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Mark 16



Gospel of Mark - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg discusses the controversial ending of the Gospel of Mark and the challenges of harmonizing the resurrection accounts in the four Gospels. He examines the evidence for and against the authenticity of verses 9-20 in Mark 16, including the writings of early church fathers. The relationship between baptism and salvation, the manifestation of spiritual gifts, and the need for faith and witness in overcoming doubt and skepticism are also explored.

Transcript

Let's turn to the last chapter in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 16. I mentioned in our introduction to the Gospel of Mark that there's a lot of controversy about how long this chapter really is supposed to be, because the most ancient manuscripts of Mark that have been found only contain eight verses. And if that's all there was in Mark, that would be very quick, it'd be quick work for us to finish it off in this session.

But as you can see in our Bibles, we have 20 verses, and there are other manuscripts that have other endings that are of different lengths than these. The close of the Book of Mark, therefore, is very much a matter of debate. And we'll talk about that.

I already did when we started in Mark, at the introduction, I talked about the arguments pro and con, the shorter endings and the longer ending and so forth. But that was many weeks ago now, and I think that I'll go over those things again when we come to, when it comes time to look at verse 9. But let's look at the first eight verses, which are found in all manuscripts and are uncontroversial. Now when the Sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices that they might come and anoint him.

Very early in the morning on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen and they said among themselves, who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us? But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away for it was very large and entering the tomb. They saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side and they were alarmed, but he said to them,

do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.

He is risen. He is not here. See the place where they laid him, but go and tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you into Galilee.

There you will see him as he said to you. And 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. And that's how our oldest manuscripts and the book of Mark, not a very decisive end.

And we'll talk about again some of the theories about that. But let's look at these verses. Now, the harmonization of the four gospels on the resurrection morning events is the most challenging part of the harmonizing of the gospels at all, because there are times when, of course, Matthew and Luke or Matthew and Mark or Mark and Luke will have differences between them in telling a same story.

But in many cases, we can tell that one of them is simply compressing the story or one is giving more detail, mentioning more people who were there and so forth. And that is the case in some respects in harmonizing the gospels on the resurrection accounts that we are reading here. But the problem here is that the resurrection account, that's one of the few things that all four gospels actually record.

The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus obviously are a central concern of all four of the gospels. The only other thing that's in all four gospels is the feeding of the 5000. Interestingly enough, everything else in the life of Jesus is recorded in only one, two or three of the gospels.

But we have four gospels telling us about Jesus resurrection and about the events that followed it. And sadly, they don't give us anything like sufficient information to know how all the events chronologically fit together. In fact, skeptics who don't believe in the Bible have put a challenge up on the Internet challenging anybody to give a sequential list of the events of the resurrection morning using all four gospels.

It actually can be done, it seems to me, and I believe I've done it in the past, not online, but I'm not going to go over it all right now because the time it takes to look at all four of the gospels and try to explain why I think things go a certain way. But we do have this. All four gospels agree that the first persons to come to the tomb on Sunday morning were women.

John only mentions Mary Magdalene, but she is also in this group and all four gospels mentioned Mary Magdalene coming to Matthew Mark and Luke mentioned other women, too. We have seen a list of women given in Mark chapter fifteen verse forty who were women who were looking on as Jesus was crucified and their names given were Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, the left. And Joseph and Salome, the same

women mentioned here, although in John's gospel, at least one other woman is mentioned as being there, and that was Mary, the mother of Jesus at the cross.

Now, whether she was at the tomb as well on Sunday morning, we don't know whether she is with these women. But Mary, the mother of Jesus, was also with the women at the cross, and that means that the list is not comprehensive. We just have a group of women and Mary Magdalene is prominent among them in all the list.

And it says that they had bought spices and that was when the Sabbath was passed. Remember, Jesus was crucified on a Friday afternoon. That, too, is controversial.

Some people think it was a Wednesday or Thursday, and I won't go into the arguments for that, because frankly, I don't think they're very important. And I don't think it's too important what day he was crucified. But different people get more or less excited about one alternative theory or another.

