

DOES

MARK 16:9-20

BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

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I. Introduction to the Controversy

A. The Passage, In Full

In Mark chapter 16 of the Authorized Version King James Bible, we read about the glorious resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ:

“[1] And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. [2] And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. [3] And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? [4] And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

“[5] And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. [6] And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. [7] But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. [8] And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.”

Should anything follow this passage, or does Mark’s Gospel Record terminate here? Any Berean Bible student will surely reply, “Brother Shawn, what a ridiculous question! The King James Bible contains **another** 12 verses, and **only then** does Mark conclude!” In that case, dear friend, continue reading the King James Bible:

“[9] Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. [10] And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. [11] And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. [12] After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. [13] And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them. [14] Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

“[15] And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. [16] He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. [17] And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; [18] They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. [19] So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. [20] And they went forth, and preached

every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”

In his eponymous study Bible published over a century ago, Dr. C. I. Scofield attached the following footnote to Mark 16:9: “The passage from verse 9 to the end is not found in the two most ancient manuscripts, the Sinaitic and Vatican, and others have it with partial omissions and variations. But it is quoted by Irenaeus and Hippolytus in the second or third century.” What kind of an annotation is **this**?! Well, honestly, it is the type of gloss that has bothered dispensationalists who have used the Scofield Study Bible for more than 100 years! Does Mark 16:9-20 **actually belong** in the Holy Bible? Is it Mark’s original inspired ending, or simply a later addition? Although we will always be indebted to Dr. Scofield for his dispensational insight, he was still just a human like all of us, and he had his theological blind spots. We want to vehemently confess **this** note was one of them—**one we should clarify**. Our goal in this treatise is to study the Scriptures as well as explore church history, that we may establish and weigh the evidence of the pertinent arguments for and against Mark 16:9-20, and ultimately establish a sound conclusion.

Although a highly technical study, the information contained herein is invaluable and worthy of our attention. Friend, if you have an open heart and mind, a sincere desire to know the truth concerning this textual matter, you **will** know it (John 7:17)! Ask the Holy Spirit to edify, encourage, and enlighten you as you progress through this study. While this author does **not** agree with everyone he will cite here, he considers this data vital to the reader’s understanding of how Satan’s evil world system operates. The Bible student will come to realize the ubiquitous doubt, confusion, heresy, and apostasy that have long plagued the Church the Body of Christ. Most importantly, the reader will understand how to **avoid** such spiritual **ruin**. Requesting your undivided attention in this, our special-edition Bible Q&A article #825, the author has made every attempt to present the truth as plainly and simply as possible, that sound Bible doctrine be advanced and the Lord Jesus Christ thereby glorified. Are you ready? Here we go!

B. The Positions, In Brief

The debate surrounding Mark 16:9-20 can be reduced to three basic positions:

- **VIEW #1: Nothing belongs after Mark 16:8.** John Mark (or Peter?) was persecuted and/or died just after he wrote verse 8. Unable to be finished, the Second Gospel Record left Mark’s hands with verse 8 as the final statement. Or, John Mark **purposefully** concluded his Book at verse 8. Today’s overwhelming “scholarly consensus” is that John Mark certainly did **not** write Mark 16:9-20—the “longer ending” as found in the King James Bible. Those last 12 verses are a later addition, or, to put it more bluntly, a **forgery**.
- **VIEW #2: Something belongs after Mark 16:8, but great uncertainty exists as to exactly what.** Although John Mark outlived his Book and wrote

past verse 8, whatever he penned thereafter was lost due to a variety of factors. We do **not** have the original ending, and we do **not** know what it is anyway. Verses 9-20, the “longer ending,” is likely **not** the original or inspired conclusion. An enigmatic “shorter ending,” probably forged as well, can replace or supplement verses 9-20. Until the mid-20th century, this was the “scholarly consensus.” While some still hold to it even today, textual “experts” currently prefer View #1.

- **VIEW #3: Verses 9-20 alone belong after Mark 16:8.** John Mark wrote verses 9-20, the “longer ending” as found in the King James Bible. They are the **only** inspired ending Mark’s Gospel Record **ever** had, thereby making it erroneous to conclude Mark at 16:8. It is also **incorrect** to allow any “shorter ending” as an alternative reading. This is the view of the author, and various other Bible believers.

Later, we will look at the respective arguments used to support these positions. For now, avoiding great detail, we are laying some simple groundwork. Suffice it to say: “As might be expected, advocates against the inclusion of the long ending and those favoring inclusion are sharply divided over this issue” (*A General Introduction to the Bible*, Geisler and Nix, page 486).

C. The People, In Brief

According to Dr. J. Sidlow Baxter, “doubt concerning [these last 12 verses] does not seem to have been expressed until **the fourth century**” (*Explore the Book*, page 224). Dr. Frederick Scrivener pinpoints: “The earliest objector to ver. 9–20 we know of was **Eusebius**” (*A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, page 587). In more recent centuries, additional uncertainty was introduced via “advancements” in the field of Greek New Testament textual criticism or study.

Dr. John William Burgon, in his 1871 classic work, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, supplies us with further data on page 5:

“It is only since the appearance of Griesbach’s second edition [1796–1806] that critics of the New Testament have permitted themselves to handle the last twelve verses of St. Mark’s Gospel with disrespect. Previous critical editions of the New Testament are free from this reproach. ‘There is no reason for doubting the genuineness of this portion of Scripture,’ wrote Mill in 1707, after a review of the evidence (as far as he was acquainted with it) for and against. Twenty-seven years later Bengel’s edition of the New Testament appeared (1734); and Wetstein, at the end of another seventeen years (1751-2), followed in the same field. Both editors, after rehearsing the adverse testimony *in extenso*, **left the passage in undisputed possession of its place.**

“Alter in 1786-87 and Birch in 1788 (suspicious as the latter evidently was of its genuineness) followed their predecessors’ example. But Matthaei (who also brought his labors to a close in the year 1788) was not content to give a silent suffrage. He had been for upward of fourteen years a laborious collator of Greek MSS [manuscripts] of the New Testament, and **was so convinced of the insufficiency of the arguments which had been brought against these twelve verses of St. Mark, that with no ordinary warmth, no common acuteness, he insisted on their genuineness.**

‘With Griesbach,’ remarks Dr. Tregelles, ‘texts which may be called really critical begin’; and Griesbach is the first to insist that the concluding verses of St. Mark are spurious. That he did not suppose the second Gospel to have always ended at verse 8, we have seen already. He was of the opinion, however, that ‘at some very remote period, the original ending of the Gospel perished—disappeared perhaps *from the Evangelist’s own copy—and that the present ending was by someone substituted in its place*” (Bold emphasis mine.).

Doubt concerning Mark 16:9-20 was confined almost entirely to “scholarly” circles, not plaguing the Christian public until 140 years ago. Two British Anglican professors and “scholars,” Drs. Brooke Foss Westcott (1825–1901) and Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828–1892), headed a massive revision of the Authorized Version King James Bible. A new English Bible, the 1881 Revised Version, resulted. Also, a new Greek Bible (the Westcott-Hort Greek) was published. At this point, so-called “older and better” readings replaced the then-270-year-old Authorized Version. Newly-discovered *Codices* (manuscripts in a large book form, as opposed to rolled up scrolls) *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* became the “standard” Christian Greek Bible for English translations, overthrowing the Protestant King James Bible and its underlying Greek New Testament (*Textus Receptus*, or *TR*; sometimes called the *Majority Text* or *Traditional Text*).

Alfred Martin informs us how Westcott and Hort forever changed the English Bible through their substitution of Greek texts:

“It is well known that the chief point in which the Westcott-Hort (‘Neutral’) text differs from the traditional text [Textus Receptus, King James Greek] is in the omission of certain passages, some rather lengthy and others quite brief. The two longest of these are Mark 16:9-20, **which Westcott and Hort print in double brackets**, and John 7:53–8:11, which they print in double brackets at the end of John. **They do not consider either of these to be genuine Scripture**” (*Which Bible?*, editor David Otis Fuller, page 167).

In order to summarize our statements thus far, we will appeal to the words of Samuel Zwemer:

“...they also bring us to the heart of the problem, namely, the fact that Codex B of the Vatican Library and Codex Aleph brought from Mount Sinai in 1859 do

not contain the last twelve verses of Mark. **This was the principal reason why Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Alford denied their genuineness.** So when Westcott and Hort issued their revised text of the New Testament, they assured us that “the original text terminated abruptly, from whatever cause ... **the rest was added at another time and probably by another hand**” (*Counterfeit or Genuine?*, editor David Otis Fuller, page 164). (Bold emphasis mine.)

Dr. Scrivener, the leading conservative scholar on the 1881 Revised Version Committee, provides us with his firsthand evaluation of Westcott and Hort’s efforts:

“The elegant volume which exhibits the Greek text contains in its margin many alternative readings, chiefly recorded in passages wherein a difference of opinion existed between the two illustrious editors. Words or passages supposed to be of doubtful authority are included in brackets ([]), those judged to be probably or certainly spurious—and their number is ominously large—in double brackets ([[]]). Mark xvi. 9—20; John vii. 53—viii. 11 are banished to the end of their respective Gospels, **as if they did not belong to them**” (*A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, page 489). (Bold emphasis mine.)

Dr. Fuller relays the following information, whose recommendation of Burgon will be useful to us in the ensuing pages of this our treatise:

“The longest passage called in question by Westcott and Hort and Bishop Ellicott—who dominated, domineered, and engineered the proceedings from beginning to end—is Mark 16:9-20. Dean Burgon has proceeded to provide thoroughly documented proof that this section of God’s Holy Word was in the original autographs. This is found in this condensed volume of his original work, which consisted of well over four hundred pages and was one of the most scholarly, carefully documented critiques that has ever been written on this subject and one that no scholar has ever answered or even attempted to answer” (*Counterfeit or Genuine?*, page 9). (Bold emphasis mine.)

Having presented the passage in question, delineated the positions in brief, and defined some of the chief people involved in this controversy, we move to examining the arguments for and against the last 12 verses of Mark. In Part II, up next, we look at the opposition to the passage. Part III will consider the support for the passage.

II. Examination of the Arguments for the Omission of Mark 16:9-20

Recall our comments from Part I. Those who reject Mark 16:9-20 as the original, inspired ending of Mark's Gospel Record fall into one of three categories:

1. Persecution and/or death prevented Mark from completing his Book.
2. Mark wrote something after verse 8, but that original ending was lost.
3. John Mark deliberately closed his Record at verse 8.

At this point, we now endeavor to explore these positions, outlining the reasons why people refuse the last 12 verses of Mark as found in the King James Bible. Since this author fervently disagree with them, he will also issue rebuttals to their assertions.

Claim #1: Nothing belongs after Mark 16:8 because persecution and/or death caused John Mark to unexpectedly terminate his Gospel Record prematurely.

According to a few individuals, John Mark died (or was executed?) before he could finish his Gospel Record past verse 8. Verses 9-20 as found in our King James Bible are considered “spurious” or “doubtful,” unauthorized additions to Mark's Gospel Record. They do ***not*** belong!

C. E. Graham Swift remarks in *The New Bible Commentary* (Revised, 3rd edition, 1970):

“The generally accepted view is either that the Gospel was, very early on, mutilated at the last page, or that Mark was unable to finish, perhaps owing to the rising tide of persecution.... Yet although the question of literary authenticity must remain uncertain, all scholars agree that these verses are canonically authentic. They are part of the Canon of Holy Scripture” (pages 885-886).

Although we strongly wish “all scholars agree that these verses are canonically authentic,” that is simply ***not*** the case. Honestly, the vast majority of Bible “scholars” are **hostile** opponents of Mark 16:9-20—and, in this part of our study, we will see their sentiments in their own words.

What exactly did Mark intend to write had he lived long enough to complete his work? Unfortunately, we have nothing but ***idle speculation*** at this point. By the way, an offshoot and rarer notion is that Mark's Gospel Record ended suddenly because the

Apostle Peter, its “source,” was slain before he could finish telling Mark what to write. Regardless, “scholars” generally agree Mark lived to conclude and publish his Gospel Record. In fact, ancient Church Fathers—including Papias, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen—believed Mark did not die until **after** he completed his Book (*The King James Version Defended*, Edward F. Hills, page 209). Nevertheless, even if we believe Mark lived to finish his writing, “scholars” offer us a variety of more vague conjectures as to what he **did** write—that is, assuming he **continued after verse 8** (and most of them today say he did not write further)! Was it the Longer Ending, our King James conclusion? Or, maybe it was the Shorter Ending, a variant reading provided in some modern English versions?

Dr. Hills, on page 209 of *The King James Version Defended*, provides us with additional comprehension, although he is writing in the mid-20th century when scholars were willing to believe Mark 16:8 was **not** the original ending:

“But the theory that Mark purposely ended his Gospel at Mark 16:8 has never been widely held, in spite of Creed’s and Lightfoot’s arguments that this is the only possible view. As Beach (AD 1959) rightly observes, ‘It seems unlikely that Mark would end the Gospel on a note of fear, for the whole purpose and import of the Gospel is that men should not be afraid.’ And it is even less likely that Mark concluded his Gospel without any reference to the appearance of the risen Christ to His disciples. For this, as W. L. Knox (AD 1942) reminds us, would be to leave unmentioned ‘the main point of his Gospel, and the real ‘happy ending’ on which the whole faith of the Church depended.”

To entertain the notion that Mark ended prematurely (his death, Peter’s death, whatever the case) is to do nothing more than occupy ourselves with folly. We are now treating the Bible like it is “just another volume of human musings.” **Even if** Mark (and/or Peter) expired before he finished writing, could not the Holy Spirit have led another man to complete his Gospel Record? Would not associates of Mark have finished it for him? To claim Mark died before ending his Gospel Record, rendering it unintentionally shortened, is to outright deny Divine inspiration (and God’s ability to continue **without** Mark and/or Peter). Is the Bible so dependent on people that it cannot be brought to pass without their aid? The scholars, so conceited, reply in the affirmative: “You **cannot** understand the Scriptures without **our** ‘academic insight!’”

As Bible believers, we simply **cannot** adopt **any** possibility of an incomplete Gospel Record of Mark. Of course, if human reasoning has its sway—and it **certainly does** in textual criticism—then we have **no** problem denying God’s influence as touching the Bible! We are **not** Bible “believers” at this point, but rather Bible **doubters**. In that case, we are left to wonder if **other** Bible Books might have been unintentionally ended. Maybe Luke was killed off before he could finish writing Acts? If Mark and/or Peter died before the Gospel Record of Mark could be finished, why did the omniscient Holy Spirit **not** take precautions against it? After all, Paul completed 2 Timothy before he died (2 Timothy 4:6-7) and Peter concluded 2 Peter before he perished (2 Peter 1:12-15). How could death interrupt the writing of John Mark? We pass on from this claim.

Claim #2: Something belongs after Mark 16:8, but we cannot establish the concluding text with absolute certainty.

Although John Mark lived to finish the Gospel Record that bears his name, his original conclusion was lost for some reason (opinions vary here, which we will present and assess later). What about verses 9-20 of our King James Bible? Again, this “longer ending” is considered “spurious” or “doubtful,” an **unauthorized** addition to Mark’s Gospel Record. Verses 9-20, it is said, are **uninspired** and do **not** belong! An enigmatic “shorter ending,” probably forged as well, can serve as a replacement for, or supplement to, verses 9-20. If Claim #1 appeared to be speculative and open to endless possibilities, Claim #2 really complicates our search for definitive answers! We cannot expect this ambiguous position to profit us at all, but many even now hold to this former view of the “scholarly consensus.” More will be said about it in the ensuing pages. For now, let us concentrate on the current “scholarly” view.

