

**Introduction**

1. Have you ever been in a conversation and later thought of something else you wish that you had said?
  - a. Maybe you had a good comeback or perhaps an explanation you thought would have been helpful?
  - b. In this lesson we come to twelve verses that most scholars believe are additions to Mark's gospel.
  - c. They are generally not accepted as canonical, that is fully scripture for our faith and practice.
  - d. Most of what is in these verses is found elsewhere in scripture, but some of it, such as verses 16 and 18, presents theological and practical problems.
2. So how did these verses come to be added to Mark's gospel?
  - a. The two earliest and most reliable Greek manuscripts of Mark as well as early copies in other languages as well as lectionaries (prescribed readings) attest the ending of Mark at Mk 16:8.
  - b. Early Christian writers, such as Clement of Alexandria (d. CE 215), Origen (d. CE 254), Eusebius (d. CE 339), and Jerome (d. CE 420) attest to the end of the gospel at Mk 16:8.
  - c. Eusebius and Jerome both stated that most of the Greek manuscripts they knew had nothing after v. 8.
  - d. According to James Brooks, Mark's gospel ends in four different ways in the ancient textual witnesses (James Brooks, *Mark*, 272).
    - 1) The gospel ends at Mark 16:8.
    - 2) Some early and later versions include vv. 9-20, the so-called long ending.
    - 3) One Old Latin manuscript adds after v. 8 the so-called short ending, "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."
    - 4) About seven later Greek manuscripts of medium and inferior value have after v. 8 the short ending and then the long ending (vv. 9-20).
  - e. What can we conclude about the ending of Mark?
    - 1) The best and earliest manuscripts end at Mk 16:8.
    - 2) Jerome and Eusebius attest the ending at v. 8.
    - 3) External evidence, such as the existence of three different endings and their various combinations, goes against all three of the alternate endings.
    - 4) Internal evidence of vocabulary, grammar, and style reveals that the three possible alternative endings are unlike the vocabulary, grammar, and style found in the of the rest of Mark.
    - 5) The long ending may be an addition from other gospel accounts in an attempt to harmonize them.
    - 6) Matthew and Luke, who most likely used Mark as a source, do not follow his account after v. 8.
3. The additional endings appear to be attempts to supply a more appropriate ending to Mark's gospel.
4. Brooks notes, ". . . the prevailing view in contemporary scholarship is that Mark intended to end his Gospel with v. 8. The problem then becomes to explain why he did so" (Brooks, 274). Brooks also summarizes three possible explanations for the abrupt ending of Mark's gospel.
  - a. Ending with trembling, bewilderment, flight, and fear is not unusual in Mark as people were often amazed and fearful at His manifestation of God's power.
  - b. The abrupt ending of the gospel matches its abrupt beginning with the start of Jesus' ministry and no details about His earlier life.
  - c. ". . . Mark had a definite purpose in his ending. He apparently wanted an open ending to indicate that the story was not complete but was continuing beyond the time he wrote. He wanted his readers/hearers to continue the story in their own lives. By stating that the women told no one, he challenged his readers/hearers to assume the responsibility of telling the good news to everyone. . . . By his ending, Mark challenged the disciples of his day, and he continues to challenge the disciples of today, to live and witness for the Lord Jesus Christ in the present and future" (Brooks, 275).
5. However, let's take a look at the long ending of Mark in Mk 16:9-20. **Read Mk 16:9-20.**

## A. Resurrection Appearances (9-14)

1. Appearance to Mary Magdalene (9-11)
  - a. This account is consistent with other accounts found in the canonical gospels.
  - b. Regarding Mary Magdalene's encounter with the risen Jesus, **read Jn 20:11-18** and **Mt 28:8-10**.
  - c. Regarding the unbelieving response of the disciples, **read Lk 24:9-11**.
2. Appearance to two followers (12-13)
  - a. This resurrection appearance is also consistent with another gospel account.
  - b. **Read Lk 23:13-35**.
3. Appearance to the eleven disciples (14)
  - a. **Read Jn 20:19-20** and **Lk 24:36-49**.
  - b. John also records a second appearance to doubting Thomas in Jn 20:24-29.
4. Paul provides the best summary of Jesus' post resurrection appearances in **1 Cor 15:3-8**.

