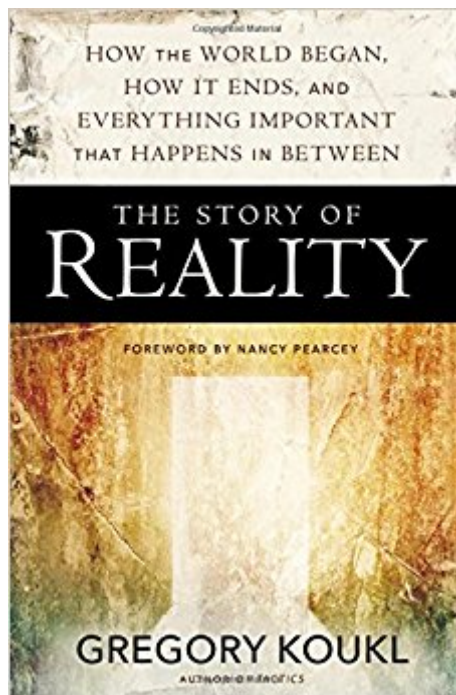




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The Story Of Reality: How The World Began, How It Ends, And Everything Important That Happens In Between



Synopsis

Biblical Christianity is more than just another private religious view. It's more than just a personal relationship with God or a source of moral teaching. Christianity is a picture of reality. It explains why the world is the way it is. When the pieces of this puzzle are properly assembled, we see the big picture clearly. Christianity is a true story of how the world began, why the world is the way it is, what role humans play in the drama, and how all the plotlines of the story are resolved in the end. In *The Story of Reality*, bestselling author and host of *Stand to Reason*, Gregory Koukl, explains the five words that form the narrative backbone of the Christian story. He identifies the most important things that happen in the story in the order they take place: God, Man, Jesus, Cross, Resurrection. If you are already a Christian, do you know and understand the biblical story? And for those still seeking answers to the questions of life, this is an invitation to hear a story that explains the world in a way nothing else will. This story can change your life forever.

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Customer Reviews

My friend Greg Koukl is known as a man whose ambition is to be pleasing to God---and his newest work, *The Story of Reality*, certainly is ambitious. How can one cover "the reason for everything" in a single manuscript? Well, Greg tackles the challenge valiantly and courageously, addressing the heartfelt plea of every person who asks, "Why am I here? What is so important about life?" Thoughtful, provocative, and intellectually stimulating, Greg walks the reader through the big issues of life, giving answers that are truly worthy of consideration

by the toughest skeptic. I highly recommend this stirring book by a most remarkable apologist! -- Joni Eareckson Tada, Joni and Friends International Disability Center I have known Greg Koukl for a quarter of a century as a smart, well-educated man of integrity with a tender heart for God. I've enjoyed his previous writings, but *The Story of Reality* is clearly his best and most important book to date. I couldn't put it down. Koukl carries on a conversation with the reader, presenting the big elements of the Christian Story, providing reasons for believing the Story, and contrasting it, when appropriate, with alternative narratives. The book has a wonderful feel of authenticity. I highly recommend it for believers who want to be encouraged and instructed, and it's an excellent give-away for an open unbeliever. -- J. P. Moreland, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University

Greg Koukl is a master communicator! *The Story of Reality* is a beautifully crafted description of the Christian worldview, written in an accessible, winsome, and well-reasoned manner. If you're curious about why Christians see the world the way we do, or you're a believer who simply wants to communicate Christianity in an articulate way to others, this book is for you! -- Lee Strobel, bestselling author of *The Case for Christ* and *The Case for Grace*

We're not likely to glean the point of our existence from CNN. It takes the greatest story ever told---and a great storyteller---to steal us away from our dead-end plots and to display the richness of reality as Greg Koukl does here. These are the big questions, and *The Story of Reality* answers them in a sharp, winsome, and accessible way. Read it, and then give it to a friend! -- Michael Horton, J. Gresham Machen Professor of Theology, Westminster Seminary California; author of *Pilgrim Theology*

The Story of Reality is a delightful and bold book. Greg Koukl has masterfully captured the heart of the Christian story in a way that is clarifying and insightful for believers but also eye-opening and thought-provoking for nonbelievers. *The Story of Reality* is a book worth reading carefully, discussing with friends, and ultimately passing on to others. -- Sean McDowell, professor at Biola University; author of more than fifteen books, including *A New Kind of Apologist*

