
Why Mark 16.9–20 is in the Bible

A Defence of the Authenticity of the Traditional Ending of the
Gospel according to Mark

Trinitarian Bible Society



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Why Mark 16.9–20 is in the Bible

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Mark 16.19–20

INTRODUCTION

Picture a relatively young believer, a student perhaps, reading his Bible. He has decided to read through the Scriptures systematically on his own. Making good progress he now has arrived at the last chapter of Mark. But something in this chapter makes him anxious. In his copy of the English Standard Version—recommended to him by his church—the following bold and prominent statement placed after verse 8 confronts him.

[SOME OF THE EARLIEST MANUSCRIPTS DO NOT INCLUDE 16.9–20.]

What does it mean? Noticing the footnote, he goes to the bottom of the page where the following is found:

Some manuscripts end the book with 16:8; others include verses 9–20 immediately after verse 8. At least one manuscript inserts additional material after verse 14; some manuscripts include after verse 8 the following: *But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this, Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation. These manuscripts then continue with verses 9–20.*¹

The unease has given way to bewilderment. What are these manuscripts? How early are they? How many are there? Which of these endings to Mark's Gospel is the authentic one? His next step is what

many in our generation do when they have questions: they enter them into an internet search engine. Perhaps this will yield some clarity in relation to the confusion.

One search result yields a page that talks about Codex Sinaiticus as the oldest known New Testament manuscript. But it then goes on to say that the Gospel according to Mark stops abruptly at verse 8 in this manuscript without any resurrection appearances or direct encounters with the risen Christ.

The website claims that Mark was the earliest Gospel and casts doubt on the nature of the resurrection because it says these verses were added later. It suggests that belief in a bodily resurrection developed over time, rather than being based on early eyewitness experiences and that the resurrection narratives in later Gospels (Matthew, Luke, John) are theological elaborations rather than historical reports. But then looking down the page they note that it is clearly a site written by Muslims against Christianity.

Our young believer quickly abandons this for another option. The next website speaks about Mark's Gospel being tampered with and that the original ending at verse 8 undermines the credibility of Scripture. But the language makes it clear that this is written by atheists.

Filled with alarm the young believer picks up his Bible again. He remembers that not long ago he read Jesus foretelling

His resurrection several times in the Gospel according to Mark (8.31; 9.9–10; 9.31; 10.34).

How do the other Gospels end? Checking each of them it is clear that they all have accounts not just of the death and burial of Christ but also of the empty tomb. In each of them the Lord appears, but Mark in the ESV ends chapter 16 calling into question all the post resurrection appearances after verse 8.

The young believer decides to listen to a sermon on this passage; after all that is a good way of having difficulties explained. The preacher he selects is emphatic that the latter part of Mark 16 is not original and should not be regarded as God's Word and so refuses to expound it. The preacher does not give much information except that Bible scholars are agreed that the verses should be excluded, and it should not affect our confidence in God's Word. The things in those verses are just what we find elsewhere in Scripture, so it is not essential. This seems hopeful at the time but then the young believer begins to think about the way that the Muslims and atheists were using this to attack Scripture.

As he ponders, the young believer asks himself: 'Should it be in the Bible if it is not really in the Bible? Surely it makes things unclear if there are parts of the Bible that are in doubt. What are these endings and manuscripts? Is there a way to be sure?'

Again, the young believer turns to an internet search but this time comes

across material that gives solid reasons why these verses are in fact to be regarded as authentic and part of Scripture. He discovers that this has been the historic testimony from the early church up to the Protestant Reformation, and then to traditional Protestant Christians in the centuries following. It is firmly asserted that God has promised to preserve His Word by His special providential care, and those who deny the authenticity of this significant portion of God's Word implicitly deny God's many promises to preserve the words He inspired. The rest of this booklet explains those reasons.

