

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS (STRANGITE)

This church has two main branches. One is located in Artesia, New Mexico and the other in Burlington (Voree), Wisconsin. There are members that live throughout the United States.

James Jesse Strang (1813-1856), lawyer schoolteacher, postmaster, and newspaper editor, became acquainted with Mormonism in 1836 when he married Mary Perce, whose sister was married to an active and dedicated Mormon named Moses Smith. After moving to Burlington, Wisconsin Territory in 1843, Strang walked from Burlington to Nauvoo, Illinois with Moses' brother Aaron Smith. At Nauvoo, he became acquainted with Mormon leaders Hyrum and Joseph Smith, Jr. and was convinced of the truth and was baptized. At this time, the Mormons were investigating alternative places for the Church to settle and directed Strang to return to the Burlington area and survey that area as a possible new gathering place for the Saints. James J. Strang submitted a positive report to Joseph Smith three months later that the Burlington area would be an excellent place for the Mormons to congregate.

On June 18, 1844, Joseph Smith replied to James J. Strang's letter with the appointment of the Burlington area as a Stake of Zion to be named Voree and appointed Strang to be his successor. This letter arrived at Burlington on July 9, 1844, after his angelic ordination, James J. Strang immediately told acquaintances of his ordination and likewise showed the Letter of Appointment to numerous individuals. This appointment was in accordance with *Doctrine and Covenants 28:7*:

For I have given him [Joseph Smith] the keys of the mysteries,
and the revelations which are sealed until I shall appoint
unto them another in his stead.

Smith's appointment of a single successor was mandated by a February 1831 revelation given as a "law" governing the appointment of his successor:

2. Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church, through him whom I have appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations from my hand.

3. And this ye shall know assuredly – that there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me.

4. But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be him; for if it be taken from him he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead.

5. And this shall be a law unto you, that ye receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations or commandments:

6. And this I give unto you that you may not be deceived, that ye may know they are not of me.

7. For verily, I say unto you, that he that is ordained of me shall come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you before, to teach those revelations which you received and shall receive through him whom I have appointed.

[Doctrine and Covenants, 43rd section]

James J. Strang was the only person following the death of Joseph Smith to claim that Joseph appointed him to be his successor in the prophetic office. At the exact time of Joseph Smith's death, a host angels appeared to James J. Strang and an angel ordained him to be a prophet, seer, revelator, and translator. Angelic ordination was mandated by *Doctrine and Covenants 43:7*

which referred to Joseph Smith's angelic ordination in the *Doctrine and Covenants 27:12-13 and 128:20-21*

In September 1844, an angel revealed to James J. Strang the location of records buried in a local hill near Burlington. Four of his coverts followed his directions and dug up the brass plates covered with an alphabetical and pictorial record from undisturbed soil beneath a sizeable oak tree. The case that the plates were contained in disintegrated the minute it hit the open air. These men publicly testified that there was no possibility of fraud. Strang then translated the "Voree Plates" by using the Urim and Thummin.

At Beaver Island, James J. Strang also used the Urim and Thummin to translate the ancient Jewish record taken from the plates of Laban which contained *The Book of the Law of the Lord* given to Moses on Mount Sinai. James J. Strang printed this record containing the Ten Commandments in 1851, and in 1856 reprinted this information along with a variety of chapters of different subjects. *The Book of the Law of the Lord* is the only book that contains all of the original Ten Commandments that were given to Moses in that it restored the Fourth Commandment, "Thou Shalt Love they Neighbor as Thyself." Also restored was the seventh day as the Sabbath and the explanation it was changed to Sunday by pagans in horror of the sun god [the day of the sun], they were superstitious and ungodly people.

James J. Strang was mortally wounded by apostate members in 1856 at Beaver Island and died several weeks later at Voree. Although coherent at times, James J. Strang refused to name a successor. This was in accordance with his teachings that the "lesser cannot ordain the greater" As only a heavenly being had the authority to ordain a man to be prophet, seer, revelator, and translator, as in the cases of Joseph Smith and Moses, he realized such an ordination was impossible.

Stangites believe according to *1 Nephi 13:42* the dispensation of the fullness of times would be in two portions: The opening portion to the Gentiles and the second portion to the Jews. The opening portion, according to Lehi in the *Book of Mormon*, it was to be composed of the ministries of two prophets.

The first prophet was to be of the tribe of Ephraim, he is to be immediately followed by a prophet [James J. Strang] of the tribe of Judah. Joseph Smith, of the seed of Joseph in Egypt and the tribe of Ephraim was to “bring forth my word (Book of Mormon) unto the seed of thy loins, and not to be bringing forth of my word only, saith the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them [the Bible.]

Lehi prophesied: “Wherefore the fruit of thy loins shall write, and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written (Book of the Law) by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together, unto the confounding of false doctrines and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.” [2 *Nephi 3:11-12.*] *See Ezekiel 37:15-20.*

Joseph Smith, the stick of Ephraim, brought forth *The Book of Mormon* and he was immediately followed by James J. Strang, who was of the tribe of Judah, brought forth the *Book of the Law of the Lord*.

Stangites also believe that in accordance with 1 *Nephi 13:37*; 1 *Nephi 14:1-2, 5*;- and 2 *Nephi 6:12* the Gentiles did not humbly accept the restored gospel and becoming a righteous people. During Nephi’s replication of his father’s vision, the angel explained that there are two alternatives for the Gentiles. They can repent and be rewarded or harden their hearts and be punished: “For the time cometh, saith the Lamb of God, that I will work a great and marvelous work among the children of men; a work which shall be everlasting, either on the one hand or on the other – either to the convincing of them unto peace and life eternal, or unto the deliverance of them to the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds unto their being brought down into captivity, an also unto destruction, both temporally and spiritually, according to the captivity of the devil, of which I have spoken.” [1 *Nephi 14:7*]

Jesus Christ in his post-resurrection mission to the Americas specified: 10. “And thus commandeth the Father that I should say unto you: At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all people of the whole earth, and shall be filled with all manner of lying, murders, and priest crafts, and whoredomes, and of secret abominations; and if they shall do all these things, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fullness of my gospel from among them.

