

On pages 152-153 of *Neither Oldest Nor Best*, Dr. Sorenson enlightens us concerning the textual discipline of stichometry:

“...Yet, in the debate over the last twelve verses of Mark 16, stichometry will become of importance. Stichometry is the measure of letter sizes, space sizes and frequency, the number of letters to a line, the number of lines and columns to a page.

“At the end of the Gospel of Mark in Vaticanus (as well as in Sinaiticus) there is a glaring blank space where the last 12 verses should have been. **Whoever recopied those pages without them had to know exactly how much space to allow so that when the Gospel of Luke commenced it was precisely where it should be. This is where stichometry comes in. The scribe had to count the number of lines involved, along with the number of words and the number of letters to leave no more and no less room from Mark 16:8 to where Luke 1:1 commenced. And then the quire at the end of Mark 16 also included pages at the beginning of Luke 1. The scribe who recopied had to match those words on those lines exactly so that when the new section was inserted, it would match up precisely with the older section. Is there evidence that happened? Indeed there is.**

“**Vaticanus is laid out with three columns of text per page. Mark 16:8 ends about three quarters of the way down the second column. The rest of that column and the third column on that page are blank. That is the exact space needed for the last 12 verses of Mark 16.** On the next following page, Luke 1 commences. In any other book of the Bible in Vaticanus that much blank space is not wasted. If the Gospel of Mark had ended where it now does, the Gospel of Luke would have commenced at the top of the third column, not wasting almost a page and a half of valuable parchment space.

“**A similar phenomenon occurs in Sinaiticus.** Codex Sinaiticus rather has four columns per page and the letter size is a little smaller. But low [sic] and behold, four lines into the second column where Mark 16:8 ends, there is a blank space which extends to the bottom of the page. **This again is exactly the necessary space for the last 12 verses of Mark 16. At least in Sinaiticus, the scribe re-working the text did not waste the rest of the page, but commenced Luke 1 at the top of the third column.**

“The point is simple. **In both Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, there conveniently are blank spaces where Mark 16:9-20 should have been. The pages respectively were re-copied and those 12 verses were intentionally omitted. As noted above, the quire leaves of both volumes for Mark 16 and vicinity were replaced and completely recopied for each codex and the same scribe did the work on each.**

“The intrigue of who did this, why and when, is an amazing mystery. We will venture some educated guesses a little later in this chapter. **But the overarching point is that Vaticanus was intentionally modified to omit one of the foundational truths of Christianity—the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Apart from that flagrant heresy, Vaticanus has no textual integrity as a primary source for the New Testament. The modern Critical Text is built upon a manuscript intentionally modified to deceive.**”

In Section I of this present Part IV, we will say more about deliberate alterations of manuscripts to advance false teaching.

E. Codex Alexandrinus and Mark 16:9-20

One “cousin” manuscript of Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus is Codex Alexandrinus (A), assigned to the 5th century, and it “ranks second only to B and \aleph as representative of the New Testament text” (*A General Introduction to the Bible*, Geisler and Nix, page 394). As its name implies, Alexandrinus is also part of the Alexandrian or Critical Text, the body of manuscripts upon which modern English versions are based. Dr. Sorenson, page 151, in *Neither Oldest Nor Best*:

“If the conventional dating of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are to be believed, they are not much older than Alexandrinus. Yet, **Alexandrinus is a manuscript from Alexandria [Egypt], no less, which contains the last 12 verses of Mark.** It seems strange if the true New Testament did not contain the last 12 verses of Mark 16, why does a cousin manuscript of almost the same age and the same place of origin contain it?”

To wit, Alexandrinus actually **sides with** the Textus Receptus (King James Greek) **against** Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. The critical apparatuses of the *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th revised edition) and the *United Bible Societies Greek New Testament* (4th edition) bear record of that fact. In other words, the longer ending of Mark as found in the King James Greek is **also** found in Alexandrinus. Why? Could have Vaticanus and Sinaiticus originally had Mark 16:9-20 like Alexandrinus, but Vaticanus and Sinaiticus were later edited to compete with the (preserved/Traditional) King James Greek text?

F. The Shorter or Intermediate Ending

All Old Latin manuscripts have Mark 16:9-20 except one—Codex Bobiensis (K). Edward Hills, in *King James Version Defended*, adds this to our understanding:

“In place of Mark 16:9-20 the Old Latin manuscript *k* has the so-called ‘short ending’ of Mark, which reads as follows: ‘And all things whatsoever that had

been commanded they explained briefly to those who were with Peter; after these things also Jesus Himself appeared and from the east unto the west sent out through them the holy and uncorrupted preaching of eternal salvation. Amen.'... *L, Psi*, and a few other Greek manuscripts have this 'short ending' between 16:8 and 16:9. P. Khale (1951) reports that 5 Sahidic manuscripts also contain both this 'short ending' and Mark 16:9-20. The 'short ending' is also found in the margins of 2 Bohairic manuscripts and 7 Ethiopic ones" (pages 210-211).

Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible, page 581, reports the following concerning this "shorter ending:"

"This intermediate ending is **certainly not genuine**; it was written as a conclusion to the Gospel by some one who had the ordinary ending before him and objected it to as unauthentic, or who had a MS before him ending at 16⁸ and thought this abrupt. It appears that the copy from which most of these MSS with the intermediate ending were made, ended at 16⁸." (Bold emphasis mine.)

Writing in 1883, Frederick Scrivener concurs:

"The Old Latin Codex *k* puts in their room a **corrupt and careless version** of the subscription in *L* [Codex Regius] ending with $\omega\tau\eta\rho\iota\alpha\varsigma$ (*k* adding amen)..."
(*A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, page 584). (Bold emphasis mine.)

Although containing the last 12 verses of Mark, the Revised Standard Version (1952) attaches this footnote:

"Some of the most ancient authorities bring the book to a close at the end of verse 8. One authority concludes the book by adding after verse 8 the following: 'But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this, Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.' Other authorities include the preceding passage and continue with verses 9-20. In most authorities verses 9-20 follow immediately after verse 8; a few authorities insert additional material after verse 14."

We turn again to Dr. Lunn for additional insight concerning the shorter ending of Mark:

"...[T]his text actually appears nowhere in the entire Greek manuscript tradition, whether ancient or medieval, as an independent conclusion to Mark. It only occurs in a handful of Greek copies in conjunction with 16:9-20, and is always situated first. All these copies are related to the Alexandrian text-type, as previously shown. Its sole other appearance in

Greek is as a marginal reading in one Byzantine manuscript (MS 274). Standing as an ending on its own the text makes one solitary appearance in an Old Latin codex from North Africa, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. The ending is also attested in certain Coptic and many Ethiopic manuscripts, but again together with the longer ending.... Both the external and internal evidence, therefore, underscore the secondary nature of this text. There can be little doubt that the shorter ending had its origins in Egypt. Clear pointers to this are the fact of its presence primarily within Greek manuscripts of the Alexandrian type, and its strongest attestation in those versions bordering on Egypt” (*Original Ending of Mark*, page 57).

Even Westcott and Hort admit, “No mention or trace of the Shorter Conclusion has been found in any Father” (*The New Testament in the Original Greek, Notes on Select Readings*, page 38). Dr. Metzger adds, “The mouthfilling phrase at the close (‘the sacred and imperishable message of eternal salvation’) betrays the hand of a later Greek theologian” (*The Text of the New Testament*, page 228). These are just a few more indications we need **not** take the “shorter ending” of Mark seriously. No additional time or space will be given to discuss it.

Recalling the statement of the RSV editors about “the additional material after verse 14,” we now introduce a brief discussion of the “Expanded Ending of Mark.”

G. The Expanded Ending or Freer Logion

In the 1989 New Revised Standard Version, which has the last 12 verses of Mark, attaches a footnote to verse 14:

“Other ancient authorities add, in whole or in part, And they excused themselves, saying, ‘This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits. Therefore reveal your righteousness now’—thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, ‘The term of years of Satan’s power has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was handed over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin no more, that they may inherit the spiritual and imperishable glory of righteousness that is in heaven.’”

This ending is the “Expanded Ending” or “Freer Logion.” It is found in an incomplete 4th/5th century manuscript, Codex Washingtonianus (W), currently housed in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. According to Dr. Holland, “this ending is widely rejected” (*Crowned With Glory*, page 148 footnote). Dr. Burgon described the Freer Logion as, “so weak and worthless a forgery” (*The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, page 28).

In light of Jesus’ stinging rebuke of the disciples in Mark 16:14 (“*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.”), it has been suggested a scribe invented the Freer Logion so as to soften the criticism. Whatever the case, Lunn adds on page 58 of *The Original Ending of Mark*:*

“This text has far too weak an attestation to be taken seriously. It also suffers from almost total neglects on the part of the early church fathers. Not surprisingly, therefore, it is universally recognized by modern scholars as being inauthentic. As Metzger affirms, ‘It is obvious that the expanded form of the long ending... has no claim to be original.’”

After noting Jerome made reference to the Freer Logion circa A.D. 417, commenting it was in some Greek manuscripts of his day, Lunn resumes on page 59:

“This is the obvious fact that the intrusion of the logion into the place where it is found demands the prior existence of the longer Markan ending. The contents of the logion are self-evidently semantically dependent upon v. 14 and v. 15 of that ending. Its words cannot stand alone as a meaningful text. **The logion, therefore, indirectly points to the prior existence and acceptance of Mark 16:9-20.”**

H. The Witnesses Overwhelmingly Support Mark 16:9-20

Dr. Scrivener, on page 590 of *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*:

“All opposition to the authenticity of the paragraph resolves itself into the allegations of Eusebius and the testimony of $\aleph B$. Let us accord to these the weight which their due: but against their verdict we can appeal to the reading of Irenaeus and of both the elder Syriac translations in the second century; of nearly all other versions; and of all extant manuscripts excepting two. So powerfully is it vouched for, that many of those who are reluctant to recognize S. Mark as its author, are content to regard it notwithstanding as an integral portion of the inspired record originally delivered to the Church.”

Dr. Lunn recapitulates the matter for us on pages 112 and 115 of *The Original Ending of Mark*:

“The subsequent patristic and pseudepigraphal evidence [for Mark 16:9-20] is widespread. Between the first and fifth centuries writers and writings from Asia Minor, Syria, Persia, Armenia, Palestine, Egypt, North Africa, Italy, Gaul, and even the British Isles, all testify to their acquaintance with the ending. It was thus known in both East and West, among the Latin churches and the Greek, as well as the Oriental and the Coptic, and in all the leading Christian centers—Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria. The same cannot be claimed for the abrupt or shorter endings, each of which is

much more restricted in its geographical distribution. The principle of ubiquity then, as well as antiquity, favors the longer ending.”

...

“For the vast majority of its history the church as a body has pronounced in favor of this passage [Mark 16:9-20]. The indications of doubt on the part of Eusebius and the copyists of a small number of manuscripts do not reflect the view of the church in general. Its inclusion was unambiguously accepted from the earliest times, with the second-century church fathers. The Byzantine, Vulgate, and Peshitta texts, which were to hold sway in the principal sections of the church for a thousand years or more, each embraced it. The humanist scholars and reformers of the early sixteenth century all received it as authentic, it being published in the Greek NT editions of Erasmus, Stephanus, Elzevir, and Beza. The Bible translation tradition set in motion by Tyndale included it, the passage appearing in Coverdale’s version, the Great Bible, the Anglican Bishops’ Bible, the Puritan Geneva Bible, the Catholic Rheims-Douai version, as well as the King James Bible which came to dominate the English-speaking world for the next three centuries. In the Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century and other subsequent revivals the Gospels were preached and read in a form that contained the final verses of Mark. The great missionary movement of the early nineteenth century brought about the translation of the NT into numerous languages of Africa, Asia, Australasia, and the Americas. With the received Greek Text and the King James Bible as the only possible, and indeed the only known base-texts, the longer version of Mark’s Gospel passed into the hands of the indigenous churches. **It was not until the latter half of the nineteenth century that the long-established acceptance of Mark 16:9-20 began to be seriously challenged in certain academic quarters of the Western world. This turn-around found its impetus in the re-discovery of Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, two manuscripts which, it should be remarked, had long lain unused by the church.** History shows therefore that also in the matter of ecclesiastical tradition, or what may be termed ‘canonicity,’ the longer ending has received a clear stamp of approval” (Bold emphasis mine.).

