

We believe the Word of God has authority over the church. The church does not have authority over the Word. The Word created the church and sits in judgment on our church's birth, life, trials and troubles, graces and victories. We do not sit in judgment on the Word of God. Therefore, we are eager to place the Word in an exalted place in the center of our church life and humbly submit to God and His Word.

We believe that there are four major attributes of Scripture. These equally reveal: God in all His Triune glory, our godlessness from the early pages of Scripture on, His saving work to transform sinners into the precious image of Jesus Christ, the ministry of the local church in this portion of divine history, and the great and glorious return of Jesus Christ at the end of this age.

The word of God has:

**Authority:** "The words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God." Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 73 (2 Tm 3:16; 2 Pt 3:16; 1 Tm 5:18; 1 Cor 2:10-13)

**Clarity:** "The Bible is written in such a way that its teachings are able to be understood by all who will read it seeking God's help and being willing to follow it." Grudem 108 (Ps 119:130; Ti 1:9; Eph 4:11; 2 Tm 2:24-25)

**Necessity:** "The Bible is necessary for knowing the gospel, for maintaining spiritual life, and for knowing God's will, but it is not necessary for knowing God exists or for knowing something about God's character and moral laws." Grudem 116 (Rm 10:13-17; 2 Tm 2:25; 1 Pt 1:23-2:3; Eph 5:17; Rm 1:19-21, 2:14-15)

**Sufficiency:** "The Bible contained all the words of God He intended His people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting Him perfectly, and for obeying Him perfectly." Grudem 127 (2 Tm 3:15-17).

**The "What You Must Know about the Bible" sermon can be found here: <http://gbcaz.org/2009/09/what-you-must-know-about-the-bible/>**

We have gained a Vision for our church from the Scriptures that makes all the difference in the Purpose for which we live. We have said it this way: "A biblical vision of God leads us to the gospel purpose of Christ."

As a church we have set our sights on 3 inseparable biblical themes in Scripture (our Biblical Vision of God). This is our humble attempt to summarize what the grand theme of the Scriptures is! We set our sights on:

- The glory of God:** passionately prizing the Father's glory
- The cross of Christ:** unashamedly embracing Jesus and His cross
- Life-transformation by the Spirit:** dependently pursuing the Spirit's transformation of life

That biblical vision does not lead us to a static, sheltered life in this world. Rather, the vision of God we have from Scripture leads us to Christ's mission (purpose) for us in His gospel (our Gospel Purpose in Christ):

- Drawing in :** prayerfully striving to be used by God to draw in (the lost) . . .
- Building up :** diligently planning to be built up . . .
- Sending out:** purposefully living as a 'sent one'

**The Vision and Purpose series can be found at: <http://gbcaz.org/category/series/vision-series/>**

We believe that a **biblical vision of God** and our **gospel purpose in Christ** lead us to a desire to see these things expand beyond the walls of Grace Bible Church. We desire to see God's plan – to rescue and purify a people for His own possession from every tongue, tribe, nation, and people – to be our heartbeat as well. We believe that missions must flow from a biblical vision of God, and it must be pursued according to God's gospel priorities as laid out in the New Testament.

As a church we have taken aim at 4 interdependent guidelines about how we will engage in missions, summarized this way: we long to work tirelessly to see **the GLORY of God in the GOSPEL of Jesus Christ manifested in the CHURCH around the WORLD.**

We believe missions must be **Doxological**. That is, missions must be about the **GLORY** of God. God is working out all things for the praise of His own glory. God's purpose in gospel missions, like everything else, terminates in His own glory. That means that everything we want to do in the cause of missions must take aim at the glory of God as its purpose. *Rom 11:33-36; Eph 1:5-14; Isa 43:7,25; Ezek 36:21-33.*

Secondly, we believe missions must be **Christological**. That is, missions must be about the **GOSPEL** – the good news that God is reconciling sinful man to Himself, forgiving and conquering the sin that separates us from Him so that we can be with Him. This only takes place by the substitutionary death of Jesus at the cross and is available only to those who repent and believe. Missions must be about the proclamation of this exclusive message. *In 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom 10:9-10.*

