

Mark 16:9-20; A Textual Criticism
by John Stewart

Biblical Reference: Mark 16:9-20.

Problem: The Textus Receptus includes 9-20 after verse 8. Four mss. omit vs. 9-20, some have a shorter ending only, and some include 9-20 before or after the shorter ending.

The Shorter Ending: πάντα δε τα παρηγγελμενα τοις περι τον πετρον συντομως εξηγγειλαν. μετα δε ταυτα και αυτος ο Ιησους απο ανατολης και αχρι δυσσως εξαπεστειλεν δι αυτων το ιερον και αβθαρον κηρυγμα της αιωνιου σωτηριας. αμην.

"And they promptly reported all these instructions to Peter and his companions. And after that, Jesus Himself sent out through them from East to West the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation. Amen."

Variant Readings:

1. Add vs. 9-20 with asterisks, obeli, or critical note in ms.
2. Omit vs. 9-20.
3. Add shorter ending only.
4. Add shorter ending and 9-20.
5. Add 9-20 and shorter ending.

I. External Evidence - Accumulation

Include 9-20

(Tisch. 8th) ACDEFWGHK (L vide supra) MSUVX **ΓΔΠ** al fere omn c ff²
g^{1,2} l n q vg cop go syr^{cu} syr^{sch} etp txt syr^{hr} arm^{ed} aeth^{edd}

(U.B.S.) ACDKX **ΔΟΠ** f¹³ 28 33 274txt 565 700 892 1009 1010 1071 1079
1195 1230 1242 1253 1344 1365 1546 1646 2148 2174 Byz lect^{60,69,70,185,547,883}

it^{aur,c,d} supp ff² l¹n,o,a vg syr^{c,p,h,pal} cop^{sa} bo fay (goth ms.
lacks vv. 12-20) arm^{mss} geo^B Diat.^a in Justin? Iren.^{gr.lat} Tert.
Aphraetes Apost. Constitutions Didymus

(Legg) Codd. Uncs. pler. et minusc. omn 9-20 Lab., ... vg
Sy^c pesh, hl^{txt} Cop^{sa} bo (ed.) Arm(ed.) Aeth(ed.) Geo^B Const. Apost. VI
15 de baptismo, Pseudo-Caesar Diat 4 193, Hippolyto, Const. Apost. VIII
I Irenaeo, Justin Apol I 45

(Alford) (1) ACD rel vulg lat^{a2} c ff² g¹² l n q Syr syr^{cu}
syr^(txt) syr jer copt goth aeth arm-recent-mss (2) It is cited Iren.

(Lane) ACDKLWX~~ACTYΦ~~ 28 33 274 565 700 892 1009 latt syr^c ph pal coppt

(Aland) CKADLW~~ΓΑΘΥΛΦ~~ pl lat sy^p sa bo Ju(?) Ir(lat)

Omit 9-20

(Tisch 8th) ~~N~~BK arm^{cdd} antiq et quidem^{ven} aeth^m et^a arvat

(Aland) ~~B~~N 2386 K sy^c arm^{codd}; Cl Or Eus

(Legg) ~~N~~BK sy^s Geo¹ et A Aeth(3 cdd) Arm(8 cdd)

(Alford) ~~B~~K arm-old-mss Clem-Rom Just Clem-Alex, Marin Quaest, Seu,
Vict, Greg-nyss (or Hesych of Jerus.) Jer. Euthym

(Lane) ~~N~~B 304 2386 lect?

(UBS) ~~N~~B 2386 (Lect? lection ends w/vs 8) syr^s arm^{mss} eth^{mss}
geo^{1,A} Clement Origen Eusebius mss^{acc.} to Euseb. Jerome^{mss} acc to Jerome
Ammonius

Include 9-20 with asterisks, obeli, or critical note in ms.