I. If Mark 16:9-20 is inspired, and worthy of our acceptance, why do a few Greek manuscripts and other minor witnesses lack them?

Why are these 12 verses absent from some Greek New Testament manuscripts and other minor witnesses, especially Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus? Furthermore, of all the verses in Mark, what makes verses 9-20 ***especially liable*** to suspicion and removal? The passage was ***accidentally*** omitted from some manuscripts, and ***forcefully*** eliminated from other manuscripts. Let us now look at certain specific possibilities that could account for these exclusions.

1. Did John Mark originally stop at 16:8, then add verses 9-20 after some time the autograph was in circulation?

In quick passing, we want to note some entertain the notion John Mark added verses 9-20 later, after Mark 1:1–16:8 had been in circulation for some time and copied without those last 12 verses. Dr. Baxter offers this possibility:

“My own view, believing as I do that the apostles made synchronistic written records of our Lord’s sayings and doings, is that at verse 8 Mark came to the end of Peter’s own written memorabilia, and that the rapid but telling summary which follows was Mark’s own. There is the same quick transition from one scene to another, and the whole is notably in keeping with all that precedes. It may be that for this reason some of the early copyists omitted it; or it could be that Mark himself appended it some little time after his first transcribing had gone forth. This would account for its being in some copies and not in others” (*Explore the Book*, page 224).

This “original incompleteness” of Mark, which falls under **neither** category of accidental or deliberate omission, casts doubt on Divine inspiration. It is inconceivable the Holy Spirit would allow an **incomplete** portion of an original autograph to be distributed. Although interesting, we wholly reject this view.

2. Was it unintentionally removed?

When the Four Gospel Records were circulated as one unit of manuscripts several centuries ago, Mark was the last in the set. The final page contained Mark 16:9-20, and may have been torn off and subsequently not present to be copied. If true, this would constitute an **accidental** removal of the verses. Referring to Dr. Burgon’s insight, Dr. Edward Hills speaks to this situation:

“In the second place, Burgon called attention to the fact that in many ancient manuscripts of the Four Gospels the Western order was followed. Matthew was placed first, then John, then Luke, and finally Mark. **Thus Mark 16:9-20 was often, no doubt, written on the very last page of the manuscript and could easily be torn off.** Suppose some early Christian, who was already wrestling with the problem of harmonizing Mark 16:9 with Matt 28:1, should find a manuscript which had thus lost its last page containing Mark 16:9-20. Would not such a person see in this omission an easy solution of his difficulties? He would argue as modern critics do that the genuine text of Mark ended at 16:8 and that verses 16:9-20 were a later addition to the Gospel narrative. Thus a tendency on the part of certain ancient scribes to omit the last twelve verses of Mark could easily develop, especially at Alexandria where

the scribes were accustomed to favor the shorter reading and reject the longer as an interpolation” (*King James Version Defended*, pages 211-212). (Bold emphasis mine.)

A more complicated scenario may account for the omission of the last 12 verses of Mark. It involves lectionaries, which, you may remember from Part III Section D, are portions of the Bible organized to be read during church services on certain holidays. They were an integral part of the early church before the advent of the printing press and mass Bible production. Lectionaries are similar to the “responsive readings” in the back of modern hymnals.

Dean Burgon, describing the problem, writes in *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, page 226:

“Returning then to the problem before us, I venture to suggest as follows:—What if, at a very remote period, this same isolated liturgical note (το τέλος) occurring at S. Mark xvi. 8, (which is ‘the end’ of the *Church-lection* for the iind Sunday after Easter,) should have unhappily suggested to some copyist,—καλλιγραφίας *quam vel Criticae Sacre vel rerum Liturgicarum peritior*,—the notion that *the entire ‘Gospel according to S. Mark,’* came to an end at verse 8?.... I see no more probable account of the matter, I say, than this:—**That the mutilation of the last chapter of S. Mark has resulted from the fact, that some very ancient scribe misapprehended the import of the solitary liturgical note τέλος (or το τέλος) which he found at the close of verse 8.** True, that he will have probably beheld, further on, several additional στίχοι. But if he did how could he acknowledge the fact more loyally than by leaving (as the author of Cod. B is observed to have done) one entire column blank before proceeding with S. Luke? He hesitated, all the same, *to transcribe* any further, having before him, (as he thought,) as assurance that ‘THE END’ had been reached at v. 8” (Italic emphasis in original.) (Bold emphasis mine.)

The Dean continues on pages 238-239:

“But *why*, (it may reasonably be asked,)—*Why* should there have been anything exceptional in the way of indicating the end of this particular Lection? *Why* should τέλος be constantly found written after Mark xvi. 8?

“I answer,—I suppose it was because the Lections which respectively ended and began at that place were so many, and were Lections of such unusual importance. Thus,—(1) On the 2nd Sunday after Easter, (κυριακή γ' τῶν μυροφόρων, as it was called,) at the Liturgy, was read S. Mark xv. 43 to xvi. 8; and (2) on the same day at Matins, (by the Melchite Syrian Christians as well as by the Greeks,) S. Mark xvi. 9–20. The severance, therefore, was at ver. 8. (3) In certain of the Syrian Churches the liturgical section for Easter Day was S. Mark xvi. 2–8: in the Churches of the Jacobite, or Monophysite Christians, the Eucharistic lesson for Easter-Day was ver. 1–8. (4) The second matin

lesson of the Resurrection (xvi. 1–8) also ends,—and (5) the third (xvi. 9–20) begins, at the same place: and these two Gospels (both in the Greek and in the Syrian Churches) were in constant use not only at Easter but throughout the year. (6) *That* same third matin lesson of the Resurrection was also the Lesson at Matins on Ascension-Day; as well in the Syrian as in the Greek Churches. (7) With the Monophysite Christians, the lection ‘feriae tertiae in albis, ad primam vesperam,’ (i.e. for the Tuesday in Easter-Week) was S. Mark xv. 37–xvi. 8: and (8) on the same day, at Matins, ch. xvi. 9–18. During eighteen weeks after Easter therefore, *the only parts* of S. Mark’s Gospel publicly read were (a) the last thirteen [ch. xv. 43–xvi. 8], and (b) ‘*the last twelve*’ [ch. xvi. 9–20] verses. Can it be deemed a strange thing that it should have been found *indispensable* to mark, with altogether exceptional emphasis, —to make it unmistakably plain,—where the former Lection came to an end, and where the latter Lection began?” (Italic emphasis in original.)

In other words, when certain early Bible manuscripts of Mark were being copied, a marginal note in lectionaries introduced confusion. What was actually the end of a “responsive reading” (Mark 15:43–16:8) was ***wrongly understood as the end of Mark altogether***. This is a plausible scenario.

Dr. D. A. Waite, on page 55 of *Defending the King James Bible*, summarizes Burgon for us:

“But these twelve verses are a lection, one of the Scripture portions that was read by the ‘Melchite Syrian Christians as well as by the Greeks’ on the 2nd Sunday after Easter. Burgon goes into that and proves beyond any question that this was the reason a few manuscripts dropped this section out. He also shows that the portion before Mark 16:9-20 (verses 1-8) was also a lection or a reading. At the beginning of verse 9 there is the word, *telos*, meaning ‘end.’ Some people took this to mean that was the end of Mark’s Gospel. It doesn’t mean that at all. It meant that was the end of the lection portion. In this case, it was the reading from Mark 15:43 through 16:1-8. This lection was read on the second Sunday after Easter.”

Writing on page 53 of *Final Authority*, Dr. Bill Grady makes the following additional observations:

“Thus, we recognize the possibility that such a disconcerting message as τῆλος (the end) could have suddenly appeared in the text, after verse eight. (And as this accommodating of manuscripts to lectionaries was not regimented until the ninth-twelfth centuries, an incompetent scribe would have been even more confused in the earlier years when such procedures were little known.) Not only are we aware of a number of extant manuscripts that exhibit this very lectionary entry at verse eight (codices 22, 24, 36, etc.), but we have the testimony of Eusebius to that effect. After stating that the traditional ending ‘is not met with in all the copies,’ he also confirms with respect to verse

eight, 'For at those words, in almost all copies of the Gospel according to Mark, comes the end.'"

In other words, due to a lectionary marginal note presumed to be part of the Bible text itself, some scribes thought the Gospel Record of Mark ended at 16:8. These were then those documents to which Eusebius and Jerome alluded, as we discussed way back in Part II, Section C.

3. *Was it intentionally removed?*

We must say it without any reservation. It is strong language, but it is ***not*** groundless. As there are heretics and apostates in Christendom today, so there were in centuries past denominationally-minded people who perverted the Bible to fit their theological system—and for which reason they **purposefully** deleted Mark 16:9-20. Author Gail Riplinger proposes explanation on page 364 of *New Age Versions*:

"The only 'witnesses' who exclude it are the Alexandria, Egypt line, initiated by Ammonius Saccas, who was cited by Mme. Blavatsky as the 'founder' of her Luciferian Theosophy. **As early as A.D. 180 Irenaeus wrote of the Docetic heretics who used this corrupt and shorted Gospel of Mark because they believed that the complete gospel emphasized the *bodily* resurrection of Christ too much.**" (Italic emphasis in original.) (Bold emphasis mine.) (*You will remember Dr. Holland alluded to this Irenaeus' writing, which we presented back in Part III, Section C.)

Dr. Sorenson, in *Neither Oldest Nor Best*, page 150, agrees that manuscripts of Mark were deliberately tampered with concerning the close of Mark's Gospel Record:

"But once again, there is clear evidence that Vaticanus was modified, quite apparently in collusion with Sinaiticus to advance a **particular heretical view—a denial of the resurrection of Jesus Christ** by omitting it from what higher criticism considered to be the primary source gospel—the Gospel of Mark." (Bold emphasis mine.)

Dr. Grady, in *Final Authority*, pages 49-50, sheds further light on the subject. He reaffirms our earlier comments in Part IV concerning the unique attributes of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. Grady concurs false teachers deliberately altered these documents to suit their pet theological systems:

"If you had the *Codex Vaticanus* before you, each page (measuring 10" x 10½") would be seen to contain three columns of 42 lines each. Whenever the respective scribe concluded the individual books within his codex, he would do so according to an established pattern. After penning his final lines, he would accentuate the book's completion by purposely leaving the column's remaining space blank. The next book would begin at the top of the adjacent column.

When arriving at Mark 16:9-20 however, we observe a pronounced departure from this otherwise consistent procedure. With Mark 16:8 terminating on line 31, we note that the remaining eleven blank lines are followed not by a fresh column with Luke 1, but rather by an additional 42 *blank* lines! This space of a whole column is striking as it constitutes **the only such occurrence in the entire 759-page manuscript.**

“...When examining *Codex Sinaiticus* we discover that the shenanigans are stranger yet. Each of the slightly larger pages (leafs) [sic] of this uncial manuscript (13½” x 14”) contains four, 2½”-wide columns of 48 lines respectively. However, when viewing the conclusion of Mark’s Gospel in this codex, even the novice will find his attention arrested by two pronounced signs of textual intrusion. The first of these concerns the presence of six pages unlike the other 364½ leaves in several particulars. This initial cause for suspicion is intensified further by the twofold discovery that one leaf contains Mark 16:2-Luke 1:56 while the handwriting style for all six pages matches that of the Vatican Codex B.” (Bold and italic emphasis in original.)