Thirdly, we believe missions must be **Ecclesiological**. That is, missions must be about the **CHURCH**. One effect the Gospel has on a people is the assembling of redeemed sinners into a community of Christians who have been saved by the Gospel and are being transformed together by the Gospel. Jesus said, "I will build My church" (Mt 16:18), and He has designed the gospel mission to go to the ends of the earth by the expansion and reproduction of local churches in concentric circles, from Jerusalem and Judea to Samaria, to Tempe, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. If followers of Jesus are to be obedient to all of His teachings (Mt 28:20), they will inevitably be members of local assemblies of believers (many of the New Testament commands for believers depend upon, or require, the existence and operation of local churches). We should never think of missions or attempt to "do" missions apart from a love for the local church and a desire to see biblical churches established, growing, and reproducing themselves. *1Tim3:14-15; Eph 1:22-23; Eph 2:11-22; Eph 3:8-10.*

Finally, we believe missions must be **GLOBAL**. That is, we must think of the task of Gospel mission in a way that goes beyond the walls of Grace Bible Church. We want to see our church established and mature, but that is not the end. We want to see our church mature so that it can reproduce itself in concentric circles from Tempe to the Phoenix Valley and beyond, to the ends of the earth, until our Savior returns to reign. We want to reach our neighborhood with the Gospel, and we want to see the gospel proclaimed in places where it is not yet heard. *Rev 5:9; Rev7:9; Mt 24:14.*

We as a church desire to live out the Gospel Mission in Tempe and to the ends of the earth. We long to see God raise up faithful servants who will carry the Gospel to their campuses, cul-de-sacs, and cubicles for the glory of God. And we long to see God raise up servants from among us who will go to places where the glory of God is not acknowledged, where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not known, and where the church does not exist, so that we can be a faithful part of what God is doing through the Gospel to reconcile to Himself people from every tongue, tribe, nation, and people.

**The "Mission: Glory, Gospel, Church, World" series can be found at: <http://gbcz.org/category/series/missions-series/>**

We believe the summary teaching of Scripture is that “salvation belongs to the Lord” (Ps 3:8). It uniquely belongs to Him and therefore is uniquely His to give. If any man, woman, boy or girl finds himself or herself in possession of biblical salvation, it is only because God first graciously gave that salvation. God is therefore sovereign in salvation. God Himself IS our salvation! This summary teaching of Scripture is also known as The Doctrines of Grace.

**The sinner's life is totaled (Total Depravity).** Every man and every part of man is totaled by the devastating effects of sin. Sin is essentially the active, intentional, unashamed missing of God in every possible way so as to glorify self and dethrone God. Sin is fighting God to play God in and over our own lives. Self is propped up as the “starting line, the race itself, and the finish line” of every thought, word, attitude, deed, desire, and relationship. And, as sinners, we are not troubled by this at all – we actually like it this way and seek for how we may protect and even advance such a godless and dark life (Jn 3:19-20). This depravity has rendered us completely unable to change this condition (total depravity has created total inability before God).

*Gn 6:5, 11-12; Dt 7:10; 1 Kg 8:46; Ps 14:1-3 (Rm 3:10-12); Ps 51:5; 58:3; 143:1-2; Pr 20:9; Ec 7:20; Is 53:6; Jer 13:22-23; 17:5, 9-10; Mt 15:19-20; Jn 3:19-20; Rm 3:23; Ep 2:1-3; 4:17-19; etc.*

**The Father's Sovereign and Electing Love (Unconditional Election).** Since we are all totally depraved and totally unable (and unwilling) to change our condition – we are all running from God and heaven as fast as we can (a C. J. Mahaney illustration). The Scriptures overwhelmingly teach that God, in His gracious sovereignty has chosen in eternity past to save sinners anyway from His wrath. The Scriptures do not teach that God elects those He saves on the condition that He foresaw that they would believe in Him. Rather, before time He sovereignly, lovingly, graciously, personally, and unconditionally elects them for His own sake, glory before the foundation of the world. In other words, one believes in Christ because he is elect by God; one is not elect because he believes. *Ps 135:5-6; Ex 33:19; Dt 7:7; 10:14-15; Jer 1:5; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Rm 8:28-33; Mt 22:14; 24:22, 24, 31; Ac 13:46-48; Rm 9:10-16, 21; 1 Th 5:9-11; 2 Th 2:13; 2 Tm 1:9-10; 2:10; 1 Pt 1:1-2; etc.*