Claim #3: Nothing belongs after Mark 16:8 because that is where Mark chose to end his Gospel Record.

Most individuals claim verses 9-20 (as in our King James Bible) do **not** belong because Mark **purposely closed** his Book with verse 8. According to Dr. Nicholas P. Lunn, this became the “new scholarly consensus” in the mid- to late-20th century (*The Original Ending of Mark*, page 2). Prior to that, Claims #1 and #2 were popular “scholarly” approaches to closing the Gospel Record of Mark.

However, it is rather difficult for us Bible believers to accept Mark 16:8 as the final verse. For example, without verses 9-20, there are **no** post-resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ in Mark’s Gospel Record. What is conspicuously lacking is proof that He has **indeed** risen from the dead! An important question arises at this point. How could Mark deliberately end with verse 8? “*And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.*” Would **fear** really be an appropriate conclusion to the Second “Gospel” (“Good News”) Record? Does not that very “dangling” statement indicate something is missing?

Dr. Robert H. Gundry, on page 155 of his *A Survey of the New Testament* (4th edition), represents a popular “scholarly” position: “Many think that Mark intended his Gospel to end with 16:8. If so, the women’s trembling and amazement, dumbfoundedness and fear, bring the Gospel to a close on the note of awe, as appropriate to Mark’s portrayal of Jesus as the Christ, God’s Son.” In other words, someone taking the textual critics’ approach to the Holy Bible, dismisses this “**fear**” as **not** terror or dread but rather awe and wonder at Christ’s resurrection. Thus, Gundry argues, it would **not** be unsuitable for Mark to stop at 16:8.

On pages 21-23 of his book, *Is the ‘World’s Oldest Bible’ a Fake?*, David W. Daniels, who favors the inclusion of Mark 16:9-20, skillfully answered this re-defining of “*afraid*”

as “filled with awe:”

“I can prove to you that Mary Magdalene wasn’t all joyful and ‘in awe.’ Look at what John wrote, himself—and he was **there** that day, and **knew** Mary Magdalene.

“John 20:10-13: Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

“Mary Magdalene doesn’t sound in AWE at all. **She sounds sad**, because she doesn’t know **who** took Jesus’ body away, or **where** it is. Mary’s not thinking about Jesus being **resurrected** this morning. **That’s why she’s weeping.**

“Look at John 20:9: For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

“Jesus said a lot of things that the disciples didn’t understand. This was one of them.

“John 20:14-15: And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

“Here Mary Magdalene clearly still doesn’t get it. **There’s no body.** That’s **all** she knows. Not even angels appearing can change that for her. She asks where Jesus was laid, so she can take His body away again. She doesn’t understand why someone would move His body!

“Verse 16: ‘Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.’ Not until she has **seen the risen Lord Jesus for herself** does she stop weeping and being sad!

“So no, they were **not** in awe. They were afraid. Not a suitable ending for Mark’s gospel. Look at Mary Magdalene. Not even angels appearing gave her hope. **Only Jesus’ body risen from the dead made her stop weeping.**

“Mark’s Gospel was never supposed to stop at 16:8. That’s why out of 620 Greek Mark 16s in existence, 618 of them **have verses 9-20**. That’s 99.677%

of Greek manuscripts that have Mark 16 that have verses 9-20.

“Only two defective manuscripts are missing them: Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus.” (Bold italicized emphasis in original.)

Daniels’ final comments about “two defective manuscripts” will be dealt with in greater detail later in this study. Again, for now, we are still outlining rudimentary information. Let us review what we have discussed thus far in opening this Part II. Whether they claim:

- (1) John Mark and/or Peter died before the Gospel Record of Mark was finished,
or
- (2) John Mark wrote an original ending after verse 8 but it was lost,
or
- (3) John Mark chose to end his Gospel Record with verse 8,

...these disparate camps can agree on one fact: Mark 16:9-20 is ***not*** authentic. They will thus rely on several refutations of these last 12 verses of Mark as found in our King James Bible. We proceed to define their particular arguments by presenting them in the form of questions. Again, since this author disagrees with them, he will answer them as well. By the way, the first three items are complex. Please make every attempt to follow them as closely as you can.

A. Do not the “earliest/oldest/best/most reliable” manuscripts lack Mark 16:9-20?

Drs. Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix take the prevailing “scholarly” position:

“These verses (9-20) are **lacking in many of the oldest and most reliable Greek manuscripts**, including \aleph , B, Old Latin manuscript k, the Sinaitic Syriac, many Old Armenian manuscripts and a number of Ethiopic manuscripts” (*A General Introduction to the Bible*, page 487). (Bold emphasis mine.)

Marginal notes and footnotes in modern Bible versions, as well as commentaries and other Bible study aids, encapsulate the most common excuse for questioning or eliminating Mark 16:9-20.

For example, the highly popular New International Version (NIV, 2011 update) has a conspicuous horizontal bar between verses 8 and 9, with the following disclaimer in brackets: “The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9-20.” Verses 9-20 are then provided in *italics*, with a “shorter [alternative] reading” supplied in a footnote. Upon observing this strange sight, the reader is left to conclude,

“Well, since the *‘earliest’* and *‘ancient’* manuscripts lack verses 9-20, they must not be authentic, and therefore not worthy of my time or trust!” Henceforth, this Bible user will parrot the claims of the textual critics who produced the NIV, passing that unbelief on to yet others. Since the NIV is one of the bestselling versions, doubtless this misleading information has spread far and wide. **Millions upon millions of souls thus move from faith to doubt!** To be fair, we note the NIV committee members are not alone in their dispersion of such rhetoric. Here are other popular versions.

The David Jeremiah Study Bible (2013 NKJV edition) bears the following note at Mark 16:9-20:

“Some **ancient** manuscripts do not have the so-called “long ending” of Mark, **indicating that it is not part of the original account. Most scholars believe this section was added later to conclude what otherwise seems like an abrupt ending to the Gospel.** If these scholars are correct, the abrupt ending fits with Mark’s focus on Christ’s immediate ministry, ending concisely with Christ’s glorious resurrection.” (Bold emphasis mine.)

Let us look at the *Holman KJV Study Bible* (2012) as touching its comment on Mark 16:9-20:

“These verses do not appear in the oldest manuscripts of Mark’s Gospel. Therefore, one should be cautious about building a doctrine based only upon these verses and not supported by other Scripture.” (Bold emphasis mine.)

The Ryrie Study Bible, 1978 NASB edition, describes Mark 16:9-20 in this manner:

“These verses do not appear in two of the most trustworthy [sic] manuscripts of the N.T., though they are part of many other manuscripts and versions. If they are not a part of the genuine text of Mark, the abrupt ending at verse 8 is probably because **the original closing verses were lost.** The **doubtful genuineness of verses 9-20** makes it unwise to build a doctrine or base an experience on them (especially vv. 16-18).” (Bold emphasis mine.)

Yet, this problem goes *back much further* than the NIV, David Jeremiah NKJV Study Bible, Ryrie NASB, Holman KJV Study Bible, and so on. Remember, in our introduction, we quoted the Scofield Study Bible’s footnote at Mark 16:9. We would do well to look at this quote again from **1917**: “The passage from verse 9 to the end is not found in the two most ancient manuscripts, the Sinaitic and Vatican, and others have it with partial omissions and variations. But it is quoted by Irenaeus and Hippolytus in the second or third century.” For over a century, this comment has bothered dispensationalists—including this author—and rightly so. Again, it is most unfortunate Brother Scofield allowed such negative light to be cast upon Mark 16:9-20 in his work. But, negative scholarly opinions about this passage of Scripture existed prior to the

(English-language) Scofield Study Bible.

Released in **1901**, the American Standard Version (ASV) has a footnote at verse 9: “The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and some other authorities, omit from ver. 9 to the end.” The ASV was quite popular during the first half of the 20th century, and its critical remark here influenced American Christians (pastors, teachers, congregants, et cetera) to question Mark 16:9-20. It would also do us well to note the ASV was the American counterpart to the British 1881 Revised Version (RV) of Westcott and Hort, whom we have “met” earlier! The rejection of Mark 16:9-20 in the United States had already occurred in Great Britain. In other words, modern English versions here in America were simply following the pattern set forth in the RV!

Dean Burgon, on pages 36-37 of his monumental classic, *Revision Revised*, judged the 1881 Revised Version just two years after its released:

“We may now proceed with our examination of their work, beginning—as Dr. Roberts (one of the Revisionists) does, when explaining the method and results of their labours—with what we hold to be the gravest blot of all, viz. **the marks of serious suspicion which we find set against the last Twelve verses of S. Mark’s Gospel**. Well may the learned Presbyterian anticipate that—‘The reader will be struck by the appearance which this long paragraph presents in the Revised Version. **Although inserted, it is marked off by a considerable space from the rest of the Gospel. A note is also placed in the margin containing a brief explanation of this.**’ [Burgon here quoted *Companion to the Revised Version*.]

“A very brief ‘explanation’ certainly: for the note explains nothing. Allusion is made to the following words—

“‘The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and some other authorities, omit from ver. 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel.’

“But now,—For the use of *whom* has this piece of information been volunteered? Not for learned readers certainly: it being familiarly known to all, that codices B [Vaticanus] and Ⲛ [Sinaiticus] alone of manuscripts (to their own effectual condemnation) omit these 12 verses. But then scholars know something more about the matter. They also know that these 12 verses have been made the subject of a separate treatise extending to upwards of 300 pages,—which treatise has now been before the world for a full decade of years, and for the best of reasons has never yet been answered. Its object, stated on its title-page, was to vindicate against recent critical objectors, and to establish ‘the last Twelve Verses’ of S. Mark’s Gospel. Moreover, competent judges at once admitted that the author had succeeded in doing what he undertook to do. **Can it then be right (we respectfully enquire) still to insinuate into unlearned minds distrust of twelve consecutive verses of the everlasting Gospel, which yet have been demonstrated to be as**

trustworthy as any other verses which can be named? (Italic emphasis in original. Bold emphasis mine.)

Some *10 years before the Revised Version was released*, Dr. Burgon had written a massive treatise defending Mark 16:9-20 as inspired of God and genuine. His 1871 volume, *“The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel according to S. Mark, vindicated against recent critical Objectors and established,”* still has never been answered. Instead, as modern English versions have just shown us, “scholars” in the 21st century continue to peddle the nonsense that Mark 16:9-20 should be rejected and excluded because “ancient” Vaticanus and Sinaiticus carry the most weight. Sadly, the unsuspecting Christian public repeats it, so the confusion is inadvertently reinforced. Vaticanus and Sinaiticus **do** lack the verses, that we do **not** deny but rather freely confess. Yet, as will be demonstrated in this thesis, that is **not the whole truth!** Upon closer examination, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus actually reveal themselves to be worth nothing. Despite what the “experts” tell us, the supposed “evidence” against Mark 16:9-20 has been overly exaggerated—and even outright tampered with. These are bold statements, and this author will surely prove them.

By the way, as for the plethora of Bible handbooks, commentaries, and other so-called “study helps,” the vast majority are more along the lines of **study hindrances**. Like the modern versions, they are rife with skepticism and misrepresentations. Regrettably, anyone who uses them will go away with **more doubt than faith**. Sadly, such weak, discombobulated Christians are vulnerable to Satan’s endless attacks—too confused and embarrassed to share the Bible with the lost world around them. In fact, the discouragement may become so pronounced they may wind up **relinquishing the Bible!** This is the pitiful story of many people who were **not** guided into the truth concerning this and other textual matters. Let us provide a sampling of just what drivel the general Christian public is subjected to if they so happen to encounter these alleged Bible study “aids.”

The *Zondervan Handbook to the Bible* (2017, 5th edition, page 594) is one such example as touching the “scholarly” approach to Mark chapter 16:

“The resurrection. See on Luke 24. For some unknown reason – most probably damage to very early copies of the Gospel – **the best surviving manuscripts of Mark end abruptly at 16:8**. Verses 9-20 represent early attempts to round the Gospel off more satisfactorily.” (Bold emphasis mine.)

Of course, as always, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are praised as the “best” manuscripts we have. Here is a second reason Bible readers will likely doubt Mark 16:9-20. They have already been told the “oldest” manuscripts are without them (one seemingly strong point), now they are informed these are also the “best” manuscripts (another outwardly strong point). The *Zondervan Handbook to the Bible* has no further commentary to offer on Mark 16:9-20—not even analyzing these 12 verses. The reader is now under the impression the passage is **not** worthy of any careful consideration—or even belief! Another “eye-opening” discovery is made when we consult *The Baker*

Illustrated Bible Handbook (page 600) as touching Mark 16:9-20. Its commentary also simply **ceases at verse 8**, with **no remarks whatsoever given for the last 12 verses!** In fact, the reader gets the vibe its two seminary-graduate (Baptist “Ph.D.”) editors did **not** even consider these precious words of God as deserving any attention!

At this point, we want to enter this into the record. Strangely, we find the following footnote in the New American Bible:

“This passage, termed the Longer Ending to the Marcan gospel by comparison with a much briefer conclusion found in some less important manuscripts, has traditionally been accepted as a canonical part of the gospel and was defined as such by the Council of Trent.”

Wow! The ***Roman Catholic*** Bible—and the Council of Trent—hold Mark 16:9-20 in higher regard than so-called “Protestant, Bible believers!” Let us go back to some more quotes unfavorable to these last 12 verses.

Earlier, we looked at Dr. Robert H. Gundry’s remarks. We will examine his comments again, this time in full. In *A Survey of the New Testament* (4th edition), page 155, he speaks of Mark 16:9-20 in some of the severest “scholarly” tones possible:

“MARK’S ENDING The best textual tradition stops with Mark 16:8. Inferior traditions add 16:9-20, called the long ending, and a shorter, unnumbered ending, both generally recognized as inauthentic. Many think that Mark intended his Gospel to end with 16:8. If so, the women’s trembling and amazement, dumbfoundedness and fear, bring the Gospel to a close on the note of awe, as appropriate to Mark’s portrayal of Jesus as the Christ, God’s Son. On the other hand, Mark’s narrating the fulfillments of all Jesus’ other predictions insofar as those fulfillments had occurred during Jesus’ time on earth favors that Mark went on to narrate a fulfillment of the disciples’ seeing Jesus in Galilee and that the two inauthentic endings arose out of awareness that such an original ending was lost. Read Mark 16:8.” (Bold emphasis mine.)

Could the predominant “scholarly” opinion of Mark 16:9-20 be more obvious? The “best textual tradition”—that is, the “oldest and best manuscripts” approach—is to **close Mark at 16:8**. Furthermore, both the shorter ending (not in the King James) and the longer ending (last 12 verses of the King James) are seen as “inauthentic.” The manuscripts upon which the King James Bible is based are labeled as “inferior traditions.” If that is not vicious enough, on the same page, Gundry furnished us with more injurious information in an inset:

“The Ending of Mark. The question of Mark’s ending does not affect any major doctrine of the Christian faith. Biblical inspiration is certainly not at issue, only what was the original text of the Bible as opposed to later additions by copyists. **The earliest and most trustworthy manuscripts of the New**

Testament had not yet been discovered in 1611, so that the translators of the King James Version, which contains the long ending and to whose influence more recent translations bow unfortunately often, did not know that the long ending was textually doubtful, indeed, inadmissible.” (Bold emphasis mine.)

Again, the “scholarly” position is to: (1) praise Vaticanus and Sinaiticus as the “earliest and most trustworthy manuscripts,” and (2) deprecate the King James Bible and its underlying texts that contain the last 12 verses of Mark as “textually doubtful” and “inadmissible” (banned, excluded, prohibited)! These are ***not*** the words of an atheist, agnostic, or non-Christian. Remember, these are from a “Christian” “Protestant” seminary professor!

