

Manuscript Differences

1John 5:7-8

By Scott G MacLeod

In all articles, I plan, with the help of God, to provide the full story of what is being discussed. I have noticed that when it comes to reading books about Bible issues, the writers are often biased one way or the other, very hard to have someone present both sides of an issue and allow the reader to use common sense and come to ones own conclusion without the writer pushing his bias onto the reader.

It is very easy to slant anything one way by truthfully reporting only some of the facts. For example, there may be 10 facts encompassing a certain truth or story, when all 10 facts are laid out before the reader, the reader has the full picture. However, if I am biased one way and I accurately report to you points 2, 4, 6, 8 & 10 and purposely leave out points 1, 3, 5, 7 & 9, I can, therefore, mislead you into my way of thinking.

I heard someone say, 'Always beware of the sound of one hand clapping', that means, beware of someone who is telling one side of the story. We all know that it takes two hands to clap, but some people make so much noise on one side of an issue that that is all you hear.

I believe that everyone has to be honest with themselves and admit that we all have preconceived ideas about anything even before we have all the facts. I admit to you that I approach the Word of God with a preconceived idea that the Bible is the Word of God. I do not read it with the mindset that I am looking for proofs that it is the Word of God. No a thousand times over! I hold the Bible in my hand and believe that it is the Word of God.

In this article, we will discuss if the following 24 English words of 1John 5:7-8 should be in the Bible, '(7)...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...'. No other passage of the Word of God has been debated more than these 24 words and are often referred to as 'the Heavenly witness', 'Comma Johanneum' (Latin), 'Johannine Comma'(English) or the 'Trinitarian Formula'. The term 'comma' describes 'a group of words isolated as a single group'.

It may come as a surprise to some, but, many newer Bibles question or remove these words. In this article we will look at the evidence for and against the Johannine Comma and see which side is right.

As with all articles, we will have a look at three different voices: **VOICE OF THE CRITICS**, **VOICE OF THE CHURCH** and the **VOICE OF THE CHRISTIANS**.

I will start by showing how the verses appear in the KJV & NKJV translations. Next, I will show how the verses appear or do not in some newer Bibles.

KJV TRANSLATION: the words in blue are the words under consideration.

1John 5:7 For there are three that bear record **in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.**

1John 5:8 **And there are three that bear witness in earth,** the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

NKJV TRANSLATION: the words in blue are the words in question.

1John 5:7 For there are three that bear witness **in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.**

1John 5:8 **And there are three that bear witness on earth:** the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

Since the NIV and the ESV Study Bibles seem to be commonly used today, I will show how they have handles these 24 English words or the 'Johannine Comma'.

NIV STUDY BIBLE:

1 John 5:7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

NIV STUDY BIBLE MARGINAL NOTES:

You will notice that the following phrase (Johannine Comma) is removed from their translation, '**in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. 8 And there are three that testify on earth:**'. This phrase appears in the marginal notes with this comment, 'not found in any Greek manuscript before the fourteenth century'.

NIV STUDY BIBLE FOOTNOTES:

In the footnote section of their Bible they have the following comment, '...some older English versions add the words found in the NIV text note. But the addition is not found in any Greek manuscript or New Testament translation prior to the fourteenth century.'

I need you to make a mental note of the phrase in their footnote, we will discuss this in detail later.

ESV STUDY BIBLE:

1 John 5:7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.

ESV STUDY BIBLE MARGINAL NOTES:

No reference to the 24 English words! The reader is completely in the dark as to these words.

ESV STUDY BIBLE FOOTNOTE NOTES:

No reference to the 24 English words! The reader is completely in the dark as to these words.

It is amazing that the ESV does not even make a single reference to these 24 English words that we are looking at. According to their translation and notes, it is assumed that these words are not apart of Scripture.

