

Opening Prayer

Let Us Begin in Prayer

Father, last week we confessed that Your Word is true. Tonight we bring You our questions, and we bring them without fear, because You are not threatened by honest examination.

*Keep us from two errors: **forcing the text to say what it does not say**, and **abandoning what it plainly does say**. Give us patient minds, humble hearts, and a love for the truth more than for winning.*

Teach us to trust You where we cannot yet see. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Psalm 12:6 • John 10:35



WEEK TWO · INERRANCY

Tested and Trustworthy

Hard Questions, Careful Limits, and the Confessing Church

Key Text: **Psalm 12:6; John 10:35**

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WHERE WE HAVE BEEN

Now the Hard Part

Last week: Scripture is God-breathed, and therefore true in all it affirms.

- Tonight, the objections — the ones raised in classrooms, in comment sections, and at two in the morning.
- A doctrine that cannot survive its hardest questions was never worth holding.
- Inerrancy has been examined for centuries. It has not needed our protection so much as our patience.
- Charles Spurgeon, *Christ and His Co-Workers* (MTP #2467)



KEY TEXT

Read Aloud Together

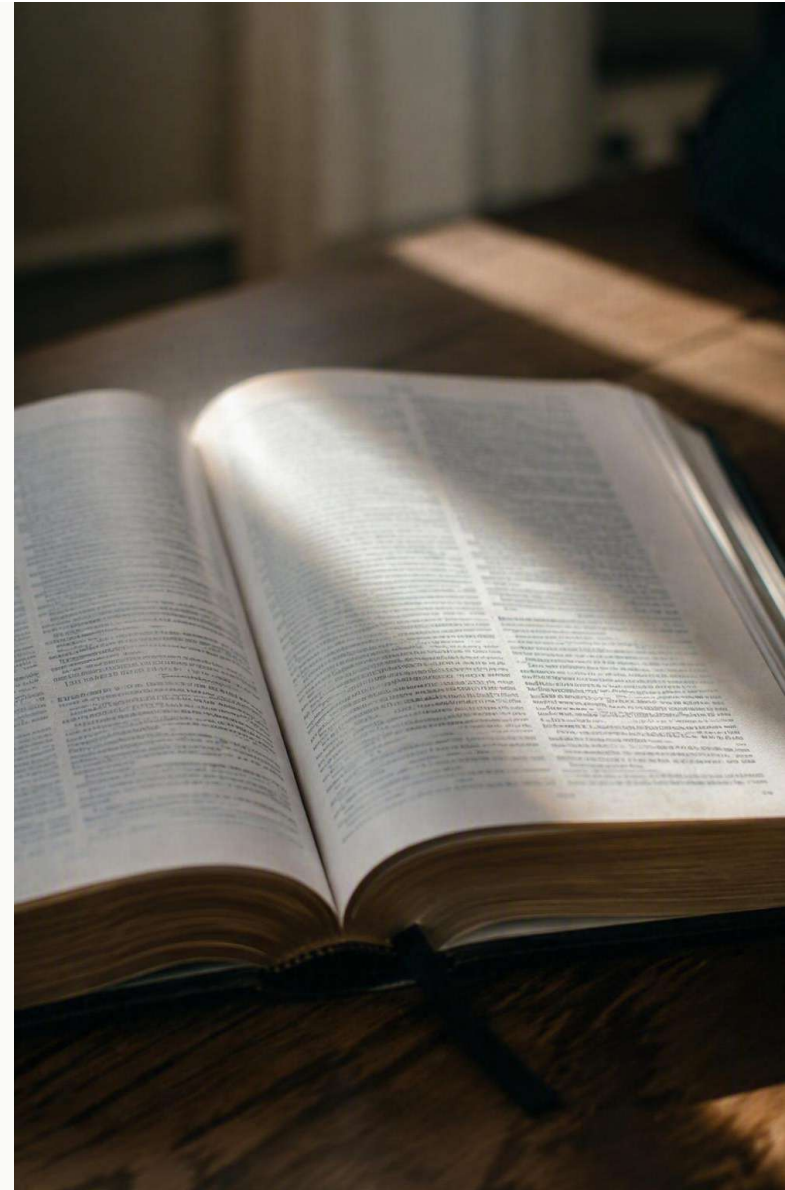
“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”

“If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;”

THE IMAGE: Refined silver is not untested silver — it is silver that came through the fire.

