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### **1 JOHN 5:7-8 AND THE TRINITY**

The people who claim that God is supposedly a trinity only have two Scriptures they can use to try to support this teaching. Those two Scriptures are Matthew 28:19-20 and 1 John 5:7-8. Without those two Scriptures Trinitarians actually don't have any biblical support whatsoever for their trinity belief. Those two Scriptures are all they can appeal to. Appeals to any other Scriptures are totally artificial.

My 110-page article from three years ago entitled "**Our Trinitarian Baptism Formula**" methodically and thoroughly demolished the claim that the trinity text of Matthew 28:19 is a part of the Bible. The article proves that the trinity formula was not at all a part of the original text of the Gospel of Matthew; it was added at a later date to that verse by some devious scribe.

This present article deals with the second Scripture that is used to claim that God is supposedly "a trinity". Together, these two articles demolish any supposed biblical support for claiming that God is a trinity.

So let's examine these verses.

For there are three that bear record [**in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth**], the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. (1 John 5:7-8)

All of the bolded text in this quotation, which I have placed in parentheses, is not a part of the letter which the Apostle John wrote. Those words were only added more than 1000 years later by some very dishonest scribe.

As the Apostle John wrote it, the text for these two verses (which should really only make one verse) reads:

For there are three that bear record, **the spirit**, and **the water**, and **the blood**: and these **three agree in one**. (1 John 5:7-8)

(I will continue to refer to this text as two verses, so that the continuity between the preceding and the following verses is maintained.)

Here is the evidence for this.

### **THE EVIDENCE**

Johannes Gutenberg invented printing in the 1450's. From that time onwards it became easy to print multiple copies of the Bible. Before that time the only Bibles in existence had been hand-written by scribes. This was a laborious task, and it could take a year or longer for one scribe to produce one whole Bible.

The Greek language manuscripts of the New Testament written before the 1450's are more numerous than Greek manuscripts of any other ancient work. Including complete and fragmented (i.e. partial) copies of the New Testament, there are, in round numbers, about 5,800 Greek language manuscripts,

10,000 Latin language manuscripts, and 9,300 manuscripts in various other ancient languages.

Now of the 5,800 Greek language MSS (and many of those are only fragments of one book of the New Testament) there are 112 manuscripts that include John's first epistle. And **none of those 112 Greek MSS contain this spurious text in 1 John 5:7-8**. Not a one!

Amongst scholars who deal with these Greek manuscripts this spurious text is known as "Comma Johanneum" or as "the Johannine Comma". (The Latin word "comma" is used to mean "a short clause", and not the punctuation mark we spontaneously think of.)

Here is a short quotation from Wikipedia on the subject "Comma Johanneum":

"The **Comma Johanneum**, also called the **Johannine Comma** or the **Heavenly Witnesses**, is a comma (a short clause) found in Latin manuscripts of the First Epistle of John at 5:7-8. The comma first appeared in the Vulgate manuscripts of the 9th century. **The first Greek manuscript that contains the comma dates from the 15th century**. The comma is absent from the Ethiopic, Aramaic, Syriac, Slavic, Armenian, Georgian, and Arabic translations of the Greek New Testament. The scholarly consensus is that **that passage is a Latin corruption that entered the Greek manuscript tradition in some subsequent copies**. As the comma does not appear in the manuscript tradition of other languages, the debate is mainly limited to the English-speaking world due to the King James Only movement." (my emphasis)

It is well-known that "the Johannine Comma" was not a part of any Greek text before the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It obviously was not a part of the Apostle John's original letter. It is also well-known that this text came from a corrupted Latin Vulgate manuscript, and then only in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

It is also known that **the scribe** who wrote that Greek manuscript in the 15<sup>th</sup> century **was deliberately dishonest!** This becomes obvious from another quotation from Wikipedia.

The Greek manuscript from the 15<sup>th</sup> century that first contained "the Johannine Comma" is called **Codex Montfortianus**. Here is a short quotation from Wikipedia from the topic "Codex Montfortianus".

"It was the first Greek manuscript discovered to contain any version of the Comma Johanneum in 1 John chapter 5. **It was copied from an earlier manuscript that did not have the Comma**. The Comma was translated from the Latin." (my emphasis)

This quotation shows that it is known that the scribe who wrote Codex Montfortianus was copying from a Greek manuscript that did **not** contain these spurious words. He added these words to the Greek text of 1 John in order to have some "biblical support" for the trinity teaching.

This is something **a very few dishonest scribes** have done **throughout history**. They personally had a belief or a teaching that is not at all supported by any biblical text. And so they then very dishonestly added something (or changed something) to a copy of a certain book of the Bible which they happened to be in the process of producing. In time their dishonest addition or change was then copied by subsequent scribes, and in that way it finagled its way into the accepted text for the Bible. This problem is not restricted to Greek language New Testament manuscripts.