VOICE OF THE CRITICS

We will start by considering comments from Bruce Metzger who was one of the world's best-known Textual Scholars of the 20th century. After the completion of the UBS4 Greek Text in 1993, (for more information on UBS4 Greek Text, please see the section 'Greek Manuscripts' under Textual Issues/Articles) Bruce Metzger put together a condensed book of notes that the translators used in determining what Greek words should or should not be used. The title of the book is, 'A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament UBS4, Second Edition, Bruce M. Metzger'. (For a picture of this book, please see 'List of Resources used for Manuscript Differences')

This book covers the whole of the New Testament and on pages 647-649 he deals with 1 John 5:7-8. We are told by Bruce Metzger that the Johannine Comma is spurious and has no right to be included in the New Testament, he claims that the Textus Receptus Greek Text (for more information on the Textus Receptus Greek Text, please see the section 'Greek Manuscripts' under Textual Issues/Articles) has added these words. His case is build upon 2 main points, one is called 'External Evidence' and the second is called 'Internal Probabilities' or 'Transcriptional Probability'. Big words, what do they mean? To put it very simply, External Evidence looks at all of the manuscripts that we have, be they Greek, Latin, etc., anything that is outside. Internal Probabilities looks at the style of writing, the words used, etc., anything inside.

I will briefly summarize his points under External Evidence and then move to Internal Probabilities. As for External Evidence he states that the passage is missing from every known Greek Manuscript but for 8, and of those 8, 4 have the Johannine Comma in the text and the other 4 have the Johannine Comma in the margin. We are further told that the Johannine Comma 'appears to be a translation from a late recension of the Latin Vulgate'. (His exact words in quotations). Some might not know that his phrase 'late recension' means a late copy of the Latin Vulgate that has deviated from its original copy. We are given the 8 MSS (manuscripts) as follows: 61, 88, 221, 429, 636, 918, 2318 & 629 that contain the Johannine Comma in either their text or margin. Here is the important point to get. You many remember that the NIV stated that no Greek MS (manuscript) contained the Johannine Comma prior to the 14th century. Well, according to Bruce Metzger, MS 221 is a 10th century MS that shows the Johannine Comma as an added variant reading! Now here is my question, added from what? It would have to be an

equally dated MS or an earlier one! It is very apparent that the NIV is wrong in their notes and therefore misleading.

Another bold statement that he makes is that none of the Greek Fathers ever quoted it. That statement is very misleading, because there is a Greek Father that alludes to the passage in his writings of the 4th Century. Gregory of Nazanzus (4th century Greek father) alludes to the passage and objects to the grammatical problem if the Johannine Comma is omitted. It is true that he does not quote the Johannine Comma directly, but, he does show us by his comments that he was familiar with it. So, now we are back as far as the 4th Century! Not too sure about you, but I am starting to see a bias in Bruce Metzger's comments!

For those who would like to dive a little deeper into the area of manuscripts, there is one MS that Bruce Metzger does not mention, Codex Britannicus, some scholars say that Codex Britannicus is just another copy of Codex Montfortianus (M61), but some do not. There are a number of reasons to consider why they are different, for instance, Codex Montfortianus omits all six articles ('the') from verse 7 and changes the order of 'Holy Spirit' to 'Spirit Holy'. Furthermore, in verse 8 the five articles are omitted, the conjunction 'and' just before the last phrase is omitted, and the entire last phrase is removed, 'these three agree in one'. For these reasons some have concluded that they are very different the one from the other, for more information on this see Charles Forster's book 'A New Plea for the Authenticity of the Text of the Three Heavenly Witnesses' (Cambridge:Deighton Bell and Co., 1867. pg 126). At present Codex Britannicus remains undated!

He further makes the comment that the Johannine Comma is missing from all ancient versions (Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Arabic, Slavonic), except the Latin. Its that little expression, 'except the Latin' which is proceeded by the word 'all', sounds like quite a ratio against the Johannine Comma, we need to explore that a little deeper. Upon reading the comment 'except the Latin', one might think that that represents a very small number, but many of the Latin Fathers quoted the Johannine Comma. What he is not telling you is that we have many more Latin MSS than Greek MSS. There are 8000+ Latin MSS/lectionaries compared to 5000+ Greek MSS, of the 8000 Latin MSS/lectionaries, thousands have the Johannine Comma reading! Also, as for the 5000+ MSS that we have today and the statement that is often made, '...only 4 of the 5000 contain the text of the Comma...'. Statements like that are so misleading, as only 525 of the 5000 contain 1John 5. Some may not know this, but the MSS that we presently have, some contain few verses and others contain large sections of the New Testament. To summary, the proper way to state their case, '...only 4 of 525 contain the Comma in 1John 5...'!