**The Son's Atoning Death (Limited Atonement).** In order for God's sovereign and saving choice of sinners to take its full effect and be realized in the lives of sinners in time, He sent His Son to earth to be the penal substitutionary sacrifice on behalf of those sinners He elects unto salvation. A sinner's guilt before God and the wrath of God against him must be removed. Sin's debt is removed because Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth and died on the cross to make 'atonement' for every single person who would ever believe in His name. The application of the atonement is limited (particular, definite) – clearly not all in the world are saved. What limits the application of the atoning work of the cross? We believe that it is God, not the unbelieving sinner, who limits the atonement. Jesus' death actually secured the salvation of every single one of God's elect (the scope of the applied work of Christ on the cross is limited by God's gracious, sovereign choice). Jesus' death did not make salvation potentially possible for all sinners (as if it is up to the totally depraved and unable sinner to decide to apply the atoning work of the cross to his own life through faith). If that were the case, the atonement would be limited by the unbelieving sinner's refusal to believe (making the sinner sovereign in salvation, NOT God). *Jn 1:29; Hb 9:26-28; 2 Cor 5:18-21; Rm 3:25; Hb 2:9, 17; 1 Jn 2:1-2; 4:10, 14; Rm 5:11; Rv 5:6-14; 7:9-12; Jn 1:9; 3:16-17; 4:42; 6:51; Rm 5:18-19; 1 Cor 15:22; 2 Cor 5:14-15, 19; 1 Tm 2:3-6; 2 Pt 3:9; etc.*

**The Spirit's Regenerating Grace and Power (Irresistible Grace).** So far we have seen the Father's work in salvation – to sovereignly and graciously elect sinners out of His wrath for salvation. The Son, Jesus Christ, came to earth to make atonement for the sin of the Father's elect. What about the third Member of the Godhead? The Holy Spirit's primary ministry in the salvation of man is to negate the effects of past, present and future sinful offenses of the redeemed by the cross of Jesus. The Holy Spirit must come to the sinner and re-create him (his heart) so that he will be inclined or oriented toward God (not sin). HE must overcome the depravity and inability of the sinner. Regeneration makes salvation possible for the sinner by enabling him to make use of two crucial gifts from God (faith and repentance) which the Holy Spirit then uses to apply the effects of the cross of Jesus. *Ezk 36:25-27; Jn 3:3-8; 1 Cor 2:12-14; 2 Cor 5:17; Ga 6:15; Eph 2:4-5; Col 2:13; Ti 3:4-7; Js 1:18; 1 Pt 1:3, 23; Mk 1:14-15; Rm 10:9-10, 14-17; Eph 2:8-9; Ph 1:29; Lk 24:46-47; Ac 2:37-38; 17:30-31; 20:21; 26:20; 2 Cor 7:9-10; 1 Th 1:9-10; 2 Pt 3:9; Ac 5:31; 11:18; 2 Tm 2:24-25; Rm 5:18-19; 8:1; 1 Cor 6:9-11; Phil 3:9; etc.*

**The Believer's Persevering Pursuit of Christ (Perseverance of the saints).** The re-created, regenerated believer now finds that he has new desires. Sin increasingly becomes repugnant and Jesus Christ becomes more and more delightful. The believer in Christ, utilizing the gracious means given to him, seeks to rise up against sin to oppose it daily, consistently. The believer can and will give in to indwelling sin, but he will NOT become enslaved to sin all over again, because it is God who was, is, and will be powerfully at work in him to finish His saving work and purpose for him in this world.

*Is 43:1-5; 54:10; Mt 18:12-14; Jn 5:24; 6:37-40; 8:31-32; 10:27-30; 17:2, 6, 9, 11-12, 15, 24; Rm 6:6-7, 11-14; 8:1, 28-29; 1 Co 1:8-9; 10:13; 2 Co 3:18; Eph 1:13-14; 4:30; Phil 1:6; 2:12-13; 3:12-14; Col 1:21-23; 3:3-4; 1 Th 5:23-24; 2 Th 3:3; 2 Tm 1:12; 4:17-18; Hb 3:12-14; 7:25; 10:14; 1 Pt 1:3-5; 2 Pt 1:2-11; 1 Jn 5:11-13; Jd 1, 24-25; etc.*

**The “Salvation Belongs to Our God” series can be found at: <http://gbc.org/category/series/salvationbelongstogod/>**

The doctrine of sanctification is the description of the ongoing work of the Gospel in the life of a believer. Those who repent and believe in the Gospel are **justified** at the point of conversion. Justification is God's declaration that a believing sinner is positionally righteous (also known as **positional sanctification**). All who are justified by God through faith in the Gospel are also **sanctified** (sometimes referred to as **progressive sanctification**), an on-going process of becoming practically righteous. Justification is a one-time, irreversible declaration of God at the point of conversion. Sanctification is the continual process of renewal that encompasses the entirety of a believer's earthly life. The regenerated believer is progressively and assuredly conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. That process ends at **glorification**, the immediate perfecting of the believer at death or rapture.

