

**Text:** 1 Jn 5.7

We come to the last major passage of controversy, 1 Jn 5.7. Unlike the previous two passages we considered where there is sufficient early testimony to inspire confidence in them, this passage has virtually no early and middle ages Greek testimony at all. There is some Greek testimony in the later part of the manuscript period, but very little of that.

### III. The “Comma Johanneum” (1 Jn 5.7)

NAU 1 **John 5:6** This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

KJV 1 **John 5:6** This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

#### A. Erasmus and the Greek New Testament

1. The *Comma* left OUT of the first and second editions of Erasmus' GNT
2. The *Comma* not found in any mss that Erasmus examined
3. But the *Comma* included in the third edition of Erasmus' GNT
4. Attacks
  - a. Edward Lee and Diego Lopez Zuniga attacked Erasmus for ignoring the *Comma* and “hence encouraging ‘Arianism’.”
  - b. Erasmus responds:

“Is it negligence and impiety, if I did not consult manuscripts which were simply not within my reach? I have at least assembled whatever I could assemble. Let Lee produce a Greek MS. which contains what my edition does not contain and let him show that that manuscript was within my reach. Only then can he reproach me with negligence in sacred matters.”

5. Notes to Erasmus' third edition. (Codex Montfortianus, now at Trinity College, Dublin)
  - a. "I have restored the text ... so as not to give anyone an occasion for slander." (White, p. 61)
  - b. "But to return to the business of the reading: from our remarks it is clear that the Greek and Latin manuscripts vary, and in my opinion there is no danger in accepting either reading." (White, p. 61)

B. The Greek manuscript evidence for the *Comma*: all in minuscules (late origin)

1. Four minuscules have it in the margin. These are dated in the following centuries:
  - a. 221 - X
  - b. 88 - XII
  - c. 429 - XIV
  - d. 636 - XV
2. Four minuscules have it in the text itself. These are dated in the following centuries:
  - a. 2318 - XVIII
  - b. 61 - XVI
  - c. 629 - XIV
  - d. 918 - XVI
3. Not found in any other Gk mss. containing 1<sup>st</sup> John

C. The Latin Evidence

1. Not found in the two oldest Latin mss
2. Earliest Latin mss containing *Comma* (m, q, l) are dated from the 5th to 7th C.
3. Is found in the vast majority of Latin mss (95% according to some)

D. The arguments of KJV Only for the *Comma*

1. Most will argue simply as a matter of faith: it is in the KJV, therefore God intended for it to be in the KJV and it is thus the Word of God.

2. Edward Hills, a KJV advocate says this:

- a. "In other words, it is not impossible that the *Johannine comma* was one of those few readings of the Latin *Vulgate* not occurring in the traditional Greek Text but incorporated into the Textus Receptus under the guiding providence of God. In these rare instances God called upon the usage of the Latin speaking church to correct the usage of the Greek-speaking church." quoted in White, p. 85
- b. Hills: "on believing principles, [it] must be regarded as genuine." quoted in White, p.85

## E. Conclusions

1. The *Comma* is orthodox and absolutely true in what it says.
2. However, the doctrine of the Trinity does not stand or fall on the inclusion of this verse.
3. The mss. evidence is very sparse at best.
4. Consequences of absence:
  - a. A significant theological passage disappeared from the actual Greek text for over 1200 years.
  - b. This is contrary to the concept of the tenacity of the text: i.e., the text tends to be maintained in spite of many, many copies over time.

The *Comma* is clearly not genuine. Of the three major passages of contention, it is the only one that one can categorically argue against.