MARK 16.9–20 IS IN THE EARLIEST BIBLES

We do not have the original manuscript of the Gospel according to Mark, but we do have copies from the centuries that followed. Manuscripts are handwritten copies of the text originally written on papyrus (early paper made from papyrus plants) or vellum (animal skin, typically calfskin).

Mark 16.9–20 appears in some of the most ancient Greek manuscripts. The oldest ones were written in capital letters and are called uncials. These include Codex Alexandrinus (A or 02) from the fifth century, as well as Codices Ephraemi Rescriptus (C or 04), Bezae (D or 05) from the same era, and Codex Washingtonianus (W or 032) from the fourth/fifth century. These are only a few examples from the full list (see endnotes).²

Mark 16.9–20 is not only found in almost all the earliest manuscripts, it is in the majority of all New Testament manuscripts. James A. Kelhoffer of Uppsala University in Sweden estimates that '99% of the surviving manuscripts agree with the Textus Receptus and preserve the reading of the LE [Longer Ending]'.³ As he notes, this is also the figure given by the textual critics Kurt and Barbara Aland, and a similar reading is broadly agreed by others also.⁴ Not only is the sheer number significant, Mark 16.9–20 is present in the majority of manuscripts from all the geographic regions where early Christianity was found.

It is fair to ask, therefore, why the ESV claims that some of the earliest manuscripts do not include Mark 16.9–20.⁵ Some of the earliest manuscripts do omit these verses but the actual number is only two.⁶ They are the Codex Sinaiticus (ⲁ or 01) and Codex Vaticanus (B or 03), which are usually dated to the fourth century AD. Although they have been championed by scholars, these two manuscripts disagree with one another in 3,036 places in the Gospels alone.⁷

Yet even these two manuscripts end the Gospel according to Mark in an unusual way. Both have deliberate gaps where the verses ought to be. This shows, as Nicholas Lunn observes, that the scribes copying the text were aware of the actual ending and therefore these earliest manuscripts also testify to the existence of the verses even if they do not contain them.⁸

It could actually be argued, in fact, that every Greek witness testifies to an awareness of these verses.

In very early times it was the practice to mark the portions of the Gospels appointed to be read in public worship. These were included in a lectionary, a book consisting of selections of Scripture for reading in connection with the church calendar. These 12 verses were appointed to be read on days commemorating the resurrection and ascension from at least the fourth and fifth centuries across the regions where early Christianity was found.⁹ Many copies were written specifically for public reading and other ordinary copies had a note added in the margin before and after each reading. It seems probable a later copyist may have misinterpreted a marginal note as meaning that the whole Gospel ended at verse 8 and that the remaining words were not part of the Gospel. This might explain the confusion in Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.

Other earliest Bibles from the fourth and fifth centuries also include the verses. Additionally they are in ancient translations of the New Testament, including the Old Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and Latin Vulgate as well as the slightly later Armenian, Arabic, Old Church Slavonic, Georgian, and Ethiopic.¹⁰ The presence of these verses in so many early translations across diverse geographic regions testifies to their widespread acceptance as authentic Scripture.

MARK 16.9–20 IS QUOTED BY THE EARLIEST CHRISTIAN WRITERS

The earliest Christian writers also testify to these verses. These include writings from the period before AD 150 such as *The First Epistle of Clement* [of Rome], *The Shepherd of Hermas*, and *The Epistle of Barnabas*. Lunn shows how these writers and even apocryphal Gnostic gospels show dependence on specific Greek words uniquely used by Mark in these verses.¹¹

There are writers from the period AD 150–300 who quoted these verses, such as Justin Martyr, Tatian, Irenaeus of Lyons, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Hippolytus, and Vincentius of Thibaris, and the treatise *Didascalia Apostolorum*.

Irenaeus of Lyons (c. AD 180), in his work *Against Heresies* (3.10.6), writes: ‘Also, toward the conclusion of his Gospel Mark says, “So then after the Lord Jesus spoke to them, He was received up into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God”’ (citing Mark 16.19). This quotation is particularly significant because it comes from a major church leader only a century after Mark wrote his Gospel, and it explicitly attributes verse 19 to Mark himself.