**Sanctification, like justification, is secured and accomplished by God through the power and the promises of the Gospel.** The Gospel is not merely important at the point of conversion. The power and the promises of the Gospel are essential for living the Christian life every day. Prior to conversion, every person was a slave of sin, impurity, lawlessness, shame, and death, unable to keep God's law but unable to escape God's law, condemned by law and incited by sin to further lawlessness. But by His grace, God has united every believer to Jesus Christ – crucified and raised – so that the believer would be powerfully freed from the tyranny of sin to undoubtedly become a slave of God, a slave of righteousness, and a slave of obedience!

God has united us, by the power of the Gospel, to Jesus Christ. Our death in Him changed our relationship to sin and law, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin and condemned by law, but undoubtedly raised to new life and freedom from the power of sin's mastery. The believer now, by the power and promises of the Gospel, has died to sin and has been raised with Christ, walks in newness of life, is being progressively conformed into the image of Christ, is under grace (which reigns through righteousness to eternal life!), is a slave of God, of righteousness, and obedience.

As the believer lives the Christian life, he must never "graduate" from the Gospel. The gracious promises and the transforming power of God for us in the Gospel are needful every day. The promises of God for us in the Gospel are immeasurably more powerful for sanctification than our promises to Him. As we fight sin, we must find ourselves at the cross of Jesus Christ and be reminded of the objective grace-realities of our new position in Christ. As we seek to obey God and be conformed to the image of Jesus, we must anchor all of our efforts in the finished work of Jesus Christ at the cross. It was by Jesus' death-burial-resurrection that He secured for us the power and promises we need to live a life pleasing to God. We desire as a church to cling to these grace-realities of the Gospel in all that we do. *Rom 5:20-6:23; Ti 2:11-14; Col 3:1-17.*

**The Romans 6 series can be found at: <http://gbcz.org/category/series/romans-6/>**

The doctrine of sin is the summary principles of all that the Bible teaches concerning sin, human depravity and inability, and indwelling sin in the life of the believer. We love all of the doctrines (summary teachings) of all the exalted subjects the Bible teaches – so why single this doctrine out? Primarily because of what the prior distinctives stress from God's word. Sin loves to de-centralize Scripture in the believer's life (conviction 1), would love to blur our vision of God in His word and impede the pursuit of His Son's mission for us (conviction 2), would love to rob God of His glory in salvation in the life of a believer by marring the believer's sanctification or growth in Christ (conviction 3). How could we NOT cultivate a thorough, biblical understanding of this great enemy within so that we might combat sin's pervasive presence within our church and life?

In particular, we want to draw attention within this important doctrine to two things. First, the doctrine of sin is to be applied to ourselves before we apply it to others. The sinful tendency is to be more aware of others' sin than our own. Jesus addresses this with the "log/splinter" illustration (Lk 6:41-42). Second, church discipline (Mt 18:15-17) is a very necessary part of a healthy and God-glorifying local church. Why? If God is indeed sovereign in salvation, and has done EVERYTHING necessary to secure the salvation of the believer, and has supplied that believer with His grace and strength to live an obedient life, then our dear brother or sister caught in sin is winnable ("If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother" Mt 18:15). When applied correctly to his life, the believer is moved to invite those around him to help "win" him back to obedient living through confession and repentance in order to magnify the greatness of the Savior of his life.

But what if one of our own refuses to repent of sin? Matthew 18:15-17 provides the necessary tools (steps) for the church to patiently, humbly and intentionally take with its members who are in unrepentant sin (also see our bylaws concerning our practice of church discipline). God's reputation as the glorious Savior is at stake.

continued

**Stage 1 of discipline (18:15) consists of:**

- One or several private meetings; time to see the brother demonstrate that his listening to reproof has transferred into obedience.
- This step should be occurring on a regular, consistent basis because we are inviting one another into our lives, and because we are eager to gently and graciously address sin in our church family.

**Stage 2 of discipline (18:16) means:**

- Involving for a period of time one or two more believers who can then become eye-“witnesses” indeed to:
  - The validity of the charge.
  - The brother’s righteousness and integrity (or lack thereof).
  - The stubbornness of the brother; his refusal to listen to reproof and correction.
  - The level of severity is growing, but all of this is still done with a hope that this brother is winnable.

