What Is Reality?

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The Real, or Reality, I take to describe the place where God dwells, the state of mind which he possesses, and the way he acts. I take the world, in the state of mortality it has known since the beginning of human history to be -- in large part -- the contravention of this reality, to be a place where God does not and cannot dwell, where his perceptions do not prevail, and where humankind acts in a way contrary to his desires. The primary question is and always has been: How to discover the mind of God.

Throughout history God has mediated his knowledge about the Real to humankind through various means: through dreams, visitations, and various degrees and forms of revelation to private individuals and to prophets. The scriptures contain an account of God’s dealings with humankind and are a historical record of his revelations to prophets, or, in other words, of his transmission to them of knowledge of the Real.

It is my contention that the temple has been the means which, throughout history, God has used as the primary vehicle through which to pass on to humankind knowledge concerning Reality (Temples of the Ancient World, ed. Donald W. Parry [1994], 622-623)

The Temple Endowment
James E. Talmage (1862-1933)
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The Temple Endowment, as administered in modern temples, comprises instruction relating to the significance and sequence of past dispensations, and the importance of the present as the greatest and grandest era in human history. This course of instruction includes a recital of [1] the most prominent events of the creative period, [2] the condition of our first parents in the Garden of Eden, [3] their disobedience and consequent expulsion from that blissful abode, [4] their condition in the lone and dreary world when doomed to live by labor and sweat, [5] the plan of redemption by which the great transgression may be atoned, [6] the period of the great apostasy, [7] the restoration of the Gospel with all its ancient powers and privileges, [8] the absolute and indispensable condition of personal purity and devotion to the right in the present life, and a strict compliance with Gospel requirements. (The House of the Lord [1969], p. 83; brackets and numbers added).

Outline of the Pearl of Great Price According to Major Topics

PROLOGUE: OVERVIEW OF “THE PLAN OF HAPPINESS” and the “PLAN OF SALVATION” – The “Down-road” and “Up-road”
Moses 1

THE CREATION
Moses 2; Abraham 4

THE GARDEN OF EDEN
Moses 3; Abraham 5

THE FALL OF ADAM AND EVE
Moses 4:1-26

EXPULSION FROM THE GARDEN
Moses 4:27-31

THEIR CONDITION IN THE WORLD
Moses 4:20-25; 5:1-3; 6:48-49

RECEIVING THE PLAN OF SALVATION
The Law of Sacrifice Moses 5:4-12

ESTABLISHMENT OF SATAN’S KINGDOM
Moses 5:13-57

LAW OF CONSECRATION AND COMING INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD (THE EXALTATION OF ENOCH AND HIS CITY)
Enoch’s Zion Moses 7

THE APOSTASY IN THE DAYS OF NOAH AND DESTRUCTION OF WICKED AS IT WILL BE AT THE SECOND COMING
Moses 8; Joseph Smith Matthew

ABRAHAM AND THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT – The Marriage Ordinance
Abraham 1-2

THE RESTORATION OF THE GOSPEL INCLUDING THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT
Joseph Smith History

EPILOGUE: THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH
The Articles of Faith