

Sunday, August 19, 2012—Mark Dispensationally Considered—Mark 16:9-20: An Overview of The Last Twelve Verses of Mark

The Last Twelve Verses of Mark

- Now that we have reached Mark 16:9, before we can proceed with our consideration of the text we need to discuss the modern belief that these twelve verses should not be in the Bible. Virtually all modern Evangelical scholarship and textual theory maintains that Mark 16:9-20 should not be in the Bible. Bud Chrysler and Josh Dakan encountered this idea in their class at Bible College as recently as last month.
- Verse 8 ends with the women fleeing from the empty tomb, and saying "nothing to anyone, because they were afraid." Many scholars take 16:8 as the original ending and believe the longer ending (16:9-20) was written later by someone else as a summary of Jesus' resurrection appearances and several miracles performed by Christians. Most scholars, following the approach of the textual critic Bruce Metzger, hold the view that verses 9-20 were not part of the original text. Mark 16:9-20 was included in the Rheims New Testament, and in the King James Bible and other influential translations. In most modern-day translations based primarily on the Alexandrian Text, it is included but is accompanied by brackets or by special notes, or both.
- The NIV separates Mark 16:9-20 from the rest of the text and includes the following note above verse 9, "The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:19-20."
- The NASV attached the following footnote to verse 9, "Some of the oldest mss. omit verse 9 through 20. A few later mss. and versions contain this paragraph, usually after verse 8; a few have it at the end of the chapter."
- Textual critics view verse 8 as the undisputed ending of Mark's gospel. As the NASV footnote indicates some textual critics advocate for what is called the shorter ending which adds the following 9th verse:
 - "And they reported all the instructions briefly to Peter's companions. Afterwards Jesus himself, through them, sent forth from east to west the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation. Amen."
- The inclusion of verses 9-20 as it stands before us in the King James Bible is known as the longer ending. Others have advocated for an even longer ending, known as the Freer Logion which includes the insertion of additional text between verses 14 and 15.
 - And they excused themselves, saying, "This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not permit God's truth and power to conquer the evil [unclean] spirits. Therefore, reveal your justice now." This is what they said to Christ. And Christ replied to them, "The period of years of Satan's power has been fulfilled, but other dreadful

things will happen soon. And I was handed over to death for those who have sinned, so that they may return to the truth and sin no more, and so they may inherit the spiritual, incorruptible, and righteous glory in heaven.”

- The *New Living Translation* summarizes these points in their footnote which reads, “The most reliable early manuscripts conclude the Gospel of Mark at verse 8. Other manuscripts include various ending to the Gospel. Two of the more noteworthy are printed here.”
- In order to get to the bottom of what is going here I would like for you to consider the following footnote from the *Scofield Reference Bible*.
 - The passage from verse 9 to the end is not found in the most ancient manuscripts, the Sinaitic and Vatican, and other have it with partial omissions and variations.”
- As we have considered footnotes from the NIV, NASV, NLT, and the *Scofield Reference Bible* what keeps coming up as the main argument for leaving verses 9-20 out of the Bible? These verses are not found in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts. From Scofield we learn that we are really only talking about two manuscripts Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus.
 - *Codex Sinaiticus* (330-360)—4th century uncial manuscript that did not come to the scholars’ attention until it was found at St. Catherine’s Monastery and Greek Orthodox monastery in the 19th century.
 - *Codex Vaticanus* (325-350)—is one of the oldest extant manuscripts of the Greek Bible (Old and New Testament), one of the four great uncial codices. The Codex is named for the residence in the Vatican Library, where it has been stored since at least the 15th century. It is written on 759 leaves of vellum in uncial letters and has been dated to the 4th century. Scholars initially were unaware of the Codex’s value, which changed in the 19th century when transcriptions of the full codex were completed. It was extensively used by Westcott and Hort in their edition of *The New Testament in the Original Greek* in 1881. The most widely sold editions of the Greek New Testament are largely based on the text of the Codex Vaticanus.
- Please note, that the existence of one these manuscripts (*Codex Sinaiticus*) was not even known to scholars until the 19th century. Meanwhile the scholastic value of the other (*Codex Vaticanus*) was not realized by Protestant scholars until the Vatican released transcriptions of the full codex in the 19th century. So the 1881 edition of the Greek New Testament released in 1881 by Westcott and Hort was based primarily on a Roman Catholic manuscript and Greek Orthodox manuscript that were either unknown or unstudied until the 19th century.
- So do we really want to throw Mark 16:9-20 as well as scores of other passages out of the Bible simply because two “old” Greek manuscripts don’t include these verses? Be careful how you answer. If you say yes, what you are saying is that from the 1st century until the 19th when these

mss. were either discovered or studied Bible believing Christians did not possess the complete and accurate word of God.

