

Foundational Teachings



100 Years Ago—Azusa Street Revival

—by Charles P. Schmitt,
D.Min., D.D.

Topeka, Kansas, Holiness preacher Charles Parham was impressed to open a short-term Bible school on January 1, 1906. The most important person to be touched by Parham at this school was a son of slaves, a black Holiness preacher named William Joseph Seymour (1870–1922).

Convinced of Parham's teaching on the "baptism of the Holy Spirit accompanied by the physical evidence of speaking in other tongues," Seymour accepted a call to pastor a newly formed Holiness congregation on Santa Fe Street in Los Angeles, California. His first sermon was from Acts 2:4, which earned for him a padlocked door on the meeting place by that very evening.

From there Seymour accepted hospitality at the home of Richard and Ruth Asberry at 216 Bonnie Brae Street, where Seymour gave himself to prayer. Soon the Holy Spirit was poured out. Carl Brumback described the event: "As though hit by a bolt of lightning, the entire company was knocked from their chairs to the floor. Seven began to speak in diverse kinds of tongues and to magnify God. Soon it was noised over the city that God was pouring out His Spirit. White people joined the colored saints and also joined the ranks of those filled with the Holy Ghost."

Soon large crowds gathered at the Asberry home. Only after part of the floor collapsed were the meetings moved to an abandoned A.M.E. Church building at 312 Azusa Street in mid-April of 1906. Vinson Synan calls the meetings at Azusa Street among "the most far-reaching religious meetings of the twentieth century." Synan continues: "No sooner had Seymour begun preaching in the Azusa location than a monumental revival began. Scores of people began to 'fall under the power' and arise speaking in other tongues." Services continued daily for 1,000 days.

News of the happenings were publicized in the Los Angeles Times (and in not-too-

favorable language: "New Sect of Fanatics Is Breaking Loose"). The great San Francisco earthquake, in which nearly 10,000 lost their lives, hit at the very same time—in mid-April 1906—and contributed to the mystique of the hour. Hundreds and then thousands began to flock to Azusa Street by the trainloads, from all across the United States and Canada and even from around the world. As they drew near to the building, people would fall down under the power of God, blocks away. Angels were seen, and fire was seen consuming the building just like the burning bush in Exodus. In the meetings there was complete integration of the races—"the color line was washed away in the blood."

Frank Bartleman, a Holiness journalist and one of the early participants in the revival, described the Azusa Street meetings in these words: "Suddenly the Spirit would fall upon the congregation. God Himself would give the altar call. Men would fall all over the house, like the slain in battle, or rush to the altar en masse to seek God . . . The services ran almost continuously. Seeking souls could be found under the power almost any hour, night and day . . . God's presence became more and more wonderful. In that old building . . . God took strong men and women to pieces, and put them together again for His glory. It was a tremendous overhauling process. Pride and self-assertion, self-importance and self-esteem could not survive there . . . No subjects or sermons were announced ahead of time, and no special speakers for such an hour. No one knew what might be coming, what God would do. All was spontaneous, ordered of the Spirit. We wanted to hear from God . . ." Bartleman continued: "Brother Seymour generally sat behind two empty shoeboxes, one on top of the other. He usually kept his head inside the top one during the meeting in prayer."

John G. Lake described William Seymour in these grand words: "God had put such a hunger into that man's heart that when the fire of God came it glorified him. I do not believe any other man in modern times had a more wonderful deluge of God in his life . . . and the glory and power of a real Pentecost swept the world . . ."

The Azusa Street revival continued in strength for three years, from 1906 to 1909. Unfortunately, ongoing strife eventually caused it to diminish in effectiveness. Many whites left to begin their own churches. By 1914, the

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Captured by Eternity's Values

—by Dotty E. Schmitt

In the midst of a materialistic, hedonistic and humanistic culture, the Scriptures clearly admonish us: "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Col. 3:2). And it is said that Moses "persevered because he saw Him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27b).

It is essential for us as believers to have a biblical worldview that is evidenced in the way we live our lives and view our culture. In regard to trials and sufferings, Paul emphatically declared: "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary. But what is unseen is eternal" (2 Cor. 4:17, 18).