It is very interesting to note that next he gives us a possible theory as to how the Johannine Comma may have made it into the Latin line of MSS. Just before he does this he acknowledges that one of the earliest quotations of the Johannine Comma is contained in a Latin treatise, Liber Apologeticus (chap 4), penned by Priscillian in the 4th century. However, in the very next sentence he calls the Johannine Comma 'a gloss' and then proceeds to tell us how 'the gloss' may have made it into the Latin stream of MSS. Amazing! Just think about that for a second! Bruce Metzger is writing his book in 1993, the 20th century, and he is looking back to the 4th

century, 1600 years! How is he able to comment on a supposed event when he was not there to witness it? How can he make such comments when there is not a bit of evidence anywhere to support his theory? Can you not see his bias? Is it not telling that as soon as he gives us a bonafied quotation from the 4th century he then throws in a possible theory as to it being 'a gloss'. Why not investigate the fact that Priscillian must have taken the Johannine Comma from an existing MS? As we will see later, the Johannine Comma was known as far back as the 3rd century that we are aware of today!

I will provide you with his comment in full, 'Apparently the gloss arose when the original passage was understood to symbolize the Trinity (through the mention of the three witnesses: the Spirit, the water, and the blood), an interpretation that may have been written first as a marginal note that afterwards found its way into the text. In the 5th century the gloss was quoted by Latin Fathers in North Africa and Italy as part of the text of the Epistle, and from the 6th century onwards it is found more and more frequently in MSS of the Old Latin and of the Vulgate'. Nice story, just one glaring problem, no historical evident to back it up. Please notice the underlined words and that should be enough to cause anyone to disregard this theory.

Next he moves to 'Internal Probabilities' which consist of 'Transcriptional Probability' and 'Intrinsic Probability'. He states under Transcriptional Probability that he cannot understand how, if the Johannine Comma is original, copyists of hundreds of Greek manuscripts (MS) omitted the Johannine Comma. Another misleading statement. When that is stated the way he words it, it leaves one with the idea that 'hundreds of Greek MS' have left it out. In another book that he authored in 1964 called, 'The Text of the New Testament – Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration', on page 147 he states, 'Among the thousands of Greek manuscripts of the New Testament examined since the time of Erasmus, only eight are known to contain this passage...'. When that sentence is read the word 'thousands' just jumps off the page in relation to 'only eight', that is some ratio isn't it? ('since the time of Erasmus' is referring to the 16th century to us.) The problem with both sentences is that of the 'thousands(5000+) of Greek manuscripts' that we have, they do not all contain the epistle of 1 John, only 525 do and of those 525, only 14 predate the 9th century! To put this all into focus, if you were to take the time period of the 2nd century to the 7th, we only have 5 manuscripts that contain the first epistle of John! It is amazing how we are lead to believe that there is a mountain of evidence against the Johannine Comma.

Finally, he refers his readers to another of his books, 'The Text of the New Testament – Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration 4th edition', where on page 146 he tells another story as to how Erasmus was forced to place the Johannine Comma in his third edition of his Greek NT. This is a very common story that is repeated by many scholars who are against the Johannine Comma, however, only Bruce Metzger will be honest and tell us a very important point. According to Bruce Metzger the story goes something like this, when Erasmus published his first and second Greek NT they lacked the Johannine Comma. A man by the name of Stunica charged Erasmus with committing a very serious error by omitting the Johannine Comma, to which Erasmus replied that he had not found the Johannine Comma in any of the MSS that he had used. According to Bruce Metzger, Erasmus in an unguarded moment 'may

