

Mark 16:9-20 — The Amazing Ending Of The Gospel Of Mark

December 27, 2020

Good morning! I hope everyone had a good Christmas. I hope you had a chance to be part of our Christmas Eve worship either in person or online. It was a great night of worship of Jesus.

The reason we celebrate Christmas and the reason we know the truth about what happened when Jesus was born is because of our Bible. We trust the Bible. It is the Word of God. It tells us the truth about God. We live in a world full of media spin, Internet deception, and social media manipulation. We live in a world where it is hard to find the truth about anything. Thankfully, because we have the Bible, we have the truth. Jesus tells us in John 14:6 that he is the way, the truth, and the life. In John 17:17, Jesus tells us God's Word, the Bible that we hold in our hand, is truth. In Jesus we have the truth of the living word. In the Bible, we have the truth of the written word. This is why we have confidence in our Bible. Jesus says that just as we can trust him to save us, we can trust our Bible to tell us the truth about God.

This is why I love to teach the Bible. A sportscaster gives his or her opinion about a sport. A news reporter doesn't just report the news but gets to manipulate the truth. This is not true in my job. As a pastor, I get to teach, explain, and apply God's Word, not my opinion.

While the Bible was written thousands of years ago, I can tell you the English Bible you hold in your hands is an accurate translation of the words and thoughts of God as he inspired the biblical authors to write them. This is why we

can trust our modern Bibles to tell us the truth, even though it is a book written thousands of years ago.

The reason I can say this is because I am familiar with the science of textual criticism and the history of ancient manuscripts behind our Bible. The science of textual criticism and the history of how manuscripts were passed down to us is incredibly important. Before you can believe your Bible, you have to be confident that you can trust your Bible.

In seminary, the science of textual criticism and the history of manuscript transmission is one of the first things they teach you. It is one of the most important things you learn. Before anyone can preach from the Bible and claim it is the authoritative Word of God, one needs to be confident the Bible we have is accurate and true. Those who attack the Christian faith usually begin their attack by assaulting the trustworthiness of the Bible. If someone was able to demonstrate that the Bible is filled with errors and is corrupted by pointless legend, the entire Christian faith would crumble.

Once you understand the science of textual criticism and history of manuscript transmission, you quickly learn why the Bible is the most trustworthy document in history.

That leads us to the book of Mark. We finished the book of Mark before Christmas. At that time, I told you the Gospel of Mark has some extra verses in it. Open your Bibles to Mark 16:9 and you will find them. They are identified as verses 9-20 in modern Bibles. They appear to call into question the accuracy of God's Word. Modern translations have a disclaimer above these verses that

says, “Some of the earliest manuscripts do not include Mark 16:9-20.” If you go to an old English translation, such as the KJV, which is not based on modern research but only on Greek manuscripts hundreds of years ago, you will see verses 9-20 do not have a disclaimer above them. What is going on? I thought you said the Bible was trustworthy?

astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

● [SOME OF THE EARLIEST MANUSCRIPTS DO NOT INCLUDE 16:9-20.]⁷

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

⁹ [[Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, ^fhe appeared first to ⁹Mary

into Galilee: there shall ye see him, ⁿas he said unto you. ⁸ And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: ^oneither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.
 ● ⁹ Now when *Jesus* was risen early ^pthe first day of the week, ^qhe appeared first to ^rMary Magdalene, ^sout of whom he had cast seven devils. ¹⁰ And ^tshe went and told them that had

Here are 11 verses that modern Bibles say we cannot trust. That sounds like a problem!

Instead of these extra verses being a problem, I am excited about them. They

provide me a chance to teach about textual

criticism. As we study these verses, they will not weaken your confidence in the Bible. They will strengthen it. These verses allow me to do something I almost never get a chance to do. I get to go behind the Bible and tell you where it came from. I typically spend each week answering the question, “What do these verses mean?” Today I am answering the question, “Where did these verses come from?”

We will learn why modern Bible translators put this disclaimer above these verses. First, we will first look at external evidence for why these verses don’t belong. Second, we will look at internal evidence why these verses don’t belong.