In a most powerful discussion on the issues of life and death, Paul clearly stated an eternal fact: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat

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Captured by Eternity's Values

of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:17). From these, and numerous other Scriptures, it is very clear that the way we as believers presently live determines our eternal destiny.

My heart is captured by these truths of Scripture. It is obvious that in these critical last days, His Spirit is brooding over us as a people—encouraging, admonishing and motivating us to cultivate such a depth of intimacy with Him that every thought, motive and action is brought into the light of His presence and His truth! Paul could endure everything and anything for the sake of the Lord and His kingdom because he lived with the values of eternity moving in every fiber of his being. He knew the power of the secret place, being fully assured that his "Father who sees what is done in secret will reward openly" (Mt. 6:4, 6, 18).

Paul had such a high view of the righteous judgments of his God that in the light of other people's opinions and criticisms he could boldly write, "My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore, judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motive of men's hearts. At that time, each will receive his praise from God" (1 Cor. 4:4, 5).

As these profound truths deeply saturate our minds and hearts, we will understand something more of the fear of the Lord—which is to hate evil and love the Lord—which continues to woo us into greater depths of knowing, trusting, obeying and loving Him! He will have an end-time Bride who does indeed wear the combat boots of His power, presence and purity; a Bride who endures triumphantly by seeing Him who is invisible! †

The Da Vinci Code

—by Charles P. Schmitt

Dan Brown's popular and controversial fiction, *The Da Vinci Code*, has also now come to movie screens. Underlying Brown's strange novel is a mixture of ancient heretical Gnosticism and medieval folklore—namely, that Jesus Christ fathered a daughter with Mary Magdalene, whose descendants founded the "Merovingian dynasty." According to Brown, a Roman Catholic sect called Opus Dei has been killing people to keep secret this relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene. Dan Brown also makes Leonardo da Vinci the past leader of a secret order, the Priori of Sion, whose mission it is to guard the documents proving the bloodline of Christ's child. Brown also assures us that it is Mary Magdalene and not John who is sitting next to Jesus in Da Vinci's masterpiece, *The Last Supper* (If that were true, where then was John?). As far as the authority of the Word of God goes, Dan Brown clearly dismisses that. One of his

leading characters dogmatically states: "The Bible is a product of man ... not of God. The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds. Man created it ... and it has evolved through countless translations, additions and revisions. History has never had a definite version of the book."

The facts, however, are that the Christian Church has always accepted as God's Word the record of the four apostolic gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—and has always rejected spurious "gnostic gospels," such as the gospel of Thomas (which has Christ teaching Hindu and Buddhist philosophy), the gospel of Philip (which identifies Mary Magdalene as Christ's "companion"), and the gospel of Mary (which makes Mary Magdalene the chief instructor of the 12 apostles!)

Ancient Gnosticism (from the Greek word for "knowledge," gnosis) was a hydra with many heads—different mystical cults with strange mixtures of Judaism, Christianity, oriental mysticism and just plain hocus-pocus.

Paul confronted the Gnostics in his Colossian letter, and John spoke of their "antichrist spirit" in 1 John 4. Church Fathers such as Irenaeus wrote volumes against the Gnostics and their destructive heresies—heresies which mainly undercut and denigrated the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not strange that there should be such a renewed interest in Gnosticism in these last days!

The Mary Magdalene of God's Word

Mary Magdalene was one of many women whose life Jesus had touched. Along with the Twelve, there were "women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to

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A Rehearsal for Heaven

—by Charles P. Schmitt

It is clear, satan hates interculturalness, for he is the author of segregation and discrimination. But God is bringing forth a church in these last days that is actually “a rehearsal for heaven.” The phenomenon of mega churches is comparatively new in the earth. In the first century, there was really but one mega church—Jerusalem. (All the other churches were basically house churches.) Jerusalem, however, was very segregated and not intercultural. According to one recent news report, out of the 400,000 churches in America today, some are emerging as mega churches—churches with 2,000 or more participants on a Sunday morning. The amazing thing is that most of these mega churches are breaking into the area of interculturalness! God is indeed bringing forth His people in these last days as “a rehearsal for heaven”—where “a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language [are] standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb...” (Revelation 7:9). “And they sang a new song: You [Jesus] are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because You were slain, and with Your blood You purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:9–10).