(Tisch 8th) 137, 138

(Legg) 137, 138

(UBS) f¹ 137 138 1110 1210 1215 1216 1217 1221 1241^{vid} 1582

Add shorter ending

(Legg) K

(Lane) K

(UBS) it^KAdd shorter ending and vs. 9-20(Aland) L^ψ 099 0112 (274^{mg.}) 579 (K) sy^h mg aeg^{pt} aeth^{codd}(UBS) L^ψ 099 0112 579 syr^h mg cop^{sa^{mss}} bo^{mss} eth^{mss}Add 9-20 and shorter ending(UBS) 274^{mg} 1^{961,1602}

II. External Evidence - Culmination

Include vs. 9-20: ACDEFGHKMSUVWX~~ΓΔΘΑΤΨ~~ 28 33 274^{txt} 565 700

892 1009 1010 1071 1079 1195 1230 1242 1253 1344 1365 1546 1646 2148

2174 Byz lect^{60,64,70,185,547,883} it^{aur,c,d^{supp}ff^{2g}1²} 1,n,o,q vg syr^{c,p,h,pal}cop^{sa,bo,fay} (goth*) arm^{mss} aeth geo^B Diat.^{a,i,n} Justin? Iren.^{gr} lat

Tert. Pseudo-Caesar, Hippolytos, Justin, Aphraetus, Apostolic Constitutions, Didymus

Omit vs. 9-20: NB 304 2386^(K) (Lect? lection ends w/vs 8)syr^s arm^{mss} eth^{mss} geo^{1,A} Clem. of Rome Orig. Eusebius mss^{acc} to EusebiusJerome mss^{acc} to Jerome Ammonius Justin? Clem. of Alex. Marin Quaest,

Severus of Antioch, Victorinus, Greg. of Nyssa, Euthynnus

Include vs. 9-20 with asterisks, obeli, or critical note in ms.:f¹, 137 138 1110 1210 1215 1216 1217 1221 1241^{vid} 1582

Include shorter ending: K (or it^K)

Include shorter ending and vs. 9-20: L 099 0112 579 syr^h mg
 samss bomss
 cop

Include vs. 9-20 and shorter ending: 274^{mg} lect. 961,1602

III. External Evidence - Distribution

	Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta	Other	
			(A)	(B)		
Include 9-20	A E F G H K M S U V r 1009 1010 1079 1195 1344 1546 1646 Byz lect ⁶⁰ , 69,70,185, 547,883 _{syr} P, ^h (goth. ms. lacks vv. 12-20) eth Aphraet.	C A 33 892 ^{txt} cop ^{sa} bo fay Didymus	W φ (or f ¹³) 28	φ 565 700 1071 1242 1365 2174 syr ^c pal arm ^{mss} geo ^B Justin?	D it ^{aur, c,} d supp ff ² g ^{12,1,n,o,a} vg ^c Diat. ^a i, ⁿ Iren ^{gr} , lat ^{Tert.} Hippolytos	X 1230 1253 2148 Pseudo- Cae. Apostolic Consti.
Omit 9-20	eth ^{mss} Severus of Antioch Gregory of Nyssa	W B Clem- Alex.		arm ^{mss} geo ^{1,A} Origen Eus. ^{mss} Eus. Justin?	syr ^S Clement Clement of Rome, Jerome mss acc to Jer. (K) Victorinus	304, 2386 Lect? Marin Quae. Euthymius
Include w/aster- isks, obeli, or crit- ical note	1110 1215 1217 1221	1241 ^{vid}	f ¹	1210 1216 1582	137 138	
shorter ending					K(or it ^K)	
shorter ending & 9-20	eth ^{mss}	L 099 579 0112 Cop samss bo mss aegpt			Syr ^h mg	
9-20 & shorter ending	274 ^{mg} lect ^{961,} 1602					

IV. Evaluation of External Evidence

Include 9-20

The overwhelming distribution of evidence supporting the inclusion of 9-20, its bulk and attestation throughout all major text-types together with Caesarean support, forces the balances of external evidence to weigh in favor of the inclusion. The versions, Old Latin and coptic especially, add support to the addition.