have promised that he would insert the Johannine Comma...in future editions if a single Greek MS could be found containing the passage' (I have placed his direct quote in quotations from his book). Bruce Metzger writes that a MS was produced, Metzger suggests that it was made to order and he states that it was probably written around 1520 in Oxford. He also suggest that a Franciscan friar named Froy took the Johannine Comma from the Latin Vulgate. Once Erasmus was confronted by this MS he promptly added the Johannine Comma into his 3rd edition with many notes showing his disapproval of the insertion. A number of things could be said about that story, but we will only mention a few points. Very simple point, Bruce Metzger was not there, he did not witness this, therefore, that is why he used the phrases that I have underlined, 'may have promised'. But here is the place that I give Bruce Metzger full points for being honest and admitting to the following. He has a footnote that is numbered 22, in which Bruce Metzger admits that 'a specialist in Erasmian studies, could find no explicit evidence that supports this frequently made assertion concerning a specific promise made by Erasmus' (once again I have placed his direct quote within quotations). The name of the Erasmian specialist is Henk Jan DeJonge, his book is called 'Erasmus and the Comma Johanneum', *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienae*, 1vi (1980), pages 381-9. Here is my main point, if I had Bruce Metzger in front of me, I would ask him the following question, 'Why go to all the trouble of telling us a supposed story when at the end you quote a expert that completely disqualifies your story'? Here is the disturbing thing that I have noticed, many scholars quote the supposed story of Bruce Metzger and they remove the expression, 'may have promised' and they state it as fact. I will show this a little later.

I need to provide a little more information on the relationship between Bruce Metzger and H. J. DeJonge, the recognized specialist in Erasmian studies. When Bruce Metzger introduced his 1st and 2nd editions of his book, 'The Text of the New Testament', his comments did not include any reference to H. J. DeJonge. The statements of Bruce Metzger in his 1st and 2nd edition states the following, 'Erasmus promised that he would insert the Johannine Comma, as it is called, in future editions if a single Greek manuscript could be found that contained the passage. At length such a copy was found...or made to order'. Was Metzger aware of H. J. DeJonge' work? However, when Metzger produced his 3rd edition of the book, 'The Text of the New Testament – Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration', he acknowledges the work of H. J. DeJonge in the following manner, 'What is said on p. 101 above about Erasmus' promise to include the Johannine Comma if one Greek manuscript were found that contained it, and his subsequent suspicion that MS 61 was written expressly to force him to do so, needs to be corrected in the light of the research of H. J. DeJonge, a specialist in Erasmian studies who finds no explicit evidence that supports this frequently made assertion'. Also, when Metzger 4th edition of the same book was released, he mentions the work of DeJonge as I have indication in the above paragraph. For those who would like more information of this, another Erasmian specialist, Yale professor Roland Bainton, has also concurred with DeJonge on his findings.

For those interested in the story of what really happened, we will let the specialist DeJonge speak. In a letter that came from the pen of H. J. DeJonge, dated June 13, 1995 addressed to Michael Maynard, he states the following, 'This is what Erasmus writes in his 'Liber tertius quo respondet', Erasmus first records that Lee had reproached him with neglect of the MSS of 1

John because Erasmus had consulted only one MS. Erasmus replies that he had certainly not used only one MS, but many copies, first in England, then in Brabant, and finally at Basle. He cannot accept, therefore, Lee's reproach of negligence and impiety'.

Erasmus' own words, '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 scared matters.'

DeJonge' words, 'From this passage you can see that Erasmus does not challenge Lee to produce a manuscript etc. What Erasmus argues is that Lee may only reproach Erasmus with negligence of MSS if he demonstrates that Erasmus could have consulted any MS in which the Johannine Comma figured. Erasmus does not at all ask for a MS containing the Johannine Comma. He denies Lee the right to call him negligent and impious if the latter does not prove that Erasmus neglected a manuscript to which he had access.

I would like to point out a very important point that I do not want my readers to miss. I am not writing this article to prove to you that the Johannine Comma should be in the Word of God, I can't do that, there comes a point where one has to exercise faith. What is my purpose then? I am writing to cast doubt into your mind as to the status quo that exist in the field of Textual Criticism that has been and is overrun by natural thinking. I believe that I have shown you enough information to achieve that goal, however, we will continue with a few more points.

