.

Mormons

- History/Origin

- The Nephites were obedient sons of God, righteous and civilized followers of God. They also had lighter skin.
- The Lamanites were wicked, nomadic hunter-gatherers with darker skin.
- Before the Lamanites destroyed the Nephites in 385, the last remaining Nephite, Moroni, hid the golden plates Lehi had sent with the sons to the New World in 421.

Mormons

- History/Origin
 - Who was the angel who told Joseph Smith where to find the golden plates? Moroni.
 - He's the guy who hid the plates.
 - He's also the son of a man named Mormon who was wounded in the battle of 385.

Mormons

- History/Origin
 - Joseph Smith founded his church on April 6, 1830, as the Church of Christ.
 - He changed the name in 1834 to the Church of Latter Day Saints, and changed it again in 1838 to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Mormons

- History/Origin

- Joseph Smith's family members were among the first converts.
- Joseph Smith became consumed with the idea of Zion on earth and moved the group westward to Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois.
- After Smith died in 1844 while in jail, the band of Mormons moved westward to Utah under the leadership of Brigham Young.

Mormons

- Lessons

- This bizarre origin story has no archaeological evidence to support it.
- There is power in a compelling narrative that gives people identity, hope, and a sense of community.
- The Mormons aren't Christian, and, sadly, they are blinded by this darkness.