Recall the abrupt change between verses 8 and 9 causes modern textual critics to question the authenticity of Mark 16:9-20. How could the focus be the women (verse 8) and then shift to Christ Himself (verse 9)? Also, Mark 16:9 seems to be at odds with the timeline of Matthew 28:1 (it actually is ***not***). Mary Magdalene being given her full title in verse 9 makes it seem like she is just appearing in Scripture, when, in fact, she is found in earlier verses in chapter 16 and even chapter 15. Unique Greek words and phrases in Mark 16:9-20 call Mark’s authorship into question. For all these reasons and others, modern textual critics have rejected the last 12 verses of Mark. Sincere or not, **ancient** Bible copyists used this “human wisdom” to regard verses 9-20 as uninspired and thus removed them from some witnesses. These manuscripts lacking the verses were then copied, giving rise to other manuscripts without them. It is ***not*** that difficult to believe.

Dr. Burgon qualifies and recapitulates in *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*, Volume 1, pages 298-300:

“The page of \aleph on which St. Mark ends is the *recto* of leaf 29, being the second of a pair of leaves (28 and 29), forming a single sheet (containing St. Mark xiv. 54–xvi. 8, St. Luke i. 1–56), which **Tischendorf has shewn to have been written not by the scribe of the body of the New Testament in this MS., but by one of his colleagues who wrote part of the Old Testament and acted as *diorthota* or corrector of the New Testament—and who is further identified by the same great authority as the scribe of B. This person appears to have cancelled the sheet originally written by the scribe of \aleph , and to have substituted for it the sheet as we now have it, written by himself. A correction so extensive and laborious can only have been made for the purpose of introducing some important textual change, too large to be effected by deletion, interlineation, or marginal note. Thus we are led not only to infer the testimony of \aleph is here not**

independent of that of B, but to suspect that this sheet may have been thus cancelled and rewritten in order to conform its contents to those of the corresponding part of B.

“This suspicion becomes definite, and almost rises to a certainty, when we look further into the contents of this sheet. Its second page (28 *v*^o) exhibits four columns of St. Mark (xv. 16–xvi. 1); its third page (29 *r*^o), the two last columns of St. Mark (xvi. 2-8) and the first two of St. Luke (i. 1-18). **But the writing of these six columns of St. Mark is so spread out that they contain less matter than they ought; whereas the columns of St. Luke that follow contain the normal amount.** It follows, therefore, that the change introduced by the *diorthota* must have been an extensive excision from St. Mark:—in other words, that these pages as originally written must have contained a portion of St Mark of considerable length which has been omitted from the pages as they now stand. **If these six columns of St. Mark were written as closely as the columns of St. Luke which follow, there would be room in them for the omitted twelve verses.**—More particularly, the fifth column (the first of page 29 *r*^o) is so arranged as to contain only about five-sixths of the normal quantity of matter, and the *diorthota* is thus enabled to carry over four lines to begin a new column, the sixth, by which artifice he manages to conclude St. Mark not with a blank column such as in B tells its own story, but with a column such as in this MS. is usual at the end of a book, exhibiting the closing words followed by an ‘arabesque’ pattern executed with the pen, and the subscription (the rest being left empty). But, by the very pains he has thus taken to conform this final column to the ordinary usage of the MS., his purpose of omission is betrayed even more conclusively, though less obviously, than by the blank column of B.” (Bold emphasis mine.)

Lastly, but most importantly, as a Pauline dispensationalist, this author will remind you of the necessity of Mark 16:9-20 and the vital doctrines contained therein. We meticulously delineated and expounded them in Part III. Just as church members today fear these last 12 verses because certain groups misunderstand and abuse them (primarily, snake handling, poison drinking, laying hands on the sick to cure them), so there were surely people in the early centuries of church history who thought it best to exclude the passage from the record of Scripture and save themselves headache and heartbreak. When some denominationally-minded soul disagrees with a Bible verse, retranslation or elimination are the prime reactions! Unfortunately, God’s Word is needlessly sacrificed when all that was really needed was a renewed Christian mind instead of a reconstructed Bible text! Dispensational Bible study saves us from such awful spiritual confusion.

In chapter 18 of Acts, we read of Apollos, a Bible teacher from Alexandria, Egypt, who simply needed to approach the Scriptures dispensationally. Aquila and Priscilla, converts of the Apostle Paul, assisted him in this regard: “[24] *And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. [25] This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the*

*spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. [26] And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, **they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.** [27] And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: [28] For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.”*

Paul had met and taught Aquila and Priscilla earlier (verses 1-3). When Aquila and Priscilla heard Apollos’ Bible teaching was restricted to “*the baptism of John*”—verse 25—the Bible says “*they expounded unto [Apollos] the way of God more perfectly*” (verse 26). John the Baptist’s message was now 20 years old, and much had happened in God’s dealings with man since John. Some of the major events included: Christ Jesus had conducted His three-year-long earthly ministry, the Holy Spirit had descended in Acts chapter 2, the stoning of Stephen and fall of Israel had occurred in Acts chapter 7, the Apostle Paul had been converted and commissioned in Acts chapter 9, and the Church the Body of Christ had now begun. The prophetic program was now paused (Acts 3:19-21) and the mystery program was underway (Romans 16:25-26). Salvation and blessing were going to Gentiles without Israel—that is, through her fall and through Paul’s message of grace (Romans 11:11-14). These are at least some of the points Aquila and Priscilla taught Apollos, Apollos being simply misinformed ***not*** deliberately dishonest.

What we can take from this is that, although Apollos was a “scholarly” man in the Scriptures, he was still quite ignorant of the truth. Alexandria, Egypt, had been infected with this lack of spiritual perception to some degree. If there was a failure to apply dispensational Bible study in Egypt in the first century, we need ***not*** wonder why Egypt was the locality of the corruption of Mark with its last twelve verses omitted in subsequent centuries!

At this point, our detractors—nay, Mark 16:9-20 rejectors—may still be adamant none of this is important. So, we will deal with them once again, reaffirming what has gone before.

V. Inquisition into Importance

A. Does the removal of Mark 16:9-20 affect doctrine?

On page 155 of Robert Gundry's *A Survey of the New Testament* (4th edition), we read the standard answer of the "scholars:"

"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.).

Dr. Gundry asserts the whole controversy surrounding Mark 16:9-20 "does not affect any major doctrine of the Christian faith." Therefore, he is wholly comfortable in labeling those 12 verses as "textually doubtful, indeed, inadmissible [excluded, prohibited]!" Proponents of the modern English versions—and their "new" underlying Westcott/Hort-based Greek New Testaments (United Bible Societies, Nestle-Aland, et cetera)—repeatedly claim variant manuscript readings do *not* affect any major Christian doctrines. Let us refer to our prior comments to test that claim as it pertains to Mark 16:9-20.

As we have already understood from this treatise (Part III), if we eliminate Mark 16:9-20 from our Bible:

- There is **no** clear Tribulation commission for the Little Flock to follow.
- There is **no** Ascension of Christ and His sitting at the Father's right hand in Mark.
- There are **no** actual post-resurrection appearances of Christ in Mark.
- There is **no** authority for Peter to preach his message of Acts 2:38.

Other than these four items now suspicious, indeed, no doctrine is affected when we omit Mark 16:9-20. (Sarcasm!) We will deal more fully with this in Section B of this Part V.

We remind ourselves of a quote we read earlier from Gail Riplinger, on page 364 of *New Age Versions*:

"The only 'witnesses' who exclude it are the Alexandria, Egypt line, initiated by Ammonius Saccas, who was cited by Mme. Blavatsky as the 'founder' of her

Luciferian Theosophy. As early as A.D. 180 Irenaeus wrote of the Docetic heretics who used this corrupt and shorted Gospel of Mark because they believed that the complete gospel emphasized the *bodily* resurrection of Christ too much.” (Italic emphasis in original.)

Without Mark 16:9-20, the resurrection of Christ is diminished and its proof withheld from Mark. Pagan heretics in Egypt (Alexandria?) who denied bodily resurrection evidently damaged Mark’s Gospel Record by removing its last 12 verses in some cases, to which Church Father Irenaeus responded in his work *Against Heresies*, citing Mark 16:19 circa A.D. 180 (predating Vaticanus and Sinaiticus). If doctrine is ***not*** affected in its removal, why would someone want to eliminate Mark 16:9-20 in the first place?! Do not people omit verses from their sectarian Bibles today so as to stress their denominational points and remove anything to the contrary?

Let us refresh ourselves with Dr. Sorenson’s comments on page 150 of *Neither Oldest Nor Best*:

“But once again, there is clear evidence that Vaticanus was modified, quite apparently in collusion with Sinaiticus **to advance a particular heretical view—a denial of the resurrection of Jesus Christ** by omitting it from what higher criticism considered to be the primary source gospel—the Gospel of Mark.” (Bold emphasis mine.)

According to David W. Daniels, *Is the World’s Oldest Bible a Fake?*, on page 18:

“Until I learned the textual critics say, against all historical fact, that Mark was the first gospel, and that the other gospels were written later. But they claim that what’s in the ***other*** gospels was added ***later***, and ***didn’t actually happen.***” (Bold and italic emphasis in original.)

If Mark was the first Gospel Record written (as some scholars believe), and he originally stopped writing at 16:8, then we have **no** clear resurrection appearances of Christ in Mark. Now, someone would reply, “But we can go to Matthew, Luke, and John to read of the resurrection.” Unfortunately, the Bible critic or doubter will then counter that with, “Matthew, Luke, and John are mere embellishments of what actually happened. The **original** Gospel Record of Mark contained **no** resurrection appearances whatsoever. ***Matthew, Luke, and John added it when they wrote years later.***” Wow! What **catastrophic** damage we have inflicted upon Christian doctrine—and to think “scholars” with their numerous theological degrees are too blind to see the danger (1 Corinthians 1–3). They mindlessly tell us *ad nauseum*, “No major doctrine is affected when Mark 16:9-20 is removed.” There is either willfully dishonesty or downright incompetence here. Amazingly, ***these*** are the people (mis)leading our seminaries, Bible colleges, and churches! They are translating modern English versions, running our “Christian” and “Bible” publishing houses, and so on! No wonder confusion abounds in our churches and universities!

We can go back to Dr. Lunn, on page 356 of *The Original Ending of Mark*, for an excellent survey of the matter thus far:

“For the greater part of its history the far larger portion of the Christian church has accepted Mark 16:9-20 as an authentic conclusion to the second Gospel. Such is the view that dominated within the church throughout the bulk of the patristic, medieval, and reformation periods, and up to relatively recent times. During these many centuries only rarely and in a few specific geographical locations were there any indications of doubt about the genuineness of these verses.

“This situation radically changed in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Primarily it seems to have been the impetus given to NT textual criticism by the publication and study of Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus that led to a scholarly revision of the traditional position. The fact of the absence of the passage from these early manuscripts was joined to the results of the then developing historico-critical approach to biblical literature. Claims then made about the number of non-Markan words contained in the passage appeared to corroborate the picture given by the earliest copies. As a result of both the external evidence afforded by the two great uncials and the interpretation of the internal evidence relating to vocabulary and style, the rejection of Mark 16:9-20 became the prevailing scholarly position. Within this broader view there were a variety of opinions. Initially it was maintained that either the original ending was lost or that Mark, though intending to do so, never managed to complete his work. Later, with the introduction of new interpretative approaches, the idea became popular that 16:8 was in fact the Gospel’s designed conclusion, a view which presently dominates. Whichever of the three explanations is preferred, the matter has evidently been settled in the minds of the majority of NT scholars. Over the last century and a half it has been customary in commentaries simply to rehearse the same arguments. The validity of the evidence seems to be assumed by each successive generation of scholars. The current scholarly consensus, however, cannot claim unanimity since certain scholars, although few in number, have continued to advocate the genuineness of the passage. Such have persisted in arguing that the evidence, both external and internal, does not warrant the conclusions accepted by the majority.”