I believe the Bible is fairly plain that he was crucified the day before the Sabbath. What's not entirely plain is whether it was the regular Saturday Sabbath, which they had every week, or whether it was a special Sabbath, such as might fall at the beginning of a Passover festival. But the point here is when the Sabbath came, his body had been quickly buried.

They buried it Friday night or whatever night it was in order that his body might not still be hanging on the cross over the Sabbath. And so when the Sabbath had passed and that was a Sunday morning, it was the first day of the week. They could then go and give his body a proper anointing because he had been hastily buried.

And they also probably didn't have all the proper spices on hand until after the Sabbath. They had to buy them. So quite early in the morning, they found some shops open and bought some spices.

It says specifically, it doesn't say they brought them. It says they bought them. So it specifically indicates that they bought them that morning and they were bringing them to anoint the body of Jesus in a proper manner.

And it says it was very early in the morning on the first day of the week. They came to the tomb when the sun had risen. They were wondering how they'd moved the stone.

And I'm not sure how they had not thought of that earlier. They maybe thought they could find somebody on the side or near the side to help them move it. It's a very large stone and it's not likely that three or four women themselves could move it.

Besides which, the tomb had been sealed by the Roman authorities, but they may not have known that. The sealing of the tomb was an afterthought, it would appear, because when Jesus was buried, the Jews were concerned that someone might come and try to

steal the body. So they went to Pilate and got permission to steal it and have a guard set over it.

The women who had seen Jesus buried might have left before that event and may not have even known that the tomb had been sealed. All they knew is there was a stone there to move. And so they were musing among themselves, well, how are we going to get the stone to be moved? Who's going to do that for us? But then they looked up, I guess, and saw in a distance.

As they approached, they saw that the stone had in fact been moved. Now, they didn't know what to think about that. They didn't actually consider that Jesus had risen from the dead.

That wasn't something that crossed their mind. All the women except Mary Magdalene got to the tomb sooner than Mary did. She saw that the tomb was open and she assumed at that point that someone had stolen the body.

She ran back and told Peter and John. That's what John's Gospels says. She didn't actually go all the way to the tomb.

She saw in the distance the tomb was open. She thought someone had tampered with it. She ran off to help Peter and John, while the other women were at the tomb actually getting information from the angel.

So Mary didn't get any information. She just went to Peter and John. Someone took the body of Jesus.

We don't know where they took it. Peter and John jumped up and ran to the tomb and Mary trailing behind pretty far behind. Apparently, she's making the trip several times back and forth.

Peter and John get there. John gets the tomb first, but stops outside the tomb. Peter comes up behind and runs into the tomb.

And then John did. And they saw no angel. But they did see that the tomb was empty and they saw Jesus grave clothes there.

And apparently they realized that he hadn't been stolen because the grave clothes have been removed from the body. And even the napkin that had been wrapped around his head had been folded up separately and set neatly there, which grave robbers would have just grabbed the whole body that was all wrapped up. They wouldn't have undressed it and carried away, you know, naked.

And so it says John at that point believed. Then Peter and John left and Mary, who had been trailing behind him, finally got to the tomb for the first time. She had seen it from

the distance with the other women and gone back to hold them.

Then Peter and John got there before she got back. And then they left. And then she got there and she got to Jesus.

And after that, Jesus appeared to the women as they were on the road. That's how the gospels harmonize. I believe it's a little difficult.

I said it's complex. And so we'll just work with Mark here as much as possible. At this point, when they saw that the stone being rolled away, Mary Magdalene, according to John's gospel, separated from them and went to tell Peter and John.

But the other women went to the tomb. And they saw a young man called in a long white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. But he said to them, don't be alarmed.

You think Jesus of Nazareth, who is crucified. He is risen. He is not here.

See the place where they laid him. So they didn't see Jesus. They just saw the place and had an angel answer.

Now it says a young man. This is a very common way for the Bible to speak about angels when they appear to people. It says a man or two men or whatever.

In fact, one of the gospels says it was an angel. Mark says it was a young man. One gospel says it was two men.

One gospel is two angels. So you've got all four gospels read a little differently. Of course, there were two angels, sometimes called men, and sometimes only one is mentioned.

The one who gave this announcement. So they now understand that Jesus is going to Galilee ahead of them. It says in verse seven, go and tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you into Galilee.