The external evidence of text criticism proves Mark’s final verses do not belong.

All translations of the Bible come from ancient manuscripts that have existed for thousands of years. Many of these ancient manuscripts still exist

today and are found in libraries around the world. These ancient copies of biblical books are studied and compared with one another by scholars. That way they can test their accuracy and reliability. This process of finding ancient copies of Bible books and comparing them to one another to ensure accuracy has gone on for hundreds of years.

The Holy Spirit is the ultimate author of the Bible. He inspired the apostles and prophets to write the Bible without error. The Holy Spirit is not just the author of the Bible, but he is also the preserver of the Bible. Just as the Holy Spirit inspired the ancient authors to say exactly what he wanted said, the Holy Spirit also preserved the Bible from ancient times so we can be sure we have an accurate copy of what was written. How the Holy Spirit preserved the Bible for you and me is the first part of our story.

The printing press was not invented until the 1500s. Before that time, everything was copied by hand. Let's learn how the Bible was copied, starting with the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is accurate because it was carefully copied by scribes.

Jewish scribes were in charge of copying Old Testament books. Scribes took their job incredibly seriously since they knew they were handling the very words of God. There are amazing stories of what they did to make sure their handwritten copies were accurate to the originals. Scribes numbered letters in Bible books. An "A" had the value of 1. A "B" had the value of two and so forth. The scribes then had a numerical value for each line when they added up the numbers of the letters. They checked to make sure the numerical value of each

line in the original and copy matched. They also knew the exact number of times each letter of the Hebrew alphabet occurred in a Bible book. That way they could check a copy against an original. They also knew the exact middle letter of a Bible book. That was another way they made sure copies and originals were identical. Every copy had to contain the same number of columns as the original. Nothing was allowed to be written from memory. The space between each letter was measured by a thread so it was uniform. If one error was made when copying a book, that book was either burned or buried.

Listen to this story. One scribe was famous for writing one letter as he copied the Scriptures, then taking a bath. He then returned and wrote another letter. He continued bathing and copying, one letter at a time, until he had copied the entire Old Testament. Why did he wash after each letter? The washing was to remind him of the importance of each letter and the purity of the Bible and the purity demanded of his work.

Robert Dick Wilson is a scholar of ancient literature. He says that when you examine Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian and Moabite literature, when those ancient writings talk about their kings and when the Hebrew Old Testament mentions the same kings, Hebrew Old Testament gives accurate names and dates of those kings every time. Even though the modern Hebrew text is 2,300 to 3,900 years old, it was accurately copied and transmitted to us. Robert Wilson says the accuracy of Hebrew copyists is unequalled in all of history.

The New Testament is accurate because of the numerous manuscripts that remain.

Since this morning's focus is on the final verses of the Gospel of Mark, let's move from the accuracy of the Hebrew copyists of the Old Testament to tell you the story about the transmission of our New Testament.

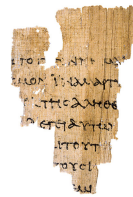
When it comes to the New Testament, there are 25,000 ancient copies of all or part of the New Testament for us to examine. You might say, "Is that all?" Absolutely not! I couldn't even begin to tell you how many ancient copies of the New Testament disappeared over history! There are 25,000 ancient copies that still exist today. By ancient, we are talking whole or partial copies of New Testament books, some dating back almost 2,000 years.

The good news is this means there are a lot of old copies of New Testament books that we can compare to one another. That way we can quickly see if someone copied something wrong or inaccurately. None of the other manuscripts will have that error. While the Hebrew Old Testament that we talked about was copied by trained scribes, the Greek New Testament wasn't. While it was copied carefully, it was not copied with such painstaking accuracy. The large number of ancient copies of the New Testament helps us quickly find errors that are inadvertently introduced as New Testament books were copied. In God's providence, the fact that the Holy Spirit preserved so many ancient copies of New Testament letters gives us great confidence that we know what was actually written.

