

The Gospel of Mark

WEEK 50

The Longer Ending of Mark EXPLAINED: Mark 16:9-20

Two factual observations:

1. This is NOT an issue of *inspiration*, but *transmission*.

- We believe in what's called “organic inspiration.” This means that God divinely chose and inspired ordinary men to write down His very Words, still using their own personality, vocabulary, and style. We do **NOT** believe that the authors went into some spiritual-like hypnosis and scribbled everything down blindly, thus giving us Scripture.
- The Bible is the most copied manuscript of any ancient document.
 - Close to 6,000 different OT & NT manuscripts.
 - The longer ending of Mark didn't first appear until the **150's AD**.
- God guaranteed the inspiration of the text as Scripture (Matt. 5:17–18; John 10:35; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; 2 Pet. 1:20–21). If God guarantees it, then it happened. God doesn't make empty promises!

2. This is NOT the first time we've seen *manuscript “issues”* in the Gospels.

- Verse 28 is missing from Mark 15, Verse 26 is missing from Mark 11.
- John 7:53-8:11.
- We can't just throw out this section of Mark & label it as “*fiction*.”
 - Deuteronomy 12, Revelation 22.

Pastor's view & considerations:

I **do believe** that the longer ending of Mark is Scripture. I **do NOT believe** that the longer ending is *authentic* to Mark as a person or his Gospel. **Here's why:**

1. New Testament manuscript evidence.

- I believe that an additional author, who was also inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote and included them after Mark 16:8 to *suffice for its “abrupt” ending*. **Here's why:**
 - First, there are internal problems within the longer ending. Some Bibles say that there should be another additional verse **after verse 14 reading**, “*But they*

reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this, Jesus sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.”

- **Second,** there are Greek words & phrases used in the longer ending found nowhere else in Mark.
 - In **verse 12**, “*after these things.*” **Verse 14**, “*afterward.*”
- **Third,** the longer ending implies knowledge of future events:
 - The two witnesses
 - The Great Commission
 - Acts of the Apostles
- **Fourth,** two early historians around at the time of the Gospels, Eusebius & Jerome, never make any comments about Mark 16:9-20, but do for every other verse of Mark.

2. Verses 1-2 are summarized again by verse 9.

3. It is possible that Mark himself wrote them later, but not likely.

4. Which ending makes more sense considering Mark as a person?

- Whether the longer ending is there or not, the story still makes sense: we **firmly know that Jesus has RISEN!**
- **D.A. Carson** (pastor, scholar, & theologian) states here, “*It seems that this longer ending was a summary of what happened in the other 3 Gospels + Acts. Mark lets his story speak for itself, forcing his readers to discover the ultimate significance of much of the story of Jesus.*”