Tatian’s *Diatessaron* (c. AD 170), a harmony of the four Gospels, includes the content of Mark 16.9–20, demonstrating that these verses were accepted as canonical in the second century.

Those after AD 300 include Eusebius, Epiphanius, Jerome, Hesychius, Severus, and Victor of Antioch.¹² Jerome, for example, included these verses in his Latin Vulgate translation, which became the standard Bible of Western Christianity for over a thousand years.

Even some pagan philosophers such as Porphyry and Celsus, who wrote against Christianity, quoted this passage, indicating they recognised it as part of the authentic Christian Scriptures they were attacking.

MARK 16.9–20 FITS WITH THE REST OF THE GOSPEL

It is frequently asserted that this passage does not fit with the rest of the Gospel according to Mark. This is one of the major reasons that some scholars have rejected the authenticity of these verses. The following points demonstrate, however, that the passage does fit with the rest of the Gospel.

Mark's style and vocabulary

Some modern scholars tell us that the characteristic features of Mark's style and vocabulary are missing from this passage. They think that the change from detailed description to loosely linked brief notices in Mark 16.9–20 indicates a change of authorship. But it is presumptuous to make such a judgement based on twelve verses only. The subject matter is unique and cannot be compared with earlier paragraphs on the same topic. For

example, the first five verses of Luke are unlike anything in the rest of his Gospel; the same may be said of the first five verses of John.¹³

Maurice A. Robinson, drawing on several scholarly studies, has concluded that the vocabulary and style of Mark 16.9–20 is perfectly consistent with passages from elsewhere in the Gospel.¹⁴ He estimates that 92.7% of the words used have 'some related parallel elsewhere in Mark'.¹⁵ As Nicholas Lunn concludes, the style of 16.9–20 is Mark's and the language of 16.9–20 'falls within the observable parameters of Markan usage'.¹⁶

Specific examples of Markan language in these verses include:

- The phrase ἐκβεβλήκει ἑπτὰ δαιμόνια ('cast out seven demons') in 16.9 reflects Mark's frequent use of ἐκβάλλω for exorcism (1.34, 39; 3.15; 3.22, 23; 6.13; 7.26; 9.18, 28, 38)
- The expression ἐφανερώθη ἐν ἑτέρᾳ μορφῇ ('appeared in another form') in 16.12 is consistent with Mark's interest in visual appearance and transformation (9.2–3)
- The commission to κηρύξατε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ('preach the gospel') in 16.15 echoes similar expressions throughout Mark (1.14, 38–39; 13.10; 14.9)¹⁷
- The emphasis on unbelief and hardness of heart in 16.14 is consistent with Mark's portrayal of the disciples throughout the Gospel

Mark's language: other features

Lunn argues that a range of 'deeper-level linguistic features' can be shown to provide evidence that supports Markan authorship. He uses methods of stylistic analysis to look carefully at the linguistic evidence in Mark such as parts of speech, participant reference (that is, how the language refers to agents—by nouns, pronouns, or inflected verbs), collocations, and syntactical structures.¹⁸

For example:

Mark often begins sentences with *kai* (and). He uses *kai* three times in the disputed ending in 16.9–20, in verses 11, 13 (in contracted form), and also in verse 15. This shows the consistency of language between the first eight verses and the remainder of the chapter, and is in keeping with Mark's style of writing.

