

What Do You Do With The End Of Mark's Gospel?

by PAUL CARTER, 6/25/2018

I don't own a commentary written in the last 100 years that argues in favor of the longer ending of Mark's Gospel.

Not one.

"It is virtually certain that 16:9–20 is a later addition and not the original ending of the Gospel of Mark." (James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, Pillar New Testament Commentary. Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 497.)

"The earliest Greek, versional and patristic evidence supports the conclusion that Mark ended his Gospel at Ch. 16:8." (William Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1974), 601.)

"The undisputed facts are that everything which follows 16:8 in any surviving MS (manuscript) can confidently be declared non-Markan on grounds of attestation, style, and content; thus the Gospel in the earliest form in which we can trace it ended at 16:8." (Dennis Nineham, *Saint Mark*, The Penguin New Testament Commentaries. (London: Penguin Group, 1992), 439)

R.T. France doesn't even consider it an open question. He simply explains why he isn't asking it: "The purpose of this note is not to argue again for what is the virtually unanimous verdict of modern textual scholarship, that the authentic text of Mark available to us ends at 16:8, but rather to set out as simply and clearly as possible (which inevitably will mean some oversimplification) the data which have contributed to that consensus." (R.T. France, *The Gospel Of Mark*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 685.)

Robert Gundry simply concludes his commentary with 16:8 and doesn't even bother discussing the longer endings.

And yet.

When I preached on the ending of Mark's Gospel yesterday at my church and explained this, by way of explaining why I was only preaching on verses 1-8, the most common piece of feedback I received was some version of this: "How come we've never heard of this before?"

That's a good question. As pastors, few things are more important than helping our people understand what is and is not the Word of God. I should have done this sooner. But for better or for worse I did it yesterday. This may not be the answer but it is at least an example. If you want to check out how I handled it see [here](#).

Even though scholars from across the theological spectrum are now virtually unanimous in understanding the Gospel of Mark as ending at verse 8 most Bible printers and publishers continue to include the extra verses. The ESV does so after a paragraph break and a brief disclaimer. It then puts verses 9-20 inside a set of double brackets.

The TNIV goes a step further and shrinks the font and puts the verses in italics.

But one way or another, they still appear in most modern versions of the Bible and therefore even if you aren't ever planning on preaching a sermon on the ending of Mark's Gospel you need to know how these verses ought to be handled.

Towards that end I offer the following 3 suggestions...

<Please go to <https://ca.thegospelcoalition.org/columns/ad-fontes/what-do-you-do-with-the-end-of-marks-gospel/> to see the author's Three Suggestions. Or just 'Google' the article title. Mark M>