**Stage 3 of discipline (18:17a) invites the church family:**

- To pursue in love and truth the brother who is giving ongoing evidence that he is in spiritual danger. However, the family of God still pursues the brother, believing he is winnable.

**Stage 4 of discipline (18:17b) finally:**

- Jesus says it’s time for the church to no longer think of him as a brother in Christ. Why? Because the “brother’s” testimony concerning his own salvation does not hold weight in the gospel community (he has established a long and hard pattern of refusing to listen to brothers and sisters; he looks as if he loves his sin more than Jesus, as if sin rules him). It is now his word against God’s word and against the whole church community’s understanding of salvation (a community of faith that has humbly, patiently desired to see him free from his sin).

At this point, the church must take steps to protect the church family and its doctrine, because there is one in their midst (the unrepentant “brother”) who appears to love his sin more than he loves Jesus and whose testimony is no longer credible. Perhaps God will use the severe discipline to awaken the so-called “brother” so that he can be restored to God and the church family.

**The Matthew 18 sermon, titled “The Heart of Christ for Our Holiness,” can be found at: <http://gbcz.org/2013/11/111013-sermon/>**

As we survey the Bible from beginning to end, we see God establishing two realities for men and women: spiritual equality before God AND role differentiation (for men and women) in the church and Christian families. This biblical view of manhood and womanhood is called a “complementarian” view of manhood and womanhood (“complement” = something that completes or makes perfect. This is a “completing” view of the genders). To diminish, ignore or blur one reality, or to fail to uphold both spiritual equality and role differentiation renders the church incomplete in its view of the genders. Let’s examine the two realities God has established for men and women according to His word:

### **The Old Testament**

**Spiritual Equality:** Man and woman are equally created in the image of God (neither one has more or less of God’s image than the other). Man and woman are equally totaled by sin (neither one is more sinful than the other). Gn 1:26-27; Gn 3:16-19.

**Role Differentiation:** God created man first, then woman (God had an order in mind when He created; an order that is linked to their different roles.). Gn 2:18ff (1 Cor 11; 1 Tm 2). God both instructs AND confronts the first human pair through the man, revealing that order was determined before the fall and is not a result of the fall, Gn 2:15-17; 3:9. This order is linked to our roles, NOT to our spiritual equality (the order doesn’t diminish our spiritual equality, it enhances and promotes our roles).

### **Jesus**

**Spiritual Equality:** Jesus dramatically emphasized a woman’s spiritual equality with man in the midst of a woman-demeaning Greek, Roman, and even Jewish culture. Jesus used illustrations and images familiar to and useful for women, Mt 13:33; 24:41; Lk 13:20-21; 15:8-10. Jesus revealed Himself as Messiah to women, Jn 4:25-26. Jesus taught women directly, Lk 10:38-42. Jesus touched women and allowed them to touch Him, Lk 8:43-48; 13:10-17. Jesus allowed women to travel with Him and His disciples, Lk 8:1-3. After His resurrection Jesus revealed Himself first to a woman, Jn 20:1-18. All of this is culturally unprecedented!

**Role Differentiation:** Jesus did nothing to exalt women to a place of spiritual leadership over men. If ever there was a time to correct the prior teaching and practice in regards to role differentiation – it was at this time through this Man! But Jesus didn’t. Rather, Jesus affirms what revelation has already taught – that women are spiritually equal with men before God (in fact He elevated this out of the culturally sinful view of His day). Jesus also affirmed the God-given role differentiation from the older Testament.

### **The rest of the New Testament**

**Spiritual Equality:** Women are spiritual equals with men in redemption. Gender was not taken into account when God designed and carried out redemption through Jesus’ atoning work (Gal 3:28). Women shared in the struggle of advancing the gospel with Paul (Ph 4:2-3). Wives were to be viewed by their Christian husbands as “fellow heirs of the grace of life” (1 Pt 3:7).

**Role Differentiation:** Paul, under no less inspiration of the Holy Spirit than in the preceding verses, defines different roles for men and women both in the church and in the Christian home, 1 Cor 11:1-16; 14:34-36; 1 Tm 2:8-15; Eph 5:22-33; Col 3:18-21; 1 Pt 3:1-7. This means in Grace Bible Church we believe the role of pastor-elder is reserved for men alone. This is due to our role differentiations. This means also that the elders of Grace Bible Church encourage our marriages to reflect the spiritual equality and role differentiations of Scripture in our families.