## B. The Great Commission (15)

1. This account is consistent with Jesus' command in Mt 28:18-20.
2. **Read Mt 28:16-20**.

## C. Belief AND Baptism (16)

1. This verse presents a potential doctrinal issue regarding baptismal re-generation.
2. Is baptism required for salvation or is only faith required?
3. It appears from Jesus' words to the thief on the cross that only faith is required since the thief could not have been baptized on the cross. **Read Lk 23:39-43**.
4. Warren Wiersbe notes, "A superficial reading of Mark 16:15-16 would suggest that sinners must be baptized to be saved, but this misinterpretation disappears when you note that the emphasis is on *believing*. If a person does not believe, he is condemned, even if he has been baptized (see John 3:16-18, 36). It was expected in the early church that believers would be baptized (Acts 2:41; 10:44-48)" (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Diligent*, 185).
5. Paul declared to the Galatian church that we are saved by faith and not by works. **Read Gal 3:1-6**.
6. Our *Baptist Faith and Message* (1963) states, "Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper."
7. Baptism is an important symbol of one's change in faith, but for Baptists baptism is not required for salvation.

## D. Signs of Faith (17-18)

1. Drive out demons in Jesus' name (17a)
  - a. This is something that Jesus and His disciples did many times as we have seen in Mark's gospel.
  - b. Paul cast out demons as recorded in Acts (cf., Ac 16:16-18, 19:11-12).
  - c. Some scholars question whether this ability continues among believers today.
  - d. There is evidence from eyewitness accounts, especially on the mission field, that it still does happen.
2. Speak in new tongues (17b)
  - a. The phrase "new tongues" (Gk., *glossais lalesousin kainais*) refers to "unknown, non-human languages."
    - 1) Paul also affirmed a gift of ". . . speaking in different kinds of tongues (Gk., *glosson*), and to still another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor 12:9-10). Some believers hold that these sign gifts (e.g., healing, miraculous powers, tongues, interpretation of tongues) were limited to the Apostolic period.
    - 2) Pentecostals point to this verse in support of their practice of speaking in unknown, heavenly tongues.

- b. At Pentecost Acts 2:5-12 presents evidence in support of supernatural enabling of believers to speak in human tongues/dialects (Gk., *te idia dialekto humon*) that they had not learned so that they could share the gospel with those who had gathered from around the known world to celebrate Pentecost.
  - c. Missionaries today work hard to learn other human languages in order to minister to those who speak those languages.
3. Pick up snakes and drink deadly poison and not be harmed (18a)
    - a. This verse serves as the sole scriptural basis for some who practice drinking poison and handling venomous snakes in worship today.
    - b. One possible scriptural corollary is Paul's encounter with a viper that bit him but did not kill him in Acts 28:1-6. However, Paul did not intentionally handle the viper as a sign of faith.
    - c. I find no scriptural evidence supporting the drinking of poison and surviving as an act of faith.
  4. Place hands on sick people and heal them (18b)
    - a. James 5:16 says, "The prayers of a righteous man availeth much."
    - b. Paul attests a spiritual gift of healing in 1 Cor 12:10-11: ". . . to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, . . ."
    - c. There are examples of healing by Peter and Paul in Acts (cf., Ac 3:1-10, 14:8-10).
    - d. Every miracle performed in the Acts preceded a powerful proclamation of the gospel.
    - e. We certainly pray for the sick and can lay hands on them as we pray. Any healing that is done comes from God and God alone.
  5. Wiersbe concludes, "Of themselves, miracles do not prove that a person has been sent by God, for the message must also be true to God's Word (see 2 Thess. 2; Rev. 13). . . . It is tragic when well-meaning but untaught people claim these signs for themselves and then die because of snake bites or poison. Of course, the excuse is given that they did not have enough faith! But whatever is not of faith is sin (Rom 14:23); therefore, they should not have done it in the first place. The person who takes up serpents just to prove his or her faith is yielding to the very temptation Satan presented to Jesus on the pinnacle of the temple (Matt. 4:5-7): 'Cast Yourself down and see if God will take care of You,' Satan said in effect. He wants us to 'show off' our faith and force God to perform unnecessary miracles. Jesus refused to tempt God, and we should follow His example. Yes, God cares for His children when, in His will, they are in dangerous places, but He is not obligated to care for us when we foolishly get out of His will. We are called to live by faith, not by chance, and to trust God, not tempt Him" (Wiersbe, 186).

#### **E. The Ascension of Jesus (19-20)**

1. This account is consistent with Luke's account. **Read Lk 24:50-53.**
2. Luke concludes his account of Jesus' ascension at the beginning of Acts. **Read Ac 1:9-11.**

#### **F. Questions/Thoughts for Reflection**

1. Do these verses add anything important to the total gospel record?
2. Why do you think that these verses may have been added by later editors?
3. How do you respond to those who believe that troublesome verses such as vv. 16 and 18a are normative for the practice of our faith today?
4. We must be careful in basing our faith and practice on only one verse. We must seek the full counsel of God's word.
5. How are you living out the challenge to share the gospel which is implied by the open ending of Mark?
6. Do you along with the women at the empty tomb stand in awe, amazement, and fear of the power of God demonstrated in the resurrection of Jesus?
7. **What are your insights and applications of God's message to you based on our long journey through the Gospel of Mark?**