Dr. Sorenson, in *Neither Oldest Nor Best*, pages 145-146, provides some concurrent remarks:

“Though these 12 verses appear in thousands of other manuscripts, we are told that because Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are the two (allegedly) oldest, largely intact copies of the Bible in existence, they must be weighted as most authoritative over the thousands of other manuscripts which are not as old. **Thus, in virtually all modern versions of the Bible, there is a footnote or marginal note saying these 12 verses are not found in the two oldest and**

best manuscripts. Though included in most modern Bible versions, a question is left for the reader, ‘Yea hath God said?’ Is this really part of the Word of God? Is this really part of the Bible? And, these are not just any 12 verses, they describe in precise detail the resurrection of Jesus Christ and then His Great Commission. If the devil could choose 12 verses to remove from the Bible, what more powerful ones could he choose? The resurrection of Jesus Christ authenticates Jesus as the Son of God (Romans 1:1) [sic, Romans 1:4]. It is the victory over not only death, but the devil himself. (I Corinthians 15). And then, if the devil could convince the world that the other gospels were mere embellishments upon the Gospel of Mark, and the true copy of Mark did not contain the resurrection account, Satan hoped he could erase it from history. But Satan forgot that there are about 6,000 other manuscripts of the Traditional Text out there which all clearly describe the resurrection of Christ, not only in Mark but all through the New Testament. It is the keystone of Christian doctrine.” (Bold emphasis mine.)

Here is an interesting point this author would like to make. In Matthew 5:17-18, the Lord Jesus Christ stated: *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”* Israel’s religious leaders **falsely** accused the Lord Jesus of disregarding, disobeying, and disrespecting Moses. He answers their charge here by stating that He has **not** come to discredit or denigrate the Law of Moses. Rather, He has come to fulfill Old Testament prophecy. This is not Him fulfilling the ceremonial law at the cross, as Calvary is still hidden from the disciples and will not be revealed until Matthew 16:21. Fulfilling the Law and the Prophets refers to Him establishing God’s earthly kingdom.

“*Jot*” is the transliteration of the Greek word “*iota*” (the eighth letter of the Greek alphabet), equivalent to “*jod*” or “*yod*” (the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet). Psalm 119 is a gigantic acrostic containing 176 verses—eight verses for each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. While not apparent in our English Bible, each first word of the first eight verses of the Psalm begins with the Hebrew letter “*aleph*” (equivalent to our “A”), the first word of each of the next eight verses starts with “*beth*” (comparable to our “B”), and so on. In most Bibles—especially printed ones—you will see a Hebrew letter heading before verse 1, another one before verse 9, yet another before verse 17, and so on. When you come to the tenth eight-verse section (verses 73-80), you will notice the Hebrew letter “*jod*” (it looks like this: ך).

Jod resembles an apostrophe, or a raised comma. It is quite tiny—the smallest Hebrew letter (like our lowercase “i”). In many but not all Hebrew words, it can be removed without changing meanings or sounds. Understandably, ***jod*** can be easily overlooked and discounted as insignificant. In English, conveying the idea of the Greek letter, we say, “There is not one iota of evidence,” meaning there is not even the smallest bit of proof.

The “*tittle*,” in the Hebrew language, is a small, horn-like projection on certain

letters to differentiate them from the rounded letters. For instance, the Hebrew letters “*cheth*” and “*he*,” “*daleth*” and “*resh*,” “*beth*” and “*kaph*” are all distinguished by means of the little horn-like “tittle.” The English equivalent of a tittle is the tiny line on the letter “Q” that distinguishes it from the letter “O.” Another example is the horizontal bar placed on a lowercase “T” to differentiate it from a lowercase “L.”

If you change letters, you obviously change meaning. Removing **parts** of letters is a gateway to altering teaching—false teaching. **If we damage a text by changing and removing letters, would we not destroy it if we remove whole sentences—especially a lengthy passage such as the twelve verses (over 150 Greek words, or some 250 English words) from Mark? Jesus Christ and the textual “experts” are at variance—and Christ is not the liar! We *do indeed* affect doctrine when we tamper with any part of the Scriptures.**

B. Does this really matter? Is it worth dividing over?

Is defending Mark 16:9-20 worth all the disagreement? **Yes, we say it once more, it sure is!** In addition to what we have just provided in Part A above, we have other material to pass along. Dr. Holland dedicates Appendix B of his book *Crowned With Glory* to the defense of Mark 16:9-20. He points out the following on page 229:

“More importantly, those who reject the longer reading do not, for the most part, replace it with any viable textual variant. Instead, it is the conclusion of most textual scholars that either Mark did not finish his Gospel or that the original ending was lost in the process of transmission. Neither view agrees with the doctrine of biblical inspiration, or the character of the New Testament as a whole. **Sadly, the dominant position among textual critics is that the original ending was lost. This, of course, would nullify biblical preservation and would logically require us to ask if other sections have likewise been lost. It would also cause us to approach the Bible as we would any other book of antiquity without regard to its divine significance.** In so doing, higher criticism gives way to lower criticism and questions the very foundations of biblical inspiration, infallibility, and preservation.” (Bold emphasis mine.)

So, provided that Bible inspiration, infallibility, and preservation (major doctrines Dr. Gundry overlooked?) mean **nothing** to us; then the controversy surrounding Mark 16:9-20 in no way affects any major doctrine. Holland counsels us on page 150:

“If we allow that a passage of inspired Scripture has been lost from this section of the Bible, what stops us from making the same application to other passages? It is certainly within the realm of scholastic studies to note any and all textual differences. But once we open the possibility that this or that passage has been lost, we are now trusting in the understanding of

men over the biblical promises of God. Certainly it is better to embrace the textual evidence and hold to the promise of preservation.” (Bold emphasis mine.)

In fact, some Bible critics have gone so far as to use the doubt surrounding Mark 16:9-20 as ammunition against Bible inerrancy. “The Bible cannot be without error because someone tampered with Mark 16! Those last 12 verses were added, embellishing the resurrection account!” Of course, we are always indebted to the “Christian” “scholars” who “love the Lord” and have given these unsaved doubters an occasion to the flesh, thereby causing the faith of Christians to diminish and even disappear. Moving on.

Dr. David Sorenson, page 155 of *Neither Oldest Nor Best*, offers an interesting possibility as to who may have altered Vaticanus and Sinaiticus to omit Mark 16:9-20:

“There is another group across Europe which for centuries did have the skills, expertise, and resources to accomplish such a task. **That was the Jesuits.** As the principal agents of the Counter Reformation, their history is replete with a long rap sheet of producing forgeries, fake documents, and altering documents to further the goals and policies of the Vatican. **They also were renowned for infiltrating Protestant churches, institutions of higher learning, and other Protestant organizations, often working as a fifth column within.** The Oxford Movement in England is one example. Through such infiltration, they reportedly were the original agents of the German Rationalist movement and higher criticism. **Their objective was to undermine confidence in the ‘paper pope’ of the Protestants—Sola Scriptura—which was their Traditional Text Bibles.**”

Let us also point out (must we?) the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fundamental belief of Christianity. If we allow this doctrine to be eroded even slightly—and we already saw how the critics do it in Section A of this Part V—then we are opening ourselves to the possibility of denying Christ’s resurrection ourselves. Ultimately, Christianity itself disintegrates. It either stands on the reality of Christ’s resurrection, or it falls because of an elaborate hoax. **Yes, much is at stake when we allow Mark 16:9-20 to be discarded!**

Such was the sad case of the Corinthians, whose doubt of the doctrine of bodily resurrection prompted the Apostle Paul to devote **nearly 60 verses to defend it** (1 Corinthians chapter 15). Here are two main highlights from that massive exposition: “[12] *Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?... [14] And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.*” Are you comfortable, friend, in allowing someone to remove a large section of the Bible—Mark 16:9-20—that forms a major pillar of Christianity? If so, you have been listening to too many doubleminded “scholars” who have more faith in themselves and their work than in the eternal words of the living God who inspired and preserved the Holy Bible in the first place!

On page vii of *The Original Ending of Mark*, Dr. Lunn opened his introduction to his work:

“Since the ending of Mark widely averred to be inauthentic contains descriptions of resurrection appearances of Jesus, the issue before us has significant repercussions in the dialogue of the church with atheists and skeptics, as well as with those of other faiths. A brief examination of pertinent internet discussions reveals that instances abound in which the supposed lack of an ending to what is commonly accepted as the earliest Gospel provides **considerable intellectual ammunition for those who wish to assail the historic Christian faith.**” (Bold emphasis mine.)

Lunn proceeds to cite examples of Muslims and other anti-Christians posting comments on the internet. They argue Mark 16:9-20 being forged is substantial proof that the Bible is unreliable and Christ’s resurrection is a lie. Consequently, when we have anyone *within* the Christian community claiming, “No doctrine is affected when we remove Bible verses, passages, words,” he or she is either (1) parroting wishful thinking heard or read elsewhere, (2) or being outright dishonest for the sake of pleasing men. It is **unfathomable** to believe modern Bible publishers and translators are unaware of the dangers they are creating for Christians when they continue to recycle their anti-Mark 16:9-20 comments. There must be some **deliberate** ignorance somewhere... and that is an unfortunate fact for which they will be accountable to Almighty God. We **refuse** to join them in their error, and shudder to contemplate the Lord’s reply to their action!

Now, we draw this to a close.

VI. Conclusion (Vindication!)

Friend, we have covered much material in this treatise, so it is only fitting we recapitulate or summarize what we have learned. Thank you for being patient.

A. How did Mark 16:9-20 ever become the target of such perpetual uncertainty and denunciation?

We will deal with the **unintentional** scenarios first:

1. If Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were originally circulated as one unit—with Mark being the final component—the page with the last 12 verses of Mark could have been mistakenly torn off. Copies of this incomplete version were then made, originating manuscripts that are without Mark 16:9-20. It is quite strange, however, that the lost leaf “just so happened” to commence precisely at a sharp break in the narrative (between verses 8 and 9).
2. A lectionary marginal note, setting off sections of Scripture to be read on “holy days” in the early churches, may have been accidentally incorporated into the Bible text during the process of transcription (copying). That is, “the end” referring to the termination of a lectionary reading at Mark 16:8 was mistaken for the end of the Gospel Record itself. (This seems to be more plausible than #1).

Now, the **intentional** situations—the nefarious ones (!):

1. The lack of a smooth transition between verses 8 and 9 caused some copyists to regard verses 9-20 as uninspired and thus remove them. These manuscripts lacking the verses became parents to other manuscripts, thus giving rise to copies without Mark 16:9-20.
2. Heretics and apostates, due to paganism in Egypt, intentionally removed Mark 16:9-20 so as to diminish proof of Christ’s bodily resurrection. These manuscripts lacking the verses were then copied, resulting in other manuscripts that did not contain them.
3. Denominationally-minded people omitted the last 12 verses of Mark because they did **not** rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). They had no ability to appreciate the passage as it relates to the prophetic program instead of our mystery program. It was a troublesome passage to them—and they excised it to relieve the burden!

Whatever the cause of the deletion of verses 9-20, some extant manuscripts do close at Mark 16:8. That abrupt termination would have moved copyists or scribes to invent a reading to round off the Gospel Record. It was here that the Shorter Ending was fabricated and attached to the end of verse 8: “And all things whatsoever that had been

commanded they explained briefly to those who were with Peter; after these things also Jesus Himself appeared and from the east unto the west sent out through them the holy and uncorrupted preaching of eternal salvation.” The introduction of this wretched, unauthorized passage then competed against the original (Longer Ending), with the Longer Ending unappreciated and thus relegated to the same inferior status as the Shorter Ending.

Mark 16:9-20 (the “Longer Ending” or “Authorized Version Ending”) is often seen as one of two ancient attempts to “fix” Mark so it does not terminate abruptly with verse 8. The “Shorter Ending” is supposedly the other effort to compensate for Mark’s “lost” conclusion. Both endings are considered spurious, uninspired, fake, not genuine; nevertheless, one or both passages are included in published New Testaments so as to avoid the awkward ending of verse 8. Howbeit, some people still choose to close Mark’s Gospel Record at verse 8, thereby avoiding all the controversy of sorting between the Longer Ending, Shorter Ending, or Intermediate Ending.

Up until the mid-20th century, the vast majority of “scholars” claimed we did *not* have the original ending of Mark. Supposedly, we did *not* know what Mark himself wrote after verse 8. What he would have written was lost, not to be recovered, so it was open to endless speculation. But, what about verses 9-20 in the King James Bible? These “scholars” did *not* believe these verses are inspired or genuine. Rather, they encouraged us to consider verses 9-20 as one of two ancient but weak attempts to “fix” Mark by adding a more suitable conclusion (otherwise, the chapter and Book end most awkwardly 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*”).

