

# The Trinity Delusion

An exposé of the doctrine of the Trinity

## 1 John 5:7

For there are three that testify in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.

### Trinitarian Claim

Some Trinitarians cite this verse as proof of the Trinity. Many of them normally read translations which do not contain this verse but disingenuously cherry pick from translations that do, such as the KJV.

### The Claim vs. The Facts

Trinitarian scholars now admit this verse was not written by the hand of John. Having access to collections of hundreds of manuscripts, modern scholars are able to determine this verse was introduced into the Bible long after John wrote this letter. The evidence is so overwhelming that it cannot be denied. However, there are still Trinitarians, especially KJV Onlyists, who are unwilling to accept the facts on this matter and claim this verse is authentic.

### The Problems with the Claim

#### 1. Trinity prooftext? What?

Trinitarians of all stripes seem to somehow think this passage would otherwise be a powerful proof for Trinitarian doctrine. Since John uses the words "three" and "one" in one statement, they somehow seem to think this would amount to a three-person-God. Trinitarians tend to read the passage as if John were saying, "and these three are one [God]," or "these three are one [being]" or some similar idea. As such, they imagine a preconceived idea into the passage which is not present anywhere in the text itself.

The text says there are three witnesses, three that **testify**, indicating the subject matter of the verse concerns **a united witness** between these three and there is no reason one should suppose it would imply anything else. 1 John 5:7 literally says, "and these three are one." The very next verse, concerning the Spirit and the water and the blood, literally says, "the **three** are unto the **one**" meaning these too have a common and united testimony. To be consistent, the Trinitarian advocate of 1 John 5:7 should also then conclude these three, the water, the Spirit, and the blood, are also a Trinity being. It is quite reckless to interpret this text as declaring the Father, Word and Holy Spirit are one God when all the verse says is the three are a united witness, **one testimony**. The oneness in question is a oneness of purpose and function, not a oneness of ontological being. In other words, the three, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit are in one united agreement concerning their witness/testimony.

In John 17 Jesus prayed for this same unity of oneness between (1) himself, (2) the Father, and the (3) church. We would not therefore assume these three entities are

"God."

I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, **that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you**, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, **that they may be one just as we are one**, I in them and you in me, **that they may become perfectly one.** (John 17:20-23).

As we can see, Jesus prayed that he and the Father and all the disciples would be one. Shall we then suppose all these are God? Of course not. And there is not reason to do so with 1 John 5:7 either. Both of these passages are referring to function, not substance of being. This passage simply does not suggest a Triune God even if it was valid. It simply says that there are three who testify and these three are one. It also says the Spirit, water, and blood are one in the same sense. Neither of the two groups of three are to be understood one other thing but as one unified testimony.

## 2. It Just Isn't There

1 John 5:7, also known as, the *Comma Johanneum*, is found in only eight **late** Greek manuscripts, four of which have the words in a marginal note. These marginal glosses were added after the original copy was made. Most of these manuscripts originate from the sixteenth century and the earliest manuscript, includes the reading in a marginal note which was added sometime after the original composition. There is no sure evidence the *Comma Johanneum* existed in the main text of any **Greek** manuscript until the early sixteenth century or perhaps the fifteenth century at best. From what we do know, it seems the *Comma* somehow found its way into **Latin** manuscripts sometime in the fourth or fifth century. It does not appear in any Greek script of any kind until 1215 A.D. where we find it in a Greek translation of the Acts of the Lateran Council, a work originally written in Latin.

## 3. The Significance of the Greek Manuscripts

The European church was essentially split into two halves. The western church spoke Latin and used Latin Bibles and the eastern church spoke Greek and used Greek Bibles. So the question of Greek versus Latin manuscripts is basically a geographical issue.

It is also important to recognize the importance of the Greek manuscripts. The New Testament was originally written in Greek. Early Christians also primarily used the **Greek** Old Testament (Septuagint), not the Hebrew Old Testament, and this tradition lasted for several centuries. Christians later translated the Greek into the Latin for the Latin speaking church in the western part of the Roman Empire, including northern Africa.

Now because the Greek language is the original language, and it would create numerous translation errors for copyists to translate from Greek to Latin and then translate from Latin back into Greek. Scribal copyists did not translate from the Latin back into the Greek but only translated from Greek into Latin. Latin copies were made from both Greek copies and already translated Latin copies.

However, Greek copies were only made from Greek copies and no translation was necessary at all. Since 1 John 5:7 does not appear in any early Greek manuscripts, it

shows us that 1 John 5:7 simply was not there but was somehow introduced into the western Latin manuscripts and independently from the Greek manuscripts in circulation. We also know this because the error was first localized to Spain and North Africa and then later made its way into Italy and Gaul (France). All these locations are in the locality of the western Latin speaking church.

#### 4. Nobody noticed?

Now here is how we can be certain that 1 John 5:7 never existed in the early church. Because of the Arian controversy in the fourth century, we know for certain the church was especially guarded concerning any Scriptural evidence they thought they had concerning the Trinity. After the end of the fourth century, these manuscripts were the canonized writings of the status quo church who fought for Trinitarian teaching and it is an unthinkable proposition to suggest the eastern Greek speaking church would have let such a passage inadvertently escape from all their Greek manuscripts spread throughout the eastern half of the Roman empire. If 1 John 5:7 had been authentic, the first attempt to omit this verse would have created an immediate outcry and church leaders would have been looking for the culprit. Indeed, blood was spilled over far less in the fourth century. It is a ludicrous fantasy to suppose the entire eastern Greek speaking Trinitarian church would have allowed 1 John 5:7 to somehow escape from every single one of their Bibles throughout the eastern church and it went unnoticed for over a thousand years.