This process of corrupting the original text has also occasionally happened in the Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures, and more often in the Greek Language LXX Old Testament and in the Latin Vulgate version, in addition to occurring in the occasional Greek language New Testament manuscripts. **If a biased scribe**, who desperately wanted to see some "biblical endorsement" for something he believed, **was so inclined, it was easy for him to make small textual changes in the manuscript he was producing**.

There was no contemporary authority that could have stopped him from making such changes. He was his own authority. And if the changes he had made actually agreed with the personal understanding of subsequent scribes, then they would be very willing to accept those changes, without questioning them.

So from the external evidence, i.e. from the manuscript evidence, it is clear beyond doubt that the text of 1 John 5:7-8 was altered for the explicit purpose of providing devious "scriptural proof" for the trinity teaching.

But we can also examine the internal evidence.

## **THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE**

It is indeed very helpful that we have manuscript evidence that this text was fraudulently altered. It means that we don't need any additional evidence to expose the fraud involved in the text commonly provided for these two verses. The manuscript evidence is perfectly sufficient to reject the added text.

However, even if such manuscript evidence was not available (as it is not available for certain unauthorized alterations of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament), there is **ample internal evidence** in these verses themselves that makes equally clear that they were fraudulently added to the original text.

Let's consider some of that internal evidence.

### **1) THE CONTEXT**

In verse 5 John stated that "**Jesus is the Son of God**".

In verse 6 John stated that Jesus Christ "came by water and blood". These two words identify Jesus Christ's entire earthly ministry. "**By water**" refers to the start of Christ's ministry, when He was baptized by John the Baptist. "**By blood**" refers to the end of Christ's ministry, when He shed His blood on the stake and died for our sins.

At His last Passover observance Jesus Christ had told the apostles:

But the Comforter, *which is the holy spirit*, which the Father will send in My name, it **shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance**, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26)

So the Apostle John writes in the second part of 1 John 5:6 that ...

" ... And **it is the Spirit that bears witness**, because the Spirit is truth."

Now John used the same Greek verb twice in two consecutive verses.

In 1 John 5:6 the expression "it is the spirit that **bears witness**" has the verb "**marturoun**". It applies to the neuter noun for "spirit", and so the verb is in the neuter singular form.

In 1 John 5:7 the expression "there are three that **bear record**" has the verb "**marturountes**". It applies to the masculine plural form for "three", and so the verb is in the masculine plural form.

But it is obviously the identical verb in both verses. So "bear witness" and "bear record" both represent one and the same Greek verb.

Thus in verse 6 John said that Christ's ministry started with "water" (i.e. being baptized by John the Baptist), and ended with "blood" (i.e. being crucified), and that the holy spirit bears witness that everything Jesus Christ taught during His ministry is true.

In the correct text for verses 7-8, John repeats the information he has presented in verse 6. That's all. It is like a summary. He repeats the spirit, the water and the blood. The concluding statement "and these three agree in one" means that **"these three present a unified message that is true"**, because it represents "the witness of God" (verse 9).

In this context presenting two lists of three each is totally out of place.

## 2) WITNESS IN HEAVEN

That phrase is total baloney! It is garbage! There is nobody in heaven who doubts that Jesus Christ is the Savior, the Son of God. It is absurd to talk about "three witnesses in heaven". God in heaven doesn't ever need any "witnesses" to vouch for the correctness of God's statements!

This line of reasoning about "witnesses in heaven", which is really intended as a plug for the pagan trinity teaching is precisely **how the carnal mind reasons! It is an insult to God**, plain and simple! That's also exactly what all other carnal ways of reasoning about God are ... they are offensive and insulting to God!

Think about this for a moment! When the carnal mind tries to praise or flatter God, what comes out is invariably offensive to God! They think they are praising God, and their supposed praise is in fact an insult to God. It happens every time.

So understand that the expression "there are three that bear witness in heaven" is highly offensive to God! And so is the trinity teaching! This phrase all by itself should tell us that it could not possibly be a statement that any servant of God would ever make about heaven. In heaven there is no need for any witnesses.

## 3) WITNESSES ON EARTH

The Apostle John had just referred to "three witnesses". But he had not said anything about "on earth"! He did not ascribe any location for those three witnesses.

Why are there supposedly **different witnesses in different locations**? That's ridiculous! If someone chooses to reason this way: then God the Father's supposed witness and Jesus Christ's supposed witness are certainly not restricted to "heaven". God's witness is valid anywhere and everywhere.

But in his own mind the perverse scribe who altered this text needed to provide two contrasting lists of three each, where the Apostle John had in fact only provided one list of three.

For the forger:

**The problem is that "the spirit" is not really "on earth"!**

The holy spirit is the power of God, and in this present age it is not residing here on earth. At this present time it is in heaven, from where it is given directly to the minds of repentant and converted individuals.

