

Credo: The Story of Reality

If someone were to ask you, “What *is* Christianity?”, what would you say? Answering this question correctly will make all the difference in our ability to be able to communicate God’s message correctly in a world thick with competing religious options. In this presentation, Greg will teach participants five words that chart the “backbone” of the Christian world view, and then carefully explain their significance. They will serve as a guide for understanding the full “picture” of reality as Jesus of Nazareth understood it, and explaining the Christian story in a coherent way to Christians and non-Christians alike who have never connected the dots.

Greg Koukl is the founder and President of Stand to Reason, an organisation that trains Christians to think more clearly about their faith and to make an even-handed, incisive, yet gracious defense for classical Christianity and classical Christian values in the public square. He received his Masters in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics at Talbot School of Theology, graduating with high honors, and his Masters in Christian Apologetics from Simon Greenleaf University. He is an adjunct professor in Christian apologetics at Biola University. He is the author of *Tactics—A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions*, *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air* with Francis J. Beckwith, and *Precious Unborn Human Persons*. He has hosted his own radio talk show for over 20 years advocating clear-thinking Christianity and defending the Christian worldview.

I. What Is Christianity?

A. Worldview

1. The correct answer to the question “What is Christianity?” is this: Christianity is a picture of reality. [I’ve chosen these words carefully because of the pluralistic world we live in.]
2. If you don’t know what the big picture looks like beforehand, it will be much harder to assemble it from the parts
3. I want to show you the big picture—the Christian worldview—so you never get lost in the details again. I want to tell the Christian story of reality.

B. Every worldview has these four elements:

1. Creation: How things began—ultimate reality
2. Fall: How things went wrong

3. Redemption: How to fix what went wrong
4. Restoration: How things get worked out

C. You can assess every worldview by asking how it addresses each of these issues.

Key: If your Christian worldview is not accurate, you will not be able to navigate well, even if you call yourself a believer.

D. True story

1. The Christian story starts a long, long time ago, long before Jesus.
2. The important thing: It is different from other stories in a significant way.
 - a. **This story does not start with the words “Once upon a time.”** Why?
 - b. Because this story is not meant to me understood as a fairy tale or a myth.
3. It is a true story.

E. So let me give you the backbone of the Christian story in 5 words.

1. God, Man, Jesus, the cross, and the final resurrection
2. There is a logical order to these 5 elements.
 - a. Our story starts with **God**. He created everything, including the most valuable thing in all creation: **man**.
 - b. But something went wrong.
 - c. So God set up a rescue plan.
 - d. In this plan, God entered into the world that he created by becoming a man: **Jesus**.
 - e. Jesus did something very special to rescue man from his problem. This happened on the **cross**.
 - f. How people respond to this solution will determine what will happen to them at the final event of history: the **resurrection**.

3. Notice:

- a. You have all the parts of a good story.

- b. You also have all the pieces of a complete worldview.

II. God

A. The story starts with God.

B. Main theme of the Bible: Rulership

C. God is distinct from creation.

III. Man

A. Man is special:

1. Man is...created with a physical body.

2. Man is a non-physical soul or spirit.

3. Man is...noble, created in the image of God.

B. Relationship -This likeness between man and God makes it possible for man to have a unique friendship with God.

C. Man is desperately fallen and needs God Himself to take action.

IV. Jesus

A. There are two very critical issues regarding Jesus:

1. Who Jesus was.
2. What Jesus came to do.

B. Jesus was a real human being.

C. Jesus is fully God.

D. The Hypostatic Union (adds humanity to God)

1. Definition: In the *one person* of Jesus the Messiah there were *two natures*: undiminished deity and true humanity.
2. Isaiah 9:6 intimates the dual nature of Jesus:
3. Micah 5:2 gives the same picture:

E. The Kenosis

1. God stepped down to become a man (Philippians 2:5-8)
2. Important clarification: Jesus never ceased being God. The Son laid aside only His privileges of deity, not His divine nature.

So the answer to our first question: Who is Jesus: So, Jesus is the God/man.

F. Why did Jesus come? What did he come to do?

He mainly came to solve the problem: to rescue, to save.

G. What did Jesus ultimately do to rescue us?

1. First, he lived the life we should have lived.
2. Second, he made a trade, his life for ours.

V. The Cross

A. The “Certificate of Debt”

B. This is why Jesus is the only way.

VI. The Resurrection

A. All human beings will be raised from the dead.

B. All who have received mercy in Christ will go on to eternal reward.

C. All those who have rejected God's mercy in Christ will be judged by their works and punished.

VII. Conclusion

A. The Christian story of reality has five elements: God, man, Jesus, the cross, the resurrection.

B. It's a story that can be told in single a sentence:

1. God, the creator of the universe
2. In order to rescue man from punishment for his rebellion
3. Took on humanity in Jesus, the savior
4. To die on a cross and rise from the dead
5. So that in the final resurrection, we could enjoy a wonderful friendship with our sovereign Lord, in the kind of perfect world our hearts have always yearned for.

C. But it's not just a story. It's a true story. It's the story of reality.