With the “scholars” treating Mark 16:9-20 most irreverently for centuries, the Holy Spirit finally gave them what they wanted—more darkness. Beginning about 70 years ago, they began to close Mark at 16:8, refusing to allow any possibility that the Longer Ending was the genuine conclusion.

To re-state, here is the resultant confusion. Verses 9-20 have been given various titles—the “Longer Ending,” “Authorized Version [King James] Ending,” “Traditional Ending,” “Familiar Ending,” et cetera. Of course, there is an “alternative” passage with which to close Mark, the “Shorter Ending.” That is, some individuals prefer to replace the Longer Ending with the Shorter Ending. Moreover, others have chosen to include **both** in their Bible. Still others, dissatisfied with both endings, favor closing Mark immediately after verse 8. Yet, if we have eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to believe, it really is *not* difficult. “*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself*” (John 7:17). **This colossal mess is the result of a failure to appreciate the Longer Ending (verses 9-20) as it originally stood in the Marcan autograph!** May we be thankful for those last 12 verses of Mark, lest we too wind up in that depressing situation of woeful Biblical ignorance!

B. What are our reasons for believing Mark 16:9-20 is authentic, inspired of God?

While the proof ***against*** Mark 16:9-20 has been overstated or exaggerated, the same cannot be said concerning the ***support*** for it. The “Longer Ending” or “Authorized Version Ending” was and is the only conclusion Mark ever had. It is genuine—***not*** doubtful, spurious, or forged! This is the Bible believer’s position, the one of faith. Why we believe Mark 16:9-20 belongs (and that it was the ***only*** ending the Book of Mark ***ever*** had), we reaffirm these our ideas now:

1. It is inconceivable the Holy Spirit would conclude the second Gospel Record with Mark 16:8—***fear*** and ***ambiguity***. Christ’s resurrection is hinted at, inferred, but not actually proven in Mark unless verses 9-20 are situated within the text. To leave that major event unresolved is totally improbable.
2. The majority of Greek manuscripts—excluding two or three (Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, the “two oldest and best” actually being just “***one***” and “***neither oldest nor best!***”)—contain the last 12 verses of Mark. Also, some 2,000 Greek lectionaries and various other witnesses in a multiplicity of languages—including some 8,000 Latin manuscripts and 1,000 Syriac versions—favor the inclusion. Mark 16:9-20 dominates all four text-types of Greek manuscripts—Alexandrian, Caesarean, Western, and Byzantine. We find alternative readings—shorter ending, abrupt ending, et cetera—locally (namely, Egypt) and few in number. No text in existence adequately concludes Mark as does the Longer Ending.
3. Dozens of early “Church Fathers” cite Mark 16:9-20 as Scripture—several predating “oldest and best” (“two false witnesses!”) Vaticanus and Sinaiticus that lack them. Jerome cannot be a witness against Mark 16:9-20, for he allowed it in his new Latin Vulgate, plus he quoted verses 9 and 14 in his writings. Eusebius’ so-called “disfavor” toward the last 12 verses of Mark is inconclusive. There are many such patristic writings in favor of those last 12 verses, writings older than any supposed “negative” comments from Eusebius or Jerome quoting Eusebius.
4. The scholia (marginal notes) and sigla (signs) found in some Greek manuscripts supposedly testifying ***against*** the authenticity actually indicate the ***opposite*** of what “scholars” tell us: the last 12 verses of Mark are ***genuine***, are “in the older” and “the more accurate” copies. To make such notes and signs witnesses against Mark 16:9-20 is ***speculative*** and even ***dishonest***.
5. Numerous cross-references to non-disputed Scripture support Mark 16:9-20 as necessary. Without those 12 verses, there is ***no*** commission to close Mark (as in the cases of Matthew, Luke, and John), no authority for Peter’s Acts 2:38 message, ***no*** “speaking in tongues” permission issued by Christ in the Four Gospel Records, ***no*** Divine empowerment for Israel’s Little Flock to survive the judgments of Daniel’s 70th Week (handling snakes, healing the sick, casting out devils, drinking poison), ***no*** Ascension of Christ in Mark, and ***no*** “servant” theme of Mark emphasized at its close.
6. We need ***not*** recoil at the thought of including Mark 16:9-20 in the canon of Scripture. Pentecostals and Charismatics indeed wrest and abuse the passage, but

we understand these verses in their dispensational setting. They are applicable to Daniel's 70th Week, the bizarre "sign" gifts useful to Israel's believing remnant during those awful judgments. We have no such authorization in Paul's Epistles, Romans through Philemon, God's words to us. Mark 16:9-20 is God's Word, but it is ***not*** to or ***about*** us. Leave it in its dispensational setting!

7. The Scriptures themselves show us how we should look at them. On a dozen occasions, the King James Bible labels Egypt as "*the house of bondage*" (Exodus 13:3,14; Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 5:6; Deuteronomy 6:12; Deuteronomy 8:14; Deuteronomy 13:5; Deuteronomy 13:10; Joshua 24:17; Judges 6:8). Egypt is a type of sin and Satan's evil world system, which explains why the LORD God delivered Israel from it. Alexandria, Egypt (even in the ***Alexandrian*** manuscripts, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, that have these "bondage" verses) is ***never*** looked upon in Scripture in a positive light. Rather the opposite, Egypt is descriptive of apostasy, spiritual darkness, ignorance, ruin, and Divine judgment (Acts 6:9; Acts 18:24; Acts 27:6; Acts 28:11). How strange it is, then, we should be looking to Alexandria/Egypt ***of all places*** to establish what is the appropriate conclusion to Mark! Again, adopting Vaticanus and Sinaiticus is ***unbelief not faith***. It is ***not*** the ***Bible-believing*** position!

C. Are the "oldest and best" manuscripts really oldest and best?

As for the maxim "the two oldest and best manuscripts lack Mark 16:9-20," we now see it is ***not*** at all weighty as the textual scholars and modern English Bible version publishers would have us believe. We remind ourselves of Dr. Scrivener's words once more:

"I have ventured but slowly to vouch for Tischendorf's notion, that six leaves of Cod. \aleph , that containing Mark xvi. 2—Luke i. 56 being one of them, ***were written by the scribe of Cod. B***. On mere identity of handwriting and the peculiar shape of certain letters who shall insist? Yet there are parts of the case, apparently unnoticed by Tischendorf himself (see p. 92, note), which I know not how to answer, and which have ***persuaded even Dr Hort***. Having now arrived at this conclusion our inference is simple and direct, that ***at least in these leaves, Cod. \aleph B make but one witness, not two***" (*A Plain Introduction to Criticism of the New Testament*, page 584, footnote 1). (Bold emphasis mine.)

Vaticanus and Sinaiticus were altered at the same time—and by the ***same*** person! They are certainly ***not*** "independent" witnesses. As Dr. Grady called them, "two ***false*** witnesses." Furthermore, they are "but one witness," the hostile witnesses against Mark 16:9-20 ***now reduced by half!*** Add to this the fact they may ***not*** be as old as scholars would have us believe, and their credibility diminishes even further. Sorenson argues Vaticanus is likely ***not*** from the A.D. 300s but rather from medieval times (1300s-1500s) and corrected in the ***mid-1800s***. As for Sinaiticus, there is strong evidence it too

dates to the *mid-nineteenth century*!

Recall Burgon's assessment of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus in *Revision Revised*, page 16:

"We venture to assure him, without a particle of hesitation, **that X B D [Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Bezae] are three of the most scandalously corrupt copies extant:—exhibit the most shamefully mutilated texts, which are anywhere to be met with:—have become, by whatever process (for their history is wholly unknown), the depositories of the largest amount of fabricated readings, ancient blunders, and intentional perversions of Truth,—which are discoverable in any known copies of the Word of GOD.**" (Italic emphasis in original. Bold emphasis mine.)

Sinaiticus' spacing of words and lines on the page of Mark 16 is widened, so as to eliminate the last 12 verses that were **originally** in the manuscript. Vaticanus has a conspicuously blank column where Mark 16:9-20 should be, as if its copyist were subtly acknowledging its existence in a parent manuscript but was pressured to omit it from Vaticanus. The same scribe wrote both Vaticanus and Sinaiticus at Mark 16. As William Grady wrote in *Final Authority* on page 51: "For the final example of Nicolaitane semantics, we discover that their phrase, '**lacking** in the oldest and best manuscripts' really means—**kept out** of *Vaticanus* and **kicked out** of *Sinaiticus*!"

D. If age weighs heavily upon a passage's authenticity, have textual critics inadvertently defeated themselves?

On the authority of the supposedly "two oldest and best manuscripts" (Vaticanus and Sinaiticus), Mark 16:9-20 is questioned and usually disregarded. Yet, as scholars often do, they exhibit two-facedness. Supposedly, the greater the manuscript's age, the closer its reading is to the original autographs (those which the Apostles and Prophets penned). Remember, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are the "golden calves" of modern textual criticism. Mark 16:9-20 is usually regarded as **older** than the two "earliest/oldest/best/most reliable" Greek witnesses—but those 12 verses are still rejected as inauthentic!

Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible, page 581, says of Mark 16:9-20:

"On the other hand, the last twelve verses are extremely ancient. **Most scholars look on them as belonging to the first few years of the 2nd cent.**, and Aristion has been suggested as the writer, on the strength of a late Armenian MS. But it is quite possible that they are part of an earlier summary of the Gospel story; and, like the passage about the woman taken in adultery (Jn 7^{53-8¹¹}), they are to be revered as a very ancient and authoritative record." (Bold emphasis mine.)

If the “ancient age” of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus (4th century?) gives us justification in removing Mark 16:9-20, then assigning those 12 verses to as early as the 2nd century means **we are better off retaining them than deleting them!** Indeed, the scholars are caught in their own trap. If Vaticanus and Sinaiticus really are of more recent origin—as in between 200 and 700 years old (Daniels, Sorenson, et cetera)—then we have **even more** reason to regard Mark 16:9-20 as that much closer to John’s Mark lifetime and, the closer we get to Mark himself, the more likely these last 12 verses are genuine after all!

E. How can scholars ignore the evidence supporting Mark 16:9-20?

At this point, surely the inquisitive reader cannot help but ask, “If all the extant evidence overwhelmingly favors Mark 16:9-20 as genuine, then why do scholars repeatedly contend it does not belong in the Bible text?” Someone may even venture to inquire, “Where are all the pastors, theologians, and teachers in calling attention to this serious matter?” If **we** can see the deception, why can **they** not? If **we** are aware of the matter, why are **they** not? While there are a few Christian leaders willing to support Mark 16:9-20—publicly, anyway—there is no consensus in their favor. Why?

The problem is “church leaders” are usually indoctrinated with the **wrong** information from the very first. Satan attacks and neutralizes the Body of Christ by infiltrating the ranks of its leadership:

“This is a David and Goliath battle with practically all of the evangelical seminaries and colleges, Bible institutes, and Bible schools slavishly following essentially the Westcott and Hort Greek Text and the Westcott and Hort theory, both of which are fallacious in every particular, the former based on two of the worst manuscripts, the latter proven to be without foundation of any kind” (*Counterfeit or Genuine?*, David Otis Fuller, page 12).

As noted near the beginning of this study, Dean Burgon, over a century ago, authored a massive 300-page book in defense of Mark 16:9-20. Frederick Scrivener, the leading conservative committee member of the 1881 Revised Version, wrote concerning it:

“Dean John William Burgon’s brilliant monograph, ‘The Last Twelve verses of the Gospel according to S. Mark vindicated against recent critical objectors and established’ (Oxford and London, 1871), has thrown a stream of light upon the controversy, nor does the joyous tone of his book misbecome one who is conscious of having **triumphantly** maintained a cause which is very precious to him. **We may fairly say that his conclusions have in no essential point been shaken by the elaborate and very able counter-plea of Dr Hort** (*Notes*, pp. 28–51). This whole paragraph is set apart by itself in the critical editions of Tischendorf and Tregelles. Besides this, it is placed

within double brackets by Westcott and Hort, and followed by the wretched supplement derived from Cod. L (*vide infra* [see below]), annexed as an alternative reading (ἄλλως [otherwise]).” (Bold emphasis mine.) (*A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, page 583)

Burton understood the facts concerning Mark 16:9-20, published them for all to read in 1871, but the 1881 Revised Version committee ignored his monograph and marked these 12 verses as doubtful. Even today, modern English translators—whether unintentional or deliberately is beside the point—continue to cast suspicions on Mark 16:9-20. Consequently, the Bible readers of these versions are encouraged to share their doubts. Here is a tragic reality we cannot help but relate.