Let us move onto another Scholar, Philip Comfort, and see how he looks at the Johannine Comma. The following comments are taken from Philip W Comfort's book, 'New Testament Text and Translation Commentary' pages 784-785. (For more information on this book, please see the 'List of Resources used for Manuscript Differences')

Philip Comfort starts out with a very strong statement, 'John never wrote the following words...' and then he quotes the Johannine Comma. His next statement shows more of his bias, with the expression, 'This gloss had a Latin origin...', not too hard to see that his mind is made up and that he is trying hard to convince his readers! He then quotes Bruce Metzger from a book that we look at earlier in this article, the quote, 'Metzger said, "Apparently the gloss arose when the original passage was understood to symbolize the Trinity (through the mention of the three witnesses: the Spirit, the water, and the blood), an interpretation that may have been written first as a marginal note that afterwards found its way into the text"'. Comfort also tells us that the passage is not found in any Greek MSS prior to the 14th century, we have disproved this earlier in this article. Further he tells us that the Johannine Comma is quoted by none of the Greek Fathers, we have also disproved this earlier in this article. Now comes the interesting part! Comfort gives us the story of Erasmus and how the Johannine Comma was inserted into his 3rd edition of the Greek New Testament. You may remember that when Bruce Metzger told us this story he made the comment that Erasmus 'may have promised' to insert the Johannine Comma if one Greek MS could be found and so on. Remember also that Bruce Metzger quotes an

expert on Erasmus where Metzger admitted that this expert has found no evidence to support Metzger's theory as to how the Johannine Comma got into the Bible. When Comfort mentions the story he drops the words, 'may have promised' and says, 'He (Erasmus) was criticized...Erasmus, in reply, said that he would include it (Johannine Comma) if he could see it in any one Greek MS'. Did you caught that? No longer is it a theory, now, according to Comfort it is a fact! If a reader of Comfort's book was unfamiliar with the writings of Bruce Metzger, the reader would be misled into think that this is the way it happened. That in my opinion is misleading and a false representation of the whole story! What comes next is yet another example of the bias of Comfort against the Johannine Comma. Comfort states the following, 'In turn, a manuscript (most likely the Monfort MS 61 of the 16th century) was especially fabricated to contain the passage and thereby fool Erasmus. Erasmus kept his promise; he include it in the 3rd edition.' Once again we find Comfort stating supposed facts as if they were the facts. Very misleading! Later in his book he refers to the Johannine Comma as 'intrusive words' and then he concludes by condemning the KJV for including it in their Bible.

Time to move on to the...

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

The Voice of the Critic, what we had above, is the loud sound of one hand clapping, we turn now to the Voice of the Church and listen to the other side of this issue.

If we were to pick John Wycliffe's Bible of 1380 as a starting point and move up to the year 1881 when the Revised Version(RV) was released, the RV was the first English Bible which removed the Johannine Comma from the Text, we have 501 years in which the Christians Church looked upon the Johannine Comma as Scripture, the Word of God. **I found it very hard to believe that God allowed the Christians Church to be misled for that many years and then decided to correct the mistake in 1881!**

But the question is, 'How far back can we go'? Let's have a look at some of the Church Fathers, comments taken from 'The Bible Version Question/Answer Database-David W Cloud. Pg 329-334. (For more information on this book, please see the 'List of Resources used for Manuscript Differences')

Tertullian (c. 200 A.D.) makes the following comment, 'The connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Comforter, makes an unity of these three, one with another, which three are one...' . (Against Praxeas, II, Ante-Nicene Fathers) Not a direct quote of the Johannine Comma, but certainly he is alluding to it. Some many question whether he is alluding to the Johannine Comma, but keep in mind that the expression 'three are one', only appears in 1 John 5:7, the Johannine Comma.

Cyprian of Carthage (c. 250 A.D.) from his book, 'De Unitate Ecclesiae, (On the Unity of the Church), The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Church Fathers Down to A.D.325'. His quote, 'The Lord says 'I am the Father are one' and likewise it is written of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 'And these three are one". There is no question here

that he is quoting from 1 John 5:7, the Johannine Comma. My simple question is, 'Where did Cyprian get this from?' Is it not common sense to conclude that he had a MS that contained the Johannine Comma?

Athanasius (c. 350 A.D.) quotes 1 John 5:7 three times in his writings.

Priscillian (380 A.D.) from his book, 'Liber Apologeticus', states the following words, 'As John says, 'and there are three which give testimony on earth, the water, the flesh, the blood, and these three are in one, and there are three which give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one in Christ Jesus.'