As sinful genders who have come to taste God’s glory and life transforming work through the cross of Jesus, we see something beautiful and exalted in our biblical manhood and womanhood. We do not tolerate a “patriarchal”, out-dated view of the genders because that is what our tradition dictates. We embrace the spiritual equality AND the role differentiation given us from our sovereign God. Why? God has something to reveal about Himself through BOTH our spiritual equality AND our role differentiation. There is spiritual equality within the Godhead but role differentiation between Members as well (1 Cor. 11:3).

We understand the difficulty that this position creates in many people’s mind in our culture today. However, we hold to this view of men and women unashamedly. We are eager that God be seen within our church family and our nuclear families as we rejoice in our spiritual equality at the cross as well as obediently embrace these distinct roles He has given us.

**The sermons entitled, “Households for Christ” from Ephesians chapters 5-6, can be found at: <http://gbcaz.org/series/ephesians>**

We believe God created the universe in six literal days around 6000 years ago.

God says that He created the heavens and the earth in six days, and He did it all by Himself (Genesis 1:1-31; Exodus 20:11; Isaiah 44:24). Many Christians today believe that God created over billions of years, and He used evolutionary processes to do it. These two views approach the Bible in divergent ways. The first view allows the words of the Bible to stand at face value, describing the events of the origin of the universe from the perspective of the one eyewitness to those events - God Himself. The second view attempts to reconcile the Biblical record with currently prevailing scientific theories about origins.

We believe the issue of origins is important. It is not simply a debate about how things began. How you view the first three chapters is indicative of how you view God, the Bible, and fallen man.

On this issue, The Nature of God is at stake.

The creation displays God's eternal power and divine nature (Romans 1:20). God's ability to speak into existence things that did not formerly exist is an important evidence of His nature and power. Throughout the Bible God stakes His own reputation -- His identity as the only true God, His power to rescue His people from their enemies, His ability to comfort, and His power to save people from their sins -- on His ability to create everything from nothing (*Isaiah 40:12,22,25,26; 42:5,8; 44:24; 45:6,7,12; 2 Corinthians 4:6; 5:17*).

On this issue, The Nature of Scripture is at stake.

In regard to its Authorship: the Bible is the Word of God. The Bible is God's revelation, His self-disclosure. God is the One who wrote the Bible, and God chose to begin His self-disclosure to man in Genesis 1. God was the only person present at the creation of everything, and He has told us how He created it all.

In regard to its Authority: because Genesis is God's record of origins, it bears all the authority of God on everything it speaks about. God's revelation about origins is in keeping with His character. He cannot lie (*Titus 1:2*).

In regard to its Clarity: God communicated in order to be understood. The Bible is God's revelation to man (He is revealing something, not concealing). Communication is intrinsic to God's being, and He imparted communication to mankind. God communicates in language in order to be understood. We believe that the Bible is intended by its Author to be understood. To claim that Genesis 1 should be understood to mean that the world was not created in six days is a violation of language and an affront to God's ability to communicate clearly.

We believe that the Bible, including its introductory chapters, should be read at face value. We trust the words of Scripture, as intended by their Author, over and against any other competing sources of information brought to the texts of Scripture from outside the texts of Scripture. There is nothing in the texts that would compel one to believe in long creative ages or an old universe. The arguments for an old universe and long creative ages come from outside the texts of Scripture.

On this issue, The Nature of Fallen Man is at stake.

Unsaved man willfully rebels against God, and he does so by nature (Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 8:7-8). According to the first chapter of Romans, every unsaved human being knows that God exists, recognizing His existence, His nature, and His power from what has been created. Sinful man does not, however, worship God as a result of this knowledge. Instead he suppresses the truth in unrighteousness, professing to be wise, proving himself to be foolish, using the very capacities given to him by God to deny the existence of God!

Current scientific theories of origins that disagree with God's account, including the theory of evolution, fall into the category of man's unrighteous truth-suppression. No man (and no scientist!) is a merely objective observer of his universe. Sinful humans invent and believe alternatives to God's record of origins because of their rebellion against God, not because universe tells us that it is old or that it is the consequence of purely natural forces (*Psalms 19:1-6; Romans 1:18-23*).

Upholding the truth of the Bible's record on origins helps to reveal the serious nature of the fallen state of mankind. Man is in such rebellion that he will do whatever he can to suppress the truth of God as Creator and Judge (*Romans 1:18-23*).

**The Genesis series can be found at: <http://gbc.org/series/genesis/>**