Scripture came through every skeptic since Celsus — still standing.

Psalm 12:6–7 · John 10:35



TWO DITCHES

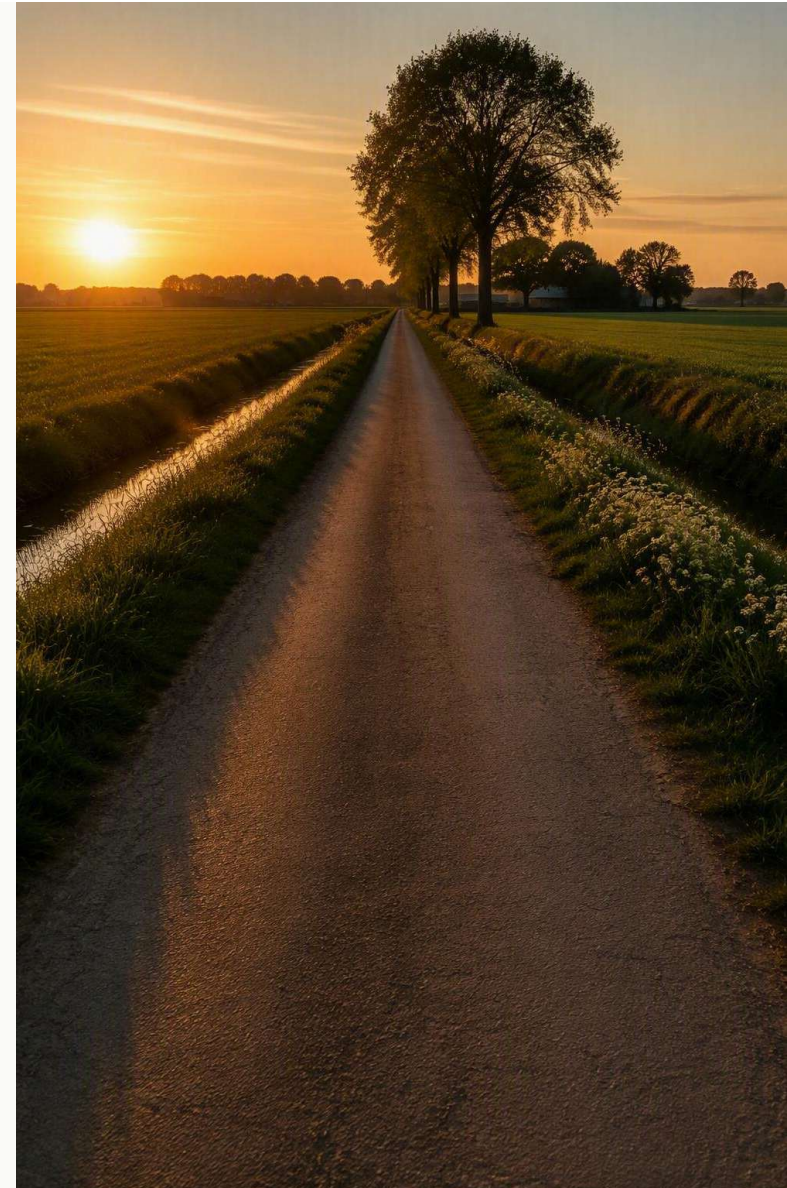
Errors on Both Sides of the Road

Two ways to mishandle a hard passage, both feeling like faithfulness.

- The first forces a **harmony** the text will not bear.
- The second **surrenders at the first difficulty** and calls it honesty.
- Between them: read carefully, wait patiently, trust the Author.