When I looked into Koukl's *Story of Reality*, I thought, "This is not how I would say this." I would have used more technical terms, added quite a bit of history, expanded it by a couple of hundred pages, and put in about a thousand footnotes. So readers can rejoice that, instead, Greg Koukl is the right man to tell the story in such a clear, concise, and conversational way. This book explains the central ideas of Christianity and answers questions people are really asking. -- Fred Sanders, Torrey Honors Institute, Biola University; author of *The Deep Things of God*

When I first read *The Story of Reality*, I knew I was reading a modern classic. Like C. S. Lewis before him, Greg Koukl has written a masterful, measured, intelligent, and insightful book---a must-read for anyone

who wants to understand Christianity and its unique ability to explain the way the world really is. Greg will enlighten and inspire you, just as he inspired me as my mentor for many years. The Story of Reality is a book you'll read more than once. It will take its rightful place alongside other Christian classics on your bookshelf. -- J. Warner Wallace, author of Cold-Case Christianity, God's Crime Scene, and Forensic Faith

Not since Mere Christianity has a book so wonderfully told the Story of Reality. The Greatest Story Ever Told is true, and Greg Koukl tells it in such a compelling way that I'm recommending you not only experience it but give a copy to everyone you care about. Why? Because The Story of Reality is not just the Christian Story---it is your Story whether you believe it or not. -- Frank Turek, author of I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist

This primer on a Christian outlook on life by Greg Koukl covers an incredibly large number of the pithiest issues in an amazingly small number of pages. Time and again I wondered, "Now how is Greg going to work his way through this question quickly and nontechnically?" But the thoughtful, succinct, and quick-moving answer that followed never disappointed and was handled amazingly. It is not an exaggeration to call this treatment C. S. Lewis-like in a number of ways. Those who pay attention to the fast pace will later be astonished at how far they have come. I recommend it highly. -- Gary R. Habermas, Distinguished Research Professor and Chair, Dept. of Philosophy, Liberty University

Greg Koukl thinks you deserve answers to your "why" questions about reality, and he offers them with wit and compassion. The Story of Reality brings the greatest story ever told to life in all its brilliant simplicity. -- Jeff Myers, President, Summit Ministries

Gregory Koukl holds MA degrees in both apologetics and philosophy. He's spoken on over 70 university campuses and hosted his own radio talk show for 27 years defending "Christianity worth thinking about." Greg is founder and president of Stand to Reason (str.org) and serves as adjunct professor of Christian apologetics at Biola University. X

I was wrong. I read the opening words of The Story of Reality and thought, "Here we go again." Over the past few years we've been inundated with books that tell the story of the world, the story of history, through what we might call a biblical-theology lens. You are probably familiar with the standard categories: creation, fall, redemption, consummation, and new creation. Through these headings we can trace and tell the story of what God is accomplishing in this world. It's helpful, it's good, and it's been done a lot recently to the benefit of the church. But this book is

not that book. Not quite. Greg Koukl's *The Story of Reality* is, indeed, a telling of the story of the world through a five-part wide-angle lens. The subtitle nicely fills it out: "How the World Began, How it Ends, and Everything Important that Happens in Between." But what sets his book apart is that instead of serving primarily as a theology text, it serves primarily as an apologetic text. Koukl tells this big story for the benefit of new believers who haven't yet assembled the various components of the faith into a coherent whole. He tells it also for unbelievers who are approaching the Christian faith as skeptics or seekers. Koukl means to show that the Bible makes sense of the entire world, that it forms the basis for a cohesive, coherent, satisfying worldview. In her foreword, Nancy Pearcey says it like this: "The Bible is not a fairy tale crafted by ancient people to give a sense of meaning to life. It is an account of reality. [Koukl] calls it a story only because, amazingly, it turns out that reality itself is structured like a great drama: It has a beginning and an end; it features a struggle between good and evil; it reaches a climax and then resolves into denouement and a finale. The cosmos is not just a succession of brute facts. It is the plotline of a grand story that God is telling through the verifiable events of history." Koukl structures his telling of the story of reality around five themes: God, Man, Jesus, Cross, and Resurrection. Under the heading of God, he distinguishes between theism and two of the major contemporary challenges: Matter-ism and Mind-ism—that there is no God or that everything is god. He defends theism and the Christian understanding of God as a real, personable, eternal being. Under Man he describes humanity as beautiful, broken, lost, and evil and shows why God must express wrath toward those who defy him. Then he turns to Jesus, defending him as a historical figure and showing that he came to rescue those beautiful, broken objects of God's wrath. Cross tells of the great transaction that occurred at the cross which allows us to take advantage of a great exchange through which we give Christ our sin and he gives us his righteousness. Resurrection tells of the resurrection of Jesus and shows how his rising from the dead offers hope that we, too, can and will rise forever. It tells also of the devastating reality of an eternal judgment and calls on the reader to turn to Christ in repentance and faith. "You have one of two choices. You can bend your knee to the Sovereign, beg for mercy because of Christ, be welcomed into his family as a son or daughter, and belong to him. Or you can reject the gift, stand alone at the judgment, and pay for your own crimes against God, such as they are." Several years ago I read Koukl's excellent book *Tactics* and found that it made a deep impression on me. Much of what he said there continues to resonate and I often find myself imitating his language and concepts. *The Story of Reality* is a worthy successor. It is a book I would gladly hand to a believer,