There is no division in heaven; no segregation, no separation. Heaven is an integrated, intercultural place; and the Body of Christ is but a “rehearsal” for that wonderful and eternal reality! Welcome to the rehearsal! †

“...a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language [are] standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. . .”
—Revelation 7:9

Confessing the Sins of Our Fathers and of Our Nation

—by Charles P. Schmitt

Nehemiah, as he stood on the threshold of the mighty restoration of the City of God in his day, prayed a most unusual prayer: “O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of love with those who love Him and obey His commands . . . I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father’s house, have committed against You...” (Nehemiah 1:5–6).

One of the gravest sins we as a nation have committed against God, along with the deaths of so many of our preborn, has been the pain inflicted on minority peoples in America—all the way from the decimation of the First Nations Peoples to the enslavement of those kidnapped from the shores of Africa to work our plantations, right down to the present-day exploitation of Hispanic and Asian workers. The devastations that have recently come to our nation may well be responses from the God of heaven to our national sins.

The Church has not been free of these grievous sins either, starting with Chrysostom’s, “I hate the Jews. It is the duty of all Christians to hate the Jews,” to Luther’s “what then shall we Christians do with this damned, rejected

race of Jews?”, right down to the early history of our nation when people of color were denied communion in Christian churches and so on. And even in our homes—mine for example, for I was raised in a very prejudice-filled environment, especially against Hispanics, Jews and blacks; somehow the sins of our fathers must be addressed and repented of!

We—you and I—must rise up in the presence of our God confessing the sins that “we as a people, including myself and my father’s house, have committed against” our God. And confession, as was evident in Nehemiah’s day must be accompanied by the fruit of repentance before God (see Nehemiah chapter 10).

We presently have in our own congregation saints from nearly one third of all the nations in the world. And it was upon just such a people, “from every nation under heaven” that the Holy Spirit first fell in Pentecostal power in Acts chapter 2! As the Church, we must be a repenting, confessing people, and by our intentional interculturalness bring forth fruits in keeping with our repentance! And I believe, upon the altar of this kind of sacrifice, the fire of God will again fall from heaven! Amen! †

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100 Years Ago

Azusa Street Mission was but a small local black congregation. On September 28, 1922, William Seymour died a brokenhearted man. In 1972, Sidney Ahlstrom, the noted Church historian from Yale University, called Seymour “the most influential black leader in American religious history.” Charles Parham died in 1929. The Azusa Street Mission itself was torn down in 1931, eventually making room for a parking lot. Today it is a Japanese cultural center.

Vinson Synan gives an excellent historical perspective on the Azusa Street revival: “The Azusa Street revival is commonly regarded as the beginning of the modern Pentecostal Movement. Although many persons had spoken in tongues in the United States in the years preceding 1906, this meeting brought the practice to the attention of the world and

served as a catalyst for the formation of scores of Pentecostal denominations. Directly or indirectly, practically all of the Pentecostal groups in existence can trace their lineage to the Azusa Street Mission . . . The Pentecostal Movement . . . can be viewed as the logical outcome of repeated calls for a ‘new Pentecost.’ In historical perspective . . . the evidence of speaking in tongues as a ‘third blessing’ superimposed on the other two . . . the movement that Parham and Seymour unleashed in Topeka and Los Angeles was destined to begin a new and important chapter in the history of Christianity.” Perhaps the most important chapter! †

—adapted from *Floods Upon the Dry Ground*

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Is the Body of Christ a Melting Pot or a Tossed Salad?

—by Charles P. Schmitt

Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “We were all baptized in one Spirit into one Body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the Body is not made up of one part but of many” (1 Corinthians 12:13–14).

Recently, a sister raised the question to Dotty and myself: “Is the Body of Christ a melting pot or a tossed salad?” Dotty immediately responded: “A tossed salad!” Everyone seemed to agree. But I was deep in thought.