I Limits · II Hard Texts · III The Text · IV The Confession

An unanswered question is not the same thing as a proven error.



CHICAGO STATEMENT 1978 • ARTICLES X, XIII, XVIII

I. What the Doctrine Does Not Claim

“We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose.”

Article X: inspiration applies to the autographic text, not to copies.

- Article XIII permits ordinary language, round numbers, and free quotation.
- It also distinguishes what Scripture affirms from what it merely reports.
- Article XVIII: read each genre on its own terms.



HARD PASSAGES

II. Working an Apparent Contradiction

“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever.” — Deuteronomy 29:29

At the tomb, mentioning one angel never denied two.

- Honest eyewitnesses differ in vantage, order, and detail.
- Samuel–Kings/Chronicles numerals: best explained as scribal.
- Method: context, genre, then patience.

Most alleged contradictions dissolve on careful reading. A few remain open — and we can live with that.



THE HARDER CASE

Where the Numbers Differ

Real differences in the Hebrew manuscripts, best explained as copying.

Ahaziah's age—22 vs. 42 (2 Kgs 8:26; 2 Chr 22:2)

Jehoiachin's age—18 vs. 8 (2 Kgs 24:8; 2 Chr 36:9)

Census of Israel—800,000 vs. 1,100,000 (2 Sam 24:9; 1 Chr 21:5)

Famine offered—seven years vs. three (2 Sam 24:13; 1 Chr 21:12)

Solomon's stalls—40,000 vs. 4,000 (1 Kgs 4:26; 2 Chr 9:25)

The molten sea—2,000 baths vs. 3,000 (1 Kgs 7:26; 2 Chr 4:5)

Not one of them touches a doctrine, a promise, or a command.



THE TEXT WE HOLD

III. Has It Come Down to Us Intact?

“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.” — Isaiah 40:8

Some 5,800 Greek New Testament manuscripts.

- Great Isaiah Scroll — a millennium earlier.
- Nearly all spelling or word order; no doctrine.
- Tel Dan Stele (1993); Pilate Stone (1961).

God who breathed the Word providentially preserved it.



THE LONG LINE

Not a Modern Invention

“Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” — Jude 3

c. AD 405

Augustine: the canonical authors made no mistakes.

c. 1270

Aquinas: nothing false under the literal sense.

1646

Westminster confesses Scripture’s authority and purity.