Mark's structure

There is an essential parallelism between the beginning and conclusion of the Gospel according to Mark. We can see this by comparing the subject matter of Mark 16.9–20 and Mark 1.9–20: our Lord's manifestation to the world, victory over Satan, gifts of the Holy Spirit, preaching the Gospel, the Kingdom of God, and the call to the ministry. This is an indication that the Holy Spirit was the Author of the ending as well as the beginning of Mark's Gospel and that Mark was the writer of both. Lunn argues from various literary devices that 'the longer

ending forms an integral element in the overall design of the Gospel'.¹⁹

Consider these structural parallels:

- Mark 1.9–11 narrates Jesus' baptism and Divine affirmation; Mark 16.19 shows His ascension and Divine enthronement
- Mark 1.12–13 describes Jesus' temptation by Satan; Mark 16.17–18 promises believers power over demonic forces
- Mark 1.14–15 presents Jesus proclaiming the Gospel; Mark 16.15 commands disciples to proclaim the Gospel
- Mark 1.16–20 depicts the calling of the first disciples; Mark 16.15–18 shows the commissioning of all the apostles

Mark's themes

Lunn argues that various Markan themes are 'strongly present in both the body of the Gospel and its ending'.²⁰ The theological themes that run throughout Mark find their completion in the final verses.

- **Discipleship and mission:** Mark emphasises following Jesus (1.17–20, 2.14, 8.34) and this culminates in the Great Commission (16.15)
- **Faith and unbelief:** Mark repeatedly highlights faith and unbelief (4.40, 6.6, 9.24), which is addressed explicitly in 16.14–16
- **Jesus' authority:** A central theme of Mark (1.22, 27; 2.10; 4.41) reaches its climax with Jesus seated at God's right hand (16.19)

- **Signs and wonders:** Mark's emphasis on miracles (1.34; 6.56; 7.37) continues with the signs promised to believers (16.17–18)
- **Proclamation of the Gospel:** This key theme (1.14–15; 13.10; 14.9) is fulfilled in the apostles' commission (16.15, 20)

If Mark 16.9–20 were omitted, these major themes would remain incomplete, leaving the Gospel structurally and thematically unresolved.

MARK 16.9–20 FITS WITH THE OTHER GOSPELS

Lunn argues that Luke 24 and the speeches in Acts demonstrate 'through unmistakable verbal resonances, acquaintance with a Gospel of Mark that included 16.9–20'.²¹

This suggests that both Luke and the early church were familiar with and accepted the longer ending of Mark.

Specific connections include:

- Luke 24.9–11 parallels Mark 16.9–11 regarding the women's report and the disciples' disbelief
- Luke 24.13–35 expands upon the brief account in Mark 16.12–13
- The ascension account in Luke 24.50–53 corresponds to Mark 16.19
- Acts 1.9–11 provides additional details about the ascension mentioned in Mark 16.19

- Jesus' promise of power in Acts 1.8 corresponds to signs promised in Mark 16.17–18
- The apostolic preaching and signs in Acts (2.43; 5.12; 8.7; 16.18; 28.3–6) fulfil what is predicted in Mark 16.17–18, 20

Furthermore, the abrupt ending at Mark 16.8 with 'for they were afraid' (ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ) would be an unprecedented and unlikely conclusion for a Greek narrative, especially one proclaiming good news. All the Gospel narratives include post-resurrection appearances of Christ, and it would be surprising if Mark, whose stated purpose was to write about 'the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God' (Mark 1.1), would end without demonstrating the ultimate vindication of Jesus through resurrection appearances and ascension.

MARK 16.9–20: WHY SO MANY PEOPLE THINK IT IS NOT IN THE BIBLE

It may be rather difficult to understand why so many people seem to reject the authenticity of this portion of Scripture. Briefly stated, they appeal to some of the earliest manuscripts, by which they mean the two Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus already mentioned. They do not usually mention the unusual features in both manuscripts that show the scribes were aware of Mark 16.9–20. From over 1,600 manuscripts that contain the Gospel according to Mark, all that contain a full Gospel are either aware

of or contain Mark 16.9–20. Only two lack these verses.²²

Opponents of Mark 16.9–20 then mention that some early writers considered it dubious. This appears to be a reference to a fourth century letter *Ad Marinum* which is usually attributed to Eusebius. The letter makes references to some disputes regarding the ending of Mark, but it leaves more questions than answers. Does it show a clear questioning of the passage and did Eusebius agree with this or not?²³ The majority of early writers from the very beginning of the Christian church quote the passage and there is no hint of its authenticity being disputed before AD 300.