and perhaps especially a new believer, confident that it will help him see that the Christian faith offers good answers, the best answers, to what this world is all about, why it is the way it is, and where it is all going to end up. I would gladly hand it to an unbeliever, one who is interested in knowing what I believe and why I believe it. Koukl promises to tell the story of reality. He does, and he does it beautifully. You'll benefit by reading his telling of how the world began, how it will end, and all the important stuff that happens in between.

What makes a great nonfiction book? The material is accessible to wide audiences, the content is meaningful, and the style of writing memorable. Greg Koukl's masterful book *The Story of Reality* qualifies in all three areas. I am so glad I received an advanced copy giving me an opportunity to promote this book. First, Greg insightfully changed key philosophical and theological terms to make them more accessible to those who aren't familiar with apologetic materials, without sacrificing their significance. For example he uses the Christian story of reality rather than referring to the Christian worldview. Another example is when he talks about the world is made up of physical things (material) and invisible things (immaterial). This approach opens the door for all of us who want to hand this book to an unbeliever or a spiritually growing Christian to assist them in understanding the Christian faith. Second, the content is explained extremely well taking high level material and making it understandable to a variety of believers and spiritual seekers. His uncomplicated writing style helps the reader easily grasp the five key points and thus enables us all to clearly articulate the Christian story to someone else. Theologian Allister McGrath in his book, *Mere Apologetics*, has an entire chapter on the most effective ways to share the truth of Christianity. His number one suggestion for defending Christianity is to begin by telling people what it really entails. His point is many people have misconceptions about Christianity that can block their coming to faith. Koukl's clear articulation of the Christian belief system helps brush away the false objections to Christianity that can block a person from accepting the truth. Third, armed with the five key points of God, man, Jesus, cross, and resurrection, followers of Jesus will find the material memorable and easily retained and readily accessible. With careful reflection on each of these points, a person can clearly share the truth of Christianity with anyone interested. One of his key themes throughout the book is facts matter to Christians. In Chapter 22 Greg provides four facts of history that provide evidence for the bodily resurrection of Jesus. These four facts are supported by the vast majority of scholars (Christian and non-Christian) who study the life of Jesus. The following is a brief outline of how the book is structured.

Introduction: Greg begins to sketch out why truth is vitally important to Christianity or any belief

system. **Part 1 God:** These chapters give an evaluation of the 3 major views of God. The views are atheism which claims there is no god, mind-ism (pantheism) where all is god and god is all, and theism, specifically the Christian story. **Part 2 Man:** The focus here is how we are intrinsically valuable but broken and separated from God because of sin. **Part 3 Jesus:** This section examines the mission of Jesus. Key to his work is to understand how and why God came to earth as a man to rescue us from sin. **Part 4 Cross:** God's wrath upon humanity can only be absolved by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Only through trusting in the finished work of Christ upon the cross can anyone be forgiven of his or her sins. **Part 5 Resurrection:** Greg begins with evidence for the resurrection of Jesus and the reliability of the gospels. However, the major focus of this section is how God will bring about universal justice. In the end evil will be dealt with, and Christ will reign. If you are looking for a book that gives you the big picture of the truth of Christianity, then look no further. It is the perfect blend of apologetics and Biblical theology. This is a book I am going to give as gifts to both my Christian and non-Christian friends and neighbors. I believe after reading it you will do the same.

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