One notable exception is *Halley’s Bible Handbook*. It treats Mark 16:9-20 with respect—at least commenting on its verses. However, it too adds a revealing note hinting of suspicion. The following text appears in a box on page 643 of the classic (2000) edition:

“The last 12 verses of Mark (often called ‘the longer ending’) are not in the Sinaiticus and Vatican manuscripts (see p. 1078), but were accepted early in the history of the church as a genuine part of Mark’s Gospel. It is thought likely that the last page of the original copy was lost and added later. It does not seem that verse 8 could have been a proper ending for the book.”

Nevertheless, on page 1078, *Halley’s* acclaims Sinaiticus as “the **most precious** writing in existence.” *Halley’s* devotes three paragraphs, a dozen sentences, to Sinaiticus. A mere **two sentences** are reserved for Vaticanus (how strange for a manuscript labeled “oldest and best!”). Again, these study “helps” echo the words of Westcott and Hort in the 1881 Revised Version.

Dr. David Fuller reminds us again of what lies at the heart of this centuries-old textual controversy in the Anglophone Christian world:

“In the Revised Version of 1881 a number of passages in God’s Word are called in question; grave doubts are cast upon them when the footnotes tell us that ‘the oldest and best manuscripts’ omit them. By ‘oldest and best’ Westcott and Hort and the other translators, except for Prebendary Scrivener, meant primarily Codex B (or Vaticanus) and Codex Aleph (or Sinaiticus). Both of these manuscripts were the oldest, but there is overwhelming proof they are the poorest and most unreliable” (*Counterfeit or Genuine?*, page 9).

In addition to Codices Vaticanus (B) and Sinaiticus (Aleph), Edward F. Hills (*Believing Bible Study*, page 134) cites Legg’s apparatus to report the “other ancient witnesses” that lack the passage. Verses 9-20 are also absent from the Sinaitic Syriac manuscripts, the Adysh and Opiza manuscripts of the Old Gregorian version, and eight manuscripts of the Armenian version. Hills reports Colwell as increasing the number of Armenian manuscripts to 62. We will look at manuscripts, including Vaticanus and

Sinaiticus themselves, in greater detail in Part IV. Again, we are basic, gradually building in complexity.

B. Do not some manuscripts that contain Mark 16:9-20 have scribal notes indicating the passage is unauthentic or lacking in older Greek manuscripts?

Dr. Bruce Metzger, on page 226 of *The Text of the New Testament*, provide a second line of evidence against the authenticity of Mark 16:9-20:

“Not a few manuscripts which contain the passage **have scholia stating that older Greek copies lack it** (so, for example, MSS. 1, 20, 22, &c.), and in other witnesses the passage is **marked with asterisks or obeli, the conventional sigla used by scribes to indicate a spurious addition to a literary document.**” (Bold emphasis mine.)

Drs. Geisler and Nix repeat Metzger’s sentiments:

“Among some of the witnesses that have these verses, there is also an asterisk or obelus **to indicate it is a spurious addition to the text**” (*A General Introduction to the Bible*, page 487). (Bold emphasis mine.)

Metzger and Geisler/Nix, writing in the mid-20th century, evidently must have missed what Dr. Burgon penned in 1871 in his famous defense of Mark 16:9-20!

“I. We are assured,—(by Dr. Tregelles for example,)—that ‘a Note or a Scholion stating the absence of these verses from *many*, from *most*, or from the *most correct* copies (often from Victor or Severus) is found in twenty-five other cursive Codices.’ Tischendorf has nearly the same words: ‘Scholia’ (he says) ‘in very many MSS. [manuscripts] state that the Gospel of Mark in the most ancient (and most accurate) copies ended at the ninth verse.’ That distinguished Critic supports his assertion by appealing to seven MSS. in particular,—and referring generally to ‘about twenty-five others.’ Dr. Davidson adopts every word of this blindfold.

1. Now of course if all that precedes were true, this department of the Evidence would become deserving of serious attention. But I simply *deny the fact*. I **entirely deny that the ‘Note or Scholion’ which these learned persons affirm to be of such frequent occurrence has any existence whatever,—except in their own imaginations. On the other hand, I assert that notes or scholia which state the exact reverse, (viz. that ‘in the older’ or ‘the more accurate copies’ the last twelve verses of S. Mark’s Gospel are contained,) recur even perpetually. The plain truth is this:—These eminent persons have taken their information at second-hand,—partly**

from Griesbach, partly from Scholz,—without suspicion and without inquiry. But then they have slightly misrepresented Scholz; and Scholz (1830) slightly misunderstood Griesbach; and Griesbach (1796) took liberties with Wetstein; and Wetstein (1751) made a few serious mistakes. The consequence might have been anticipated. **The Truth, once thrust out of sight, certain erroneous statements have usurped its place,—which every succeeding Critic now reproduces, evidently to his own entire satisfaction;** though not, it must be declared, altogether to his own credit. Let me be allowed to explain in detail what has occurred” (*The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, pages 114-115). (Italic emphasis in original.)(Bold emphasis mine.)

Burgon recognized the sad reality of “scholars” in his own day blindly following other “scholars.” What was being peddled as “the truth” was actually a *lie*, a gross misrepresentation of the extant data, but who was actually researching and double-checking if what they were reporting was true? (We can apply the same description today!) Burgon proceeds to address the matter of so-called “negative” scholia and sigla, summarizing his view on pages 122-123:

“(8.) So far, therefore, as ‘Notes’ and ‘Scholia’ in MSS. [manuscripts] are concerned, the sum of the matter proves to be simply this:—(a) Nine Codices are observed to contain a note to the effect that the end of S. Mark’s Gospel, though **wanting ‘in some,’ was yet found ‘in others,’—‘in many,’—‘in the ancient copies.’**

(b) Next, four Codices contain subscriptions **vouching for the genuineness of this portion of the Gospel** by declaring that those four Codices had been *collated with approved copies preserved at Jerusalem*,

(c) Lastly, sixteen Codices, — (to which, besides that already mentioned by Scholz, I am able to add at least five others, making twenty-two in all,)—contain a weighty critical scholion asserting categorically that **in ‘very many’ and ‘accurate copies,’** specially in the ‘true Palestinian exemplar,’ *these verses had been found by one who seems to have verified the fact of their existence there for himself.*

(9.) And now, shall I be thought unfair if, on a review of the premisses [sic], assert that I do not see a shadow of reason for the imposing statement which has been adopted by Tischendorf, Tregelles, and the rest, that ‘there exist about thirty Codices which state that from the more ancient and more accurate copies of the Gospel, the last twelve verses of S. Mark were absent?’ **I repeat, there is not so much as one single Codex which contains such a scholion; while twenty-four of those commonly enumerated state the exact reverse.**—We may now advance a step: but the candid reader is invited to admit that hitherto **the supposed hostile evidence is on the contrary entirely in favour of the verses under discussion.** (‘I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times.’)”

Despite Burgon's assessment of the matter 100 years ago, Dr. Nicholas Lunn (2014) reports the opponents of Mark 16:9-20 in the 21st century *still* appeal to such "negative" scholia and sigla:

"Additionally, a number of late Greek manuscripts contain a marginal note (*scholium*) or some sign (*siglum*), such as an asterisk or obelisk, after Mark 16:8. In much modern scholarly literature these features are interpreted as evidence against the genuineness of the ending" (*The Original Ending of Mark*, page 23).

Dr. Lunn answers the scholars who appeal to the scholia and sigla found in these supposed "negative witnesses" against Mark 16:9-20:

"Before considering the details of these features, three general comments are in order. Firstly, there is the question of quantity. One of the above authors gives the number as 'Not a few,' another as merely 'several.' The latter is in fact the more accurate description. **Overall there are fewer than thirty Greek manuscripts displaying these notes and signs.** In comparison with the several hundred copies of Mark's Gospel in total this is not a hugely significant amount. Secondly, **the majority of these manuscripts are of a relatively late date.** Three originate from the seventh to eighth centuries, but most of the remainder were produced after the tenth century, one even as late as 1400. Thirdly, and more importantly, that the notes in question are to be taken as indicating the spurious nature of Mark 16:9-20 is **not the actual the case regarding many, if not most, of them, as shall be demonstrated below. Greek equivalents of 'spurious' or 'doubtful' appear nowhere in these notes.** The presence of even the idea of doubt is merely an **inference**, and a **questionable** one at that." (Bold emphasis mine.)

Firstly, Lunn proceeds to show how, in three Alexandrian texts that include both the shorter and longer endings, a copyist inserted a note immediately after the shorter ending (see Part IV, Section F). That marginal note, translated into English, reads: "These [verses] are also present after 'for they were afraid.'" Then, the longer ending (verses 9-20) is provided. The three codices bearing this feature are L, Ψ, and 083. Both L and Ψ close Mark after verse 20 with the subscription, "The Gospel according to Mark." Contrary to what "scholars" tell us, the scribe or copyist is *not* evaluating the authenticity of verses 9-20. He is merely indicating his awareness of some manuscripts containing verses 9-20 (longer ending) and not the shorter ending.

Secondly, Dr. Lunn deals with minuscules (manuscripts with lowercase Greek letters) bearing marginal notes, which, when translated into English, read as follows: "In some of the copies the Evangelist is completed to this point. But in many these [verses] are also present." We find this scholium in manuscripts 15, 22, 1110, 1192, and 1210. A longer scholium—found in manuscripts 1, 205, 209, and 1582—is: "In some of the copies the Evangelist is completed to this point, as far as Eusebius Pamphili also made his canons. But in many these [verses] are also present." Again, there is **no** scribal comment

explicitly stating “spuriousness,” “doubt,” or “not genuine.” It is merely a remark of numbers—“many” manuscripts containing Mark 16:9-20, “some” manuscripts lacking it. Contrary to today’s “scholarly” argument, again, **nothing** in these marginal notes speaks of “**older**” Greek manuscripts lacking those last 12 verses.

Thirdly, Lunn advises us of another type of marginal note. When rendered into English, it comments: “From here to the end does not occur in some of the copies, but in the ancient copies it all occurs in full.” This is characteristic of manuscripts 20, 215, and 300. Here, the copyist actually designated the “**ancient**” copies as containing Mark 16:9-20! (This is the **exact opposite** of what the “scholars” tell us today!)

Finally, Dr. Lunn deals with an asterisk or obelisk appearing after Mark 16:8 in manuscripts 137, 138, 156, 187, 264, 1221, 2346, and 2812. He writes:

“The presence of these marks, we are told by those scholars cited at the beginning of this section, signifies doubt on the part of the scribe concerning the genuineness of the passage that follows. This function of the signs might be as they claim, but it cannot be assumed. The symbols might serve simply to signal the occurrence of a textual variant, without any implications of doubt. Were a scribe to actually include an explicit note at this point, there is no reason to suppose its contents would do anything other than accord with those considered above, and none of these contains any remark about the inauthenticity of the verses. It is noteworthy in this context that MS 205, besides the marginal note described earlier, also has an obelus in the column to refer to the note. The implicit information of these textual symbols, therefore, need not indicate anything more than what is expressed explicitly through the scribal notes appearing in other manuscripts in the same location.”

In other words, scholars exaggerate and even outright falsify specifics when appealing to manuscript scholia and sigla as proof Mark 16:9-20 is inauthentic and not found in the “oldest” Greek manuscripts. They are overstating what those marginal notes and signs indicate. In fact, they are **assuming** something that may **not** be true. The next section will show us where else the scholars have misled us concerning the last 12 verses of Mark.

C. Did not Church Fathers Eusebius and Jerome claim almost all Greek manuscripts available to them lacked Mark 16:9-20?

Scholars who question the genuineness of Mark 16:9-20 seek sanctuary in the “hostile” testimonies of two particular fourth-century church fathers—Eusebius (A.D. 265–339) and Jerome (A.D. 342/347–420). As we noted earlier, Dr. Scrivener pinpoints this argument: “The earliest objector to ver. 9–20 we know of was **Eusebius**” (*A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, page 587).

Drs. Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix report:

“Many of the ancient Fathers show **no knowledge of these verses** (e.g., Clement, Origen, **Eusebius**, et al.). **Jerome** admitted that ‘**almost all Greek copies do not have this concluding portion.**’” (*A General Introduction to the Bible*, page 487). (Bold emphasis mine.)

As touching Geisler and Nix reference to Jerome, they are citing Dr. Metzger’s *The Text of the New Testament*:

“Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Ammonius **show no knowledge of the existence of these verses**; other Church Fathers state that the section is absent from Greek copies of Mark known to them (e.g. Jerome, *Epist.* cxx. 3, *ad Hedibiam*, ‘**Almost all the Greek copies do not have this concluding portion**’)” (page 226). (Bold emphasis mine.)

According to Dean Burgon, writing over 100 years ago, *Eusebius most certainly knew of Mark 16:9-20*—and answered a question concerning it. (By the way, if Mark 16:9-20 was “composed by the **second** century” [*New American {Roman Catholic} Bible* footnote], then how could **fourth-century** Eusebius **not** be aware of it?!? This makes no sense!!!) In that case, the claim of Geisler and Nix is **incorrect**. With regards to Jerome, Metzger’s comment is also **wrong**. Jerome’s testimony on the subject needs to be qualified, and we will get to him later in this section. For now, however, let us concentrate on Eusebius.

To understand why Eusebius is brought into this discussion, we must provide an extended quote from Burgon’s work, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, pages 41-51. Burgon is verbose (thorough!), but he will be cited in full for sake of clarity. You may skip reading all of this quote, but please at least pay attention to the bold emphasis this author has made for your convenience:

“EUSEBIUS, II. With respect to whom the case is altogether different. What that learned Father has delivered concerning the conclusion of S. Mark’s Gospel requires to be examined with attention, and must be set forth much more in detail. **And yet, I will so far anticipate what is about to be offered, as to say at once that if any one supposes that Eusebius has anywhere plainly ‘stated that is wanted [lacking] in many MSS.,’—he is mistaken. Eusebius nowhere says so.** The reader’s attention is invited to a plain tale.