As with the ESV footnote cited above, references to the so-called ‘shorter ending’ of Mark often seem only to muddy the waters. This spurious insertion appears in only a handful (six) of late Greek manuscripts (copied from the seventh to thirteenth centuries), plus one lectionary. It is not so much a legitimate ending as it is a late and spurious scribal interpolation. It should be noted that all the Greek manuscripts that include this ‘shorter ending’ actually proceed to include Mark 16.9–20.²⁴

It is also claimed that many manuscripts have marks such as asterisks and obeli (horizontal lines or dagger-like marks: †) in the margin to indicate that the passage has dubious authenticity. This claim has been repeated from scholar to scholar, but when the evidence is investigated it appears to

be unfounded. In fact, detailed studies of these supposed marginal markings have shown that they often indicate lectionary divisions rather than textual doubts.

Some scholars assume that Mark 16.9–20 copies elements from the resurrection accounts in the other Gospels. Others assert that Mark 16.9–20 contradicts statements made in the rest of Mark. However, these claims fail to recognise that similarities between Gospel accounts are to be expected when describing the same historical events. The supposed contradictions, like the claim that 16.9 contradicts 16.2 about the timing of the resurrection, are readily resolved through careful reading. Mark 16.2 describes when the women went to the tomb, while 16.9 states when Jesus rose, not when He was first seen.

Another objection is that the abrupt ending at verse 8 is Mark’s intended literary device—that he deliberately ended with a description of the fear of the women to create tension. Yet this theory, popular among some modern literary critics, cannot be substantiated from early Christian writings or from what we know of ancient literature. It also fails to account for the numerous prophecies of the resurrection in Mark that would be left unfulfilled without the longer ending. Even in Mark 16.6–7 the angel instructs the women that the risen Christ will appear in Galilee, and they will ‘see him’. This prophecy of the angel surely indicates fulfilment in Mark’s Gospel record. If Mark finishes at verse 8, the prophecy is incomplete.

The influence of modern critical scholarship, primarily beginning with Westcott and Hort in the nineteenth century, has played a significant role in undermining confidence in these verses. These scholars' preference for Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus has shaped Biblical scholarship despite the overwhelming manuscript evidence in favour of the longer ending.

DIVINE PRESERVATION

All of the evidence and arguments presented here help to add confidence in believing this passage is authentic. Ultimately, we ought to believe that God has kept His promise to preserve His Word for all generations (Psalm 119.152, 160). This extends to the whole of Scripture, not just this passage. Christ declared that 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away' (Matthew 24.35). This preservation extends to every 'jot' and 'tittle' (Matthew 5.18), ensuring that Scripture remains 'pure' (Proverbs 30.5) and 'perfect' (Psalm 19.7). The Bible's inspiration (2 Timothy 3.16) logically requires preservation, for what benefit would Divinely inspired Scripture have if it were subsequently corrupted or lost?

Scripture's purposes further necessitate its complete preservation. God's Word was written not merely for its original recipients but 'for our learning' also (Romans 15.4). When Christ enjoined the teaching of 'all things' He commanded (Matthew 28.20), He presumed the church

would have access to those commands. Similarly, when Scripture warns against adding to or taking away from 'the words' (Revelation 22.18–19), it assumes a settled, preserved text. The Spirit's promise to lead the church into 'all truth' (John 16.13) requires that 'all truth' remains available through God's preserved Word.

Biblical precedent confirms this doctrine, as seen when God replaced the broken tablets with new ones containing 'the words that were in the first tables' (Deuteronomy 10.2) and when Jeremiah's burned scroll was rewritten with 'all the former words that were in the first roll' (Jeremiah 36.28). The Westminster Confession of Faith (1.8) rightly affirms that the Hebrew and Greek texts have been 'by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages'.