In 1968, Drs. Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix published a book titled *A General Introduction to the Bible* (a second edition was released in 1986). This work became a seminary and Bible college textbook, now in circulation for over 50 years. Many pastors, teachers, and other church leaders have been trained using it. We made reference to it many times in this treatise. Now, as we are drawing our discussion to a close, let us go back and re-read the comments of Geisler and Nix.

For example, they claimed on page 487:

“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.” (Bold emphasis mine.)

As for Geisler and Nix calling Vaticanus and Sinaiticus “most reliable,” their description is as “trustworthy” as those texts. Textual critic Herman Hoskier (1914) estimated these two manuscripts **disagreed with each other 3,000 times in just the Four Gospel Records alone** (*Codex B and Its Allies*, vol. 2, *Chiefly Concerning \aleph , but covering three thousand differences between \aleph and B in the Four Gospels*). How can Geisler and Nix simply ignore the **corrupt** testimony of B and Aleph?

Dr. Grady makes the following salient observation on pages 42-43 of *Final Authority*:

“By technical definition, the ‘oldest’ Greek manuscripts would comprise the uncial (or majuscule) style, characterized by inch-high, block capital letters running together without breaks between words.

“For our first example of Nicolaitane indifference to reality (not to mention blatant dishonesty), we submit the following statistics.

“With uncials prevailing for about ten centuries, we learn that five of their number have obtained particular notoriety due to age. They are in addition to \aleph and B; *Codex Ephraemi* (C), fourth-fifth century; *Codex Alexandrinus* (A), fifth

century; and *Codex Bezae* (D), sixth-seventh century. As all five include the sixteenth chapter of Mark, we soon discover that when Geisler and Nix stated that the last twelve verses were lacking in ‘many’ of the oldest Greek manuscripts, what they really meant was only **2 out of 5**—Sinaiticus and *Vaticanus*.” (Bold emphasis in original.)

As Grady points out, Geisler and Nix grossly misrepresented the textual data—the manuscript evidence—for Mark 16:9-20. They inflated the number of “oldest and most reliable Greek witnesses” against those last 12 verses of Mark, deeming less than half as “many.” In this manner, Geisler and Nix maintain the scholarly position without exposing its weak foundation. Had they been honest, their readers would be more willing to accept Mark 16:9-20 as genuine!

Geisler and Nix, page 487 again:

“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 we noted earlier, Eusebius was definitely aware of Mark 16:9-20. Remember, scholars generally agree Mark 16:9-20 was “composed by the second century” [New American {Roman Catholic} Bible footnote], so how could **fourth**-century Eusebius not be aware of it?!?) Geisler and Nix also “conveniently” (?) failed to mention the **many** ancient church fathers who **quote** Mark 16:9-20!

Consider now Geisler and Nix, page 487 again:

“The familiar long ending of the KJV, NAB and NKJV reflected in the Textus Receptus/Majority Text tradition is found in a number of uncial manuscripts (C, D, L, W), most minuscules, most Old Latin manuscripts, the Vulgate, and in some Syriac and Coptic manuscripts.”

Grady remarks on page 43 of *Final Authority*:

“They [Geisler and Nix] are soon in trouble with another ‘scholarly’ disclosure: ‘The familiar longer ending (AV) of the Received Text is found in a vast number of uncial manuscripts (C, D, L, W, Θ)...’

“Having subpoenaed the remaining uncial witnesses to Mark 16, we discover that the ‘vast number’ of corroborating majuscules is in reality **15 out of 15!**”

Dr. Grady is using Geisler/Nix **first** edition (1968), whereas I am using their second edition (1986). His charge remains the same. Geisler and Nix are **suppressing and distorting** data again, and did **not** correct their mistake in the subsequent edition. They actually further obscured the truth. In their first edition (Grady quote), they claimed

“a vast number of uncial manuscripts;” in the second edition (my copy), it was changed to “a number of manuscripts.” (They also removed witness Θ from their second edition, eliminating a manuscript favorable to the last 12 verses of Mark.) The second edition is vaguer. Had Geisler and Nix been honest, they would have stated “all remaining uncial manuscripts have Mark 16:9-20.” To say that would have been to admit the tremendous support for Mark 16:9-20! (Their reader, however, is deprived of that information yet again!)

Drs. Geisler and Nix claimed “most miniscules” have Mark 16:9-20. Once more, Grady informs us of their duplicity:

“The uncials were gradually replaced by the cursive or miniscule-style manuscript (introduced by the scribes of Charlemagne, approximately 800 A.D.), employing lowercase letters in a running-hand style with the normal break occurring between words. When Geisler and Nix said ‘most’ miniscules contained the familiar ending, what they *really* meant to say was **600 out of 600!** (And these are the kind of people who would condemn the Jehovah’s Witnesses for wresting the Word of God?)” (*Final Authority*, page 43). (Italic and bold emphasis in original.)

Geisler and Nix relate to us Metzger’s view:

“Which reading is the original ending? Metzger concludes that ‘none of these four endings commends itself as original,’ because of **limited textual evidence**, the apocrypha [sic] flavor, and the non-Marcian style (e.g., it contains seventeen non-Marcian words).” (Bold emphasis mine.)

The reader of this treatise, by now, will see another outright lie of Geisler and Nix. How can they say there is “limited textual evidence?” The extant textual evidence in favor Mark 16:9-20 is staggering—over 99.9% of the Greek witnesses have it!

It gets even worse, as they close their commentary on Mark 16:9-20 with some rather discomfoting advice:

“It is admittedly difficult to arrive at the conclusion that any of these readings is original. But, on the basis of known manuscript evidence, it seems likely that the position of I. Howard Marshall is **most plausible: either Mark 16:8 is the real ending or that the original ending is not extant.** Of these two options, the former is more compatible with the concept of a complete canon. In the final analysis, the textual critic is left to internal evidence as the basis for making a final judgment. With the exception of the NAB [Roman Catholic Bible!] and NKJV, most major twentieth-century English translations have tended to follow the approach of Marshall, Metzger, and others by using an ‘eclectic’ approach to exclude verses 9-20 from the text” (*A General Introduction to the Bible*, page 488). (Bold emphasis mine.)

How many seminary and Bible college students memorized the information

presented in Geisler and Nix, never bothering to check to see if it was true? How many then passed that **false, incomplete** data on to their unsuspecting church members, readers, listeners, et cetera?! Surely, some even became textual critics themselves, no doubt translating Bible versions themselves, further dispersing doubt and ignorance! Certainly, there are some people truly in the dark concerning this matter. They are just mindlessly repeating what others have told them in the pulpit, seminary classroom, commentary, et cetera. Very few have, if anyone has, actually investigated it. A century ago, we find this wretched observation, and it is no different today (remember Burgon in Part II, Section B, about scholars blindly quoting other scholars):

“Dean Burgon consistently refused to accept the word or opinion of this scholar or that one unless it was backed by demonstrable facts. So often Burgon discovered that **scholars quoted other scholars without investigating their findings**” (*Counterfeit or Genuine?*, page 11).

However, everyone cannot be excused as totally ignorant. If Burgon back in the **1870s** could write **300 pages** in defense of Mark 16:9-20, there is enough evidence to defend it now 150 years later! It is **not** an evidence problem but rather a heart problem. *“Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God”* (John 12:42-43). They want to keep their prestigious position in the “scholarly” circles—and, if the “scholars” say “no” but the evidence says “yes,” the most convenient position to take **socially** is say “no!” If they admit Mark 16:9-20, they will have to recant a century-plus of theological “scholarship” as false. All their Bible publishing houses would be forced to stop printing their New Testaments based on the corrupt Alexandrian texts, all their anti-KJV rhetoric would have to be recanted, they would have to admit the King James was right all along, and submit to the **inspired, perfectly preserved** Word of God. They will have to give up arguing over this textual variant and that textual variant, debating which reading is closest to the original. In other words, they will have to spend their time **studying** the preserved Bible they **do** have instead of **looking** for what they **do not have!** **A lot is at stake—they know it, and are unwilling to lose it! It all boils down to one word: Pride!**

This author has **no** vested interest in defending a denominational system, or retaining his job at a seminary or position on a Bible translation committee. He is a member of **no** denomination. **No** Bible college employs him. He need **not** worry about losing “scholarly” friends (that happened long ago). Therefore, he can be “blunt” in this treatise. He is **not** afraid of offending someone with Bible truth. The author is only accountable to the Lord Jesus Christ, his Saviour and God.

Unfortunately, the “scholars” could **not** have done a better job in complicating matters concerning the Bible. This is because **seminaries** are often nothing more than Bible **cemeteries**—where the truth **dies** because they are always looking for “something else” they lack. It is absolutely impossible for the natural or fleshly man to understand the Scriptures; **only** the Holy Spirit can impart spiritual light to us. Are we willing to

listen?

Turn to 1 Corinthians 2:9-14: “[9] *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. [10] But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. [11] For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. [12] Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. [13] Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. [14] But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*”

Through the centuries, the Body of Christ has permitted **unqualified** people to run its Bible colleges, seminaries, churches, and other ministries. A clear testimony of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone was practically ignored. What was stressed was someone’s ability to read and write Greek, Hebrew, Latin; proficiency in reciting some statement of faith or creed; familiarity with church history and theological concepts; and so on. **All** the advanced, secular degrees in the world **cannot** substitute the indwelling Holy Spirit. If they do **not** have the Holy Spirit, they have **no business whatsoever** heading **any** Christian group. Yet, the people **lacking** a testimony of salvation in Christ are often the very individuals dictating to us what is and what **is not** the Bible, what is and what **is not** Christian teaching. No wonder the professing church is so rife with heresy and apostasy!

For instance, a seminary graduate once complained to me how that now that he had come to understand the Bible dispensationally, he realized he had wasted so much time and money on formal “Bible” education. He really had learned practically nothing from so-called “institutions of higher learning.” Another brother—possessing a master’s degree in divinity and a doctorate in theology—lamented to me that he was still “so ignorant” of the Scriptures. In other words, his denominational system had robbed him of the truth as well. These are **not** isolated cases. Thousands of people who have gone through formal “Bible” training often struggle to understand verses just as those who have **not** matriculated through such a program. Why? These universities and colleges are promoting worthless church tradition and idle speculations instead of clear and simple dispensational Bible study, man’s intellect exalted instead of God’s mind adopted. Can we expect anything more from people who have **not** followed God’s Word, God’s way? If we are **not** handling the Scriptures as the Holy Spirit designed them, disaster is sure to follow. Approaching the Bible using philosophy and denominationalism are **not** the means whereby we understand God’s Word and will.

Since the “scholars” either often do not have the indwelling Holy Spirit, or they possess Him but ignore Him and His simple truths (the Corinthians? Galatians? Colossians? Ephesians?), they wind up in a spiritual mess. Their darkness is then transferred to their listeners and readers. As you might have sensed in the “scholarly”

quotes presented in this treatise, the “experts” are often confused. They have nothing definite in which our faith can be placed. What they have is shifting sand—this newly-discovered manuscript is right, no, that textual philosophy is correct, no, let us publish 100 modern English versions with hundreds of variant readings and let *you* the reader decide what *you* want the Bible to say! One will interpret textual data or manuscript evidence one way, and another will take that same information and come to another conclusion. We **cannot** all be correct. Someone is *right*, and someone is *wrong*. The Holy Spirit is right, and everyone else is wrong. That is reality of the matter. **Non-Christians or Christians thinking like non-Christians** have **no** authority over Christian matters and should not be commenting on them. Yet, the professing Body of Christ has not been strict here. Again, we have let all sorts of **non-Christian** ideas penetrate our churches and ministries because we ourselves were too ignorant of Christian teaching in the first place!