“It was not until 1825 that the world was presented by Cardinal Angelo Mai with a few fragmentary specimens of a lost work of Eusebius on the (so-called) Inconsistencies in the Gospels, from a MS. in the Vatican. These, the learned Cardinal republished more accurately in 1847, in his ‘Nova Patrum Bibliotheca;’ **and hither we are invariably referred by those who cite Eusebius as a witness against the genuineness of the concluding verses**

of the second Gospel. It is much to be regretted that we are still as little as ever in possession of the lost work of Eusebius. It appears to have consisted of three Books or Parts; the former two (addressed 'to Stephanus') being discussions of difficulties at the beginning of the Gospel,—the last ('to Marinus') relating to difficulties in its concluding chapters. The Author's plan, (as usual in such works), was, first, to set forth a difficulty in the form of a Question; and straight-way, to propose a Solution of it,—which commonly assumes the form of a considerable dissertation. **But whether we are at present in possession of so much as a single entire specimen or these 'Inquiries and Resolutions' exactly as it came from the pen of Eusebius, may reasonably be doubted.** That the work which Mai has brought to light is but a highly condensed exhibition of the original, (and scarcely that,) its very title shews; for it is headed,—'An abridged selection from the 'Inquiries and Resolutions (of difficulties) in the Gospels' by Eusebius.' **Only some of the original Questions, therefore, are here noticed at all: and even these have been subjected to so severe a process of condensation and abridgment, that in some instances *amputation* would probably be a more fitting description of what has taken place.** Accordingly, what were originally two Books or Parts, are at present represented by XVI. 'Inquiries,' &c., addressed 'to Stephanus;' while the concluding Book or Part is represented by IV. more, 'to Marinus,'—of which, *the first* relates to our Lord's appearing to Mary Magdalene after His Resurrection. Now, since the work which Eusebius addressed to Marinus is found to have contained 'Inquiries, with their Resolutions, concerning our SAVIOUR'S *Death* and Resurrection,'—while a quotation professing to be derived from 'the *thirteenth* chapter' relates to Simon the Cyrenian bearing our SAVIOUR'S Cross;—it is obvious that the original work must have been very considerable, and that what Mai has recovered gives an utterly inadequate idea of its extent and importance. It is absolutely necessary that all this should be clearly apprehended by any one who desires to know exactly what the alleged evidence; Eusebius concerning the last chapter of S. Mark's Gospel is worth,—as I will explain more fully by-and-by. Let it, however, be candidly admitted that there seems to be no reason for supposing that whenever the lost work of Eusebius comes to light, (and it has been seen within about 300 years,) it will exhibit anything essentially different from what is contained in the famous passage which has given rise to so much debate, and which may be exhibited in English as follows. It is put in the form of a reply to one 'Marinus,' who is represented as asking, first, the following question:—

'How is it, that, according to Matthew [xxviii. 1], the SAVIOUR appears to have risen 'in the end of the Sabbath;' but, according to Mark [xvi. 9], 'early the first day of the week'?'—Eusebius answers,

'This difficulty admits of a twofold solution. **He who is for getting rid of the entire passage, will say that it is not met with in *all* the copies of Mark's Gospel: the accurate copies, at all events, making the end of Mark's**

narrative come after the words of the young man who appeared to the women and said, 'Fear not ye! Ye seek JESUS of Nazareth,' &c.: to which the Evangelist adds,—'And when they heard it, they fled, and said nothing to any man, for they were afraid.' For at those words, in almost all copies of the Gospel according to Mark, comes the end. What follows, (which is met with seldom, [and only] in some copies, certainly not in all,) might be dispensed with; especially if it should prove to contradict the record of the other Evangelist. This, then, is what a person will say who is for evading and entirely getting rid of a gratuitous problem.

'But another, on no account daring to reject anything whatever which is, under whatever circumstances, met with in the text of the Gospels, will say that here are two readings, (as is so often the case elsewhere;) and that *both*, are to be received, inasmuch as by the faithful and pious, this reading is not held to be genuine rather than *that*; nor *that* than *this*.'

"It will be best to exhibit the whole of what Eusebius has written on this subject, as far as we are permitted to know it,—continuously. He proceeds:—

"We then, allowing this piece to be really genuine, our business is to interpret the sense of the passage. And certainly, if I divide the meaning into two, we shall find that it is not opposed to what Matthew says of our SAVIOUR'S having risen 'in the end of the Sabbath.' For Mark's expression, ('Now when He was risen early the first day of the week,') we shall read with a pause, putting a comma after 'Now when He was risen,' the sense of the words which follow being kept separate. Thereby, we shall refer [Mark's] 'when He was risen' to Matthew's 'in the end of the Sabbath,' (for it was *then* that He *rose*); and all that comma after, expressive as it is of a distinct notion, we shall connect with what follows; (for it was '*early*, the first day of the week,' that 'He *appeared to Mary Magdalene*.') This is in fact what John also declares; for he too has recorded that '*early*, 'the first day of the week,' [Jesus] appeared to the Magdalene. Thus then Mark also says that He appeared to her early: not that He *rose* early, but long before, (according to that of Matthew, 'in the end of the Sabbath: ' for though He *rose* then, He did not *appear to Mary* then, but '*early*.') In a word, two distinct seasons are set before us by these words: first, the season of the Resurrection,—which was 'in the end of the Sabbath; ' secondly, the season of our SAVIOUR'S Appearing,—which was '*early*.' The former [The text of Eusebius seems to have experienced some disarrangement and depravation here.], Mark writes of when he says, (it requires to be read with a pause,)—'Now, when He was risen.' Then, after a comma, what follows is to be spoken,—'Early, the first day of the week, He appeared to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils.'"—Such is the entire passage. **Little did the learned writer anticipate what bitter fruit his words were destined to bear!**

"1. Let it be freely admitted that what precedes is calculated at first sight to

occasion nothing but surprise and perplexity. For, in the first place, there really is *no problem to solve*. The discrepancy suggested by 'Marinus' at the outset, is plainly imaginary, the result (chiefly) of a strange misconception of the Evangelist's Greek,—as in fact no one was ever better aware than Eusebius himself. 'These places of the Gospel would never have occasioned any difficulty,' he writes in the very next page, (but it is the commencement of his reply to the *second* question of Marinus,)—'if people would but abstain from assuming that Matthew's phrase (ὅψε σαββάτων) refers to *the evening of the Sabbath-day*: whereas, (in conformity with the established idiom of the language,) it obviously refers to an advanced period of the night.' He proceeds:—The self-same moment therefore, or very nearly the self-same, is intended by the Evangelists, only under different names: and there is no discrepancy whatever between Matthew's,—'in the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week,' and John's—'The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalen early, when it was yet dark.' The Evangelists indicate by different expressions one and the same moment of time, but in a broad and general way.' And yet, if Eusebius knew all this so well, why did he not say so at once, and close the discussion? I really cannot tell; except on one hypothesis,—which, although at first it may sound somewhat extraordinary, the more I think of the matter, recommends itself to my acceptance the more. I suspect, then, that the discussion we have just been listening to, is, essentially, **not an original production: but that Eusebius, having met with the suggestion in some older writer, (in Origen probably,) reproduced it in language of his own,—doubtless because he thought it ingenious and interesting, but not by any means because he regarded it as true.** Except on some such theory, I am utterly unable to understand how Eusebius can have written so inconsistently. His admirable remarks just quoted, are obviously a full and sufficient answer,—the proper answer in fact,—to the proposed difficulty: and it is a memorable circumstance that the ancients generally were so sensible of this, that they are found to have *invariably* substituted what Eusebius wrote in reply to the *second* question of Marinus for what he wrote in reply to the first; in other words, for the dissertation which is occasioning us all this difficulty.

"2. But next, even had the discrepancy been real, the remedy for it which is here proposed, and which is advocated with such tedious emphasis, would probably prove satisfactory to no one. In fact, the entire method advocated in the foregoing passage is hopelessly vicious. The writer begins by advancing statements which, if he believed them to be true, he must have known are absolutely fatal to the verses in question. This done, he sets about discussing the possibility of reconciling an isolated expression in S. Mark's Gospel with another in S. Matthew's: just as if on that depended the genuineness or spuriousness of the entire context: as if, in short, the major premiss [sic] in the discussion were some such postulate as the following:—'Whatever in one Gospel cannot be proved to be entirely consistent with something in another Gospel, is not to be regarded as genuine.' Did then the learned Archbishop of

Caesarea really suppose that a comma judiciously thrown into the empty scale might at any time suffice to restore the equilibrium, and even counterbalance the adverse testimony of almost every MS. of the Gospels extant? Why does he not at least deny the truth of the alleged facts to which he began by giving currency, if not approval; and which, so long as they are allowed to stand uncontradicted, render all further argumentation on the subject simply nugatory? As before, I really cannot tell,—except on the hypothesis which has been already hazarded.

“3. Note also, (for this it not the least extraordinary feature of the case) what vague and random statements those are which we have been listening to. The entire section (S. Mark xvi. 9–20), ‘*is not met with in all the copies;*’ at all events not ‘*in the accurate*’ ones. Nay, it is ‘*met with seldom.*’ In fact, it is *absent from ‘almost all’* copies. But,—Which of these four statements is to stand? The first is comparatively unimportant. Not so the second. The last two, on the contrary, would be absolutely fatal,—if trustworthy? But *are* they trustworthy?

“To this question only one answer can be returned. The exaggeration is so gross that it refutes itself. Had it been merely asserted that the verses in question were wanting in *many* of the copies,—even had it been insisted that *the best copies* were without them,—well and good: but to assert that, in the beginning of the fourth century, from ‘almost all’ copies of the Gospels they were away,—is palpably untrue. What had become then of the MSS. from which the Syriac, the Latin, all the ancient Versions were made? How is the contradictory evidence of *every copy of the Gospels in existence but two* [Vaticanus and Sinaiticus] to be accounted for? With Irenaeus and Hippolytus, with the old Latin and the Vulgate, with the Syriac, and the Gothic, and the Egyptian versions to refer to, we are able to assert that the author of such a statement was guilty of monstrous exaggeration. We are reminded of the loose and random way in which the Fathers,—(giants in Interpretation, but very children in the Science of Textual Criticism,)—are sometimes observed to speak about the state of the Text in their days. We are reminded, for instance, of the confident assertion of an ancient Critic that the true reading in S. Luke xxiv. 13 is not ‘three-score’ but ‘*an hundred and three-score;*’ for that so ‘the accurate copies’ used to read the place, besides Origen and Eusebius. And yet (as I have elsewhere explained) the reading ἐκατον καὶ ἐξήκοντα is altogether impossible. ‘Apud nod mixta sunt omnia,’ is Jerome’s way of adverting to an evil which, serious as it was, was yet not nearly so great as he represents; viz. the unauthorized introduction into one Gospel of what belongs of right to another. And so in a multitude of other instances. The Fathers are, in fact, constantly observed to make critical remarks about the ancient copies which simply *cannot* be correct.

“And yet the author of the exaggeration is clearly *not Eusebius*. It is evident that *he* has nothing to say against the genuineness of the conclusion of S. Mark’s Gospel. Those random statements about the

copies with which he began, do not even purport to express his own sentiments. Nay, Eusebius in a manner repudiates; for he introduces them with a phrase which separates them from himself: and, 'This then is what a person will say,'—is the remark with which he finally dismisses them. It would, in fact, be to make this learned Father stultify [negate] himself to suppose that he proceeds gravely to discuss a portion of Scripture which he had already deliberately rejected as spurious. But, indeed, the evidence before us effectually precludes any such supposition. 'Here are two readings,' he says, '(as is so often the case elsewhere;) *both* of which are to be received,—inasmuch as by the faithful and pious, *this* reading is not held to be genuine rather than *that*; nor that than *this*.' **And thus we seem to be presented with the actual opinion of Eusebius, as far as it can be ascertained from the present passage,—if indeed he is to be thought here to offer any personal opinion on the subject at all; which, for my own part, I entirely doubt.** But whether we are at liberty to infer the actual sentiments of this Father from anything here delivered or not, quite certain at least is it that to print only the first half of the passage, (as Tischendorf and Tregelles have done,) and then to **give the reader to understand that he is reading the adverse testimony of Eusebius as to the genuineness of the end of S. Mark's Gospel, is nothing else but to misrepresent the facts of the case; and, however unintentionally, to deceive those who are unable to verify the quotation for themselves.** It has been urged indeed that Eusebius cannot have recognised the verses in question as genuine, because a scholium purporting to be his has been cited by Matthaei from a Catena at Moscow, in which he appears to assert that 'according to Mark,' our SAVIOUR 'is not recorded to have appeared to His Disciples after His Resurrection:' whereas in S. Mark xvi. 14 it is plainly recorded that He appeared unto the Eleven as they sat at meat.' May I be permitted to declare that I am distrustful of the proposed inference, and shall continue to feel so, until I know something more about the scholium in question? Up to the time when this page is printed I have not succeeded in obtaining from Moscow the details I wish for: but they must be already on the way, and I propose to embody the result in 'Postscript' which shall form the last page of the Appendix to the present volume.

"Are we then to suppose that there was no substratum of truth in the allegations to which Eusebius gives such prominence in the passage under discussion? By no means. The mutilated state of S. Mark's Gospel in the Vatican Codex (B) and especially in the Sinaitic Codex (Ⲱ) sufficiently establishes the contrary. Let it be freely conceded, (but in fact it has been freely conceded already,) that there must have existed in the time of Eusebius *many* copies of S. Mark's Gospel which were without the twelve concluding verses. **I do but insist that there is nothing whatever in that circumstance to lead us to entertain one serious doubt as to the genuineness of these verses.** I am but concerned to maintain that there is nothing whatever in the evidence which has hitherto come before us,—**certainly not in the evidence**

of Eusebius,—to induce us to believe that they are a spurious addition to S. Mark's Gospel.” (Bold emphasis mine.)

That is, Burgon considers *Eusebius was merely repeating a previous writer*, not expressing his *own* evaluation of Mark 16:9-20.

Dr. Metzger further argues against Mark 16:9-20, *The Text of the New Testament*, page 226, by appealing to what are called the Eusebian Canons:

“The original form of the Eusebian sections makes no provision for numbering sections after xvi. 8.”

Again, we go to Dr. Burgon, writing in the 19th century, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, pages 130-132, to answer the appeal to Eusebius' Canons:

“The starting-point of this discussion, (as I begin by remarking), is the following memorandum found in certain ancient MSS.:—‘Thus far did Eusebius did canonize;’ which means either: (1) That his Canons recognise no section of S. Mark's Gospel subsequent to § 233., (which number is commonly set over against ver. 8:) or else, (which comes to the same thing,)—(2) That no sections or the same Gospel, after § 233, are referred to any of his X Canons.

“On this **slender foundation** has been raised the following precarious superstructure. It is assumed,

“(1st.) That the Section of S. Mark's Gospel which Eusebius numbers ‘233,’ and which begins at our ver. 8, *cannot have extended* beyond ver. 8;—whereas it may have extended, and probably did extend, down to the end of ver. 11.

“(2dly.) That because no notice is taken in the Eusebian Canons of any sectional *number* in S. Mark's Gospel subsequent to § 233, no *Section* (with, or without, such a subsequent number) can have existed:—whereas there may have existed one or more subsequent Sections all duly numbered. This notwithstanding, Eusebius, (according to the memorandum found in certain ancient MSS.), may have *canonised* no further than § 233.

“I am not disposed, however, to contest the point as far as Eusebius is concerned. I have only said so much in order to shew how unsatisfactory is the argumentation on the other side. Let it be assumed, for argument sake, that the statement ‘Eusebius canonized no further than ver. 8’ is equivalent to this, ‘Eusebius numbered no Section, after ver. 8:’ (and more it cannot mean:)—What *then?* I am at a loss to see what it is that the Critics propose to themselves by insisting on the circumstance. For we knew before,—it was in fact Eusebius himself who told us,—that Copies of the Gospel ending abruptly at ver. 8, were anciently of frequent occurrence. Nay, we heard the same

Eusebius remark that one way of shelving a certain awkward problem would be, to plead that the subsequent portion of S. Mark's Gospel is frequently wanting. What *more* have we learned when we have ascertained that the same Eusebius allowed no place to that subsequent portion in his Canons? The new fact, (supposing it to be a fact,) is but the correlative of the old one; and since it was Eusebius who was the voucher for *that*, what additional probability do we establish that the inspired autograph of S. Mark ended abruptly at ver. 8, by discovering that Eusebius is consistent with himself, and omits to 'canonise' (or even to 'sectionize') what he had already hypothetically hinted might as well be left out altogether? (See above, pp. 44-6.)"

Dr. Lunn, on page 98 of *The Original Ending of Mark*, provides us with his understanding of Eusebius' so-called "negative" testimony again the last 12 verses of Mark:

"(2) The two compositions of Eusebius described above, that is, the letter to Marinus and the Canons, comprise the whole of the evidence that may be obtained from this oft-cited writer with respect to the ending of Mark. Any fair assessment must conclude that the strength of this evidence has been either overstated or in some cases actually distorted in the recent works of biblical scholars. The most common misrepresentation is to fail to mention the significant fact that in *ad Marinum* Eusebius prefaces his remarks on the textual problem with the words 'someone might say.' Consequently the impression is given that the comments directly reflect the views of Eusebius himself, and the whole issue concerning the use of the optative and the indicative together with the fact that Eusebius proceeds to harmonize the disputed passage are completely passed over. A statement then to the effect that 'Eusebius ... claimed that it was absent from almost all the Greek manuscripts' is quite misleading. Much more serious is the actual tampering with the evidence. One commentator informs his readers that 'Eusebius and Jerome both tell us these verses were absent from all Greek copies known to them.' To say 'absent from all Greek copies' is blatantly distorting the truth. What Eusebius wrote was that Mark's Gospel finished at 16:8 'in nearly all the copies, and that vv. 9-20 appear 'in some but not in all' manuscripts. It goes without saying that such a gross misrepresentation of the evidence is totally unacceptable. Regrettably more than one author is guilty of this offence." (Bold emphasis mine.)