The New Testament is accurate because of the age of the manuscripts.

Of those 25,000 ancient copies of New Testament books, 5,656 of those go way back. They were written in the second or third century. That is between the year 100 to 300 A.D. Remember that the New Testament books were not even composed until 50 to 90 A.D. Let me give you three examples.

There is a manuscript called the **Rylands Papyri**. It is also known as **P-52**. It is also called the Rylands manuscript after the name of the man that discovered it. The earliest New Testament letters were written on papyrus, which is why its official name has a “P” in front of it. Ancient manuscripts are also numbered based on when they were found and who found them. P-52 has part of the Gospel of John on it and it was written in 130 A.D. John the apostle was alive in 90 A.D. It is a copy of the Gospel of John made approximately 40 years after it was written.



Bruce Metzger, who is a Greek scholar, has said this manuscript is so old, that if it had been found a hundred years ago it would have destroyed the German school of higher criticism which claimed the Bible was written hundreds of years after the biblical authors. If this manuscript was found earlier in history, it would have destroyed liberalism in many denominations.

Another ancient manuscript is called the **Bodmer Papyri**. This papyrus has all of the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Luke. It was written between the years 150 to 200 A.D. This copy of two Gospels was written only 60 years after the originals. It is currently kept in the Library of World



Literature in Switzerland.

Another famous one is called the **Chester Betty papyrus**. It has all four Gospels and the book of Acts. It dates from the year 200 A.D. This a copy of all four Gospels and Acts was written a little over 100 years after the originals. It is



kept in the Chester Beatty Museum in Dublin, Ireland. It is also partially owned by the University of Michigan.

Those are three stories of ancient manuscripts that give us either all or a portion of New Testament books. I only told you three stories. We have more than 5,656 manuscripts that contain either all or a portion of New Testament books from the years 100 to 300 A.D. We would be here a long time if I told you the story behind each of them.

What is amazing is there shouldn't be this many ancient copies of the New Testament books in existence. The years 100 to 300 A.D. was a time of incredible persecution. The Romans and Jews were trying to stamp out Christianity. The Romans burned Christians alive. They threw them into the Colosseum to be eaten by wild animals or slaughtered in combat. At that time, it was illegal to possess a copy of a New Testament book. New Testament books that were found were burned. Yet the New Testament was so popular, and the Holy Spirit was so powerful, that he preserved 5,656 copies of New Testament letters from that early period of church history that we still have today. This way, we know what the Bible actually said. We are not guessing about what we thought it said.

Once you get to the fourth century, things change dramatically. When Constantine became emperor of Rome, he legalized the Christian religion in the Roman Empire. Persecution ended and ancient copies of the New Testament letters abounded.

We looked at three of the 5,656 most ancient copies of the New Testament letters. Let's look at a few of the more famous ancient New Testament documents written after 325 A.D. These are just two of the stories of the 20,000 ancient manuscripts we possess.

The earliest copies of the New Testament were written on papyrus and stored as scrolls. As we get past 300 A.D., people began using what was called a codex. That simply means a bound book, like we have today. One of the most important codexes is called **Codex Sinaiticus**. It was written in the year 350 A.D. It has the entire New Testament in it plus almost all of the Old Testament. It has an interesting story behind how it was discovered and how it was preserved.

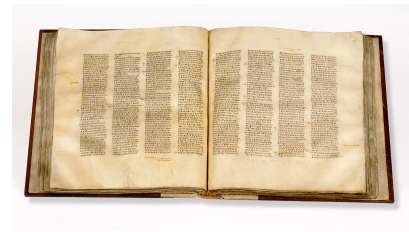
In 1844 a 30-year-old man named Count Von Tischendorf was traveling the ancient world looking for old Bible manuscripts. As part of his travels, he stayed at St. Catherine's monastery on Mt. Sinai. One night, he saw a waste basket full of paper the monks were using as fire starter to keep warm. He looked at the paper and realized they were burning ancient copies of the Old Testament written in Greek. They were over 1,200 years old! He pulled 43 pages from the waste basket to save them. A monk casually remarked he had already burned two wastebaskets full of these ancient papers! The Count told him that this was not the kind of stuff you want to use as kindling for your fire! The Count was

permitted to keep the 43 pages he pulled from the trash can. He brought them to Leipzig University Library in Leipzig, Germany, and eventually published these ancient papers to the delight of Bible scholars around the world.

