

Intro:

Last time we developed the historical/geographical progress of the various manuscript families. We saw historical reasons why a certain set of manuscripts tended to become the most readily available manuscripts: the Majority.

The distinctive readings of the Majority texts tend to be dated later than the readings of the Alexandrian texts. There is no evidence for Majority readings prior to about AD 300.

When we speak of the “distinctive readings” we mean the disputed readings. Of course the vast majority of the New Testament is NOT disputed – the evidence for the undisputed portion goes right back to the apostolic period.

There remain two main points of contention about the Greek manuscripts that I want to cover:

1. Three key disputed passages
2. The deity of Christ: do the older mss. have a low view of Christ?

I. The shorter ending of Mark (Mk 16.9-20)**A. The Manuscript Evidence**

1. Almost all manuscripts contain the longer ending.
2. Only Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and one other do not have it.
3. Sinaiticus leaves room for it

B. The external evidence

1. Greek mss. exclusions noted above.
2. Other exclusions
 - a. Sinaitic Old Syriac
 - b. Some mss. of the Sahadic Coptic version
 - c. Mss of the Armenian trans.
 - d. Some versions of the Georgian trans.
3. Codex W adds an entire paragraph between vv. 14 and 15.
4. Inclusions with obelisks: “The passage is included in a number of manuscripts along with critical marks (such as asterisks or obeli) indicating that the scribe knew of the questionable nature of the passage.” White, p. 255

5. A different shortened ending found in the Latin “k”
6. Same shorter ending combined with longer ending in a number of mss.
7. Some Old Church Slavonic mss. include only vv. 9-11 of longer ending
8. Jerome
 - a. Aware of mss that did not contain the passage
 - b. Knew of the “W” addition, indicated it had some popularity

C. Scholarly argument for exclusion based on external evidence

B. B. Warfield: “The existence of the shorter conclusion... is *a fortiori* evidence against the longer one.”

Multiplicity of readings suggests that the longer ending is not original else the scribes would not have been attempting to “explain” the abrupt shorter ending with other passages.

“One must explain the existence of the shorter ending *and* the use of asterisks and obeli in some manuscripts to set vv 9 through 20 off *and* the inclusion of the long paragraph in W and the manuscripts that put both the long and short endings together. There simply would be no need for all these different endings if vv 9 through 20 were a part of the gospel when it was originally written.”

D. The internal evidence (subjective)

1. Change of style
 - a. Some see a definite change in style between verse 8 and verse 9
 - b. Others see no change of style
2. Content/Vocabulary
 - a. The reproach of the disciples (14)
 - 1) It is suggested that this is uncharacteristic of Jesus’ post-resurrection ministry

“This is quite out of character, given the other accounts of Jesus’ dealings with the disciples after the resurrection. It is so strong that at least one scribe felt it needed toning down and introduced the ninety-word interpolation preserved today

by Codex W.”

2) But! See these passages

a) Luke 24.25-27

b) John 20.26-29

c) John 21.20-22

Rebuke is not foreign to Jesus’ post-resurrection ministry.

3) Is baptism connected to belief? (16)

a) Jesus never taught anything like this

b) But! Peter did (Ac 2.38)

c) Second half of Mk 16.16 makes it impossible to interpret baptism as necessary to salvation

4) Are all believers to experience the snake-handling/poison drinking of verse 18?

a) The apostles performed all these signs (called ‘signs of an apostle’ – 2 Cor 12.12)

b) Paul specifically endured the bite of a poisonous snake (Ac 28.3-5)

c) And note! The other signs are not the universal experience of all believers – in fact, they died out with the apostles

E. Three possibilities

1. Mark originally included the longer ending and through some accident it was left out of some early manuscripts causing various attempts at editing

2. Mark issued two editions of his gospel, one shorter and one longer

a. Longer ending added later, by Mark.

b. This would account for the many variations

c. Does not seem highly likely

3. Abrupt ending moved scribes to supply longer ending

Conclusion:

“Whatever the case may be regarding the genesis of the various endings of Mark, we can say that given the external evidence, we believe every translation should provide the passage. However, we believe that every translation should note the fact that there is good reason to doubt the authenticity of the passage as well. Allow the readers of Scripture to ‘be diligent’ (2 Timothy 2.15) in their own studies and come to their own conclusions.” White, p. 257.

The treatment of various versions:

NASB: “Later mss add vv 9-20”

NIV: “The earliest manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20.”

NKJV: “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.”

KJV: no note

ESV: “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.”

My conclusion:

1. The longer ending is very old, being quoted by Irenaeus
2. It might be non-original
3. It is not any problem doctrinally, in spite of unusual verses (nor is it a doctrinal problem to leave it out)
4. It should be included, but noted

Personal conviction: it is original; it is hard to see some scribe making an extended piece like this up. My opinion!