To wit, Eusebius' statements perceived to be *against* the authenticity of Mark 16:9-20 are inconclusive. What we *do* know is that Church Fathers **prior to** Eusebius quoted these last 12 verses of Mark. Lunn, on page 99, cites Robinson: "Explicit patristic citation from the second century (Justin, [Tatian], Irenaeus) outweighs patristic speculations of the fourth and later centuries, whether by Eusebius, Jerome (in repetition)... or Hesychius."

Dr. Scrivener, on page 588 of *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, inscribed:

“The language of Eusebius has been minutely examined by Dean Burgon, who proves to demonstration that all the subsequent evidence which has been alleged against the passage, whether of Severus, or Hesychius, or any other writer down to Euthymius Zigabenus in the twelfth century, is a mere echo of **the doubts and difficulties of Eusebius, if indeed he is not retailing to us at secondhand one of the fanciful Biblical speculations of Origen.**”

More will be said about Eusebius in Part IV, Section I, as touching lectionaries. Now, we move on to Jerome, the other major Church Father cited as rejecting Mark 16:9-20. On pages 51-57 of *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, Burgon comments on Jerome’s so-called “negative” witness against Mark 16:9-20. Again, this is a lengthy quote, but for sake of clarity, it will be furnished in its entirety. As before, you do not have to read every word, but please at least note the bolded statements:

“III. We have next to consider what JEROME has delivered on this subject. So great a name must needs command attention in any question of Textual Criticism: and **it is commonly pretended that Jerome pronounces emphatically against the genuineness of the last twelve verses of the Gospel according to S. Mark. A little attention to the actual testimony borne by this Father will, it is thought, suffice to exhibit it in a wholly unexpected light; and induce us to form an entirely different estimate of its practical bearing upon the present discussion.**

“It will be convenient that I should premise that it is in one of his many exegetical Epistles that Jerome discusses this matter. A lady named Hedibia, inhabiting the furthest extremity of Gaul, and known to Jerome only by the ardour of her piety, had sent to prove him with hard questions. He resolves her difficulties from Bethlehem: and I may be allowed to remind the reader of what is found to have been Jerome’s practice on similar occasions,—which, to judge from his writings, were of constant occurrence. In fact, Apodemius, who brought Jerome the Twelve problems from Hedibia, brought him Eleven more from a noble neighbour of hers, Algasia. Once, when a single messenger had conveyed to him out of the African province a quantity of similar interrogatories, Jerome sent two Egyptian monks the following account of how he had proceeded in respect of the inquiry,—(it concerned 1 Cor. xv. 51,)—which they had addressed to him:—‘Being pressed for time, I have presented you with the opinions of all the Commentators; for the most part, translating their very words; in order both to get rid of your question, and to put you in possession of ancient authorities on the subject.’ This learned Father does not even profess to have been in the habit of delivering his own opinions, or speaking his own sentiments on such occasions. ‘This has been hastily dictated,’ he says in conclusion,—(alluding to his constant practice, which was to dictate, rather than to write,)—‘in order that I might lay before you what have

been the opinions of learned men on this subject, as well as the arguments by which they have recommended their opinions. My own authority, (who am but nothing,) is vastly inferior to that of our predecessors in the LORD.' Then, after special commendation of the learning of Origen and Eusebius, and the valuable Scriptural expositions of many more,—'My plan,' (he says,) 'is to read the ancients; to prove all things, to hold fast that which is good; and to abide steadfast in the faith of the Catholic Church.—I must now dictate replies, either original or at second-hand, to other Questions which lie before me.' We are not surprised, after this straightforward avowal of what was the method on such occasions with this learned Father, to discover that, instead of hearing *Jerome* addressing *Hedibia*,—(who had interrogated him concerning the very problem which is at present engaging our attention,)—**we find ourselves only listening to *Eusebius* over again, addressing *Marinus*.**

"This difficulty admits of a two-fold solution,' Jerome begins; as if determined that no doubt shall be entertained as to the source of his inspiration. Then, (making short work of the tedious disquisition of Eusebius,)—'**Either we shall reject the testimony of Mark, which is met with in scarcely any copies of the Gospel,—almost all the Greek codices being without this passage:—**(especially since it seems to narrate what contradicts the other Gospels:)—or else, we shall reply that both Evangelists state what is true: Matthew, when he says that our LORD rose 'late in the week:' Mark,—when he says that Mary Magdalene saw Him 'early, the first day of the week.' For the passage must be thus pointed,—'When He was risen:' and presently, after a pause, must be added,—'Early, the first day of the week, He appeared to Mary Magdalene.' He therefore who had risen late in the week, according to Matthew,—Himself, early the first day or the week, according to Mark, appeared to Mary Magdalene. And this is what John also means, shewing that it was early on the next day that He appeared.'—To understand how faithfully in what precedes Jerome treads in the footsteps of Eusebius, it is absolutely necessary to set the Latin of the one over against the Greek of the other, and to compare them. In order to facilitate this operation, I have subjoined both originals at foot of the page: **from which it will be apparent that Jerome is here not so much adopting the sentiments of Eusebius as simply translating his words.**

"This, however, is not by any means the strangest feature of the case. That Jerome should have availed himself ever so freely of the materials which he found ready to his hand in the pages of Eusebius cannot be regarded as at all extraordinary, after what we have just heard from himself of his customary method of proceeding. It would of course have suggested the gravest doubts as to whether we were here listening to the personal sentiment of this Father, or not; but that would have been all. What are we to think, however, of the fact that Hedibia's question to Jerome proves on inspection to be nothing more than a translation of *the very question which Marinus had long before addressed to Eusebius?* We read on, perplexed at the coincidence; and

speedily make the notable discovery that her next question, and her next, are *also* translations *word for word* of the next two of Marinus. For the proof of this statement the reader is again referred to the foot of the page. It is at least decisive: and the fact, which admits of only one explanation, can be attended by only one practical result. It of course shelves the whole question as far as the evidence of Jerome is concerned. Whether Hedibia was an actual personage or not, let those decide who have considered more attentively than it has ever fallen in my way to do that curious problem,—What was the ancient notion of the allowable in Fiction? That different ideas have prevailed in different ages of the world as to where fiction ends and fabrication begins;—that widely discrepant views are entertained on the subject even in our own age;—all must be aware. I decline to investigate the problem on the present occasion. **I do but claim to have established beyond the possibility of doubt or cavil that what we are here with is *not the testimony of Jerome at all*. It is evident that this learned Father amused himself with translating for the benefit of his Latin readers a part of the (lost) work of Eusebius; (which, by the way, he is found to have possessed in the same abridged form in which it has come down to ourselves:)**—and he seems to have regarded it as allowable to attribute to ‘Hedibia’ the problems which he there met with. (He may perhaps have known that Eusebius before him had attributed them, with just as little reason, to ‘Marinus.’) In that age, for aught that appears to the contrary, it may have been regarded as a graceful compliment to address solutions of Scripture difficulties to persons of distinction, who possibly had never heard of those difficulties before; and even to represent the Interrogatories which suggested them as originating with themselves. I offer this only in the way of suggestion, and am not concerned to defend it. **The only point I am concerned to establish is that Jerome is here a *translator*, not an original author: in other words, that it is *Eusebius* who here speaks, and not Jerome. For a critic to pretend that it is in any sense the testimony of Jerome which we are presented with; that Jerome is one of those Fathers ‘who, even though they copied from their predecessors, were yet competent to transmit the record of a fact,’—is to entirely misunderstand the case. The man who translates,—not adopts, but *translates*,—the problem as well as its solution: who deliberately asserts that it emanated from a Lady inhabiting the furthest extremity of Gaul, who nevertheless was demonstrably not its author: who goes on to propose as here question after question *verbatim as he found them written in the pages of Eusebius*; and then resolves them one by one in the very language of the same Father:—such a writer has clearly conducted us into a region where his individual responsibility quite disappears from sight. We must hear no more about Jerome, therefore, as a witness against the genuineness of the concluding verses of S. Mark’s Gospel.**

“On the contrary. **Proof is at hand that Jerome held these verses to be genuine. The proper evidence of this is supplied by the fact that he gave**

them a place in his revision of the old Latin version of the Scriptures. If he had been indeed persuaded of their absence from **'almost all the Greek codices,'** does anyone imagine that he would have suffered them to stand in the Vulgate? If he had met with them in **'scarcely any copies of the Gospel,'**—do men really suppose that he would yet have retained them? To believe this would, again, be to forget what was the known practice of this Father; who, because he found the expression 'without a cause' (εἰρή,—Matth. v. 22,) only 'in certain of his codices,' but not 'in the true ones,' *omitted* it from the Vulgate. Because, however, he read 'righteousness' (where we read 'alms') in S. Matth. vi. 1, he exhibits *'justitiam'* in his revision of the old Latin version. On the other hand, though he knew of MSS. (as he expressly relates) which read 'works' for 'children' (ἔργων for τέκνων) in S. Matth. xi. 19, he does not admit that (manifestly corrupt) reading,—which, however, is found both in the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Sinaiticus. Let this suffice. I forbear to press the matter further. **It is an additional proof that Jerome accepted the conclusion of S. Mark's Gospel that he actually quotes it, and on more than one occasion: but to prove this, is to prove more than is here required.** I am concerned only to demolish the assertion of Tischendorf, and Tregelles, and Alford, and Davidson, and so many more, concerning the testimony of Jerome; and I have demolished it. **I pass on, claiming to have shewn that the name of Jerome as an adverse witness must never again appear in this discussion.**" (Bold emphasis mine.)

As Burgon pointed out, Jerome—whose comments are frequently used to argue **against** the genuineness of Mark 16:9-20—**included those last 12 verses in his Latin Vulgate of A.D. 382.** Evidently, Jerome thought they were worthy of acceptance! In fact, Westcott and Hort admit that on page 41 of *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (*Notes on Select Readings*):

"Jerome, who (about 383) had allowed them a place in the Vulgate, adopted, as we have seen (p. 33f.), the language of Eusebius some 24 years later. In two other places he shews acquaintance with them; once (*Contra Pelag.* ii 15) in noticing a remarkable interpolation (see note on v. 14), and once in referring to Mary Magdalene's delivery from possession, recorded also, but with a different verb, in Lc. viii 2."

Even Westcott and Hort acknowledge Jerome was merely echoing or paraphrasing Eusebius' comments on Mark 16:9-20 made a few years prior. Also, they concede Jerome quoted Mark 16:9, part of a passage he *supposedly* viewed as spurious! Dr. Lunn elaborates on Mark 16:9-20 as found in Jerome's Latin Vulgate:

"Regarding the matter in hand, the testimony of this version is unanimous. All extant copies of the Vulgate version of Mark, amounting to several hundred, contain 16:9-20. There are no copies ending at 16:8, no alternative endings, and no marginal comments expressing doubt. Thus in the Bible that was to dominate the whole of Western Christianity for

well over a thousand years the disputed verses formed an unquestioned part. This is comparable to the position of the Byzantine Greek text in the Eastern Church, which like the Vulgate, bears universal witness to the longer ending" (*The Original Ending of Mark*, page 48). (Bold emphasis mine.)

Another comment of Jerome occasionally presumed to be against the last 12 verses of Mark should be qualified. Lunn contends (page 103) Jerome was not questioning Mark 16:9-20 as inspired but rather the *Freer Logion*, a variant reading with scant manuscript evidence sometimes inserted at the close of Mark. (We will address the Freer Logion later, in Part IV, Section G.)

On page 104, Dr. Lunn quotes Jerome as found in the *Nicaean and Pre-Nicaean Fathers* (2, 6:487-88). Jerome wrote in his new Latin Vulgate, the introduction to the Gospel Records:

"....For if we pin our faith to the Latin texts, it is for our opponents to tell us *which*; for there are almost as many forms of texts as there are copies. If, on the other hand, we are to glean the truth from a comparison of *many*, **why not go back to the original Greek and correct the mistakes introduced by inaccurate translators**, and the blundering alterations of confident but ignorant critics, and, further, all that has been inserted or changed by copyists more asleep than awake? I am not discussing the Old Testament.... I am now speaking of the New Testament. This was undoubtedly composed in Greek.... We must confess that as we have it in our language [Latin] it is marked by discrepancies, and now that the stream is distributed into different channels we must go back to the fountainhead [Greek].... **I therefore promise in this short Preface the four Gospels only, which are to be taken in the following order, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, as they have been revised by a comparison of the Greek manuscripts. Only early ones have been used.** But to avoid any great divergences from the Latin which we are accustomed to read, I have used my pen with some restraint, and while I have corrected only such passages as seemed to convey a different meaning, I have allowed the rest to remain as they are." (Bold emphasis mine.)

As Lunn proceeds to stress, Jerome himself declared he used "only early [Greek manuscripts]" to produce the Books of Matthew through John in his Latin Vulgate. Had Jerome considered Mark 16:9-20 forged or spurious, why can we find those same verses even now in his Vulgate? Was that passage—in Jerome's own words—comparable to the "early" manuscripts? Yes! In other words, Jerome including the verses was his admission these were "in the **early** Greek." He claimed he was **improving** the Old Latin by appealing to the Greek, and part of that was the inclusion of Mark 16:9-20! Lunn confirms, "Jerome, it ought to be noted, retains the longer ending **without comment or qualification.**"

Burgon writes on pages 27-28 of *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*:

“XIII. JEROME, on a point like this, is entitled to more attention than any other Father of the Church. Living at a very early period, (for he was born in 331 and died in 420,)—endowed with extraordinary Biblical learning,—a man of excellent judgment,—and a professed Editor of the New Testament, for the execution of which task he enjoyed extraordinary facilities,—his testimony is most weighty. Not unaware am I that Jerome is commonly supposed to be a witness on the opposite side [against the last 12 verses of Mark]: concerning which mistake I shall have to speak largely in Chapter V. **But it ought to be enough to point out that we should not have met with these last twelve verses in the Vulgate, had Jerome held them to be spurious. He familiarly quotes the 9th verse in one place of his writings;** in another place he makes the extraordinary statement that in certain of the copies, (especially the Greek,) was found after ver. 14 the reply of the eleven Apostles [Freer Logion—see Part IV, Section F], when our SAVIOUR ‘upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen.’ To discuss so weak and worthless a forgery, no trace of which is found in any MS. in existence, and of which nothing whatever is known except what Jerome here tells us,—would be to waste our time indeed. **The fact remains, however, that Jerome, besides giving these last twelve verses a place in the Vulgate, quotes S. Mark xvi. 14, as well as ver. 9, in the course of his writings.**” (Bold emphasis mine.)

Dr. Lunn concludes:

“Taking into account the overall testimony of Jerome, then, it cannot be fairly concluded that he is in any sense whatsoever a witness against the genuineness of the longer Markan ending. Rather, a balanced assessment of the relevant evidence actually leads to quite the opposite position. **The only legitimate inference of all that has been considered is that Jerome himself regarded these verses as an authentic part of the second Gospel”** (*The Original Ending of Mark*, page 105).

Now, we get to some “easier” material!

