

## MANUSCRIPT BACKGROUND

There are around 5,800 Greek transcripts of the NT. The largest cluster of these is called the Byzantine group. A smaller cluster is called the Alexandrian group. Scholars continually debate over which cluster is superior; Byzantine has more manuscripts, but they are later (6<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century). Alexandrian has fewer (30+), but they are older, 200+ years older. The KJV, NKJV and the ESV are translated almost exclusively by Byzantine texts. Later translations typically use the Alexandrian texts. So what?

Erasmus created a cluster of Greek manuscripts for the KJV using just 6-7 Greek Byzantine manuscripts, the oldest of which was the 10<sup>th</sup> century. His result—the *Textus Receptus*, based mostly the Greek, part Latin, part added verses. So what? Church tradition asserted the supremacy of *Textus Receptus* until modern times. Note: Erasmus only had one Revelation text.

Alexandrian manuscripts use fewer words, and are more abrupt. More variation within the Synoptics. When the Alexandrian texts were used later in updated English translations, a small rebellion occurred, including the beginnings of the KJV-only movement, largely in reaction to the neo-Christian theology of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. So what?

Even though there are thousands of manuscripts in general for the Greek New Testament, there are only 310 extant manuscripts of Revelation: 7 papyri, 12 majuscules (uppercase manuscripts; i.e., older manuscripts), and 291 minuscules (lowercase manuscripts; i.e., later manuscripts). Given the source of the vast majority of Greek manuscripts, lectionaries (manuscripts read in church assembly), there are fewer extant manuscripts of Revelation. It could be that the metaphors which challenge us now, also challenged the church then, especially when read aloud in the assembly.

Some Examples of Substantive Differences/Readings Between Alexandrian (A) and Byzantine (B)	
Alexandrian	Omitted by Byzantine but in TR (i.e., out of KJV, but not A)
Matthew 12:47 present. Matthew 17:21 mostly omitted. Matthew 18:11 mostly omitted. Matthew 21:44 omitted (eclectic).	Luke 17:36 omitted. Acts 15:34 omitted. Acts 24:7 omitted.

KJV “Test Passages” (Used by KJV Only Group as Evidence of a “True” KJV) (Passage in neither A nor B above, but added later)	
Acts 8:37 <i>Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” The eunuch answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> century baptismal practice, a pious expansion. From E, 6 <sup>th</sup> to 8 <sup>th</sup> century

<p>I John 5:7-8</p> <p>7For there are three that testify: 8the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.</p> <p>Addition (substitute for 8) ...</p> <p><i>testify in heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three that testify on earth: the</i></p>	<p>Clearly added, while a great Trinitarian statement, but 500+ mss in Greek do not have this verse; 9 mss do have it but the earliest date of the 9 are no earlier than the 12<sup>th</sup> century. And the 12<sup>th</sup> century mss, the verse is actually written in the margin. And, on top of that, the “marginal” reading was actually 16<sup>th</sup> century as per pediagraphical analysis. Finally, only 1 mss has it prior to Erasmus compilations.</p> <p>Then why in the Erasmus compilation (<i>Textus Receptus</i>)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> edition didn’t have it because it wasn’t in any of the Greek mss</li> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> edition created a visit from the Inquisition. “Don’t you believe in the Trinity?” Erasmus responded by saying show me a Greek mss with the Trinity statement. #61 had it, in Greek, but Erasmus recognized the handwriting, and noted wryly the ink wasn’t quite dry yet. He defused the situation and added it anyway.</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> editions had the statement.</li> </ul>
<p>The logic behind the KJV-only group: God’s divine will supervised this translation, even the ones listed above. The KJV then is better than the Alexandrian or Byzantine Greek or even the <i>Textus Receptus</i> mss. See Bruce Metzger’s book for a full narrative.<sup>24</sup></p> <p>Since 1900, approximately 200 translations of the Bible have been made, most died a merciful death. Goodspeed and Moffitt’s “translation,” for example, took rather odd liberties. Since 1900, approximately 200 translations of the Bible have been made, most died a merciful death. Goodspeed and Moffitt’s “translation,” for example, took rather odd liberties with the text including moving the verses around—“This is the way it <i>should</i> read.” RH Charles in the 1920’s completed re-ordered the Revelation to suit his preferences.</p> <p>Some current issues ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Copyright control promulgates new translations, plus marketing opportunities into specific markets and demographics (e.g., the young woman’s Bible, the urban Afro-American’s Bible, <i>Cotton Patch</i>).</li> <li>➤ Some current marketing compromises the seriousness of the Gospel. For an “up to date” version, such marketing poses, “Too many spiritual facials ... Holy Spirit is the best cleanser.”</li> </ul>	<p><i>Nota Bene:</i></p> <p>From 1611-1769 there were <b>11</b> editions of the KJV—primarily to improve readability. And, the 1611 version included the apocrypha.</p>

<sup>24</sup>Metzger, Bruce M., *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (2nd Edition)*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994. To order see: <http://www.logos.com/products/details/1903>

Revelation 13. Numbering Beast. John the saw a beast coming from out of the sea. Powerful he was with 10 horns, smart with 7 heads, each with a blasphemous name, and yet authoritative with 10 crowns on these horns. Kind of like a leopard, but with feet like a bear, and a lion's mouth. Satan gave the beast his power, throne and authority. One of the beast's heads seemed to have a fatal wound, but healed nonetheless. The whole world was intrigued, and loyal. People worshiped the dragon because he had given the beast great authority, so they worshiped the beast as well—Who is like the beast? Who can fight him?

Q Why was the beast's origin special?

Q What is a "blasphemous" name?

The beast boasted proud words and blasphemy for 3.5 years. Blaspheming God, His authority, and all those who live with Him, the beast was given power make war with believers. He was given authority over everyone. All the earth who are not God's followers **will** worship the beast.

Q Why was the beast given power to attack believers? To even conquer them?

John continues—listen up. If you are captured, you are captured. You will be killed. You need to be patient, enduring faithfully on the basis of believers.

Q How can we be expected to "just take it?"

BUT, another beast... Two lamb-like horns, but speaking dragon-like. He made all earths inhabitants worship the first beast—whose fatal wound had been healed. Great miracles and signs were given, even bringing fire from the skies. People were deceived. An image in the first beast's honor was commissioned. He had power to breathe life into this image; those who did not worship the image were killed. Then he forced everyone, everyone to receive a mark on his forehead, or his right hand. Without this mark, no one could buy or sell. The mark of the beast was in charge. Wisdom is needed; calculate the number of the beast, for is is "man's number." His number is

...

Q What is the purpose of chapter 13? Is this prophecy for the times to come under the Roman emperors, or this world's last days? What have you learned?

## REVELATION 13

And the dragon [later mss. say "And I..."] stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. <sup>2</sup>The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. <sup>3</sup>One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. <sup>4</sup>Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

<sup>5</sup>The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months.

<sup>6</sup>He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. <sup>7</sup>He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. <sup>8</sup>All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world [Or, *written from the creation of the world in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain*].

<sup>9</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear.

<sup>10</sup>*If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed [some mss. read anyone kills] with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.*

<sup>11</sup>Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. <sup>12</sup>He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. <sup>13</sup>And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. <sup>14</sup>Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. <sup>15</sup>He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. <sup>16</sup>He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, <sup>17</sup>so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. <sup>18</sup>This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666 [or 616, or 661, depending on the manuscript].