Our nation has been called “a melting pot”—but some very severe problems have arisen from that concept, especially when the majority metal has been white/Anglo. True, other minorities—other brightly colored metals—have been added to the pot, but the majority metal—by virtue of sheer dominance—has made the whole look like itself. The identity and the color, the beauty and the value of the other metals has been “swallowed up,” if you will, in the mix. And I believe the current social turbulence in our American society is a reflection of just that—the “melting pot” concept with its loss of cultural identities and the consequent denigration of the value of other cultures.

The Body of Christ has been called to be more than a melting pot. At Immanuel’s Church, we are a church of various minorities—European and other Caucasians, Native Americans, Hispanics, African-Americans, Asians, African Africans, Middle-Easterners, and so on. But our church culture can, at times, seem to be predominately white, Anglo Saxon, Protestant and Charismatic—and all too much of our other cultures and backgrounds and identities have seemingly become absorbed and melted in that predominance!

What then is the “tossed salad” concept? One whole, but made up of many different parts—one salad made up of lettuce, tomatoes, onions, leeks, carrots, etc. The Church is one Body, Paul writes to the Corinthians, but made up of many differing parts, each contributing its uniqueness to the whole, blending together into one without a loss of the distinctiveness of each part! My, how onions add to a salad, but they remain uniquely onions, and that is why they add so much to the whole salad.

To see people wearing clothing special to their own cultural hearts is a joy! To see a blend of different cultures reflected in our leadership and ministry is enriching! To worship to the sound of a different drum—that is a foretaste of heaven! To have close friends from different cultures, drawn close to our hearts by the love of God, that is what the Body of Christ is all about!

God is calling us all to take the next step up—into an inter culturalness that brings the beauty of each contributing part into the beauty of the whole—the beautiful Body of Christ! Welcome to this foretaste of heaven! †

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The Da Vinci Code

support them out of their own means” (Luke 8:1-3). John, commenting on the crucifixion tells us that “near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene” (John 19:25). Mary Magdalene was also among the first three women to come to the tomb on Resurrection Sunday morning (Mark 16:1). In all, Mary Magdalene’s name is mentioned a little more than a dozen times—but never in any way to imply that she was Jesus’ wife, lover, or sexual partner!

One of the most revealing incidents is in John “when Jesus [dying on the cross] saw His mother there, and the disciple whom He loved

standing nearby, He said to His mother, ‘Dear woman, here is your son,’ and to [John] the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ From that time on, this disciple took her into his home” (John 19:26–27). If Dan Brown’s fiction had any basis, and Jesus and Mary Magdalene were husband and wife, it is inconceivable that Jesus would have gone to such lengths to insure that His mother was taken care of, all the while neglecting His (alleged) wife who was standing nearby!

Paul, speaking of the last days, declares of some: “They perish because they refuse to love the truth and so be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2:10). May God make us lovers of the truth! Our eternal salvation hangs on it! †

Biblical Prosperity

—by Charles P. Schmitt

The Scriptures speak of the blessing of God resting on the lives of God’s people. Paul in 2 Corinthians 8:9 makes an amazing statement concerning our Lord Jesus Christ—“that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich”—rich with all kinds of spiritual and material blessings! Prosperity is not alien to the gospel of grace. But what we do with God’s blessings is another story.

Paul writes to the Corinthians, “God is able to make all grace abound to you so that in all things at all times, having all you need [but not always all that you want], you will abound in every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8). Paul further declares, “You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion . . . [resulting] in thanksgiving to God” (2 Corinthians 9:11).

The prosperity of God rests upon us in order that we might become a channel of blessing into the lives of those who have so very little. We sin against the God who blesses us when we consume His blessings on our own desires.

When I think of the needy in India, walking long miles because they can’t even afford a bicycle, I think of what a blessing it would be to do as Bill Gates has been doing, distributing his prosperity to those in such desperate need!

Someday we will all stand before our coming King. Some will be greeted with the words: “Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite Me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe Me.” To others Lord Jesus will say: “Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat . . . I needed clothes and you clothed Me. I was sick and you looked after Me.” Indeed “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me” (Matthew 25:31–46).