In 1853, he made a second visit to St. Catherine's monastery on Mt. Sinai. The monks wouldn't let him see any more ancient books or check any more trash cans! They were suspicious of him.

In 1859, he made a third visit to St. Catherine's monastery. Like his last visit, the monks were suspicious and would not let him see any other ancient papers or books. Just before he left, he gave the head of the monastery a copy of the book he published in Germany that had the Greek copies of the Old Testament he pulled from the trash can on his first visit, 15 years before. The head of the monastery was impressed. He said he had a book too. He went to his room and brought out a book wrapped in red cloth. It was contained most of the Old Testament and the entire New Testament,

all in excellent condition. It was written in the year 350 A.D. To make a long story short, it was eventually purchased through the help of the Czar of Russia on Christmas Day 1933. Today, it is in the British library in London. It is one of the most ancient and complete copies of the Bible as we have it today.



Another important early copy of the New Testament after 325 A.D. is **Codex Vaticanus**. It is a copy of the entire Bible from the year 325 A.D. It is a sister copy of

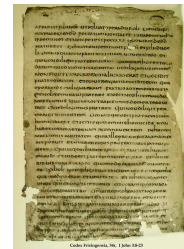


Codex Sinaticanus. It is considered to be the most trustworthy copy of the full Bible as we have it today. It is kept in the Vatican.

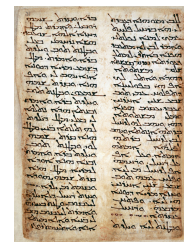
By the way, both Codex Sinaticus and Codex Vaticanus do not have Mark 16:9-20 in them.

The New Testament is accurate because of the ages of its translations.

As a church, our goal is to reach people with Jesus. Reaching people with Jesus is not new. Beginning with Pentecost, Christians have always dedicated themselves to reaching people with Jesus, even people of other cultures. Just as we are a church involved in missions that translate the Bible into different languages so people can read God's Word in their native tongue, in the early days of the Christian faith, people were translating the New Testament into other languages so they could read about Jesus in their native tongue. Many of these translations are super early in church history.



For example, we have 8,000 ancient copies of the New Testament in Latin. The earliest Latin copies of our New Testament date from the years 382 to 405 A.D.



We have more than 350 copies of the Bible in Syriac that date back to the year 200 A.D.

The New Testament is accurate because of the age and quantity of quotations by early church leaders.

In addition to ancient copies of New Testament books, we have volumes of writings from the early church leaders coming from the years 200 to 300 A.D. They wrote on a variety of subjects. They wrote Bible study material. Just as I put

Bible verses in your sermon handouts, they quoted Bible verses when they wrote about the Bible. If you take the writings of the early church leaders, that existed before the year 325 A.D., they quote the New Testament more than 32,000 times. They quote the New Testament so many times we could reassemble an entire copy of the New Testament just using the quotes they gave of the New Testament. Do you get that? Even if we had no early manuscripts of the New Testament, just using the quotes of the New Testament we have from early church leaders, we could reassemble almost the entire New Testament!

These thousands of quotes of the New Testament by the early church leaders also help us confirm the accuracy of the New Testament. You can compare the original Greek manuscripts of the New Testament letters, of which there are 5,656 copies. You can also compare them to a Syriac manuscript that dates back to those early years or a Latin copy of a New Testament letter from that same period. We have more than 8,500 New Testament fragments in those two languages alone! In addition, we can compare those manuscripts to the 32,000 ancient quotations given by the early church leaders from that early period.

This gives us great confidence that the New Testament is accurate. When we are done comparing those early copies of the New Testament, we still have an additional 20,000 copies of the New Testament after 325 A.D. This is why we can say with great confidence that the Bible we hold in our hands is reliable.