D. Does not the discontinuity between verses 8 and 9 prove verses 9-20 were added later?

Hasting’s Dictionary of the Bible, page 581, informs us of the following as touching the last 12 verses of Mark:

“For the beginning of 16⁹ is not continuous with 16⁸; the subject of the verb ‘appeared’ had evidently been indicated in the sentence which had preceded; yet the necessary ‘Jesus’ cannot be understood from anything in v. 8.”

Challengers of Mark 16:9-20 argue the lack a smooth transition between verse 8 and verse 9 indicates to them verse 9 onward was **not** the original ending. We will continue dealing with this into Part E. Let us reread the verses: “[8] *And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.* [9] *Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.*” Although verse 9 starts with “now”—suggesting it will resume the narrative of the women relaying the news of Christ’s resurrection (verse 8)—it rather switches to Christ appearing to Mary Magdalene alone. Why did Mark not tell us what happened to the women once they fled?

Friends, we must remember, the Holy Bible does not always give us what we **want** to know. It gives us just what we **need** to know, that which the Holy Spirit determined vital. Extra details would have been nice, but they have been withheld because the theme of this chapter is the proof of Christ’s resurrection. We do **not** need to know what happened to the women of verse 8 because we can resort to Matthew 28:9-10 and Luke 24:8-11,22-24. All Four Gospel Records—when viewed together—provide us with what we need to know about Christ’s post-resurrection appearances. If we must dismiss Mark 16:9 as faulty for isolating Mary Magdalene from the women of verses 1-8, then we must also reject John chapter 20 as erroneous since John mentions **one** woman at the tomb—**her**!

In our next part, we further address the discontinuity between Mark 16:8 and 16:9.

E. Does not the masculine participle in verse 9 conflict with the subject/women of verse 8, indicating verses 9-20 were added later?

Recall, from our previous section, *Hasting’s Dictionary of the Bible*, page 581, summarizing this objection to Mark 16:9-20:

“For the beginning of 16⁹ is not continuous with 16⁸; the subject of the verb ‘appeared’ had evidently been indicated in the sentence which had preceded; yet the necessary ‘Jesus’ cannot be understood from anything in v. ⁸.”

Stated in a “scholar’s” language, “Although the masculine participle in verse 9 expects ‘he’ as the antecedent, the subject of verse 8 is the women.” The subject of verse 8 (the women) is **incompatible** with the subject of verse 9 (resurrect Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene). Such disjointedness indicates to critics that verse 8 and verse 9 were not originally together. Someone added verse 9, but was not careful enough to insert a verse with Jesus as the subject between it and verse 8.

If you have a printed King James Bible, you will notice “*Jesus*” is italicized in Mark 16:9. This implies the Authorized Version translators added it: there is no

corresponding Greek noun “**Iesous**.” Transliterated, with an interlinear, the verse looks like this in the *Textus Receptus*:

“**Anastas-de proi** [now when risen early] **prote** [first] **sabbatou** [of the week] **ephane** [appeared] **proton** [first] **Maria te Magdalene** [to Mary Magdalene], **aph** [from] **es** [whom] **ekbeblekei** [he cast out] **epta** [seven] **daimonia** [devils].”

Who has risen here? **Who** has appeared to Mary Magdalene first? The last people mentioned were the women (verse 8), but (surely!) **they** have **not** risen from the dead, **they** have **not** appeared to Mary Magdalene, and **they** have **not** cast out seven devils from her! **Jesus**’ resurrection is the larger context; therefore, the King James translators inserted the subject “**Jesus**” for verse 9 to make sense. (A similar addition was necessary in English to make Luke 7:37 sensible.)

Yet, in the “scholar’s” mind, the switch in subjects is neither smooth in Greek nor English. The “scholarly” contention is restated as follows: “Verse 9 was later added to Mark’s original. Neither in Greek nor English does verse 9 belong. Verses 9-20 were copied from some preexisting document, one that already identified ‘Jesus’ by name. This is how we account for the shift from the women of verse 8 to Jesus of verse 9, and why the Greek does not have ‘**Iesous**’ (‘Jesus’) in verse 9.”

As a supporter of the longer ending, this author sees **no** problem here. The content of verses 9-20 was **not** copied from a previous document. Rather than assuming verse 9 must point back to verse 8, thus making a difficulty, we pair verse 9 with verse 6: “*And he [the young man—that is, the angel] saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: **he is risen**; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.*” To wit, Mark’s intention in verse 9 is to continue with Christ’s post-resurrection ministry, **not** to (as supposed) resume the narrative of the women’s trip in relaying the news of said resurrection. “*Risen*” (Greek, “**egeiro**”) in verse 6 should be paired with “*risen*” (Greek, “**anastas**”) in verse 9.

F. Does not the timeline of Mark 16:9 contradict that of Matthew 28:1?

The first verse of the disputed passage (16:9-20) is: “*Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.*” As we recall from Section C, Dr. Burgon commented over a century ago that people in the early Church found this verse to be at variance with Matthew 28:1: “*In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.*” We will recall Eusebius and Jerome answering this matter earlier, in Section C.

As opposed to the “solution” Eusebius and Jerome offered, Dr. Edward F. Hills gives the most plausible solution to this dilemma on page 134 of *Believing Bible Study*:

“For, at first sight, these two passages seem to contradict each other. Mark says that Christ rose ‘early the first day of the week,’ that is *Sunday morning*; while Matthew seems to say that Christ rose ‘in the end of the Sabbath,’ which, strictly interpreted, means *Saturday evening*. It is true that Matthew’s expression can be more loosely construed to mean *the end of Saturday night*, and thus the conflict with Mark can be avoided, but there were some early Christians, it seems, who did not realize this and were seriously troubled by the apparent disagreement.” (Italic emphasis in original.)

Since people had difficulty harmonizing Mark 16:9 and Matthew 28:1, they could, upon discovering a Mark manuscript lacking its final page, just write off Mark 16:9-20 as uninspired. Dismissed as unauthentic, Mark 16:9 would no longer conflict with Matthew 28:1. However, as Hills already demonstrated, it is possible to retain **both** Matthew 28:1 and Mark 16:9.

G. Why does Mark 16:9 present Mary Magdalene as if appearing for the first time?

“Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils” (Mark 16:9). Why does this verse contain her **full** name, instead of simply referring to her as “Mary?” Does this repetition of “Magdalene” not prove someone other than Mark is writing? Why is Mary Magdalene treated as a stranger here? After all, this is ***not*** her first appearance in the narrative, for she has been seen ***three times prior*** (15:40; 15:47; 16:1).

It is unfathomable how grown men and women can honestly present this argument as something worthy of our time! Friends, is it not obvious why Mark calls her “Mary Magdalene?” He does ***not*** want to confuse her with **another** Mary, for Mary the mother of James the less is **also** found in those exact same verses (15:40; 15:47; 16:1). The full title “Mary Magdalene” in Mark 16:9 in no way disproves its legitimacy; otherwise, we are forced to wonder if Mark 15:47 and Mark 16:1 are also questionable! We move on from this petty objection at once.

H. Why does Mark 16:9 only now mention Mary Magdalene’s former devil possession?

Reading the verse again: “Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.” This appositional phrase, “out of whom he had cast seven devils,” is said to be inappropriate, an unauthorized insertion. Why is Mary Magdalene’s former condition only ***now*** revealed? If Mark were writing, he would have placed that fact ***earlier*** in his Gospel Record, right? This is, in effect, nothing more than mortal man limiting the Holy Spirit. If God wanted to

withhold some information, could He **not** do it until He deemed it necessary to reveal? How dare we tell Him, “This verse or phrase cannot be inspired because it belongs in a previous chapter!” *“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”* (Isaiah 55:9).

Progressive revelation is a frequent characteristic of Scripture. The LORD God suppresses certain aspects of an account or attributes of a person, only to disclose them decades or centuries later. For example, it is not until Acts 13:20 that we learn King Saul reigned 40 years over Israel. The Old Testament Scriptures are silent about that. Four decades after the events of Exodus chapter 17, Moses explains to us “*flint*” was the type of rock from which God’s waters flowed for Israel in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 8:15). Only in 2 Timothy 3:8 do we finally learn the names of the two Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses 1,500 years earlier. Let us consider an oddity as touching Mark: it is not until chapter 6, verse 3, that he shows us Jesus was a carpenter. Why does Luke wait until chapter 3 to report Christ’s lineage? After all, Matthew provided that information in chapter 1. The Gospel Record of John alone claims Simon was the name of Judas Iscariot’s father (6:71; 12:4; 13:2,26). Why was this not revealed **earlier**—that is, provided in Matthew, Mark, or Luke? The same could be said of “*Thomas... called Didymus*” (John 11:16; 20:24; 21:2). Would it not have been more appropriate to style him as such when he **first** appeared in Scripture (Matthew 10:3)? If a verse or phrase being “out of place” is grounds for doubt, then we must without delay remove these and other words from Scripture!

Why would the Holy Spirit **now** divulge—in Mark 16:9—the fact Jesus had previously cast out seven devils from Mary Magdalene? The exorcism occurred before His resurrection, but the information is not entered into the record of Scripture until after the resurrection. Any number of reasons could account for this. Forgery is **not** necessarily involved.

The verse again: “*Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.*” This appositive, “*out of whom he had cast seven devils,*” is said to be incongruous. Why does it just now show up in the Bible? It contrasts Mary Magdalene’s former life under Satan’s control with her new life, her resurrection life (tied to Christ’s resurrection life, of which she now proclaims).

Look at 1 Peter 1:1-4: “[1] *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,* [2] *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.* [3] *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*** [4] *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,....*” Now, chapter 2: “[24] *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.* [25] ***For ye were as sheep going astray;***

but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

The nation Israel was fully under Satan’s influence—seven being the Bible’s number of completion—but Christ’s resurrection guarantees her future deliverance into eternal life. She now speaks God’s Word (that is, relaying the news the angel gave her and the other women—Christ has resurrected). It is as if the Holy Spirit is saying, “Remember that Mary [literally, that ‘**sinner**’] who was once totally under the Devil’s control? She was the first person to see My resurrected Son, and she shared that good news with His other disciples!”

I. Are not Christ’s “Jerusalem” appearances in Mark 16:9-20 at variance with “Galilee” of verse 7?

The angel directed the women at Christ’s tomb in Mark 16:7: “*But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.*” It is argued Mark should have proceeded to describe Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances in **Galilee**, northern Israel. However, the post-resurrection appearances of Mark 16:9-20 occurred near **Jerusalem**, southern Israel. This is offered as proof that someone other than Mark added these last 12 verses later.

If we demand the verses following verse 8 should have been in Galilee (or we will not believe them to be genuine), then we are again dictating to the Holy Spirit what is and is not appropriate for His Word to say. We know indeed Christ appeared to His disciples post-resurrection in Galilee (Matthew 28:7,16-20), exactly as the angel foretold in Mark 16:7. However, it is **not** unreasonable to believe the Holy Spirit intentionally caused Mark to overlook the Galilean post-resurrection appearances. Documenting those events were **not** Mark’s purpose. It is rather Mark’s intention to show Christ **did** indeed resurrect, **did** show Himself to people who recognized Him, **did** return to Heaven to Father’s right hand, and **did** work with His believing remnant in Israel as they await His Second Coming. The eschatological or end-time activities of this Little Flock will be considered in greater detail in Part III, Section I.

J. Are there not several unique Greek words and phrases in Mark 16:9-20 found nowhere else in Mark?

The last 12 verses are viewed as doubtful because they contain Greek words and phrases found nowhere else in Mark.

“For example, the presence of seventeen non-Markan words or words used in a non-Markan sense.... indicate that the section was added by someone who knew a form of Mark which ended abruptly with verse 8 and who wished to provide a more appropriate conclusion” (*The Text of the New Testament*, Bruce Metzger, page 227).

Look at the footnote the editors of the New American (Roman Catholic) Bible place at Mark 16:9-20:

“This passage, termed the Longer Ending to the Marcan gospel by comparison to a much briefer conclusion found in some less important manuscripts, has traditionally been accepted as a canonical part of the gospel and was defined as such by the Council of Trent. Early citations of it by the Fathers indicate that it was composed by the second century, **although vocabulary and style indicate it was written by someone other than Mark...**” (Bold emphasis mine.)

Dr. Lunn provides additional insight on page 118:

“It is worthy of note that **nobody prior to the nineteenth century raised any objections against Mark 16:9-20 on the basis of its vocabulary or style.** There were many competent Greek scholars who could have done so, and even in the so called ‘pre-critical’ age there are several instances recorded of the authenticity of documents being questioned on account of their language. One classic example of this is the Donation of Constantine, an imperial decree supposedly of the fourth century granting lands to the church. Its spurious nature was exposed by the renaissance humanist Lorenzo Valla in 1440...” (*The Original Ending of Mark*). (Bold emphasis mine.)

As we saw moments earlier, textual critic Dr. Bruce Metzger also cited “different vocabulary and style” for rejecting Mark 16:9-20. Dr. Thomas Holland answered him on pages 230-237 of his book, *Crowned With Glory*. According to Holland:

“What is of much more significance is Metzger’s first point, the non-Markan words found in the longer ending. Depending on which text one uses, there are about one hundred eighty-three words found in the longer ending of Mark. **Of these there are fifty-three words used that do not appear elsewhere in Mark’s Gospel (at least in the form presented in the longer ending).** Of these, all but twenty-one are found elsewhere in the New Testament in the exact form as presented by Mark. To find such a high number of unique words within twelve verses may on the surface seem to be strong evidence that Mark did not author this section. However, if this is true how does one explain the fact that the same thing occurs elsewhere in the New Testament? For example, in the first twelve verses of Luke there are twenty words used by Luke that are not found in the same form anywhere else in the New Testament.” (Bold emphasis mine.)

Holland proceeds to provide tables of words unique to Mark 16:9-20 and terms exceptional to Luke 1:1-12. If Mark 16:9-20 must be questioned on the grounds of “unique words,” then we are to wonder if other passages of Scripture are not inspired or genuine either! He summarizes:

“Additionally, even if these unique words were found only in Mark 16:9-20 (in both form and occurrence), that would not establish that someone else wrote the conclusion of this Gospel. Excluding the longer ending, there are no less than one hundred two words that are unique to Mark. Likewise, the same can be said of the other New Testament writers. Matthew has one hundred thirty-seven words that are unique to that Gospel, Luke has three hundred twelve in his Gospel, and John has one hundred fourteen words unique to his Gospel. **Therefore, unique words (or even forms of words) do not establish that Mark did not write the last twelve verses of his Gospel.** Instead, we find this to be commonplace within the New Testament.” (Bold emphasis mine.)

Dr. Edward F. Hills, on page 134 of *Believing Bible Study*, has this to say about the so-called “different style” of Mark 16:9-20:

“One of the negative arguments employed by the critics is the alleged difference in literary style which distinguishes these last twelve verses from the rest of Mark’s Gospel. This argument is still used by critics today. Thus Metzger (1964) claims that ‘seventeen non-Markan words or words used in a non-Markan sense’ are present in these verses. Long ago, however, Tregelles (1854) admitted **‘that arguments on style are often very fallacious, and that by themselves they prove very little.’** And Burgon (1871) demonstrated this to be true. **In a brilliant chapter of his treatise on Mark he showed that the alleged differences of style were mere nothings.** For example, Meyer (1847) and other critics had made much of the fact that two typically Marcan words, namely, *euthus* (straightway) and *palin* (again), were not found in Mark 16:9-20. Burgon showed that *euthus* did not occur in chapters 12 and 13 of Mark and *palin* did not occur in chapters 1, 6, 9, and 13 of Mark. Thus the fact that these words did not occur in Mark 16:9-20 proved nothing in regard to the genuineness of this section.” (Bold emphasis mine.) (See Burgon’s *Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, chapter 9.)