Doing good works cannot save us. Scripture is plain on that issue. But what we do with the prosperity that God blesses us with evidences whether we have a faith in God that saves, or just a dead faith and a lifeless confession (James 2:14–26). “Lord, help us to so live before You that in that Great Day we will be welcomed by You into an eternal reward! Amen.” †

One Man Lost His Faith— Yet the Faith of Others Was Strengthened

—by Charles P. Schmitt

On March 5, 2006, *The Washington Post* published an article entitled, “Biblical Scholar Bart Ehrman’s Faith, Lost in Translation.” Bart Ehrman is the author of a bestselling book that picks apart the Gospels as being full of contradictions. He is, currently, the chair of the department of religious studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and was once a fundamentalist scholar, who, according to the *Post*, “peered so hard into the origins of Christianity that he lost his faith altogether.” Ehrman was a graduate of Moody Bible Institute and a former student at Wheaton College, had a “bona fide born-again experience” in his mid-teens. Today, sadly, he is an agnostic. He confesses that the emptiness he felt as a teen before receiving Christ has returned, “but he fills it with family, friends, work and the finer things in life.”

Ehrman’s faith in the New Testament record was challenged and then failed around various biblical issues. Interestingly, I personally became aware of these very same issues as a young Bible school student, and even though my faith was challenged, it was strengthened in the process! In this same *Washington Post* article, I was encouraged to read the observations about Darrel Bock, research professor of New Testament studies at the Dallas Theological Seminary. “Like many Christian scholars who have studied the ancient scrolls, Bock says his faith was strengthened by the same process that destroyed Ehrman’s.” That was my experience as well.

The Minor Issue of “Differences”

Much is made about the “differences” that appear in the various ancient Greek manuscripts from which we get our various versions and translations of the New Testament (the AV, the NIV, the NASB, the ASV, the RSV, plus The Message, The Living Bible, The Book, etc.). In Lesson 3 of my book, *A Firm Foundation*, I brought out the fact that there are around 5,300 known ancient Greek New Testament manuscripts (the *Post* says 5,700). Besides these, there are over 10,000 ancient Latin copies and 9,300 ancient versions in other languages, making a total of over 24,000 ancient manuscripts (nearly 40 times more than the next closest ancient writing, Homer’s *Iliad*, which has only 643 surviving ancient manuscripts)!

These ancient New Testament Greek manuscripts, however, pose a unique problem for present day scholars because they were copied in capital letters, with no spaces or punctuation between the words, and they, along with the other 15,000 manuscripts in Latin and other languages, were all copied by hand! (Thankfully, Gutenberg’s press in the 1400s changed all of that!) Consequently, virtually all of the many “differences” that appear between these tens of thousands of handwritten manuscripts of our New Testament are understandable—one letter incorrectly copied or omitted, a word left out, etc. But none of these differences affect any of our Christian doctrines!

Nearly 50 years ago when I studied this very issue, my faith was actually strengthened to realize that we did have an accurate New Testament in spite of all the cumbersome problems of working with thousands of handwritten manuscripts—handwritten manuscripts with no spaces between the words, and with no punctuation marks in the sentences!

Four “Major Problems”

Four “major problems” that are cited in the article are well-known to Bible reading Christians—

1. The seeming differences between John’s Gospel and Matthew, Mark and Luke. The contents and the style of writing are so different that scholars refer to Matthew, Mark and Luke as the “synoptics” (lit.: the “same view”). Matthew, Mark and Luke wrote just past the middle of the first century—the earliest writing may have been within 15–20 years of Jesus’ ascension. John, it is believed, wrote at the end of the first century, possibly nearly 50–60 years after Jesus ascended into heaven. Simply stated, John chose to write a final fresh view of the life of Jesus—not duplicating existing information, but majoring on facts not

already explored by Matthew, Mark or Luke. For example (one of my favorites this year during Passion week)—the story of the inquiring Greeks who wanted to see Jesus on that first Palm Sunday is peculiar to John (John 12:20–33). But what an impressive account this is, issuing in Jesus’ wonderful statement in John 12:32: “I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.” I’m not, consequently, dismayed by John’s slightly different view! I’m blest!