While the “scholars” may pretend to be experts on the subject, if they do not have the indwelling Holy Spirit leading them, they are not worth our time or attention. To some degree, those who are honest will admit their doubts. For instance, Dr. John MacArthur, in his study Bible first published in 1997, has a lengthy footnote for Mark 16:9-20. He enumerates **nine** reasons why these 12 verses are not to be trusted. (We dealt with and demolished these sciolous objections, and others, in Part II.) MacArthur then sheepishly admits: “Since, in spite of all these considerations of the likely unreliability of this section, **it is possible to be wrong on the issue**, and thus, it is good to consider the meaning of this passage and **leave it in the text**, just as with John 7:53-8:11.” Wow!

Why go to such great lengths to deny a passage only to then close your comments by conceding you are not entirely sure if you were even correct in your vehement disputation of it? Is someone trying to appeal to **both** his fellow “scholars” *and* the Christian public who would label him as an apostate if he did not at least partially retract his irreverent dismissal of those last 12 verses of Mark? We are inclined to think MacArthur is willing to surrender to the idea the case against Mark 16:9-20 is not “airtight” as the scholarly circles would have us believe! Whatever the case, he is just one of many such “scholarly-minded” pastors and teachers that human speculations and opinions have misled so he compromises or utterly denies Bible truth.

A second example of this “scholarly” doubletalk, something that seems to be superficially *meaningful* but is essentially *meaningless*, is epitomized in Dr. James R. White’s *The King James Only Controversy*. After admitting Mark 16:9-20 is found in nearly every Greek manuscript, having “overwhelming” support, White proceeds to question its legitimacy by regurgitating the same soggy, worn-out statements (not in Vaticanus or Sinaiticus or manuscript 302; absent from Sinaitic Old Syriac, some manuscripts of the Sahadic Coptic version, some Armenian manuscripts, some versions of the Georgian translation; the problematic scholia and sigla in some manuscripts; Jerome’s knowledge of manuscripts lacking the verses; the shorter ending present in some manuscripts; “non-Marcian” style and vocabulary in the verses; the troublesome nature of verses 16-18; as well as a few other trivial complaints—**YAWN!**). Having now left his reader with considerable doubt as to the genuineness of Mark 16:9-20, reminiscent

of MacArthur's comments, White informs us:

"What can we say, then, about Mark 16:9-20? We can **speculate** about how the longer ending arose. Did Mark issue two versions of his gospel, adding the longer ending later? **No one can say**, but that would certainly account for the various endings not in existence. More likely, early scribes felt the abrupt ending of Mark lacked the necessary proclamation of the resurrection, and thus some parallel corruption took place, drawing from oral stories and the other gospels to create the longer ending. Whatever the case may be regarding the genesis of Mark's various endings, we can say that given the external evidence, **we believe every translation should provide the passage**. However, **we also believe that every translation should note that there is good reason to doubt the passage's authenticity**. Allow the readers of Scripture to 'be diligent' (2 Timothy 2:15) in their own studies and come to their own conclusions" (page 320).

Dr. White recommends that, even though he has enumerated many reasons for us to **doubt** Mark 16:9-20, Bible translations should **still** include the passage because of the "external evidence" (overwhelming manuscript support). If we are convinced the passage is spurious, and we have laboriously outlined the evidence to support our position, why do we then concede it should **not** be removed from the modern versions? Is White hinting that maybe his excuses for rejecting the passage, like MacArthur's, are **lame** and largely **specious**, but worded so as to fool the Christian public into unbelief? Such slander of the Holy Bible is typical in "scholarly" crowds. MacArthur and White were trained to think like that, and they encourage their audience to adopt their mentality. The Scriptures diminished and our faith destroyed, the scholar proceeds to become our authority by encouraging us to believe—**but believe only what he himself believes ("I just know that I do not know! I just believe I do not believe!")**.

In *The Text of the New Testament*, Dr. Bruce Metzger reveals he is just another skeptical Bible critic. We quote page 226:

"How did Mark end his Gospel? **Unfortunately, we do not know**; the **most** that can be said is that four different endings are current among the manuscripts, but that **probably none of them represents what Mark originally intended to stand as the close of Gospel**. These four endings may be called the short ending, the intermediate ending, the long ending, and the long ending expanded." (Bold emphasis mine.)

Like with any Bible passage, "scholars" are instructed (at "Bible" **cemeteries!**) to approach Mark 16:9-20 through the eyes of academia and intellectualism. They are often performing mental exercises when discussing these last 12 verses of Mark. It does **not** bother them if Bible verses have mistakes, were corrupted, and/or are deleted. As long as the passage is **not** settled, they can keep arguing about it for the rest of their lives—and careers! They do **not** have the spiritual eyes or discernment to appreciate the passage in question. Their interest is Greek, church history, manuscripts—**not** the establishment

and proclamation of spiritual truth. If you read their works, they make **little to no** mention of the possibility of heretics deliberately altering God's words to suit their views. Scholars make **little to no** mention of the Holy Spirit guarding against error, our allegiance to the truth, our faith resting in the words of God as opposed to the words of men. What do they really believe then?

Friend, you should be warned of the dangers of Bible "scholarship," natural-man thinking, and denominationalism. Textual criticism—the science of critiquing the Scriptures, treating them like any other book—is a **most perilous** field of study. Having studied along with this treatise, now you know why! The controversy of Mark 16:9-20 all comes down to **one** important question, which we now address.

F. Do we actually believe in Bible inspiration and Bible preservation—or not?

Let us suppose that, contrary to all the overwhelming evidence to indicate otherwise, Mark 16:9-20 does **not** belong in the Bible. If that were the case, how unusual it is the Holy Spirit ended a Gospel (literally, "Good News") Record **without** any clear resolution, any definitive proof, Christ actually arose! This is the dominant "scholarly" position today. Or, the lesser known "scholarly" interpretation, that He would allow its ending to be lost, never to be recovered, is equally bizarre. If we accept either opinion, then Mark's "closure" is now left open to vague interpretation and idle speculation.

"Well, maybe Jesus did not **really** resurrect, because He never **actually** appears in a resurrected body in Mark! Perhaps they were all **lying**—the angel, the women, and so on. No one **really** saw Him in a resurrection appearance anyway! If Mark was indeed the **first** Gospel Record to be written, and Mark did not **originally** contain these post-resurrection appearances, then Matthew and Luke and John **invented** those accounts!" Such is a **dangerous** position, but it is what we have set ourselves up for because we allowed the "scholarly" circles with their worthless natural-man thinking cloud our judgment (1 Corinthians chapter 2)!

In the words of Dr. Wilbur Pickering:

"I find it inconceivable that an official biography, commissioned by God and written subject to His quality control, should omit proofs of the resurrection, should exclude all post-resurrection appearances, should end with the clause *'because they were afraid!'* But most modern critics assure us that such is the case, that the genuine text ends at verse 8. **So where was God all this time?**" (*The Identity of the New Testament Text*, 4th edition, page 299). (Bold emphasis mine.)

Dr. Edward Hills said it best in *Counterfeit or Genuine?*, page 23:

“Has Christ kept this promise [of Bible preservation] or has He not? If we believe this promise, then we must do as Burgon and other orthodox Christians have done. Like Burgon, we must allow this promise to guide us in our dealings with the New Testament text. **We must interpret all the data of New Testament textual criticism in the light of this promise.**

“It is just here, however, that many Christians are **fatally inconsistent. They say they believe in Christ’s promise to preserve the true New Testament text, but in practice they ignore this promise and treat the text of the New Testament exactly like that of an ordinary book concerning which no such promise has been made.** Thus they are guilty of a basic unfaithfulness. In their efforts to be pleasing to **naturalistic** critics they themselves have lapsed into **unbelief**. They have undermined their own faith and deprived themselves of all ground for confidence in the infallibility of the Bible. **For if the New Testament is just an ordinary book, then the trustworthiness of its text is, at best, only a probability, never a certainty.**” (Bold emphasis mine.)

VII. Final Words

Finally! We now get to closing comments, some notable and quotable quotes. First is Dr. Holland's evaluation:

"It is enough to say that there is nothing in the longer ending to dispel it from the Gospel of Mark, and everything in it that would call for its inclusion. It certainly should not be rejected because of the faulty witnesses of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. And, as can be seen, it should not be rejected because of the internal evidence. **Instead, both the external and internal evidence reveals [sic] that the longer ending was penned by John Mark and is part of the divine record**" (*Crowned With Glory*, pages 236-237). (Bold emphasis mine.)

On pages 20 and 21, Dr. Edward F. Hills writes in his work, *Counterfeit or Genuine?*:

"Dean Burgon believed that the history of the New Testament text was similar to the history of the New Testament canon, and all orthodox Christians will do well to agree with him in this, for study of the New Testament manuscripts bears him out. In other words, during the early Christian centuries Satan directed his assault not only on the New Testament canon but also on the New Testament text. No sooner had the New Testament books been given to the Church through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit but the Spirit of Darkness began his endeavors to corrupt their texts and render them useless. But in these efforts also the evil one failed to attain his objective. In regard to the New Testament text as well as in regard to the New Testament canon God bestowed on His Church sufficient grace to enable her to overcome all the wiles of the devil. Just as God guided the Church to reject, after a period of doubt and conflict, all noncanonical writings and to receive only the true canonical New Testament books so God guided the Church during this same period to reject false readings and to receive into common usage the true New Testament text.

"For an orthodox Christian, Burgon's view is the only reasonable one. If we believe that God gave the Church guidance in regard to the New Testament books then surely it is logical to believe that God gave the Church similar guidance in regard to the text which these books contained. Surely it is very inconsistent to believe that God guided the Church in regard to the New Testament *canon* but gave her no guidance in regard to the New Testament *text*. But this seems to be just what many modern Christians do believe. They believe that all during the medieval period and throughout the Reformation and post-Reformation era the true New Testament text was lost and that it was not regained until the middle of the nineteenth century, when Tischendorf discovered it in the Sinaitic manuscript Aleph and when Westcott and Hort

found it in the Vatican manuscript B.

“Such inconsistency, however, is bound to lead to a skepticism which deprives the New Testament text of all authority. If we must believe that the true New Testament text was lost for fifteen hundred years, how can we be certain that it has now been found? What guarantee have we that either B or Aleph contain the true text? How can we be sure that Harris (1908), Conybeare (1910), Lake (1941), and other radical critics are not correct in their suspicions that the true New Testament text has been lost beyond possibility of recovery?

“According to Burgon, the fundamental mistake of contemporary New Testament textual critics was that they ignored the unique character of the New Testament text. They would not recognize that they were dealing with a Book that was different from all other books—in short, with a Divinely inspired and providentially preserved Book.”

Dr. Floyd Nolen Jones aptly summarized the whole matter in the following manner:

“Do we really believe that God would have the greatest story ever told end at 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 God allow the good news of the Gospel to end with his disciples cringing in fear? Would Mark conclude his Gospel without any reference to the appearance of the risen Christ to His disciples? I think not! **The reader should feel a deep sense of righteous indignation upon learning of the unscrupulous manner in which these verses have been presented by nearly all Bible publishers.**”

“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.”

(Matthew 11:25-27)

“In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.”

(Luke 10:21-22)

“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:4-5).