Dr. Scrivener wrote on page 588 of *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*:

“With regard to the argument against these twelve verses arising from their alleged difference in style from the rest of the Gospel, I must say that the same process might be applied—and has been applied—to prove that S. Paul was not the writer of the Pastoral Epistles (to say nothing of that to the Hebrews), S. John of the Apocalypse, Isaiah and Zechariah of portions of those prophecies that bear their names. Every one used to literary composition may detect, if he will, such minute variations as have been made so much of in this case, either in his own writings, or in those of the authors he is most familiar with.”

Dr. Lunn dedicates a full chapter—nearly 50 pages—of his book, *The Original*

Ending of Mark, to countering the notion “unique style and vocabulary of Mark 16:9-20 disqualify it from being genuine.”

Famed King-James critic Dr. James White refuses to concede this point here. He knows it is a losing battle to argue against Mark 16:9-20 using the lame excuse of “unique style and vocabulary,” so (understandably) he backs away from it!

“We leave strictly objective grounds when starting to examine internal evidence. Here we are looking at the vocabulary and structure of the passage. Many have noted that the ending differs in many respects from the rest of Mark’s gospel. Supporters of the TR [Textus Receptus / King James Greek] have responded by pointing to other passages that, if isolated, would also appear non-Markan. **This area of debate seems unable to provide any clear direction on the matter**” (*The King James Only Controversy*, page 318).

Moving on to other excuses leveled against Mark 16:9-20.

K. Is not Mark 16:15-18 unorthodox or “apocryphal” in nature, based on extra-biblical sources?

Reread Mark 16:15-18 as found in the King James Bible: “[15] *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. [16] He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. [17] And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; [18] They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*”

Water baptism for salvation (verse 16)? Casting out devils (verse 17)? Speaking with new tongues (verse 17)? Taking up serpents (verse 18)? Drinking any deadly thing without harm (verse 18)? Laying hands on the sick to recover them (verse 18)? This passage is a real burden for the average church member! Unfortunately, the “scholars” are of little help here—but of great hindrance! Their best advice is to discard the passage entirely! Dr. James White contends these strange concepts cast doubt on the last 12 verses of Mark being in the original Bible:

“The passage’s content often has been criticized, and rightly so. We do not, by pointing out the following items, wish to indicate that an orthodox interpretation of these endings is not possible. Many conservative scholars have provided such interpretations, and we can stand by their work. Utilizing the principle of examining other passages that would help us understand or interpret these rather obscure verses does indeed yield a consistent viewpoint. **However, the natural reading of these verses strongly suggests that the person who**

wrote them was *not* completely familiar with the entire gospel of Mark itself and was utilizing apocryphal and unorthodox sources.

....

"The next issue is in verse 16. The conjunction of baptism and belief is unusual to say the least. In no other passage does Jesus tie these things together so intricately. Now, Jesus does then go on to say that the basis for condemnation is unbelief, not lack of baptism, and hence baptism does not, even on the basis of this passage, have saving power. **But it still presents a phrase out of character with what we know of His teaching from Mark's gospel as well as the other accounts.**

"Verses 17 and 18 present yet another problem. The signs given here are promised to accompany those who have believed, seemingly to *all* who have believed. This again has no real counterpart in any other passage. Certainly Paul was bitten by a serpent and felt no ill effects, but even that story does not remove Christians from the natural consequences of life. A person can be bitten by a poisonous serpent and suffer no harm due to the snake not releasing any venom, not an uncommon occurrence. Possibly Paul's experience shows God's sovereignty over creation and His control even over animal life more than it shows Paul's ability to be poisoned and yet survive. These verses are reminiscent of many apocryphal writings that were circulating after the close of the New Testament period" (*The King James Only Controversy*, pages 318-319).

Contrary to what White and other "scholars" assert, the contents of Mark 16:15-18 are ***not*** to be feared or shunned. These verses must be examined **in context**, and **never** ripped from their surrounding verses! We will answer their charges in great detail in Part III, Sections G–I. Stay tuned!

Now, we lay out the evidence individuals provide in support of Mark 16:9-20.

III. Examination of the Arguments for the Inclusion of Mark 16:9-20

Those who accept Mark 16:9-20 as the original inspired ending of Mark's Gospel Record will now present their arguments. (As you know, this is the view of the author.)

Claim: Something belongs after Mark 16:8, and it is verses 9-20 as found in the King James Bible.

Some people claim Mark's autograph originally contained the last 12 verses. They argue this "longer ending" as found in the King James Bible is the only inspired conclusion Mark's Gospel Record ever had, thereby making a "shorter ending" or any other ending fake and uninspired. (Again, this is the goal of this treatise.)

A. How could the Gospel Record of Mark possibly end so abruptly at 16:8, especially on a note of fear?

Doubtless, the most obvious problem in closing Mark at verse 8 is its sudden ending, vagueness and alarm rampant: "*And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.*" Remember, the angel had encouraged them, "*Be not affrighted*" (verse 6). How strange it would be for Mark to then close his Book with, "*for they were **afraid!***" We already dealt with this at the opening of Part II, Claim #3, so, if necessary, refer back to those comments. By the way, these women were ***not*** afraid and silent ***forever***. Judaism did ***not*** accept the testimony of women as legally valid, but Jesus appeared to them to encourage them to speak (Matthew 28:9-10). Eventually, they ***did*** speak, as revealed in Luke 24:10-11,22-24.

Drs. Westcott and Hort, page 46 (*The New Testament in the Original Greek, Notes on Select Readings*), freely stated they did ***not*** believe Mark 16:8 was original ending:

"It is incredible that the evangelist deliberately concluded either a paragraph with ἐφοβουτο γάρ, or with a petty detail of a secondary event, leaving his narrative hanging in the air. Each of these points of intrinsic evidence is of very great weight...."

Dean Burgon, also writing in the late 19th century:

"Not that Biblical Critics would have us believe that the Evangelist left off at verse 8, intending that the words,—‘neither said they anything to any

man, for they were afraid,' should be the conclusion of his Gospel. 'No one can imagine' (writes Griesbach,) 'that Mark cut short the thread of his narrative at that place.' It is on all hands eagerly admitted, that so abrupt a termination must be held to mark an incomplete or else an uncompleted work. How, then, in the original autograph of the Evangelist, is it supposed that the narrative proceeded? This is what no one has even ventured so much as to conjecture. It is assumed, however, that the original termination of the Gospel, whatever it may have been, has perished. We appeal, of course, to its actual termination: and,—Of what nature then, (we ask,) is the supposed necessity for regarding the last twelve verses of S. Mark's Gospel as a spurious substitute for what the Evangelist originally wrote? What, in other words, has been the history of these modern doubts; and by what steps have they established themselves in books, and won the public ear?" (*The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, page 4).

Today, over a century later, the "scholarly consensus" is the **exact opposite**: verse 8 **was** Mark's original ending, it is claimed today. Just pick up a popular modern commentary or study Bible, and see if the editors have any remarks concerning Mark 16:9-20. We saw a few examples of this in Part II. They relegate those last 12 verses to an inferior status because they believe verse 8 **is** Mark's intended conclusion.

Dr. Metzger, however, seems to be in difficult straits as touching the "abrupt" ending of Mark, vacillating between faith and unbelief, but we nevertheless quote him (*The Text of the New Testament*, page 228):

"Thus we are left with the short ending, witnessed by the earliest Greek, versional, and patristic evidence. Both external and internal considerations lead one to conclude that the original text of the Second Gospel, as known today, closes at xvi. 8. But did Mark intend to conclude his Gospel with the melancholy statement that the women were afraid (ἐφοβούτο γάρ)? **Despite the arguments which several modern scholars have urged in support of such a view, the present writer cannot believe that the note of fear would have been regarded as an appropriate conclusion to an account of the Evangel, or Good News.** Furthermore, from a stylistic point of view, to terminate a Greek sentence with the word γάρ is most unusual and exceedingly rare only a relatively few examples have been found throughout all the vast range of Greek literary works, and no instance has been found where γάρ stands at the end of a book. Moreover, it is possible that in verse 8 Mark uses the verb ἐφοβούτο to mean 'they were afraid of' (as he does in four of the other occurrences of this verb in his Gospel). In that case obviously something is needed to finish the sentence.

"It appears, therefore, that ἐφοβούτο γάρ of Mark xvi. 8 does not represent what Mark intended to stand at the end of his Gospel. Whether he was interrupted while writing and subsequently prevented (perhaps by death) from finishing his literary work, or whether the last leaf of the

original copy was accidentally lost before other copies had been made we do not know. All that is known is that more than one pen in the early Church sensed that the Gospel is a torso and tried in various ways to provide a more or less appropriate conclusion” (Bold emphasis mine.).

Metzger refuses to believe Mark wrote the last 12 verses, later inscribing to conclude his position:

“Since **Mark was not responsible for the composition of the last twelve verses of the generally current form of his Gospel**, and since they undoubtedly had been attached to the Gospel before the Church recognized the fourfold Gospels as canonical, it follows that the New Testament contains not four but five evangelic accounts of events subsequent to the Resurrection of Christ.” (Bold emphasis mine.)

Nevertheless, he is seemingly open to leaving it where it sits in the New Testament. Otherwise, as he states, the final note of the Gospel Record of Mark is “fear” and “for!”

In closing here, we say this: If Mark 16:8 is the original ending, the final word “fear” is at variance with Mark’s opening, “*The beginning of the **gospel [Good News!] of Jesus Christ, the Son of God***” (1:1). Without any clear resolution, which verses 9-20 alone provide, can anyone leave Mark with unshakeable faith in the resurrection of Christ? Nay! On the contrary, we too would shake in fear—unbelief!

B. Do not most Greek manuscripts contain these 12 verses?

Yes, the vast majority of the Greek manuscripts that contain Mark include the last 12 verses as found in our King James Bible. In fact, that “majority” is **over 99%!**

Dean Burgon provides the Greek manuscript evidence, which we will examine more closely later, in Part IV:

“THE two oldest Copies of the Gospels in existence are the famous Codex in the Vatican Library at Rome, known as ‘Codex B;’ and the Codex which Tischendorf brought from Mount Sinai in 1859, and which he designates by the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet (א) [Aleph/Sinaiticus]. These two manuscripts are probably not of equal antiquity. An interval of fifty years at least seems to be required to account for the marked difference between them. If the first belongs to the beginning, the second may be referred to the middle or latter part of the ivth [4th] century. But the two Manuscripts agree in this,—that *they are without the last twelve verses of S. Mark’s Gospel*. In both, after *ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ* (ver. 8), comes the subscription: in Cod. B [Vaticanus],—KATA MAPKON; in Cod. א [Aleph/Sinaiticus],—ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΚΑΤΑ

MAPKON.

“Let it not be supposed that we have any *more* facts of this class to produce. All has been stated. It is not that the evidence of Manuscripts is one,—the evidence of Fathers and Versions another. The very reverse is the case. Manuscripts, Fathers, and Versions alike, are *only not unanimous* in bearing consistent testimony. But the consistent witness of the MSS. is even extraordinary. **With the exception of the two uncial MSS. [manuscripts] which have just been named, there is not one Codex in existence, uncial or cursive, —(and we are acquainted with, at least, eighteen other uncials, and about six hundred cursive Copies of this Gospel,)—which leaves out the last twelve verses of S. Mark**” (*Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, pages 70-71).

Proponents of Aleph and B counter this “majority of Greek manuscripts support Mark 16:9-20” by claiming manuscripts are more authoritative based on their **age** as opposed to their **number**. Their contention can be paraphrased as: “While **most** Greek manuscripts have Mark 16:9-20, the two **oldest** manuscripts do not. We would rather follow the **minority** because of their **age** as opposed to the **majority** because of their **number**.”

If we are to weigh **age** then, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus may in fact **not** be “the oldest extant manuscripts” as commonly assumed. As we will see later from David W. Daniels and David Sorenson, these two documents may have been **altered just a few hundred years ago—after** the translation of the King James Bible! Even **if** Vaticanus and Sinaiticus date back to the fourth century, they themselves would be **250-300** years removed from the original manuscripts of Apostolic times. This would have been plenty of time for them to be descended from corrupt copies **not** representative of the autographs. **Antiquity** does **not** necessarily suggest **reliability**, for counterfeit or forged Bibles were circulating even in the Apostles’ lifetimes in the first century: “*That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand*” (2 Thessalonians 2:2). The “scholars” are wrong in repeatedly telling us to blindly follow Vaticanus and Sinaiticus simply because they are the “oldest.”

C. Do not many ancient witnesses, including “Church Fathers,” favor Mark 16:9-20?

In his classic work from 1883, *Revision Revised*, conservative Anglican Bible scholar Dean Burgon lists 44 ancient witnesses—versions, church fathers, et cetera—attesting to the genuineness of the last 12 verses of Mark. We quote him on pages 422-423:

“...The Verses in question I find are recognized,
In the IInd century,—By the Old Latin—and Syriac Verss.:—by Papias;—

Justin M.;—Irenaeus;—Tertullian.

In the IIIrd century,—By the Coptic—and the Sahidic Versions:—by Hippolytus;—by Vincentius at the seventh Council of Carthage;—by the 'Acta Pilati';—and by the 'Apostolical Constitutions' in two places.

In the IVth century,—By Cureton's Syr. and the Gothic Verss.:—besides the Syriac Table of Canons;—Eusebius;—Macarius Magnes;—Aphraates;—Didymus;—the Syriac 'Acts of the Ap.:'—Epiphanius;—Leontius;—ps.-Ephraem;—Ambrose;—Chrysostom;—Jerome;—Augustine.

In the Vth century,—Besides the Armenian Vers.,—by codices A and C;—by Leo;—Nestorius;—Cyril of Alexandria;—Victor of Antioch;—Patricius;—Marius Mercator.

In the VIth and VIIth centuries,—Besides cod. D,—the Georgian and AEthiopic Verss.:—by Hesychius;—Gregentius;—Prosper;—John, abp. of Thessalonica;—and Modestus, bishop of Jerusalem.... (See above, pages 36–40.)

The Dean cites 6 witnesses from the second century, 6 witnesses of the third century, 15 witnesses from the fourth century, 9 witnesses of fifth century, and 8 witnesses from the sixth and seventh centuries. All these recognize Mark 16:9-20 as legitimate. Further remarks can be found in Edward F. Hills' *Believing Bible Study*, page 133:

"For these verses have an enormous weight of testimony in their favor which cannot lightly be set aside. They are found in all the Greek manuscripts except *Aleph* and *B* and in all the Latin manuscripts except *k*. All the Syriac versions contain these verses, with the exception of the Sinaitic Syriac, and so also does the Bohairic version. And, even more important, they were quoted as Scripture by early Church Fathers who lived 150 years before *B* and *Aleph* were written, namely, Justin Martyr (c. 150), Tatian (c. 175), Irenaeus (c. 180), and Hippolytus (c. 200). Thus the earliest extant testimony is on the side of these last twelve verses. Surely the critical objections against them must be exceedingly strong to overcome this evidence for their genuineness."

Dr. Thomas Holland, on page 149 of *Crowned With Glory*, has this to say about ancient witnesses for Mark 16:9-20:

"In 177 AD Irenaeus wrote *Against Heresies*. In it he cites from Mark 16:19, establishing that the longer reading was in existence at this time and was considered canonical, at least by Irenaeus:

'Also, towards the conclusion of his Gospel, Mark says: 'So then, after the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God;' confirming what had been spoken by the prophet: 'The LORD said to my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool.' Thus God and the Father are truly one and the same; He who was announced by the prophets, and handed down by

the true Gospel; whom we Christians worship and love with the whole heart, as the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things therein. (3:10:5).'

