

## Exegetical Insights from Minor Variant Readings in the Apocalypse

With more comprehensive resources available today such as the Editio Critica Maior, scholars of the New Testament text have easier access to a plethora of minor and seemingly insignificant readings across the broad stream of the Greek manuscript tradition. In times past, variant readings in apparatus critici were mostly noted to indicate how the "original" or "initial" text should be established and read. More and more, scholars of the text today recognize the exegetical insights and significant nuances provided by thousands of seemingly insignificant and "unoriginal" readings created by scribes who were native speakers of the Greek language. This paper will consider such exegetical insights and nuances found in the opening chapters of the Apocalypse of John. For example, in the epistolary openings of the individual letters to the seven churches of Asia [Minor] (Rev 2-3), a thin collection of sporadic manuscripts make the simple addition of \*kurios\* to the phrase \*tade legei\* which occurs rarely in the NT outside of the Apocalypse. Greek scribes, however, had written the phrase as they were familiar with it from its frequency in the LXX. Exegetically, this seemingly insignificant variant informs us today how Greek scribes understood the prophetic authority of those individual letters addressing the churches and rebuking false teachers. In Rev 2:13, nineteen medieval manuscripts include a comment, "and every martyr is faithful." This minor and late addition indicates exegetically how Greek scribes interpreted the word \*martus\* as "martyr" or "witness who dies" in the Apocalypse, unlike the rest of the NT where the term is almost always more generic as "witness." Other examples in this paper will consider seemingly minor variants with exegetical insights in Rev 1:3, 6, 14; 2:7, 11 inter alia.