VIII. Further Reading

The author recommends a few handy classic volumes that were instrumental in his coming to understand the Bible versions issue many years ago:

- ***Final Authority*** (1993) by William P. Grady, Ph.D. In addition to being an “Acts 2-dispensationalist,” Dr. Grady is also an historian and Baptist pastor in Michigan. Read especially chapter 5 for more information on the controversy touching Mark 16:9-20. His book is a great general reference for Bible history from the time of the Apostles all the way to late-20th-century Christianity. Also provided, of course, is abundant defense for the King James Bible as God’s preserved words in English.
- ***Gipp’s Understandable History of the Bible*** (1987) by Samuel C. Gipp, Th.D. An enormous compendium of Bible history, now in its third edition (2004), written in easy-to-understand language for anyone interested in learning about God’s preserved words and Satan’s counterfeits—the modern English versions.
- ***The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*** (1871) and ***Revision Revised*** (1883) by Dean John William Burgon. Written from the perspective of a conservative, Anglican (Church of England) scholar, these two classic volumes are indispensable but quite thorough and difficult reading at times. Burgon was contemporary with Tischendorf, Westcott, and Hort. *Revision Revised* is his scathing critique of the 1881 Revised Version and its equally corrupt underlying Westcott-Hort Greek text. The RV committee ignored his defense of Mark 16:9-20, labelling the passage as questionable in their Bible translation 10 years later. Nearly all modern Bible translation committees followed the pattern of the RV committee.

More recently, the following works have come to the author’s attention, furthering his comprehension of the Bible versions issue:

- ***Is the ‘World’s Oldest Bible’ a Fake?*** (2017) by David W. Daniels. Devoted especially to Sinaiticus’ questionable origin and highly mutilated state, Vaticanus is considered in this volume as well. Daniels is a seminary-trained Baptist and Bible linguist/researcher in California.
- ***Neither Oldest Nor Best*** (2017) by David Sorenson, D.Min. Both Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are demonstrated to be unreliable texts, of relatively recent origin—altered during the last 200 years. Dr. Sorenson is a Baptist pastor in Minnesota.
- ***The Original Ending of Mark*** (2014) by Nicholas P. Lunn, Ph.D. This highly technical analysis of Mark 16:9-20, its text and history (pro and anti), is offered as proof the last 12 verses of Mark were the original ending. Dr. Lunn is a senior Wycliffe Bible translation consultant.

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Appendix I: How Popular English Bible Versions Handle Mark 16:9-20

Unfortunately, modern English Bibles sometimes offer a “buffet” as concerning the last 12 verses of Mark. The reader can choose to: (1) adopt the longer ending of Mark 16:9-20, (2) reject it in favor of the shorter ending, (3) accept both endings, (4) deny both endings, (5) accept the Freer Logion with both endings, or (6) reject anything and everything after verse 8 and make it the closing statement.

Includes Mark 16:9-20 (“longer ending”) only – not an exhaustive list

- *King James Bible*
- *American Standard Version*
- *New King James Version*
- *Living Bible*
- *New International Version (verses italicized, horizontal bar separates them from rest of text)*
- *Amplified Bible (verses bracketed)*
- *Holman Christian Standard Bible (verses bracketed)*
- *The Message (verses bracketed)*

Includes Mark 16:9-20 (“longer ending”) followed by “shorter ending” (see Part IV, Section F)

- *New World Translation (“Jehovah’s Witness” Bible)*
- *New American Standard Bible*
- *The Voice*
- *Good News Translation*

Includes “shorter ending” (see Part IV, Section F) followed by Mark 16:9-20

- *New Revised Standard Version*
- *New Living Translation*

Includes Mark 16:9-20 (“longer ending”), with “shorter ending” in footnote (see Part IV, Section F)

- *Revised Standard Version*
- *English Standard Version*

Includes Mark 16:9-20 (“longer ending”), followed by “shorter ending” (see Part IV, Section F), with Freer Logion in footnote (see Part IV, Section G)

- *New American Bible (Roman Catholic Bible)*

Appendix II: Footnotes and Marginal Notes as Touching Mark 16:9-20 in Popular Modern Versions and Study Bibles

So as to demonstrate the widespread misinformation circulating in the Christian community as touching Mark 16:9-20, we will provide quotes from popular modern English Bible versions published during the last 120 years. Some are more misleading than others, but the fact remains such comments overwhelmingly instill confusion and doubt in the minds of millions upon millions of readers and students. *“Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD”* (Jeremiah 23:1).

These works are organized according to year of publication:

American Standard Version (1901)

“Mark 16:9 The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and some other authorities, omit from verse 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel.”

Revised Standard Version (1952)

“Some of the most ancient authorities bring the book to a close at the end of verse 8. One authority concludes the book by adding after verse 8 the following: *But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this, Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.* Other authorities include the preceding passage and continue with verses 9-20. In most authorities verses 9-20 follow immediately after verse 8; a few authorities insert additional material after verse 14.”

New American Standard Bible (1960, 1971, 1977, 1995)

“Mark 16:9 Later mss add vv 9-20.”

Amplified Bible (1965)

“Later mss add vv 9-20.”

Living Bible (1971)

“Verses 9-20 are not found in the most ancient manuscripts, but may be considered an appendix giving additional facts.”

Ryrie Study Bible (1978 NASB edition)

“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).”

New King James Version (1982)

“Mark 16:9 Vv. 9–20 are bracketed in NU as not in the original text. They are lacking in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, although nearly all other mss. of Mark contain them.”

King James Study Bible (1988, 2013) – Liberty University

“6:9-20. Ancient manuscripts contain two different endings for Mark. While some suggest that Mark did indeed intend for his gospel to end at verse 8, it ends on a note of fear and lacks a clear Resurrection account. In light of the uncertainty attached to verses 9-20, it may be advised to take care in basing doctrine upon them (especially vv. 16-18).”

“16:19, 20. Christ ascends to glory. (See Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:3-9.) The so-called ‘shorter ending’ is accepted by no one as being written by Mark. The traditional ending (KJV) is in nearly manuscripts, but is lacking in the two oldest ones we have.”

New Revised Standard Version (1989)

“Some of the most ancient authorities bring the book to a close at the end of verse 8. One authority concludes the book with the shorter ending; others include the shorter ending and then continue with verses 9-20. In most authorities verses 9-20 follow immediately after verse 8, though in some of these authorities the passage is marked as being doubtful.”

“Other ancient authorities add, in whole or in part [after verse 14], *And they excused themselves, saying, ‘This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits. Therefore reveal your righteousness now’—thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, ‘The term of years of Satan’s power has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was handed over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin no more, that they may inherit the spiritual and imperishable glory of righteousness that is in heaven.’*”

Good News Translation (1992)

“Mark 16:9 Some manuscripts and ancient translations do not have this ending to the Gospel (verses 9-20).

Mark 16:9 Some manuscripts and ancient translations have this shorter ending to the Gospel in addition to the longer ending (verses 9-20).”

The Message (1993)

“Note: Mark 16:9-20 [the portion in brackets] is not found in the earliest handwritten copies.”

God’s Word Translation (1995)

“16:8 Some manuscripts and translations end Mark here; some add verses 9–20.”

NIV Study Bible (1995)

“Serious doubt exists as to whether these verses belong to the Gospel of Mark. They are absent from important early manuscripts and display certain peculiarities of vocabulary, style and theological content that are unlike the rest of Mark. His Gospel probably ended at 16:8, or its original ending has been lost.”

Henry Morris Study Bible (1995, 2006, 2012)

“16:9 Now when Jesus. There is an obvious change in Mark’s narrative between Mark 16:8 and 16:9, and many modern scholars believe that Mark 16:9-20 constitutes a later addition by some writer other than Mark. Two of the most ancient Greek manuscripts terminate Mark’s Gospel with Mark 16:8, even though this would leave it with a very abrupt and unlikely ending. The verses in question do appear in the large majority of the ancient manuscripts, even though they are not as old as “Sinaiticus” and “Vaticanus.” Also, the verses are quoted by at least two of the important church fathers whose writings predate even these two manuscripts. Furthermore, the events described in this passage give every evidence of being true and significant, and there is no internal evidence that it is not a part of the original text. Even if it was added later, either by Mark himself or someone else, there is no good reason not to accept it as genuine Scripture.”

NOTE: We must commend Dr. Morris for taking the position of faith. He is willing to accept and even defend verses 9-20 as genuine. He is a rarity, at odds with the majority of “scholars” who argue internal evidence is against their inclusion (see Part II, Parts D–J). While we do not quote it, Morris goes on to provide commentary for verses 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18. He considered them worthy of attention. Other than commenting “these are not in the oldest manuscripts,” study Bibles often do not remark on their specific teachings.

New Living Translation (1996, 2004, 2015)

“[The most ancient manuscripts of Mark conclude with verse 16:8. Later manuscripts add one or both of the following endings.]”

“16:8 The most reliable early manuscripts of the Gospel of Mark end at verse 8. Other manuscripts include various endings to the Gospel. A few include both the ‘shorter ending’ and the ‘longer ending.’ The majority of manuscripts include the ‘longer ending’ immediately after verse 8.”

MacArthur Study Bible (1997 NKJV edition)

“The external evidence strongly suggests these verses were not originally part of Mark’s gospel. While the majority of Gr. manuscripts contain these verses, the earliest and most reliable do not. A shorter ending also existed, but it is not included in the text. Further, some that include the passage note that it was missing from older Gr. manuscripts, while others have scribal marks indicating the passage was considered spurious. The fourth-century church fathers Eusebius and Jerome noted that almost all Gr. manuscripts available to them lacked vv. 9-20. The internal evidence from this passage also weighs heavily against Mark’s authorship. The transition between vv. 8 and 9 is abrupt and awkward. The Gr. particle translated ‘now’ that begins v. 9 implies

continuity with the preceding narrative. What follows, however, does not continue the story of the women referred to in v. 8, but describes Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene (cf. John 20:11-18). The masculine participle in v. 9 expects 'he' as its antecedent, yet the subject of v. 8 is the women. Although she had just been mentioned 3 times (v. 1; 15:40,47), v. 9 introduces Mary Magdalene as if for the first time. Further, if Mark wrote v. 9, it is strange that he would only now note that Jesus had cast 7 demons out of her. The angel spoke of Jesus' appearing to His followers in Galilee, yet the appearances described in vv. 9-20 are all in the Jerusalem area. Finally, the presence in these verses of a significant number of Gr. words used nowhere else in Mark argues that Mark did not write them. Verses 9-20 represent an early (they were known to the second-century fathers Irenaeus, Tatian; and; possibly, Justin Martyr) attempt to complete Mark's gospel. While for the most part summarizing truths taught elsewhere in Scripture, vv. 9-20 should always be compared with the rest of Scripture, and no doctrines should be formulated based solely on them. Since, in spite of all these considerations of the likely unreliability of this section, it is possible to be wrong on the issue, and thus, it is good to consider the meaning of this passage and leave it in the text, just as with John 7:53-8:11."

Holman Christian Standard Bible (1999)

"Mark 16:20 Other mss omit bracketed text [verses 9-20]"

English Standard Version (2001)

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

New English Translation (2005, 2006, 2017)

"Double brackets have been placed around this passage to indicate that most likely it was not part of the original text of the Gospel of Mark. In spite of this, the passage has an important role in the history of the transmission of the text, so it has been included in the translation."

Holman KJV Study Bible (2012)

"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."

However, the editors treated these verses with more respect than most editors of other study Bibles. They proceeded to provide commentary on these verses individually.

The Voice (2012)

"After verse 8, the translators comment: 'Mark finishes his Gospel in the same

way he begins it—quickly, without commentary or explanation. He also finishes it in a humble way: it is the lowly women who take center stage in this greatest miracle of Jesus. The heavenly messenger sends the women with a commission to tell the disciples what has happened, making them the first preachers of the resurrection.’

Footnote: “16:9–20 are not contained in the earliest manuscripts. However, many manuscripts do contain these verses. It is likely the original Gospel ended in 16:8 or that the original ending was lost.”

Jeremiah Study Bible (2013 NKJV)

“6:8 | Although the angel instructed the women to broadcast the news of Jesus’ resurrection, fear and amazement kept them from telling anyone about it at first. Only after recovering the shock of all these events did they openly spread the word (Matt. 28:8; Luke 24:9). It is interesting that Mark’s Gospel—a story of divine faithfulness and recurring human failure—ends on a note of failure. However, Christ’s resurrection tells people that their failures are not the last word.”

“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.”

Also see:

<https://forwhatsaiththescriptures.org/bible-versions-manuscripts/>