Jerome (382 A.D.) in his book, 'Prologue to the Canonical Epistles', quotes the following when discussing the Johannine Comma that, '...irresponsible translators left out this testimony in the Greek codices.' He further adds the following, '...these Epistles I have restored to their proper order; which, if arranged agreeably to the original text, and faithfully interpreted in Latin diction, would neither cause perplexity to the readers, nor would the various readings contradict themselves, especially in that place where we read the unity of the Trinity laid down in the Epistle of John. In this I found translators (or copyists) widely deviating from the truth; who set down in their own edition the names only of the three witnesses, that is, the Water, blood, and Spirit; but omit the testimony of the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; by which, above all places, the Divinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is proved to be one'.

Theodorus (4th century) writes in "A treatise on one God in the Trinity, from the Epistle of John the Evangelist" the following, '...that John in his Epistle, presents God as a Trinity...'

Gregory of Nazanzius (4th century) this quote is taken from 'The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers'. Gregory of Nazanzius says, 'What about John then, when in his Catholic Epistle he says that there are Three that bear witness, the Spirit and the Water and the Blood? Do you think he is talking nonsense? First, because he has ventured to reckon under one numeral things which are not con substantial, though you say this ought to be done only in the case of things which are con substantial. For who could assert that these are con substantial? Secondly, because he had not been consistent in the way he has happened upon his terms; for after using Three in the masculine gender he adds three words which are neuter, contrary to the definitions and laws which you and your grammarians have laid down. For what is the difference between putting a masculine Three first, and the adding One and One and One in the neuter, or after a masculine One and One and One to use the Three not in the masculine but in the neuter, which you yourself disclaim in the case of Deity?' It is interesting to note that Bruce Metzger claimed that no Greek Father quoted the Johannine Comma, however, it is not too hard to see from Gregory's comment that he is indeed alluding to the passage and objecting to the grammatical structure if the Johannine Comma is omitted. Keep in mind that Gregory is a 4th century Greek Father of the Church!

Eucherius of Lyons (434 A.D.) in a tract that is titled 'Formulae Spiritualis Intelligentiae', verses 7 & 8 are quoted.

Vigilius Tapensis (484 A.D.) in his writings on the Trinity, quotes 1 John 5:7 in its entirety. This is found in his 'Works of Athanasius' and also in his tract against Varimadus the Arian under the name of Idacius Clarus.

Victor Vitensis (484 A.D.) writes the 'History of the Vandalic Persecution' in which he sets down a Confession of Faith, which Eugenius Bishop of Carthage, and the orthodox bishops of Africa, offered to King Hunnerick, a favourer of the Arians, who called upon those bishops to justify the catholic doctrine of the Trinity. In this Confession, presented in 484 A.D., among other places of Scripture, they defended the orthodox clause from 1 John 5:7, giving thereby the highest attestation, that they believed it to be genuine.

Eugenius at the Council of Carthage (485 A.D.) in 'Victor of Vitensis, Historia persecutionis Africanae', his words are recorded, '...and in order that we may teach until now, more clearly than light, that the Holy Spirit is now one divinity with the Father and the Son. It is proved by the evangelist John, for he says, 'there are three which bear testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one'

We could continue to quote from **Fulgentius Ruspensis (507 A.D.)**, **Cassiodorus (550 A.D.)**, **Maximus, a Greek writer (645 A.D.)**, **Isidore Mercator (785 A.D.)**, **Ambrosius (8th century)** and **Walafrid Strabo (9th century)**. You may wonder why I have taken so much time and space to record all of the above, the answer is simple, to point out that the Johannine Comma was known as far back as 200 A.D. and not by just one or two people, but by many. I need to refresh your mind as to the statement made by the NIV translators, 'But the addition is not found in any Greek manuscript or New Testament translation prior to the fourteenth century.', you would almost think, according to their comment, that the Johannine Comma just appeared out of no where in the 14th century by some over zealous translators. I believe we have shown by all the quotes above that this is not the case.

We can also look at Church Councils that used the Johannine Comma in debates against the Arians, comments taken from 'The Bible Version Question/Answer Database-David W Cloud. Pg 334-335,

Church Council of Carthage (485 A.D.) Eugenius was the spokesman for the bishops of Africa, Mauritania, Sardinia, Corsica and the Balearick Isles, these bishops numbered in the 300's that stood in defense of the Trinity and used 1 John 5:7-8. For those who are unfamiliar with the Arians, they denied the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the fact that He is God, is it not interesting that the bishops used 1 John 5:7-8! See quote of Eugenius above.