It is only **during the millennium** that **the holy spirit will be "on earth"**. That's what Ezekiel chapter 47 tells us. That's the account of the "waters that issued out from under the threshold of the house" (see

Ezekiel 47:1). It is only when Jesus Christ is residing here on earth, that the holy spirit will also be here on earth, **like a mighty river**.

But at this present time the holy spirit is not residing here on earth. Don't confuse certain individuals (i.e. converted members of God's Church) having God's spirit dwelling in their minds with "the holy spirit being here on earth". Those two things are not the same.

Notice also that the perverse scribe who inserted this perverse text into John's epistle was pretty hard up! He wanted to have "the trinity in heaven", but he couldn't think of three counterparts here on earth. So **he listed the holy spirit in both groups**. Make up your mind about which group the holy spirit is supposed to belong to. The forger has the holy spirit doing double duty, i.e. being a witness in both places at the same time, where he restricted God the Father and Jesus Christ to just one location.

Now obviously, the forger just kept the three witnesses that John was writing about. But John didn't spell out where those witnesses had to be. And John would not have listed one "witness" twice, supposedly in two different locations. Listing the holy spirit in both lists shows that these two lists did not originate in the mind of the Apostle John. They came from a carnal, unconverted mind.

#### 4) THE FATHER AND THE WORD

The carnal forger did not realize that he presented **an incongruous combination!**

The Apostle John is the only writer who referred to Jesus Christ as "the Word". And John only referred to Jesus Christ as "the Word" in the introductory comments of both, his gospel (i.e. **John 1:1** and **John 1:14**) and also his first epistle (i.e. **1 John 1:1**). John only referred to Jesus Christ as "the Word" exactly **three times**.

Now all the way through his gospel account, after those first 14 introductory verses, John referred to Jesus Christ as "the Son (of God)", while Jesus Christ is quoted as frequently referring to Himself as "the son of man". But the title "the Word" is never used again in that gospel, outside of those introductory comments.

Coming to John's three epistles, after the introductory 1 John 1:1 statement, John made the following references:

1 John 2:22 = "the Father and the Son"

1 John 2:23 = "the Son, the Father"

1 John 2:24 = "the Son and the Father"

1 John 3:8 = "the Son of God"

1 John 4:14 = "the Father sent the Son"

1 John 4:15 = "the Son of God"

1 John 5:5 = "the Son of God"

1 John 5:10 = "the Son of God"

1 John 5:12 = "the Son of God"

1 John 5:13 = "the Son of God"

1 John 5:20 = "the Son of God"

2 John 1:3 = "the Son of the Father"

2 John 1:9 = "the Father and the Son"

The Apostle John **very consistently** referred to Jesus Christ as "the Son"; and in his epistles John likewise, outside of his introductory comment, never referred to Jesus Christ as "the Word". "The Word" is not really a common title for Jesus Christ!

When you look at the above list, then it should be obvious that we are dealing with a dishonest addition to the text, when in the middle of that list John supposedly referred to Jesus Christ as "the Word" in 1 John 5:7. It just doesn't fit!

The Apostle John clearly contrasted the word "Father" with the word "Son". The expression "the Word" doesn't really go with "the Father". The expression "the Word" really goes with the title "God". "Father" implies a family relationship; but "Word" doesn't really fit into a family relationship.

The forger clearly did not understand how the mind of the Apostle John worked and reasoned! So the forger goofed when he inserted the expression "the Word" instead of inserting the far more appropriate expression "the Son". (Obviously, he really should not have inserted any words at all into the text of John's letter!)

**All forgers of biblical texts have made mistakes like this. They can't possibly understand how the mind of a converted servant of God thinks and reasons. Such forgers can only deceive other carnal, unconverted people. But once these things are pointed out to a converted mind, then a converted mind will always catch out such forgers. That's because a converted mind can understand how a converted author of a book of the Bible would have thought and reasoned. And when a text like this is supposed to represent instructions from God, then a carnal way of thinking sticks out like a red flag.**

Another way to present "the three witnesses" that the Apostle John refers to is to recognize that:

- 1) It is **Christ's ministry** that bears witness (i.e. it started with "the water").
- 2) It is **Christ's sacrifice** that bears witness (i.e. "the blood" of Christ).
- 3) It is **the holy spirit** that bears witness (i.e. by influencing our minds).

And obviously, the evidence that 1 John 5:7-8 was altered is irrefutable.

So both proof texts for the trinity teaching (i.e. Matthew 28:19-20 and 1 John 5:7-8) are devious changes that were made to the original text of Matthew's Gospel and to John's First Epistle. There is absolutely nothing, not one scrap, anywhere in the Bible to support the pagan trinity teaching.

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