The New Testament is accurate because there are more copies of it than anything else from ancient history.

To understand the significance of what I am telling you, we need to see how the Bible compares to other writings we have from the ancient world. After the New Testament, the second-most plentiful ancient document we possess is **Homer's The Iliad**. Remember reading that in college? How many ancient copies of Homer's The Iliad exist? 643. The Iliad was written in 800 B.C. We have a little piece of The Iliad that dates from 400 B.C. The earliest complete copy of The Iliad we have dates from 1,300 years after it was written. We only have a few copies of Homer's The Iliad. Most early copies are missing massive parts. What was copied was not copied with painstaking accuracy. Massive parts of The Iliad are reconstructed by a technique called conjectural emendation. That means they guess what it probably said. That is not at all like your New Testament where we have 25,000 copies, with 5,656 dating to the very time it was written, all copied with intentional accuracy to be identical to the original.

The Bible is the most plentiful piece of ancient literature with 25,000 copies. The Iliad is second with 643 poor copies. The third-most plentiful piece of ancient literature is **Herodotus' The Histories**. It was written in 480 B.C. The oldest copy we have is from 900 A.D., 1,300 years after it was written. There are only eight copies in existence. The fourth-most plentiful piece of ancient literature is **The History the Peloponnesian War** written by **Thucydides**. It was written in the year 460 B.C. The earliest piece we have of that is a copy written 1,500 years after the original. We only have eight partial copies in existence.

Remember that

nobody protected

other ancient

documents.

Nobody copied

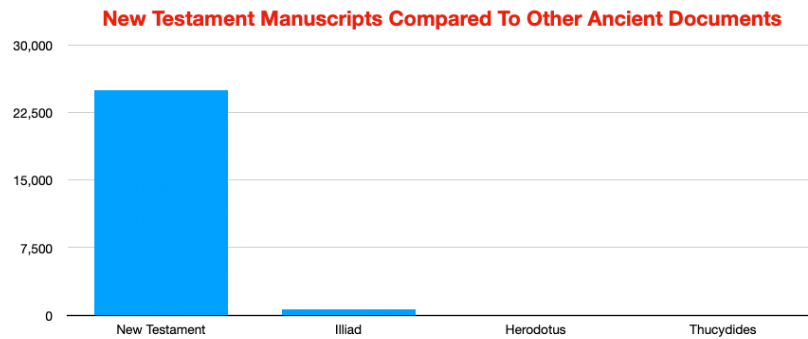
with great

accuracy those documents. Those making handwritten copies of the Bible were, for the most part, very careful because they were handling the words of God.

New Testament copies date from the time they were written. They are not copies of copies of copies of copies all done by hand so we can finally see a copy written 1,300 years after the original.

This is why New Testament scholars say that the Bible you and I hold in our hand is like Ivory Soap. It is 99.99 percent accurate. There are so many handwritten copies of the New Testament that it is easy to find a mistake where someone copied and and made an error.

While I hope you enjoyed learning about textual criticism and the story behind our Bibles, you are probably wondering how all of this pertains to the final verses of the Gospel of Mark. That is a good question. Mark 16:9-20 is a textual variant. We know Mark 16:9-20 does not appear in the earliest manuscripts we have of the book of Mark. This is why your ESV put the disclaimer above these verses. If you read the footnote on the disclaimer, you will see there is another



alternate ending that somebody introduced at some point in history that is a little shorter, but it also is not in any of the ancient manuscripts.

If it is not in any of the ancient manuscripts, and we know it should be thrown out, why is it still in your Bible with this disclaimer? The answer is that the KJV, when it was written hundreds of years ago, didn't have access to most ancient Bible manuscripts that we have today. Those translators based their translation off ancient copies of the Bible, that were old, but not nearly as old as what we have in our hands. The manuscripts they based the King James Version on had this alternate ending added to it in error. They copied this error into their translation.