Church Council of Charlemagne (late 8th century) The Emperor Charlemagne assembled all the learned men to revise the manuscripts of the Bible by cleaning up the mistakes that had creep in. The end result, which was delivered by Alciunus, shows 1 John 5:7-8 as it appears in our King James Bible.

We could also look at versions of the Bible that contained the Johannine Comma. The Johannine Comma is found in some of the **Syriac** manuscripts, the **old Latin** manuscripts, the **Latin Vulgate** and many **Latin translations**. Just a side note, there are 8000+ Latin MSS/lectionaries compared to 5000+ Greek MSS, of the 8000 Latin MSS/lectionaries that we have, 49 out of every 50, according to Scrivener, has it! That's 7840 Latin MSS/lectionaries that contain the Johannine Comma. I do not understand how anyone can simply ignore that! The **Romaunt** or **Occitan New Testament** used by the Waldenses dating to the 12th century contain the Johannine Comma, the **Tepl**, old German translation used by the Waldenses contains the Johannine Comma, **French** translations, **German**, **Spanish**, **Bohemian** or **Czech** and **English** translations contain the Johannine Comma.

I believe that it is very clear from the above comments, that there were many New Testament Translations in a number of languages before the 14th century that used the Johannine Comma.

Another very interesting point to consider is the **Grammatical** difference that occurs if the Johannine Comma is omitted. The following is a little technical, it may have to be read a number of times before the full import becomes apparent. If you look at verses 6-9 in the Critical Text (that is what NU, NA27th & UBS4 are referred to as) here is what you have, I will take the order of Greek words as they appear in the Critical Text.

6. ...And the Spirit(**neuter**) is the witnessing(**singular/neuter**), because the Spirit(**neuter**) is the truth.

7. Because three(**plural/masculine**) there_are the(**plural/masculine**) bearing_witness(**plural/masculine**),

8. the(**singular/neuter**) Spirit(**singular/neuter**) and the(**singular/neuter**) water(**singular/neuter**) and the(**singular/neuter**) blood(**singular/neuter**): and the(**plural/masculine**) three(**plural/masculine**) to the(**singular/neuter**) One are.

9. If the witness the of_men we_receive, the witness the of_God(**singular/masculine**) greater is;...

You will notice that the 'Spirit' of verse 6 is neuter and therefore the verb of verse 6 is neuter, that is consistent with Greek grammar. In verse 7 we see that a new thought is being introduced by the plural/masculines. In verse 8 we are introduced to the three things, but, notice that the 'Spirit', 'water' & 'blood' are neuter, according to Greek grammar they should be masculine because of verse 7. Also, take note that at the end of verse 8 we are introduced to the word 'three' again and it is masculine. Some will try to say that the 'Spirit' is just being personalized at the end of verse 8, but, that can't be, for the simple reason that in verse 6 the Spirit is neuter, why wouldn't the Spirit be personalized in verse 6 by the use of the masculine if that is the argument for verse 8?

But, you put the Johannine Comma back into the verse and look what happens...I will quote the Johannine Comma as it appears in the Greek of the TR, Comma is blue in color.

6. ...And the Spirit(**neuter**) is the witnessing(**singular/neuter**), because the Spirit(**neuter**) is the truth.

7. Because three(**plural/masculine**) there_are the(**plural/masculine**) bearing_witness(**plural/masculine**), the Father(**singular/masculine**), the Word(**singular/masculine**), and the Holy Spirit(**singular/neuter**); and these(**plural/masculine**) the three(**plural/masculine**) one is.

8. And three(**plural/masculine**) there_are the bear_witness(**plural/masculine**) on the earth, the(**singular/neuter**) Spirit(**singular/neuter**) and the(**singular/neuter**) water(**singular/neuter**) and the(**singular/neuter**) blood(**singular/neuter**): and the(**plural/masculine**) three(**plural/masculine**) to the(**singular/neuter**) One are.

