

### *Was Mark 16:9-20 added to the Bible?*

The end section of Mark is not thought to be part of the original gospel. Verses 9-20 of Mark are in brackets which means that this is a variant, or text which has been added to Mark.

The Bible is the living and active word (He 4:12). It is accurate and trustworthy (Ps 119:142, 151, 160). Scripture defends itself. The Bible is an accurate English translation<sup>1</sup> of the original manuscripts—understand the science and history of manuscripts and the passing down of Holy Scripture.

Scripture is based on ancient sources which have been discovered. The Holy Spirit is the author (2 Pe 1:21) and the preserver of scripture (Is 40:8). He inspired writers and preservers of God's word ensuring that it remains pure (Ps 19:8).

The Lord is able to preserve ancient texts. Copies are close to the originals. When they have been compared, they all say the same thing (Ps 19:7). Sometimes scribes left something out or they tried to clarify scripture. Scholars know when they are doing that. If, for example, something shows up in a later manuscript but it is not found in earlier ones, then they know that it was added later.

In Mark there is an ending that did not appear in his original writings. That's why it's in brackets. There is a shorter ending and there is a longer ending. Verse 8 reads: "So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid." That is it.

Some people did not like that ending. To them it sounded like stopping.

The endings do not belong. External evidence argues for exclusion. Textual scholars generally agree.

Internal evidence argues for exclusion, as well. Internally the text is foreign. The ending came from other scriptures—a sort of patchwork thrown together.

Mark's ending did not need fixing. His gospel account started abruptly<sup>2</sup> and it ended abruptly. Mark proved that Jesus is the son of God. His writings followed Jesus through his ministry to his resurrection.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> If you have a formal equivalency—an actual translation.

<sup>2</sup> At the baptism. He starts at the ministry to John the Baptist in verse two. He has nothing before the ministry of Jesus and he has nothing after the resurrection of Jesus.

<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, John. The Fitting End to Mark's Gospel. Mark 16:9–20. Grace to You. 5 Jun 11: <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/41-85/the-fitting-end-to-marks-gospel>