- In Appendix 168 of his *Companion Bible*, E.W. Bullinger lays bare the truth regarding the last twelve verses of Mark.
 - “As to the manuscripts, there are none older than the fourth century, and the oldest two uncial MSS (Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus) are without those twelve verses. Of all the others (consisting of some eighteen uncials and some six hundred cursive MSS, which contain the Gospel of Mark) **there is not one** which leaves out these twelve verses.”
- Bullinger goes on to cite the testimony of early translations that either predate or are contemporaries with Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus (4th Century).
 - The SYRIAC. The oldest is the Syriac in its various forms: the "Peshitto" (2nd Century) and the "Curetonian Syriac" (3rd Century). Both are older than any Greek Manuscript in existence, and both contain these twelve verses.
 - The LATIN Version. JEROME (A.D. 382), who had access to Greek Manuscripts older than any now extant, includes these twelve verses; but this Version (known as the Vulgate) was only a revision of the VETUS ITALA, which is believed to belong to the 2nd century, and contains these verses.
 - The GOTHIC Version (A.D. 350) contains them.
 - The EGYPTIAN Versions: the Memphitic (or Lower Egyptian, less properly called "COPTIC"), belonging to cent. 4 or 5, contains them; as does the "THEBAIC" (or Upper Egyptian, less properly called the "SAHIDIC"), belonging to cent. 3.
 - The ARMENIAN (cent. 5), the ETHIOPIC (cent. 4-7), and the GEORGIAN (cent. 6) also bear witness to the genuineness of these verses.
- As if this testimony were not enough to prove that Mark 16:9-20 should be in the Bible, Bullinger destroys the theories of the modern textual critics by citing the writings of the church fathers regarding these verses. “The FATHERS. Whatever may be their value (or otherwise) as to doctrine and interpretation yet, in determining actual *words*, or their *form* or *sequence*, their evidence, even by an allusion, as to whether a verse or verses existed or not in their day, is more valuable than even manuscripts or Versions. There are nearly a hundred ecclesiastical writers older than the oldest of our Greek codices; while between A.D. 300 and A.D. 600 there are about two hundred more, and they all refer to these twelve verses.”
 - PAPIAS (about A.D. 100) refers to verse 18 (as stated by Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc* iii. 39).

- JUSTIN MARTYR (A.D. 151) quotes verse 20 (*Apol.* I. c. 45).
 - IRENAEUS (A.D. 180) quotes and remarks on verse 19 (*Adv. Hoer.* lib. iii. c. x.).
 - HIPPOLYTUS (A.D. 190 - 227) quotes verses 17-19 (Lagarde's ed., 1858, page 74).
 - VINCENTIUS (A.D. 256) quoted two verses at the seventh Council of Carthage , held under CYPRIAN.
 - The ACTA PILATI (cent. 2) quotes verses 15, 16, 17, 18 (Tischendorf's ed., 1853. pages 243, 351).
 - The APOSTOLICAL CONSTITUTIONS (cent. 3 or 4) quotes verses 16, 17, 18.
 - EUSEBIUS (A.D. 325) discusses these verses, as quoted by MARINUS from a lost part of his History.
 - APHRAARTES (A.D. 337), a Syrian bishop, quoted verses 16-18 in his first Homily (Dr. Wright's ed., 1869, i., page 21).
 - AMBROSE (A.D. 374-97), Archbishop of Milan, freely quotes verses 15 (four times), 16, 17, 18 (three times), and verse 20 (once).
 - CHRYSOSTOM (A.D. 400) refers to verse 9; and states that verses 19, 20 are "the end of the Gospel".
 - JEROME (b. 331, d. 420) includes these twelve verses in his Latin translation, besides quoting verses 9 and 14 in his other writings.
 - AUGUSTINE (fl. A.D. 395-430) more than quotes them. He discusses them as being the work of the Evangelist MARK, and says that they were publicly read in the churches.
- Based upon the evidence, there is no legitimate reason that any reasonable person would think that Mark 16:9-20 should not be in the Bible. There is a reason why we use and stand for the King James Bible here at Grace Life Bible Church. You need to be skeptical of any so called scholarship that tries to change or correct the Bible. Either we have a final authority or we do not.

So What is the Real Problem with the Last Twelve Verses of Mark?

- The real problem is the doctrine that is contained within these verses, especially in 15 through 18.
 - Mark 16:15-16—all the mainline denominations consider this to be their commission and marking order for today even though they don't accurately teach verse 16.
 - Mark 16:17—the Baptist want verses 15 and 16 but drop out at verse 17 while the Pentecostal/charismatic crowd claims that tongues and exorcism is for today.
 - Mark 16:18—the Baptists want no part of this verse. Pentecostals pick and chose what is working today and what is not. Meanwhile, the Kentucky snake handlers and full gospel crowd tempt fate routinely by claiming the entire passage is for us today.
- Doctrinally it would be a lot easier to just say based upon the authority of the two most ancient manuscripts this passage should not be in the Bible. By doing that controversy is avoid and no one is forced to actually study their Bible.

- The real problem people have in Mark 16 has nothing to do with manuscripts, texts, and translations it has to do with a failure to rightly divide the word of truth. E.W. Bullinger touched on this point as well in Appendix 168 when he stated:
 - “When later transcribers of the Greek manuscripts came to the last twelve verses of Mark, and saw no trace of such spiritual gifts in existence, they concluded that there must be something doubtful about the genuineness of these verses. Hence, some may have marked them as doubtful, some as spurious, while others omitted them altogether.

A phenomenon of quite an opposite kind is witnessed in the present day.

Some (believers in these twelve verses), earnest in their desire to serve the Lord, but not "rightly dividing the Word of truth" as to the dispensations, look around, and, not seeing these spiritual gifts in operation, determine to have them (!) and are led into all sorts of more than doubtful means in their desire to obtain them. The resulting "confusion" shows that God is "not the author" of such a movement (see 1 Corinthians 14:31-33).”

- I accept these verses as they stand in the King James Bible. Over the next couple weeks we are going to study verse by verse through the passage as we have throughout our series of studies in Mark. I look forward to demonstrating to you from the word of God that the answer to the doctrinal problems raised in these verses is not the cast them out of the Bible but to rightly divide the word of truth.