11. And then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them.
12. And I will show unto thee, O house of Israel, that the Gentiles shall not have power over you; but I will remember my covenant unto you, O house of Israel, and ye shall come unto the knowledge of the fullness of my gospel.” [3 Nephi 16]

Stragites believe the Gentiles rejected the gospel and they are a remnant in an interregnum period before a prophet of the house of Judah is called by God and is ordained by angels. As additional proof about the gospel being rejected, the Strangites point to the revelation given to Joseph Smith on March 7, 1831 which specified:

28. “And when the times of the Gentiles is come in, a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fullness of my gospel.
29. But they receive it not, for they perceive not the light, and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men.
30. And in that generation shall the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” [D&C, 45th section]

Some of the major theological doctrines brought forth by James J. Strang can be found in the *Book of the Law* and other related scriptural books and put together in a written narrative by several members of the church.

We believe in the true and living God, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is our God, The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was not the offspring of adultery; nor was he born of woman; he was not carried about in a nurse's arms, nor dependant on his mother's milk, for sustenance; he never died, nor did he cry to himself, and find no helper. He is eternal.

Our God is glorious in his perfections; there is none like him. Almighty God alone has all the omnipotent powers in and of himself. God alone has immortality, omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. God alone is one.

Our Lord Jesus Christ receives his power from God and does his will in all things. Through God's power, Jesus Christ created the earth and redeemed it. Christ's kingdom fills the earth and the heavens, but he possesses but a speck amid the stars that Almighty God has made.

God has appointed everlasting life in the Lord Jesus. God had given the keys of death and hell to him who alone among mortals kept his glorious word in all things. He chose Christ as the first born among many brethren; for he is the first begotten of the dead, and he was given the keys of the resurrection and of life forevermore.

Jesus Christ was not the offspring of God the Father through an un-natural or unholy union, but was the son of Joseph and Mary. He was not born a God or demigod, but was born in the same manner as any other man. *Hebrews 2:16-18*, "For verily, he took not on him the likeness of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."

Book of the Law page 156:38. “Made of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, and the house and lineage of David according to the flesh, tempted and tried in all things as we are, and partaking with us of the common infirmities of human nature, he was holy, harmless, and without sin.”

Almighty God and Jesus Christ are two distinct and separate persons. Jesus is the Mediator between man and God. He was and will remain subordinate to God. *John 10:29*, “My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all;” *John 14:28*, “Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I.”

1 Corinthians 15:28, “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” *John 17:3-4* “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. 4. I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is the Son of God by holding the priesthood of an endless life. He was called by the voice of God, and by the ministration of an Angel. As of his final ordination little is said of the transfiguration, but it was there that God called him his “beloved son”, and commanded Apostles to hear him; that is, to be obedient unto him.

Peter also states that they were eyewitnesses of the majesty of Jesus Christ; for he received from God, honor [priesthood] and glory. Peter declared: “Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Savior.” (See Acts 5:29-30)

Romans 1:3-4, “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared the Son of God with power, by the Spirit according to the truth through the resurrection from the dead.” The lineage is always carried through the male line, not through the woman’s See Mathew 1:1-17.

He is the only begotten in that no other man is brought into the same degree of priesthood and jurisdiction. Also, he is the only man that the God the Father resurrected from the dead. Christ resurrected all others. He became perfect through suffering, received power from God, ascended on high, and being perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect, has set down, not in place of God, but at his right hand, as the principal viceroy and highest minister unto him, being one with God, not in person, essence or individuality, nor in any mysterious sense, but in the same manner in which the saints are all likewise required to one with him and each other; that is, one in Jesus, as son, being heir of God; that is a high priest having an inheritance in the power of God's kingdom, seeks to bring us to a like perfection, that we also be sons and also heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ in this inheritance.

John 17:20-22, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their [the Apostles] word; 21. That they may be one; as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.” [one in purpose]

Galatians 4:4-7, “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law. 5. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father. 7. Wherefore thou are no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

Christ constantly spoke of himself as “the son of man”, *Matthew 16:13*. As the redeemer is expressly declared to be “man”, *1 Corinthians 15:21*. In that greatest treatise on priesthood, the epistle to the Hebrews, it is said that because he loved righteousness (and of course not till he had done so) God exalted him in power above all others. Jesus is called the mighty God (*Isaiah 9:6*) because God has given him all power in heaven and earth, and placed all things under him, so that in the name of God, by virtue of the priesthood and authority of God, he rules as God over this earth.

We believe that the 7th day of the week, Saturday, is the true Sabbath day. *Genesis 2:2-3*, “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.” This seventh day Sabbath is a “sign” between God and his people and is to be kept as “a perpetual covenant” (See *Exodus 31:13,17*)

It should be realized that the Sabbath day was not changed by God the Father, neither Jesus Christ or the Apostles. God does not change his commandments. *Malachi 3:6*, “For I am the Lord, I change not,” I am the same yesterday, and today, and forever with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

We believe in baptism by immersion. *John 3:5*, “Except a man be born of the water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” *John 3:44-45*, “And John went down into the water and baptized him [Jesus]. 45. And Jesus when he was baptized went up straightway out of the water; and John saw, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Jesus. 46. And lo, he heard a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him.”

These are some of the major points of belief in this Church. If you are interested in learning more concerning our doctrines and beliefs please contact us through this web-site.