#### 5. Inexplicably Silent

And here is another reason we know this passage is inauthentic. We do not find single person quoting this passage in the second to fifth century debates concerning the nature of God and Christ. If indeed 1 John 5:7 was present in the original text, it is inexplicable that no one ever brought it forward concerning the deity of Christ, especially since similar sounding passages like John 10:30 enjoyed very heavy mileage. We do not find one solitary voice appealing to it through the entire Sabellian and Arian controversies and even afterward. But we do have evidence the *Comma* surfaced in the late fourth century in Spain or the early fifth century near Carthage.

#### 6. Augustine

Now Augustine was very involved in Trinity dogma which had been made the official teaching of the church by the order of Emperor Theodosius in 380 A.D. In fact, he spent nearly twenty years writing his voluminous work "On the Trinity." He never mentioned this verse once. Not once. Augustine also wrote a commentary on 1 John. It is ridiculous to suppose Augustine would have written such a huge work on the Trinity, knew about this verse, but never mentioned it anywhere. It is obvious that he didn't mention it because he had never heard of it.

Augustine, who was a Latin speaking bishop in north Africa, wrote a tract on the Epistle of John in the first quarter of the fifth century, which shows he had never heard of 1 John 5:7. And here is what he wrote concerning the fifth chapter of John's letter.

I would not have you mistake that place in the epistle of John the apostle where he says, 'There are three witnesses: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three are one.'.... if we will inquire into the things signified

I by these, there not unreasonably comes into our thoughts the Trinity itself, which is the one, only, true, supreme God, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, of whom it could most truly be said, "There are three witnesses, and the three are one:" so that **by the term 'Spirit' we should understand God the Father to be signified**; as indeed it was concerning the worshipping of Him that the Lord was speaking, when He said, "God is a Spirit:" **by the term, 'blood,' the Son**; because "the Word was made flesh:" and by the term 'water,' the Holy Spirit; as, when Jesus spoke of the water which He would give to them that thirst, the evangelist saith, "But this said He of the Spirit which they that believed on Him were to receive....And if in any other way this depth of mystery which we read in John's epistle can be expounded and understood agreeably with the Catholic faith, which neither confounds nor divides the Trinity, neither believes the substances diverse nor denies that the persons are three, it is on no account to be rejected" (*Contra Maximinum Arianum*, 22)

We can see here that Augustine wants these three, the Spirit, the water and the blood, to somehow be the Trinity. He wouldn't bother to do such a thing if he was reading a copy of the text which contained 1 John 5:7. Notice how Augustine violently distorts the text. He says the Holy Spirit in the passage is **not** the mentioned Spirit, but the Father and rather the **water** is the Holy Spirit. This is supposed to be one of the church's greatest theologians? It is laughable since he identifies the Spirit as the Father and he Father is most definitely NOT the Holy Spirit in Trinity doctrine. He resorts to similar ridiculous lengths in his commentary on John 17:3.

Augustine's gymnastics concerning 1 John 5:8, make it quite plain that he had never heard of 1 John 5:7. If he had heard of 1 John 5:7, there would have been no need for him to try and turn the Spirit, water, and blood, into the Trinity. He never mentions 1 John 5:7 in his commentary on 1 John but must rather try and turn the next verse into some kind of Trinitarian interpretation. But we see here already the zealotry toward the newly developed Trinitarian doctrine had prompted Augustine to mystically interpret 1 John 5:8 in a very violent manner in order to promote Trinitarianism. Augustine's interpretation of 1 John 5:8 shows us that he never heard of 1 John 5:7 and it also helps us see just how 1 John 5:7 was probably created.

## 7. Disinformation: Dishonest Propaganda

Unfortunately, the universal awareness of this counterfeit text has led to a mass of disinformation perpetuated by dishonest folks who don't like the facts. There is an abundance of false claims and disinformation being spread concerning 1 John 5:7. Many of these claims are noticeably without documentary support and many of those who do provide documentary support do so very dishonestly to make it appear they have evidence when they really have nothing. Some claim the Comma is found in "numerous" manuscripts but do not identify these manuscripts or tell you that the manuscripts in question are very late Latin manuscripts. What these folks forget to mention is that the Comma is only found in **Greek** manuscripts at a very late date, or they forget to tell you the Comma was written in the margin at a later date, or, they conveniently forget to inform you it is only found in Latin, not Greek manuscripts, etc. etc. It is not found anywhere in numerous early Greek manuscripts. It is found in a few early Latin manuscripts dating from the fifth century and all of them just happen to have originated in the same locality.

Another false claim is that several church fathers either "quoted," or "referred," to the Comma. However, when these quotations are examined, there is no evidence they were

citing 1 John 5:7. Another false claim is to quote a church father but forget to tell you that the work they are quoting is under high suspicion of forgery and actually written by someone else at a later date. When scrutinized, all these claims are found to be dishonest attempts at misleading others. We simply cannot find a reliable early quotation for this verse and it appears to have likely been forged in Spain, or perhaps North Africa, in the late fourth or early fifth century and introduced into subsequent Latin manuscripts.

## Conclusion

The facts are overwhelming that John was not the author of these words and this verse is a counterfeit. Since the evidence is beyond dispute, this verse no longer appears in modern translations.

### 1 John 5:7 KJV - An Old Trinitarian Corruption



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