

How Is Doctrine Established?

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Doctrine comes today as it did anciently—through divine revelation to prophets.

As Latter-day Saints, “we believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God” (Articles of Faith 1:9).

Of the relationship between revelation and doctrine, Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “In the Church today, just as anciently, establishing the doctrine of Christ or correcting doctrinal deviations is a matter of divine revelation to those the Lord endows with apostolic authority.”¹

Just as revelation is the means by which doctrine comes to prophets, seers, and revelators, each of us can also receive our own

confirmation that the doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ are true. This personal revelation comes through prayer, scripture study, and the witness of the Holy Ghost. We show that we accept the doctrine of Jesus Christ by repenting, being baptized, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and continuing to follow the laws and keep the covenants of the gospel throughout our life.

The following flowchart, based on Elder Christofferson’s April 2012 general conference address, shows how doctrine is established.² ■

NOTES

1. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Doctrine of Christ,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 86.
2. See D. Todd Christofferson, “The Doctrine of Christ,” 86–90.

The First Presidency



The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



REVELATION OF DOCTRINE COMES FROM JESUS CHRIST

When revelation is doctrine for the whole Church, it comes to only the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (see Amos 3:7; D&C 1:38; 28:2).

REVELATION MAY COME BY . . .

HIS OWN PERSON

God appeared to Moses and showed him the workmanship of His hands (see Moses 1:1–9; see also Joseph Smith—History 1:15–20).

HIS OWN VOICE

The Lord spoke to Nephi and commanded him to build a ship to bring his family to the Americas (see 1 Nephi 17:7–8).

THE VOICE OF THE HOLY GHOST

This type of revelation is communicated Spirit to spirit. The New Testament Apostles received a confirmation through the Holy Ghost that they should not require new converts to keep the law of Moses (see Acts 15:5–29).

MESSENGER

The messengers Moses, Elias, and Elijah appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and each committed the keys of his dispensation to the Prophet (see D&C 110:11–16).

REVELATION MAY COME TO . . .

THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH INDIVIDUALLY

The prophet and President of the Church can receive revelation individually that becomes doctrine when it is sustained by the united voice of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (see Acts 10; Official Declaration 2).

PROPHETS ACTING IN COUNCIL

The disciples in the Americas prayed to know what they should name the Church. Christ appeared to them and answered, “Whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; therefore ye shall call the church in my name” (3 Nephi 27:7).