

No Failing Words

Mark 16:9-20

[Some of the earliest manuscripts do not include 16:9–20.]

Mark 16:9 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

1. How can we be sure that we have the actual words of the NT writers?

- A. Number of manuscripts
- B. Date of manuscripts
- C. External support of manuscripts

“Has the NT been hopelessly corrupted? Even the bona fide textual critics who happen to be skeptics have not been able to demonstrate this to be so...Further, in the passages in which the text is in doubt, no cardinal doctrine is at stake.”

– Daniel Wallace

2. Is Mark 16:9-20 part of the original ending of Mark?

A. Thematic awkwardness

v. 9	Appearance to Mary of Magdala	Jn. 20:11–17 (with Lk. 8:2)
v. 10	Mary of Magdala as messenger	Jn. 20:18
vv. 11, 13	Disciples' unbelief	Lk. 24:11, 41
vv. 12–13	Walk to Emmaus	Lk. 24:13–35
v. 14	Appearance to the eleven	Lk. 24:36–49; Jn. 20:19–23
v. 14	Rebuke of unbelief	Jn. 20:24–29 [?]
v. 15	Evangelistic commission	Mt. 28:19; Lk. 24:47
v. 19	Ascension	Lk. 24:50–51 (together with the 'sitting at the right hand' theology)

B. Verbal incongruity

C. Early manuscript absence

D. Early external support lacking

3. Why is this not a problem and what can it teach us?

A. Confidence that we do have the original words of the NT writers

B. Encouragement of the uniformity of Christian witness about Jesus from the start

C. Reminds us that the Gospel has power and transforms life