Remember, Dr. J. Sidlow Baxter, in *Explore the Book*, claims “doubt concerning them [the last 12 verses of Mark] does not seem to have been expressed until the fourth century” (page 224). Baxter is evidently referring to Eusebius (A.D. 260/265–339/340), who lived several decades after Irenaeus (c. A.D. 130–c. 202). Dr. Lunn adds to our understanding:

“It is not until the beginning of the fourth century, with **Eusebius** of Caesarea, that we reach the first explicit expression of doubt concerning the genuineness of the ending. Even here the situation is far from clear-cut. From *ad Marinum* we learn that the author of the query knew the passage and did not question its authenticity. Nor does Eusebius’ two-fold response of itself allow us to categorically state that he himself rejected the passage. The additional evidence of the Eusebian Canons may, however, point in that direction” (*The Original Ending of Mark*, page 112).

The fact remains, however, there is overwhelming evidence for Mark 16:9-20 in Greek manuscripts. We will say more about this later.

D. Do not the Greek lectionaries support the inclusion of Mark 16:9-20?

Indeed, they do. Lectionaries were an integral part of the early church, before the advent of the printing press and mass Bible production. They are lists or books of portions of the Bible read during church services. Lectionaries can be likened to the “responsive readings” in our modern hymnals. Dean Burgon wrote of these “lectionaries” in *Revision Revised*, page 40:

“But the significance of a single feature of the Lectionary, of which up to this point nothing has been said, is alone sufficient to determine the controversy. We refer to the fact that *in every part of Eastern Christendom* these same 12 verses—neither more nor less—have been from the earliest recorded period, and still are, *a proper lesson both for the Easter season and for Ascension Day*” (Italic emphasis in original.)

According to Dr. Floyd Nolen Jones, **in excess of 2,000** Greek lectionaries support Mark 16:9-20 as belonging in the Bible—not including some 8,000 Latin manuscripts and 1,000 Syriac versions (*Which Version is the Bible?*, page 31). We will return to this issue of lectionaries in Part IV Section I, as they prove most useful in explaining why the last 12 verses of Mark came to be questioned in the first place. Moving on.

E. Do not several non-disputed verses support Mark 16:9-20?

Certainly, Mark 16:9-20 is ***not*** material or content exclusive to Mark. These verses are substantiated—at least to some degree—in non-disputed Bible passages.

- **Mark 16:9-10**: Resurrected Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, and she related the news to the disciples (cf. John 20:11-18; Luke 24:9-10).
- **Mark 16:9**: Mary Magdalene once under the influence of seven devils (cf. Luke 8:2).
- **Mark 16:11**: The disciples did not believe Mary Magdalene's testimony (cf. Luke 24:10-11).
- **Mark 16:12-13**: Christ appeared to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and they relayed news to the other disciples (cf. Luke 24:13-35).
- **Mark 16:14**: Jesus appeared to the disciples as they ate, rebuked them for their unbelief (cf. Luke 24:33-49).
- **Mark 16:15-18**: We will cover these verses in detail in subsequent sections. It is important we understand the significance of the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom; faith and water baptism for salvation; and signs following—casting out devils, speaking with new tongues, taking up serpents, drinking the deadly thing, and laying hands on the sick to recover them. For now, just know that, unless these verses are present in Mark, we lose valuable cross-references to explain other difficult passages.
- **Mark 16:19**: Christ's ascension into Heaven to sit on the right hand of God and fulfill Psalm 110:1 is found also in Luke 24:51 and Acts 1:9-11.
- **Mark 16:20**: The Apostles/Disciples going forth and obeying the Mark commission—preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom with signs following—is described throughout the opening chapters of Acts (cf. Hebrews 2:3-5).

One of the most “offensive” features of Mark 16:9-20 is its underscoring of the disciples' unbelief following Jesus' resurrection: “[11] *And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, **believed not....*** [13] *And they went and told it unto the residue: **neither believed they them.*** [14] *Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their **unbelief** and **hardness of heart**, because **they believed not them** which had seen him after he was risen.*” Would such stark unbelief really be unlikely? **No.** Mark's comments on unbelief correspond to other verses describing the post-resurrection ministry of Christ:

- “*And when they saw him, they worshipped him: **but some doubted***” (Matthew 28:17).
- “*And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and **they believed them not***” (Luke 24:11).
- “*Then he said unto them, O fools, and **slow of heart to believe** all that the prophets have spoken:*” (Luke 24:25).
- “*And while they yet **believed not for joy**, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?*” (Luke 24:41)

- *“The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, **I will not believe**” (John 20:25).*
- *“Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and **be not faithless, but believing**” (John 20:27).*

Mark’s closing verses concerning unbelief are **not** unfathomable at all. We would have every reason to accept them as a **genuine** portion of Mark. The Bible takes a negative view of man, and we have every reason to believe **God the Holy Spirit** wrote these last 12 verses of Mark. It is difficult, however, to believe some man forged these last 12 verses—he would have **embellished** it by stressing their faith and glossing over (minimizing or eliminating) their faithlessness. See our comments on the Freer Logion, Part IV, Section G. This variation was prompted after a dislike for Mark 16:14!

Additionally, Mark emphasizes unbelief elsewhere in his Gospel Record. *“And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that **ye have no faith?**” (Mark 4:40). “And he marvelled because of their **unbelief**. And he went round about the villages, teaching” (Mark 6:6). “He answereth him, and saith, O **faithless** generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me” (Mark 9:19). “And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; **help thou mine unbelief**” (Mark 9:24). It would **not** be unexpected for Mark to close with more unbelief either. The sinful human heart is **stubborn!***

F. Is not Mark 16:9-20 necessary to form that Gospel Record’s concluding commission?

Yes. Without Mark 16:9-20, there are **no** instructions to close the second Gospel Record. Matthew, Luke, and John—even early Acts—all have installments of the “Great Commission.” Mark could **not** have possibly intended to end at 16:8! Furthermore, the Holy Spirit would **not** have allowed any genuine conclusion of Mark to be lost.

Matthew 28:18-20: *“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”*

Luke 24:44-49: *“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And*

that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

John 20:22-23: *“And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.”*

Acts 1:7-8: *“And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”*

We cannot expect to remove Mark 16:15-20 without inflicting **significant** damage to, and casting **great** suspicion upon, the Apostles’ ministry as found in the early Acts period. Subsequent sections will deal with this in greater detail.

G. Can Peter preach Acts 2:38 without authorization from Mark 16:15-16?

No! The King James Bible reports in Acts 2:38: *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”* How could the Apostle Peter preach this? Is water baptism really necessary for forgiveness of sins? Must **we** be water baptized before **we** can receive the Holy Spirit? From where did Peter get such information? He derived it from Mark 16:15-16: *“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”*

Unless we have the Lord Jesus Christ issuing the commission of Mark 16:15-16, the Apostle Peter had **no** authority to preach his message of Acts 2:38. Since Mark 16:15-16 is shunned as “uninspired” and “not genuine,” Acts 2:38 loses its force and people begin to retranslate it. They attempt to harmonize it with Paul’s Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3-4), making it compatible with the Gospel of Grace. Hopeless confusion results when we fail to approach the Bible dispensationally! The key is to approach this passage, like all others, with 2 Timothy 2:15 in mind: *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

Read Acts 2:38 in the King James Bible again: *“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for [eis] the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”* Since Peter is obviously basing their forgiveness of sins **on their repentance and water baptism**, some, operating with the “only-one-Gospel-in-the-Bible” mentality, then force it to fit Paul’s Gospel message of *“Believe on the Lord Jesus*

Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). They do this by retranslating the Greek word “*eis*” (“*for*”) as “because of” in Acts 2:38. We find such an interpretation in the Amplified Bible: “And Peter said to them, ‘Repent [change your old way of thinking, turn from your sinful ways, accept and follow Jesus as the Messiah] and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ because of the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” This is **absolutely wrong**. Their forgiveness of sins is not merely an individual as with us, but also a **national** issue, to be brought to fruition at Christ’s Second Coming (Romans 11:26-27; Hebrews 8:8-13; Hebrews 10:15-17). We members of the Church the Body Christ have forgiveness of sins **now** (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; cf. Romans 5:11), and need **not** to wait for Christ’s return to get it.

Getting back to Mark 16:15-16 and Acts 2:38, we should **not** “water them down” (excuse the pun!) by making them fit Paul’s revelation of the mystery (Romans 16:25-26 cf. Acts 3:19-21). Leave them distinct from Paul/us—God’s current dealings with man—and all will be crystal clear. Water baptism, the sign of the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-17), is thus necessary in the prophetic program so as to ordain believing Jews as priests of Christ’s earthly kingdom (cf. Exodus 19:6; Exodus 29:4; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 Peter 3:20-22). John’s water baptism signified cleansing from idolatry (Ezekiel 36:25). Jews who reject it are manifesting their unbelief (Luke 7:29-30), to be consumed by the baptism of fire and whisked off to Hell at Christ’s Second Coming to close Daniel’s 70th Week (Matthew 3:7-12; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). This is the “*damnation*” of Mark 16:16. On the other hand, Messianic Jews who received John’s water baptism would then be anointed with the Holy Ghost, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which occurred in Acts chapter 2. As Levitical priests washed with water, so they were then anointed with olive oil (Exodus 29:7). Olive oil is a symbol of the anointing with the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 John 2:20,27). The Holy Spirit is to be poured out on Israel nationally in Zechariah 12:10, Christ’s Second Coming.

Again, Mark 16:15-16 and Acts 2:38 are all the Gospel of the Kingdom, and have **nothing** to do with what God is doing today. The Apostle Paul’s epistles, Romans through Philemon, describe God’s current dealings with man. Water baptism has **no** place in our Dispensation of Grace, for our Apostle Paul was **not** sent to water baptize (1 Corinthians 1:17). There is “*one baptism*” today (Ephesians 4:5), and it is the baptism by the Holy Spirit into the Church the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13).

H. Is not Mark 16:17 Christ’s only words during His earthly ministry about speaking in tongues?

Yes, they are. Mark 16:17 reads as follows: “*And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;...*” Without this verse, Christ in His earthly ministry never endorsed the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues. Unless Mark 16:17 is in the Bible, we cannot see how Revelation 7:9-10 fits into God’s dealings with Israel: “*After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood*

before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” Once the 144,000 Jewish preachers from the 12 Jewish tribes are sealed (verses 1-8), a large crowd of people from around the world appear before God’s throne in Heaven. From where did this multitude come? These are martyrs—converted under the 144,000 and subsequently killed because of their rejection of the Antichrist (cf. Revelation 6:9-11; Revelation 12:11; Revelation 20:4).

We want to draw our attention to the “*tongues*” or languages of Revelation 7:9. The 144,000 Jewish preachers were preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom (Mark 16:15-16; cf. Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10) in the languages of these Jewish people now converted and removed from the world via execution/martyrdom. In Acts chapter 2, the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues was used to translated the Gospel of the Kingdom into the languages of the foreign Jews present in Jerusalem, Jews who had traveled “*from every nation under heaven*” (verses 4-5). Once Israel is redeemed at Christ’s Second Coming, these saved Jews then preach in foreign human languages to evangelize Gentiles (Zechariah 8:20-23). Again, this has **nothing** to do with us. The spiritual gift of tongues was for Israel’s benefit during the Acts period (1 Corinthians chapter 14), passing away once all of God’s revelation to man was finalized with the completion of the Bible in the A.D. first century (1 Corinthians 13:8-13). By the way, the gift of tongues is God’s reversal of the judgment of confusion He poured out at the Tower of Babel because of the nations’ idolatry (Genesis 11:1-9).

I. Can Israel’s Little Flock survive the Divine judgments of Daniel’s 70th Week without the empowerment of Mark 16:18?

No! Two “*signs*” or miracles in Mark 16:18 are particularly troubling to denominationally-minded individuals: “*They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*” This handling of snakes and drinking of poison are looked upon with great suspicion, as no Apostle in Scripture (that is, in the Book of Acts) **ever** took up serpents or drank poison. While the Apostle Paul **did** survive a snakebite in Acts 28:1-6, **this is another matter entirely**. Moreover, a small number of modern churches appeal to Mark 16:18 to justify their use of venomous snakes during their so-called “worship” services. Some have been severely injured—or even killed! Oddly, no one wants to risk drinking the poison—lest they wind up gravely ill or dead! Such confusion in the church and embarrassment to the Lord is nothing more than people ignoring the dispensational context of verses.

Without the supernatural abilities provided in Mark 16:18, Israel’s believing remnant will be powerless in surviving the Divine judgments and wrath of Daniel’s 70th Week. Christ is ascended (Mark 16:20), away from Earth and Israel, interceding for the nation at the Father’s right hand, waiting for His return to Earth so His enemies can be made His footstool at His glorious Second Coming (Psalm 110:1; Acts 2:32-36).

Remember, again, this is the setting of the Mark chapter 16 commission.

To the Berean Bible student, the **HANDLING OF SERPENTS WITHOUT HARM** is *not* at all bizarre. This miracle is rooted in the Old Testament Scriptures. For example, in the days of Moses, Numbers chapter 21 reports of Israel: “[4] *And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.* [5] *And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.* [6] *And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.* [7] *Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.* [8] *And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.* [9] *And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”*

Summarizing their wanderings in the wilderness for 40 years, Moses says in Deuteronomy 8:15: “[The LORD God] *Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;....*” The Apostle Paul commented in 1 Corinthians 10:9: “*Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were **destroyed of serpents.***”

One of the five courses of judgment sent upon idolatrous Israel is wild animals or vicious beasts attacking them. Leviticus chapter 26 speaks of this third phase: “[21] *And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins.* [22] *I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate.*” This third stage of chastisement began during the ministry of the Prophet Elisha, as delineated in 2 Kings chapter 2: “[23] *And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.* [24] *And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.* [25] *And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.”*

The Song of Moses, anticipating Christ’s Second Coming (which Mark chapter 16 expects, remember), predicts in Deuteronomy 32:24: “*They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust.*” This coincides with the day of the LORD predicted in Jeremiah 8:17: “*For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the LORD.*” All of this will be fulfilled in Revelation 6:8: “*And I looked, and behold a pale*

horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to **kill** with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and **with the beasts of the earth.**”

However, because of the authority given in Mark 16:18, Israel’s Little Flock will endure the future revolt of the animal kingdom. Venomous snakes and other threatening animals will **not** harm them. Omitting Mark 16:18 from the canon of Scripture, we leave them without such protection!

By the way, read Hosea 2:18: “***And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.***” When Christ returns, the curses of the Old Covenant are lifted and the blessings of the New Covenant are instituted. In Christ’s Millennial Reign, Israel will be at peace. No Gentile armies will be attacking her in the Promised Land, as with the first course of chastisement (Leviticus 26:14-17). Also, no Gentile nations will be removing her from the Promised Land via war, as in the fifth course of chastisement (Leviticus 26:27-39). Moreover, the animals will **not** assault her people anymore, as in the third course of chastisement (Leviticus 26:21-22).

The Prophet Ezekiel foretold of Israel’s restoration under the New Covenant in chapters 34 and 36. (Look at Ezekiel 36:25-27; cf. Jeremiah 31:31-34.) Read from chapter 34, noting especially verses 25 and 28: “[23] ***And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. [24] And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it. [25] And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. [26] And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. [27] And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. [28] And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid. [29] And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more. [30] Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord GOD. [31] And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD.***”

With the Gospel of the Kingdom being preached during Daniel’s 70th Week—and handling of snakes confirming that message—people will be able to see God’s future kingdom involves Israel’s deliverance from such threats from the animal kingdom.

Mark 16:18 again: “*They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing,*