This stands in stark contrast to the modern critical position that leaves us with a perpetually provisional rather than a providentially preserved text. Modern critical scholars admit 'we do not have now ... exactly what the authors of the New Testament wrote.'²⁵ The reality is that their approach to Scripture means that they cannot say that any verse or passage in the New Testament is certain. It is not just Mark 16.9–20 that is in doubt for them. There is a potential for the authenticity of any verse or passage to be questioned on the basis of either new methods or new manuscripts and other evidence. The Biblical doctrine of preservation gives believers confidence that when we read

Scripture, we possess the very Word God intended us to have.

CONCLUSION

These disputed verses are part of the inspired and holy Word of God and should be received with reverence by the whole church of God. In their determination to uphold the superiority, in their judgement, of Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, Biblical scholars of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries have elevated these documents to a throne of supreme authority, with the result that these last 12 verses are retained in the modern versions only as a late and spurious addition to the original text.

We stand on infinitely firmer ground when we insist that the whole of the Gospel according to Mark—from the first verse of the first chapter to the end of verse 20 of the sixteenth chapter—was given by inspiration of God and is to be respected as an integral part of the Divine revelation.

The evidence for the authenticity of Mark 16.9–20 is compelling:

- The overwhelming majority of Greek manuscripts (99%) include it
- It appears in ancient translations across diverse geographic regions
- Early church fathers consistently quoted it and attributed it to Mark
- Its style, vocabulary, and themes align with the rest of the Gospel
- It provides a fitting conclusion that completes Mark's theological themes
- It harmonises with the other Gospel accounts and early Christian teaching
- The few manuscripts that omit it show awareness of its existence

So what, in the end, should our hypothetical student mentioned above conclude as to the originality and authenticity of Mark 16.9–20? Is it the fitting and canonical ending of Mark? For nearly 1,800 years the church universally accepted these verses as authentic Scripture. Only in relatively recent times have these verses been widely questioned, often based on incomplete evidence or questionable assumptions. As we have seen, a thorough examination of the evidence strongly supports the conclusion that Mark 16.9–20 belongs in our Bibles as the divinely inspired conclusion to the Gospel according to Mark.

GLOSSARY

Authenticity: The measure of whether a passage reflects the original wording of the Biblical text.

Canonical: Belonging to the canon—the official list of books recognised as Holy Scripture.

Codex: A hand-copied manuscript produced in a book format as opposed to a scroll.

Codices: Plural of codex.

Interpolation: A suspected later addition to the Biblical text (most commonly found in the middle of a passage) that may not have been part of the original.

Lectionary: A book consisting of selections of Scripture for reading in connection with the church calendar.

Manuscript: A handwritten copy of the text originally written on papyrus or vellum.

Minuscule (also known as cursive): A manuscript written in small, joined handwriting.

Modern Critical Text: A Greek text of the New Testament that uses textual criticism to reconstruct what the editors think might have been the earliest or most authoritative text. These texts are often constructed without adequate

regard to the historical place given to manuscripts and particular readings within the church of God, and rely on a few old, but nevertheless unrepresentative, manuscripts and readings which have lain in obscurity for many centuries. Critical texts include the Westcott/Hort and Nestle/Aland texts, both of which rely heavily upon Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲱ or 01; fourth century) and Codex Vaticanus (B or 03; fourth century).

Papyrus (plural, papyri): Writing material made from papyrus plants on which some of the earliest Greek New Testament witnesses were copied. These were prone to decay and therefore much of the papyri have only been found in the drier climate of Egypt.

Providential Preservation: The doctrine that God has preserved His Word intact through the manuscript tradition.

Textual Criticism: The scholarly discipline of studying manuscript variations.

Textus Receptus or Received Text: The standard printed editions of the text of the Greek New Testament, published during the Reformation and Post-Reformation eras, which became the basis for the great Protestant translations of the Bible. This text was based on what were considered to be the most faithful copies (apographs) of the New Testament, affirmed by Protestant

scholars as accurately conveying the Divine originals (autographs), and generally received by churches up to the present, but challenged beginning in the modern era.