If modern Bible translators simply removed verses 9-20 and didn't tell you this back story, people would get upset. I have seen people do this. They claim that modern Bible translators are pulling verses out of the Bible. So people don't accuse modern Bible translators of taking things out of the Bible, these verses are included but a disclaimer is given.

The next obvious question is, "Why did someone add these verses in the first place?"

The reason why an ancient copyist added these verses is because Mark has an odd ending. He used a cliff hanger ending. Mark ends with the women learning from an angel at the tomb of Jesus that Jesus rose from the dead, but the women leave and they don't say anything to anyone. That is the end of the book. The natural question is, "What happened next?" The other Gospels tell us what happened next, but Mark doesn't. Mark used this abrupt ending because he

wanted people that finished his book to go to their Christians friends and say, “Tell me the rest of the story about Jesus.” Mark intentionally ended his book leaving people in tension so readers would seek out the rest of the story. Sometime in the second century, a copyist let the tension in Mark’s ending get the best of him. He wrote these verses to resolve the tension and give a smoother ending.

How do we know Mark 16:9-20 was not part of Mark?

As I said earlier, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, which are some of the earliest complete copies of the New Testament, do not have these verses.

In the fourth century, two early church leaders, Eusebius (writing 280 A.D.) and Jerome (writing 390 A.D.), wrote that almost all Greek manuscripts of Mark end in verse 8 and do not include the extra verses. Did they know about this alternate ending? Yes, they did. They just said it wasn’t authentic. In the years 150-200 A.D., Justin Martyr and Taitan, also early church leaders, also knew about this alternate ending in Mark. They quoted it and said it was not authentic. In the 300s, Eusebius quoted this alternate ending and said, “The original Greek manuscripts do not have these verses.”

The external evidence for these verses not being part of Mark’s Gospel is strong. Now let’s look at some of the internal evidence against it.

The internal evidence of text comparison proves Mark’s final verses do not belong.

Let’s look at the final verses. As I do, I want us to remember that I am not saying everything in these final verses is untrue. I am saying Mark did not write them.

Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it. After these things he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them. Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover." So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs. Mark 16:9–20 (ESV)

What about these verses tell us Mark did not write them?

1. The transition between verse 8 and 9 in the Greek is rather awkward. Verse 8 is talking about the women. Verse 9 has nothing to do with the women. There is no transition. It just stops abruptly. That is awkward and bizarre.
2. If you have studied foreign languages, you know words can have a masculine or feminine ending. The Greek in verse 9 begins with a masculine pronoun but verse 8 ends talking about women and expects a feminine pronoun. Verses 9 to 20 don't belong.
3. Mark identified Mary Magdalene as the one whom Jesus cast out seven demons. Why would Mark introduce her and tell us about her at the end of this Gospel? Mark already told us about her three times earlier in this Gospel.
4. The Greek vocabulary of these verses is not consistent with the rest of Mark. In these final verses, there are 18 words never before used in this Gospel. That is highly unusual. It is like someone else is speaking because that

person used a different vocabulary in these final verses. I had the chance to sit under Mark Strauss for a week and learn from him about the Gospel of Mark. He is one of the top scholars on this Gospel and is the author of the Zondervan commentary on this Gospel. He says the Greek in the ending verses is nothing like the rest of the Gospel. He feels strongly that these verses were tacked on and not original.

5. The ending throws in strange teachings that don't appear in any of the other parts of this Gospel, such as picking up snakes, speaking in tongues, casting out demons and drinking poison.

Where did the material for this alternate ending come from?

While we don't know who wrote these verses, we know where most of these verses came from. For the most part, the author was picking things from other parts of the New Testament so he wouldn't write things that were new or untrue.

- Verse 9 is from Luke 8:1-3.
- Verse 10 is from John 20:18.
- Verse 12 is from Luke 24:13-32 on the Road to Emmaus.
- Verse 13 is from Luke 24.
- Verse 14 is from Luke 24:36-38.
- Verse 15 is from Matthew 28:19.
- Verse 16 is from John 20:23.