2. A second “major problem” is whether the account of the woman taken in adultery in John 7:53–8:11 is part of the original biblical text or not, because it is missing from some of the earliest manuscripts. Scholars ponder whether it was then added by some zealous scribe who experienced an abundance of the grace of God in his own life, or was it perhaps omitted by some legalistic scribe who feared people would take Jesus’ mercy as a license for sin? The oldest Greek manuscript omitting the account dates from the fourth century. However, manuscripts dating from the third century contain it! It is also found in the

Latin Vulgate (383 AD), and Jerome (378–430) testified that it was found in many Greek and Latin manuscripts in his day. And Papias actually referred to it in 130 AD! For myself, I see nothing in the account that contradicts the way Jesus ministered, and everything about the event described seems to be just like Jesus (But certainly nothing to lose one’s faith over—one way or the other)!

3. A third “problem” is the statement in the King James Version from 1 John 5:7 concerning the three “that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.” Apart from the KJV, virtually all other versions and translations, Protestant and Catholic, omit or bracket this statement. The NIV correctly states that these

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One Man's Lost His Faith

words are “not found in any Greek manuscripts before the 16th century.” So this probably is an over-zealous scribe’s addition! The *Post* article erroneously, however, calls this one statement a “cornerstone of Christian theology ... the only place where [the doctrine of the Holy Trinity] is spelled out in the entire Bible.” That observation is completely false! In the very first chapter of Genesis, the Lord refers to Himself as a plurality: “Let us make man in Our image, in Our likeness...” In Numbers 6:22–27, Jehovah reveals Himself to be the triune God who thrice blesses His people, and in Isaiah 6:3 our God is revealed as the thrice Holy One. In the commission of Matthew 28:19, Jesus speaks of baptizing in “the Name [singular] of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit [the three]; this is our triune God! 2 Corinthians 13:14 reflects the same thought—“may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God [the Father], and the fellowship of

And friends, after everything is said and done, our faith—though it rests on the Holy Word of God—is really our faith in a Person, our Lord Jesus Christ!

the Holy Spirit be with you all.” This same thought is found in Ephesians 4:4–6, Paul speaks of one Spirit ... one Lord ... one God and Father of all...” The doctrine of a triune (three-in-one) God is testified to in many places in Scripture, and does not rise or fall on whether 1 John 5:7 was in the original text or not!

4. A final “problem” according to the *Post* and Bart Ehrman is the question of the ending of Mark’s Gospel. The NIV states, “the earliest manuscripts [which are only two in number, “B” and “Aleph”] do not have Mark 16:9–20.” It is entirely possible that because all the ancient manuscripts were scrolls (and not bound books as we have today), that the ending of one of the earliest Mark scrolls was damaged in the process of unrolling and re-rolling and just fell apart. Consequently, all ongoing manuscripts from that one parent manuscript would be lacking that ending.

Apart from these two ancient manuscripts (“B” and “Aleph”), of all the others ... [618 of them] there is not one which leaves out these twelve verses! The two

oldest Syriac manuscripts (from the second and third centuries) contain these 12 verses and these Syriac manuscripts are older than any Greek manuscript in existence! From the second century on, the Latin versions, the Gothic versions, the Egyptian versions, the Armenian and Ethiopian versions and the Georgian version all contain these twelve verses. And besides these versions, there are hundreds of ecclesiastical writers (nearly 100 of them older than our oldest Greek manuscripts), and all of these writers refer to these 12 verses! Papias, one of the earliest, in AD 100, refers to them, and Justin Martyr (AD 151) quotes from them, as does Irenaeus (AD 180). Apart from all of that, there is almost nothing in these twelve verses that is not reiterated elsewhere in the New Testament! And I personally have never felt threatened in my faith over this or any of these other seeming “problems.”

And friends, after everything is said and done, our faith—though it rests on the Holy Word of God—is really our faith in a person, our Lord Jesus Christ! He it is who personally saves us! And He is personally sanctifying us! And He lives personally in all our lives by His Holy Spirit! Our faith, though inspired by the Holy Word of God and founded on that Word, is yet in a person—our Lord Jesus Christ! And He remains “the same, yesterday, today and forever.” And how one man lost his faith has actually become the way in which the faith of many others has been strengthened! †

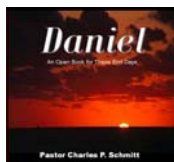
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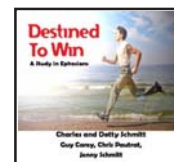
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