9. If the witness the of_men we_receive, the witness the of_God(**singular/masculine**) greater is;...

As stated above, verse 7 is introducing a new thought by the plural/masculines of the first phrase. Now we are given two masculine words and one neuter in the Johannine Comma, 'the Father', 'the Word' and the neuter 'the Spirit'. (The Spirit is always given a neuter gender in Greek grammar, keep this in mind, it is the Holy Spirit that gave us this through inspiration! The only exception, when the Lord Jesus refers to the Spirit in the Upper Room ministry, He (Christ) refers to the Spirit as 'He', using the masculine.) In the last phrase of verse 7, 'the Spirit' is now personalized by the plural/masculine 'these' and 'the three'. In verse 8 the same 'three' of verse 7 are 'bearing_witness'(plural/masculine) to three events that took place on earth, 'the Spirit' (Spirit's involvement in life & death of Christ), 'the water' (Christ' baptism) and 'the blood' (Christ' death). In the last phrase of verse 8 we are introduced to 'the three'(plural/masculine) again and told that 'these three' are in complete agreement to those events.

The last phrase of verse 9 is very important, 'the witness the of_God', this phrase points back to the last phrase in verse 7 where we were told that 'the three one is'. By leaving the Johannine Comma in and coupled with the last statement of verse 9, we have one of the greatest proofs of the Trinity, one God existing in three persons!

Another very important point to consider, why the expression in verse 7, '...the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit...'? Would it not be better to say, '...the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost...'? I believe we are given a truth here that is very precious, as all would know, only the Gospel of John presents to us 'the Word'. We are clearly told that 'In the beginning was the Word...', John 1:1, then in John 1:14 we are told, 'And the Word was made flesh...'. Take notice of these two verbs, verse 7 of 1John5, 'bearing_witness' and 1John5:8, 'bearing_witness', both verbs are 'plural/masculine's', therefore, we are looking at the Godhead. But, notice that both are 'present/active/participles', meaning, that the Godhead is presently and has been bearing

witness to these events that took place on earth! So, why use 'the Word'? At this presence moment there are three persons of the Godhead that are still 'bearing_witness' to events that took place nearly 2000 years ago and to think that 'the Word', one of those persons, has glorified humanity that He did not have when the Son left Heaven to enter this world through the virgin's womb. What does this teach me? By the Son of God taking humanity to Himself, He has not been lessened or removed from His position in the Godhead!

It is not hard to see why those who refuse to believe in the truth of the Trinity, as clearly taught in the Bible, are pleased when the Johannine Comma is removed from the Bible. I judge the Johannine Comma to be one of the strongest attestations to the truth of the Trinity!

VOICE OF THE CHRISTIANS

Based on all of the above information, what should our voice be today? I am no scholar or some great intellectual, just a simple Christian that is looking for answers. I believe that our journey over the ages has given us sufficient proof that the newer Bibles are wrong in omitting the Johannine Comma. I for one, believe that the Johannine Comma is part of Scripture and therefore a part of the Word of God. I cannot ignore or fly in the face of such evidence and still claim to process common sense!

For those that are familiar with a series of books called 'What the Bible Teaches', an esteemed brother by the name of A.M.S. Gooding writes a commentary on the epistle of 1 John. In his commentary he makes the following statements about the Johannine Comma, 'If there is one thing certain in textual criticism, it is that this famous passage is not genuine. The revisers have only performed an imperative duty in excluding it both from the text and the margin...These words are not found in a single Greek MS, earlier than the fourteenth century...The words occur first towards the end of the fifth century in Latin and are found in no other language until the fourteenth century'. Well, a very big statement that sounds very authoritative, but, I humbly disagree with my brother in Christ, we have seen in the above article that it is quoted in a 10th century Greek MS and also that many languages and Bible translations used the Johannine Comma. I simply do not understand how anyone can brush aside such a mountain of evidence in favor of the Johannine Comma!

For those interested in a very detailed study of this issue, please follow this link, 'A Case for the Authenticity of 1st John 5:7-8' by Jesse M Boyd (<https://www.jesus-is-savior.com/Bible/1john57-exegesis.htm>). I do not agree with everything on this person's site, however, his article on 1John 5 is worth the read.