You get the idea. In the book of Acts, we see Paul being saved from a snake bite. It doesn't say any place in the New Testament that all Christians will

be saved from snake bites, so the guy who wrote these verses is wrong. We don't have any idea where the idea of drinking poison and surviving it came from.

For the most part, we have a patchwork of other parts of the Bible stitched together and thrown on the end of Mark with the exception of some of the more bizarre stuff.

What does the real ending of the Gospel of Mark teach us?

Let's talk about the real ending of Mark's Gospel, as we wrap things up.

Jesus is the Son of God.

Mark doesn't just end abruptly, but he started abruptly. He skipped the story of Jesus birth. He started in Jesus' ministry. In the same way, Mark ended his Gospel with Jesus rising from the dead and didn't tell us anything that happened afterward. Mark gave us nothing before the ministry of Jesus and nothing after the resurrection of Jesus. Mark had one objective. That was to prove to us that Jesus is the Son of God. Once he accomplished that objective, he stopped writing. He told us that at the very beginning of this Gospel.

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Mark 1:1 (ESV)

Jesus is amazing.

One other thing: Let's look at the way Mark ended his Gospel.

And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. Mark 16:8 (ESV)

Let's look at some of the key words in this final verse.

- The word **trembling** is *tromos*. It means to shake.
- There is also the word **afraid**. That is the Greek word *phobos*, from where we get our word phobia.

These words are not talking about panic fear or frightened fear. They are talking about awe-and-wonder fear. This word means to be speechless.

- The other key word is **astonishment**. It is the Greek word *ekstasis*. That is where we get the English word ecstasy.

When the women left the tomb, they were shaking. They were speechless. They were in awe. They could not get their minds wrapped around the fact that the grave was empty. They could not believe they spoke to angels. At first, they didn't say anything because they were speechless and in awe of Jesus rising from the grave. Jesus is amazing! The reason Mark ended his Gospel with the women shaking, amazed and speechless in fear is because those are the three reactions that everyone experienced when they encountered Jesus throughout this Gospel. Let me show you what I mean.

- Mark 1:27 --- They were amazed at Jesus' teaching.
- Mark 2:12 --- Jesus healed the paralyti, and they were amazed and glorified God saying, "We have never seen anything like this."
- Mark 4:41 --- Jesus calmed the storm, and the disciples became very much afraid.
- Mark 5:15 --- Jesus cast the demons out of the Gadarene demoniac, and people were afraid.
- Mark 5:33 --- Jesus healed the woman with a flow of blood, and the woman fell down before him with fear and trembling.
- Mark 5:42 --- Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. It says everyone was overcome with amazement.

- Mark 6:51 --- Jesus walked on water, then calmed the storm. It says the disciples were utterly astounded.
- Mark 9:6 --- Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James, and John so his face shown bright as the sun and his clothing flashed like lightning. It says they were terrified.
- Mark 10:32 --- Jesus was walking with his disciples on the road to Jerusalem and began to tell them everything that was going to happen to him in Jerusalem. It says they were amazed.
- Mark 15:5 --- Jesus was arrested and taken before Pilate where he was accused by the Jews. It says Pilate was amazed that Jesus didn't defend himself.

What else do we expect Mark to say when he finished his book other than the women trembled, filled with fear, and were amazed? That is the way everyone reacted to Jesus in this Gospel as they were struggling to figure out his identity. Everyone was having a hard time wrapping their minds around the fact that Jesus is the very Son of God! Jesus does what only God can do!

The question is, "Are you amazed over Jesus?" Are you filled with awe, reverence and astonishment that the one who created the universe loves us so much that he became one of us to save you and me?

The only proper response to Jesus is to be just like the women leaving the tomb; today, may we leave filled with reverent fear, astonishment and amazement at Jesus and the amazing ending of the Gospel of Mark. Like the women, may we be amazed too. Like the women, only hours later, may be be

telling others about Jesus, that he is risen from the dead and that he can change our lives.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, and time with his family. Feel free to contact him at www.Christ2RCulture.com (www.c2rc.com)

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