Omit 9-20

Although only four mss. support the omission, the next best-attested reading to the inclusion must be the addition. *M* and B may be impressive to many at this point, but Vaticanus echoes her support of the inclusion by leaving the proper space for verses 9-20.

Add shorter ending and 9-20

Here five mss. have this dual ending, plus a few edited mss. from vss.

Include 9-20 with asterisks, obeli, or critical note in ms.

There is nearly matching support for this particular variant as the last two previously mentioned, although its support is primarily Byzantine with shades of Caesarean.

Add 9-20 and shorter ending

No real support.

Add shorter ending

Only it^K has this.

V. Internal Evidence -- Transcriptional and Intrinsic

There are four different endings to be dealt with: the short ending (stop at verse 8 after *ἐξέβησαν γὰρ*), the intermediate ending, the long ending (add vs. 9-20) and the long ending expanded (by adding intermediate ending).

In dealing with this problem, there is more to the problem than an error of sight, homoeoteleuton, or itacism. Each must be dealt with through intrinsic evidence, which will form a basis for resolving transcriptional problems.

Include 9-20

Contrary to the speculation of F.F. Bruce who feels these verses inspired yet not "an integral part of the Gospel to which they are now attached" and contrary to the claims of Bruce Metzger, Griesbach, and others that "these verses must be judged by internal evidence to be secondary," the inclusion of 9-20 is perhaps the best variant to account for the abrupt ending *ἐξέβησαν γὰρ* - "for they were afraid."

On stylistic grounds, the claim has been made that the inclusion of 9-20 contains a high percentage of non-Markan words. This has been sufficiently shown by Burgon to be the usual method of any ending. Also, Professor Broadus ingeniously used the preceding twelve verses (15:44-16:8) to show the invalidity of this accusation, and came up with seventeen peculiar words not found elsewhere in Mark.

Metzger argues internally for the omission by citing how Mary Magdalene is identified in verse nine even though she is mentioned previously (15:47 and 16:1), showing evidence for the abrupt ending at verse eight and the secondary addition of verses 9-20. One need not

look for to see that beginning with 15:40 two Marys are introduced, so in every case (15:40, 47, 16:1) Mary Magdalene must be identified to distinguish her from Mary the mother of Jesus.

Morgenthaler's decision, based on word-statistical evidence, concludes that "vs. 9-20... could never have been written by the same hand as the rest of the gospel of Mark." This statement seems a little strong, yet on internal grounds his point is well taken: the last twelve verses of Mark are unusually different, causing an intelligent explanation of this phenomena to be necessary. Perhaps, as Farmer speculates, Mark copied his conclusion from an existing source, causing his style and vocabulary to remain out of this section. This would account for the internal difficulties, but would not explain how the twelve verses ever came to be omitted, nor how the intermediate ending came to be. Possible explanations will be given along with appropriate variants.

To reconcile the Markan account of the unbelief of the eleven with the Lukan account where the eleven were terrified, yet Peter had seen the risen Lord, needs further study. This creates an internal problem which weakens the inclusion of 9-20. As F.F. Bruce says, there seems to be no way to reconcile this.

Exclude 9-20

Although externally weak, this variant has some of the strongest internal support, yet a fatal flaw. The omission would take care of the unusual vocabulary of 9-20, but this would have the text end at verse eight with *ἐφοβούτο γάρ*. This is more than highly unlikely, but is absurd to conjecture this fastest-moving of gospels to conclude with, "for they were afraid."

Include shorter ending

The shorter ending is flat in contrast to the glorious 9-20 inclusion. It too has a high percentage of non-Marcian words, has a complex rhetorical style in contrast to the simple style of Mark, and the closing phrase betrays the hand of a later Greek theologian. It is possible that this ending was developed by heretics who didn't like the heavy resurrection emphasis in 9-20, or didn't like the supernaturalism which permeates this section.