Uncial: A handwritten manuscript composed in capital letters in which each letter is written separately.

Vellum: A fine parchment made from animal skin, commonly used for medieval Biblical manuscripts.

Witnesses: Greek manuscripts, ancient translations (often called 'versions'), or quotations in ancient authors such as early church fathers that bear testimony to a particular reading.

ENDNOTES

- 1 ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. ESV Text Edition: 2025. esv.org
- 2 The full list is: A, C, D, E, F, G, H, K, M, N, S, U, V, X, W, Γ, Δ, Θ, Λ, Π, Σ, Φ, Ψ, Ω as found in N. P. Lunn, *The Original Ending of Mark: A New Case for the Authenticity of Mark 16:9–20* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2015), p. 25.
- 3 J. A. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, Series 2, Vol. 112 (Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, 2000) quoted Lunn, p. 25.
- 4 Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* (Revised and Enlarged edition; trans. E. F. Rhodes; Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), p. 287, cited Kelhoffer, p. 1.
- 5 ESV edition as above.
- 6 There is one late minuscule, manuscript 304 from the twelfth century, that also does not include the verses, but that seems to be because of damage to the end of the document in the same way as minuscules 1420 and 2386. 304 is a commentary and clearly incomplete as the conclusions of Maurice A. Robinson demonstrate (see Lunn pp. 33–34). It lacks a subscription after verse 8 to indicate that the scribe regarded this as the end of the Gospel.
- 7 H. C. Hoskier, *Codex B and its Allies*, Vol. 2. (London: Quaritch, 1914), p. 1, cited Lunn p. 27.
- 8 Lunn, p. 33.
- 9 See Lunn, pp. 55–57.
- 10 See Lunn, pp. 25, 42–54. There are some manuscripts that omit the verses as listed by Lunn p. 23, but the majority support them.
- 11 Lunn, pp. 61–76.
- 12 Lunn lists an additional eighteen early Christian writers, pp. 109–110.
- 13 As Lunn notes an author may vary his language considerably and other passages in Mark ‘show similar or even greater use of unique vocabulary’, p. 164.
- 14 M. A. Robinson, ‘The Long Ending of Mark as a Canonical Verity’, in D. A. Black, *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark: 4 Views* (Nashville: B&H, 2008), pp. 65–66.
- 15 Ibid., p. 60.
- 16 Lunn, p. 19.
- 17 Lunn notes that Mark uses ‘preach’ and ‘gospel’ notably more frequently than the other Gospels, p. 162.
- 18 Lunn, p. 19, see chapter 5.
- 19 Lunn, p. 19, see chapter 6.
- 20 Lunn, p. 20, see chapter 7.
- 21 Lunn, p. 20, see chapter 8.
- 22 J. T. Riddle, ‘The Ending of Mark as a Canonical Crisis’, *Puritan Reformed Journal*/Vol. 10, No. 1 (January 2018): 31–54, 33.
- 23 Ibid., pp. 39–41.
- 24 Scholars also sometimes refer to some later manuscripts they think omit the verses, but careful study shows this only really amounts to one (manuscript 304) from the twelfth century. It is a copy of other manuscripts that contain a commentary that expounds Mark 16.9–20 together with the rest of the Gospel. It is not clear

why it lacks these verses. Manuscript 2386 (also twelfth century) and manuscript 1420 (thirteenth century) are mutilated at the relevant point, see Lunn, p. 33.

- 25 Foreword to E. Hixson and P. J. Gurry, *Myths and Mistakes in New Testament Textual Criticism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), p. xii. In the same volume the editors, who are also evangelical textual critics, write: 'we believe the textual evidence we have is sufficient to reconstruct, in most cases, what the authors of the New Testament wrote. We cannot do this with equal certainty in every case, of course' (p. 20). The qualifications continually erode confidence that we have the Word of God in its completeness.

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