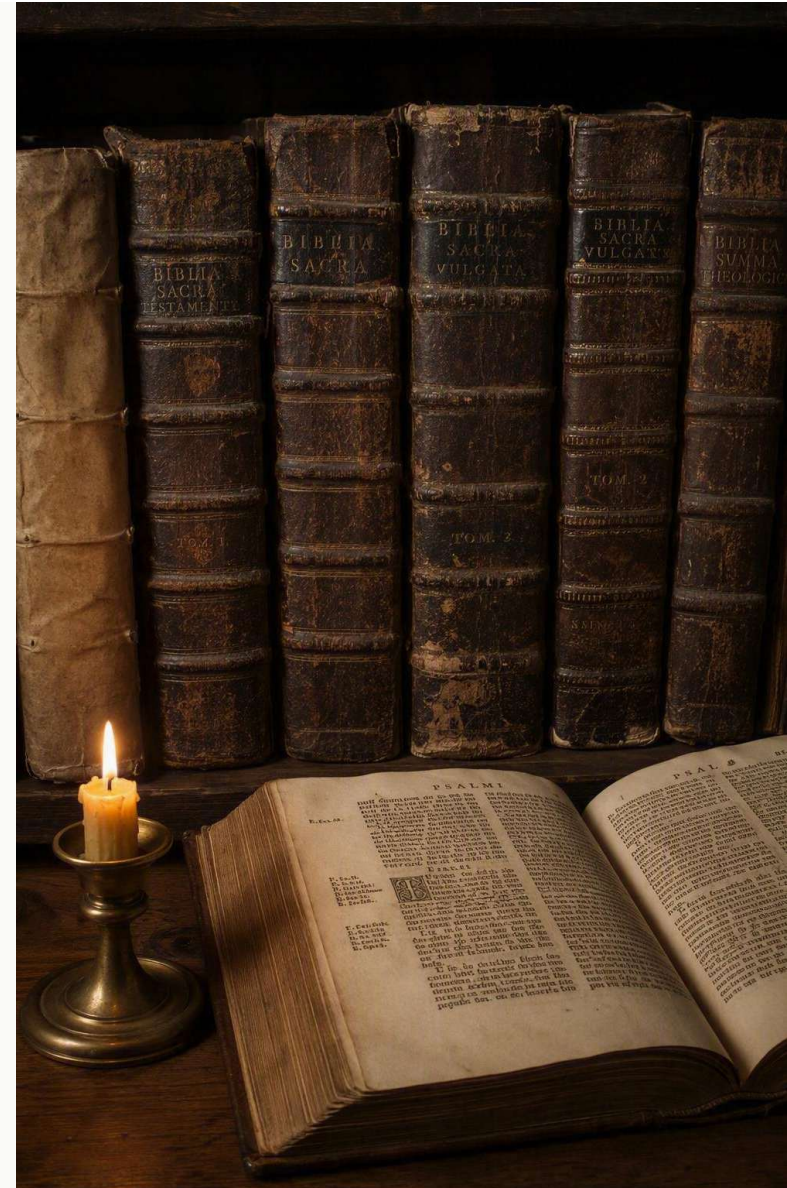
1881

Hodge and Warfield answer higher criticism.

1978

Chicago Statement — nearly 300 evangelical leaders.

Not a recent reaction. The line runs back to the Fathers.



IV. The Church Has Said This Before

“The authority of the Holy Scripture dependeth wholly upon God, the author thereof.”

Westminster I.4: the authority of Scripture dependeth wholly upon God, who is truth itself, the Author thereof.

I.5: full persuasion comes from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word.

I.8: The Scriptures were kept pure in all ages by God’s singular care and providence, and are therefore authentic.

I.10: The supreme judge in every controversy is the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.



Method Appendix: Observation, Interpretation, Application

Text	Observation	Interpretation	Application
2 Timothy 3:16a	“All scripture is given by inspiration of God” — theopneustos, God-breathed.	Scripture is breathed out by God, not merely approved by Him. Its Author cannot lie.	Open it as God speaking, not as a book about God.
2 Timothy 3:16b-17	Four uses named: doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness.	Every use assumes a dependable text. A Bible that errs cannot be leaned on.	Ask which of the four you need now, and let the text do it.
2 Peter 1:20-21	No prophecy came by the will of man; holy men “spake as they were moved.”	Concursus: the Spirit carried the writers along. Fully God’s words, fully theirs.	Stop sorting Scripture into God’s parts and men’s parts. Receive it whole.

Method Appendix: Bringing the Hard Questions to the Text

Text	Observation	Interpretation	Application
Psalm 12:6	The words of the LORD are “as silver tried in a furnace... purified seven times.”	Refined silver is tested silver. Scripture has already come through the fire.	Bring your hardest question to the text, not around it.
Psalm 12:7	“Thou shalt keep them... thou shalt preserve them... for ever.”	Preservation is God’s work across generations, not ours to secure.	Defend less, read more. The Word does not need our protection.
John 10:35	Jesus rests an entire argument on one clause: “the scripture cannot be broken.”	Christ held the highest view of Scripture, down to a single word.	Name the passage you hold at arm’s length and put it back under His verdict.

CLOSE

Discussion & Further Study

Discussion Questions

- Which objection to the Bible has troubled you most, and how has tonight reframed it?
- Where is the line between honest questioning and quietly reserving a veto?

Recommended Resources

- Vern Poythress, *Inerrancy and the Gospels*
- Daniel Wallace, *Revisiting the Corruption of the New Testament*
- Michael Kruger, *Canon Revisited*
- Westminster Confession, ch. 1.4–10 · Psalm 12; Isaiah 40

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