VI. Summary and Conclusion

In all fairness, the combined evidence points to the inclusion of vs. 9-20 as being original, yet with much suspicion. Since these verses appear to have less Marcan flavor, there perhaps must be some undetermined factor behind this. As previously stated, Mark may have copied this ending from some source, causing the divergence in vocabulary and style. Since the omission of 9-20 is only in four Greek mss. (and 2386 is a debatable witness), it is highly unlikely that this was original. Also, the abrupt ending *ἐφοβήθητο γάρ* is unimaginable as a Gospel ending. The intermediate ending lacks support, and is highly suspect of heretical editing.

The only possible explanations of Mark's ending are the inclusion of vs. 9-20 as original, or the emendation that the original ending was lost (which no early father supports). This forces one to proceed with 9-20 as the inspired text, with reservation due to internal conflict.

Bibliography (Annotated)

- Aland, Kurt. Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum: Locis Parallelis Evangeliorum Apocryphorum et Patrum Adhibitio. Stuttgart: Wurttembergische Bibelanstalt, 1964.
(Used for external evidence only)
- Bruce, F.F. "The End of the Second Gospel," Evangelical Quarterly (July 1945): 169-181.
(Bruce favors the omission of 9-20 as an integral part of Mark. He believes the existing text ends abruptly with verse eight, and the addition of 9-20 has an irreconcilable contradiction, verse 13, "neither believed they them," with Luke 24:33, "The Lord is risen indeed and has appeared to Simon." He hints at a possible "lost ending", and argues for the inspiration of 9-20!)
- Colwell, Ernest C. "Mark 16:9-20 in the Armenian Version," Journal of Biblical Literature LXI (1937): 369-86.
(Colwell favors the omission, and gives a refined compendium of the Armenian mss., and their support of the omission.)
- Cook F.C. The Holy Bible: New Testament, Vol. 1. London: John Murray, 1878.
(Much of Cook's work is evidence for inclusion of verses 9-20, without refuting omission in detail.)
- Creed, J.M. "The Conclusion of the Gospel according to Saint Mark," Journal of Theological Studies XXX (Jan. 1930): 175-180.
(Creed aligns closely with Bruce in favoring the omission and abrupt ending at verse eight.)
- Burgon, John W. The Last 12 Verses of the Gospel according to Mark. Ann Arbor: Sovereign Grace, 1959.
(Strongest presentation of arguments for the inclusion of 9-20: the history and textual evidence, internal and external, and the reasons for counting the omission as spurious. Burgon has yet to be refuted seriatim, and much of his worthwhile scholarship has molded many minds to include 9-20.)
- Farmer, William R. "The Last 12 Verses of Mark Reconsidered." Syllabus, n.d.
(Farmer presents a strong case for the inspiration and authenticity of Mark 16:9-20, but yields as speculation a possible source from which Mark copied 9-20. This syllabus is a fine, thorough treatment of the subject.)

- Greenlee, J. Harold. Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964.
(In one breath Greenlee eliminates 9-20, deeming them secondary.)
- Legg, S.C.E., ed. Novum Testamentum Graece Secundum Textum Westcotto-Hortianum. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940.
(Used for external evidence only.)
- Metzger, Bruce M. A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament. London: U.B.S., 1971.
(Metzger gives reasons for the committee's rejection of 9-20 as original, its bracketed inclusion in the U.B.S. text, and the conclusion of a missing original ending.)
- Metzger, Bruce M. The Text of the New Testament, Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.
(Here Metzger briefly lists the variants involved, and treats them as to their external and internal support, and concludes the same as above.)
- Lane, William L. Commentary on the Gospel of Mark. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974.
(Lane adds considerable external evidence, and concludes 9-20 is secondary.)
- Tischendorf, Constantine. Novum Testamentum Graece. 8th ed. 3 vol. Lipsal, 1869.
(Used for external evidence only.)
- Zwemer, S.M. "The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel of Mark," Evangelical Quarterly (Jan. 1945): 13-23.
(Zwemer favors the inclusion of 9-20, and uses arguments of Scrivener, Burgon and Hills to support his views. This is mostly a summary of the best previous arguments, as Zwemer adds few if any of his own.)