

**Mark 16:9-20 — “Understanding Mark’s Ending & the Great Commission”**

It is reassuring at the end to find that the general result of all these discoveries and all this study is to strengthen the proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures, and our conviction that we have in our hands, in substantial integrity, the veritable Word of God (Sir Frederick Kenyon).

We have a wealth of manuscripts to draw from, and we stand on the shoulders of those who spent their lives studying manuscripts and refining the methods of textual criticism. Our extremely accurate, modern editions of the New Testament are possible because of the labors of many people whom you may never know about. Whether or not you realize it, you’re probably using the fruits of textual criticism every day.  
(Brandon Crowe, PhD at U. of Edinburgh)

***The main argument:*****★Mark’s gospel ends at Mark 16:8 — “for they were afraid.”**

- The earliest and most reliable Greek mss extant (we have) clearly show Mark’s text ends here.
- And early Christian writers also affirm it ends here: Clement of Alexandria 215AD; Origen 250AD; Eusebius 330AD; Jerome 420AD).
- But various manuscripts have different “endings to mark” (often called the Shorter & Longer endings: vv.9-20) & variations therein.

*We need to examine these endings in two general categories* (the science of “textual criticism”):

**1. EXTERNAL evidence** (outside the text)

- how many? the quantity of manuscripts [how many manuscripts support a certain “reading”]
- where are the manuscripts from? (Israel, Egypt, Asia Minor, Syria)
- what language?

**2. INTERNAL evidence** (inside the text)

- The grammar
- The vocabulary
- The style
- The theology

Conclusion by Bruce Metzger (New Testament Scholar of the Biblical Texts/Manuscripts):

- **On the basis of good external evidence and strong internal considerations it appears that the earliest ascertainable form of the Gospel of Mark ended with 16:8.**

**A brief study on the “inspiration of the Bible” and the “reliability of our English translations”**

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- In Greek alone, there are more than 5,800 manuscripts today. Many of these are fragmentary, especially the older ones, but the average Greek NT [New Testament] MS [manuscript] is over 450 pages long. Altogether, there are more than 2.6 million pages of text, leaving hundreds of witnesses for every book of the NT. (Dan Wallace).

**So then:**

★ The Bible is **accurate** archeologically, geographically, historically, systematically, scientifically, prophetically, and it is **miraculous** in that it is life changing. It was **written** over a span of 1,500 years, by more than 40 authors, spanning 3 continents, and yet is perfect in **accuracy** & perfectly **unified** in theology.

1. The Bible is COMPLETE (Ps 19.7)
2. The Bible is UNIFIED (Psalm 19:7-9)
3. The Bible is TRUE (Psalm 119.151)
4. The Bible is ALIVE (Hebrews 4.12)
5. The Bible is SAVING (1 Peter 1.23-25)
6. The Bible is PRESERVED (Psalm 12.6-7)
7. The Bible is SELF-AUTHENTICATING (2 Tim 3.16-17)

**GREAT COMMISSION PASSAGES IN THE NT:**

1. The **Model** - John 20.21
2. The **Message** - Luke 24:44-48
3. The **Means** - Acts 1.8
4. The **Methodology** - Matt 28:18-20

**The Great Commission demands:**

1. sacrifice of comfort
2. confrontation in love
3. urgency in tone
4. death to self-love
5. trusting God's providence
6. every Christian's obedience

**THESIS** — As we focus on Matthew 28:18-20, we'll better understand the **Great Commission**:

**I. THE AUTHORITY OF THE GREAT COMMISSION****II. THE AGENDA OF THE GREAT COMMISSION**

You must make disciples!

1. **You Must Go!**
2. **Baptize!**
3. **Teach!**

**III. THE ASSISTANCE OF THE GREAT COMMISSION****IV. THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE GREAT COMMISSION*****So what part can YOU play in the Great Commission?***

- **Prayer.** For the missionaries — Dorothy Callier, Sean Ransom, Liam Kim, Ratan Konala.
- **Giving.** Generous, sacrificial giving. Give to the support. Hold the rope while others go down deep into the well itself. So you support those who go down to the mission field.
- **Contact.** Encourage the missionaries regularly via communication.
- **Going.** To the lost; opening the mouth; speaking of Christ; communicating Truth.
- **Disciple-making.** Your obligation is to "teach" others to "obey all Christ commanded"
- **Outward-oriented.** We are upward (glorify God), inward (love the saints), forward (toward heaven), \*and\* we must remember to be outward (toward the lost!)
- **Consider.** Is God calling you to missionary work? to labor? to serve? to go? Have you prayed about where God may have you to serve (young, old, single, married, retired)?

The preaching of the Word of God must be the central element of the witness of any local church, because our Bibles say that it is through preaching that men and women are saved. We must seek to engage with others person to person.

This seems to be where so many of us are falling short as Christians.

Too often either we cannot or will not engage with transgressors so as to teach them God's ways. No one becomes a Christian by osmosis, by silent and unwitting absorption of the truth. No one sucks up Christianity just from being around us and suddenly becomes a Christian without being informed of the truth as it is in Jesus. Carrying around a Bible to show yourself a Christian might eventually spark an interest in someone. However, opening it, speaking it, and living it is evangelism, whereas simply having a Bible, however profoundly displayed, cannot be more than a preliminary maneuver intended to open the door to closer dealings with a needy sinner.

(Jeremy Walker, *The Brokenhearted Evangelist*)

## RESCUE THE PERISHING

Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying,  
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;  
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,  
Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save.

*Rescue the perishing,  
Care for the dying;  
Jesus is merciful,  
Jesus will save.*

Though they are slighting Him, Still He is waiting,  
Waiting the penitent child to receive;  
Plead with them earnestly, plead with them gently;  
He will forgive if they only believe. [Refrain]

Rescue the perishing, Duty demands it;  
Strength for thy labor the Lord will provide;  
Back to the narrow way patiently win them;  
Tell the poor wanderer a Savior has died.

## FACING A TASK UNFINISHED

Facing a task unfinished That drives us to our knees  
A need that, undiminished Rebukes our slothful ease  
We, who rejoice to know Thee Renew before Thy  
throne  
The solemn pledge we owe Thee To go and make Thee  
known  
Where other lords beside Thee Hold their unhindered  
sway  
Where forces that defied Thee Defy Thee still today  
With none to heed their crying For life, and love, and  
light  
Unnumbered souls are dying And pass into the night

*We go to all the world  
With kingdom hope unfurled  
No other name has power to save  
But Jesus Christ The Lord*

We bear the torch that flaming Fell from the hands of  
those  
Who gave their lives proclaiming That Jesus died and  
rose  
Ours is the same commission The same glad message  
ours  
Fired by the same ambition To Thee we yield our  
powers

O Father who sustained them O Spirit who inspired  
Savior, whose love constrained them To toil with zeal  
untired  
From cowardice defend us From lethargy awake!  
Forth on Thine errands send us To labor for Thy sake

## O CHURCH ARISE!

O Church Arise and put your armor on  
Hear the call of Christ our Captain  
For now the weak can say that they are strong  
In the strength that God has given  
With shield of faith and belt of truth  
We'll stand against the devil's lies  
An army bold whose battle-cry is Love  
Reaching out to those in darkness

Our call to war to love the captive soul  
But to rage against the captor  
And with the sword that makes the wounded whole  
We will fight with faith and valor  
When faced with trials on every side  
We know the outcome is secure  
And Christ will have the prize for which He died  
An inheritance of nations