

D&C 1:24-28

24 Behold, I am God and have spoken it; these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding.

25 And inasmuch as they erred it might be made known;

26 And inasmuch as they sought wisdom they might be instructed;

27 And inasmuch as they sinned they might be chastened, that they might repent;

28 And inasmuch as they were humble they might be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge from time to time.

No one ever said that a prophet will always be perfect in all ways and in all things.

The phrase "a Prophet will never lead the Church astray" could mean that the Prophet will never lead or teach the members of the Church to sin and to not follow Christ.

Yes, there have been many errors that have been repudiated. But that doesn't mean that the past Presidents of the Church were intentionally misleading members through "false doctrines".

Consider these statements of past leaders of the church

"I make no claim of infallibility."

Spencer W. Kimball, Improvement Era, June 1970, p. 93

"We make no claim of infallibility or perfection in the prophets, seers, and revelators."

James E. Faust, Ensign, November 1989, p. 11

"The First Presidency cannot claim, individually or collectively, infallibility."

George Q. Cannon Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q. Cannon, 1957,
1:206

"We respect and venerate" (the prophet), but "we do not believe that his personal views or utterances are revelations from God."

Elder Charles W. Penrose, Millennial Star, 54:191

"Even the President of the Church has not always spoken under the direction of the Holy Ghost."

Elder J. Reuben Clark, quoted in Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History, p. 82

“...if He (God) should suffer him (Joseph Smith) to lead the people astray, it would be because they ought to be led astray...it would be because they deserved it...”

Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, 4:297-298

“The First Presidency have of right a great influence over this people; and if we should get out of the way and lead this people to destruction, what a pity it would be! How can you know whether we lead you correctly, or not? Can you know by any other power than that of the Holy Ghost? I have uniformly exhorted the people to obtain this living witness each for themselves; then no man on earth can lead them astray.”

Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, 6:100

“I am more afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire for themselves of God whether they are led by him. I am fearful they settle down in a state of blind self-security, trusting their eternal destiny in the hands of their leaders with a reckless confidence that in itself would thwart the purposes of God in their salvation...Let every man and woman know, by the whispering of the Spirit of God to themselves, whether their leaders are walking in the path the Lord dictates, or not.”

Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, 14:205

“Individual members are encouraged to independently strive to receive their own spiritual confirmation of the truthfulness of Church doctrine. Moreover, the Church exhorts all people to approach the gospel not only intellectually but with the intellect and the spirit, a process in which reason and faith work together.

Official Church web site The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

[“Approaching Mormon Doctrine,”](#) (4 May 2007)

“The Lord uses imperfect people...He often allows their errors to stand uncorrected. He may have a purpose in doing so, such as to teach us that religious truth comes forth “line upon line, precept upon precept” in a process of sifting and winnowing similar to the one I know so well in science.”

Henry Eyring, Reflections of a Scientist, p. 47

“There are exceptions to some rules. For example, we believe the commandment is not violated by killing pursuant to a lawful order in an armed conflict. But don’t ask me to give an opinion on your exception. I only teach general rules. Whether an exception applies to you is your responsibility. You must work that out individually between you and the Lord.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, Ensign, June 2006, p. 16

“I teach the people correct principles, and they govern themselves.”

Joseph Smith, Journal of Discourses, 10: 57-58

The servants of God teach nothing but principles of eternal life, by their works ye shall know them. A good man will speak good things and holy principles, and an evil man evil things. I feel, in the name of the Lord, to rebuke all such bad principles, liars, &c., and I warn all of you to look out whom you are going after. I exhort you to give heed to all the virtue and the teachings which I have given you. (TPJS p 367)

“We are all liable to error; are subject, more or less, to the errors incident to the human family. We would be pleased to get along without these errors, and many may think that a man in my standing ought to be perfect; no such thing.”

Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, 10:212

“Sometimes traditions, customs, social practices, and personal preferences of individual Church members may, through repeated or common usage be misconstrued as Church procedures or policies. Occasionally, such traditions, customs and practices may even be regarded by some as eternal principles.”

Elder Ronald Poelman, 1984 General Conference

“Forget everything I have said, or what...Brigham Young...or whomsoever has said... that is contrary to the present revelation. We spoke with a limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world.”

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, CES Conference, August 1978

“We set up assumptions, based on our best knowledge, but can go no further. We should remember that when inspired writers deal with historical incidents they relate that which they have seen or that which may have been told them, unless indeed the past is opened to them by revelation.”

Elder John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations, p. 127

“I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions.”

Joseph Smith

Not every statement made by a Church leader, past or present, necessarily constitutes doctrine. A single statement made by a single leader on a single occasion often represents a personal, though well-considered, opinion, but is not meant to be officially binding for the whole Church. With divine inspiration, the First Presidency (the prophet and his two counselors) and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (the second-highest governing body of the Church) counsel together to establish doctrine that is consistently proclaimed in official Church publications. This doctrine resides in the four “standard works” of scripture (the [Holy Bible](#), the Book of Mormon, the [Doctrine and Covenants](#) and the [Pearl of Great Price](#)), official declarations and proclamations, and the [Articles of Faith](#). Isolated statements are often taken out of context, leaving their original meaning distorted. (May 4, 2007)

<http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/approaching-mormon-doctrine>