There you will see him as he said to you. And 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, they didn't say anything to anyone as they ran.

They eventually did go apparently and tell the disciples as they were told to do. But you see, in the meantime, Peter and John had already visited the tomb because of Mary Magdalene's report. And that very night, Jesus appeared to the apostles in the upper room with Thomas absent.

And then eight days later, he appeared to them again. Now, what's interesting here is it says, go tell the disciples, I'll meet them in Galilee. And yet they are in Jerusalem.

And Jesus meets with them in the upper room that night in Jerusalem. In fact, he does so a week later, eight days later to they're still in Jerusalem. So it's this deal.

I go tell them I'll meet them in Galilee. Well, as I understand it, the disciples in this case doesn't mean the apostles alone. But I believe that Jesus had made an appointment for all the disciples in Galilee.

Along with the apostles to meet him on a certain mountain, which we read about in Matthew, Chapter 28, because in Matthew 28. And verse 16, it says, Then the eleven disciples went away to Galilee, to a mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted.

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I'm with you always, even to the end of the age.

Now, Jesus gave this announcement on a mountain in Galilee. We often call this the Great Commission, and rightly so. It is a great commission, though Mark has another great commission in Chapter 16 in the disputed verses where he says, Go and preach the gospel to every creature.

And that commission may have been given in Jerusalem. And we know that Luke in the book of Acts has Jesus ascending from a mountain in Judea, the Mount of Olives, just after giving another form of the Great Commission. You will receive power and the Holy Spirit has come upon you in Acts 1 8. And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

So we have three different versions of the Great Commission. They're not in conflict with each other. In my opinion, they were given on three different occasions and even different locations, because it would appear from Mark 16, as we shall see eventually here in our studies in the later verses of Mark, that Jesus appeared to them in the upper room.

We'll go ahead and read these verses, even though we have yet to discuss their validity. But in Mark 16, 14, it says afterward, he appeared to the 11 as they sat at the table and he rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen him after he'd risen. So this is obviously the first time they saw him, which we know from other gospels was Easter Sunday night.

I mean, resurrection Sunday night, Jesus appeared to them that night. And here he's rebuked them for not having believed the others who had seen him first, which were the women, the women actually saw him. And he said to them, go into all the world and

preach the gospel to every creature.

He who believes in his baptize will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned. So here's Mark's version, and it looks like it's in the upper room on Sunday night of the resurrection. Matthew's version, however, is on a hill in Galilee where he had made an appointment to meet with his disciples.

In my opinion, Matthew's telling us about the appointment that was fulfilled. That the angels had told the women, tell the disciples to meet him in Galilee. Now, that was not going to be the first time they'd see him, because Galilee is where Jesus had the largest number of followers during his ministry.

And Paul tells us in first Corinthians fifteen. That one of the appearances of Christ after his resurrection was to five hundred people at one time. This is in first Corinthians fifteen verse six.

After that, he was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remains to the present and some have fallen asleep. Now, when was that? None of the gospels tell us of an appearance to five hundred people at one time. I would point out to you, though, that first Corinthians was written before any of the gospel.

If we take the account of Paul here in first Corinthians fifteen, they are the earliest list of resurrection appearances that we have in writing, because the gospels were written later than first Corinthians. And what does he say in first Corinthians fifteen? It says in verse five, he was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. Now that would be on Resurrection Sunday.

That's what Mark seems to refer to after everything by over five hundred brethren at once. I'm of the opinion that was in Galilee. I don't think he had five hundred brethren in Judea.

Jesus had done very little of ministry there and in Judea, even on the day of Pentecost, there were only one hundred twenty disciples available there. It was a pretty small following he had in Judea, but he had thousands at one time following him in Galilee. And we know he met at a prearranged spot on a mountain in Galilee where he gave that Matthew's version of the Great Commission.

I'm of the opinion that would be the time, probably when there were five hundred present, probably a lot of the Galileans for whom he had done miracles and things like that, who were his disciples. And when the angel said to the woman, go tell his disciples that he'll meet you in Galilee, I think it was about this big meeting that when we're supposed to spread the news to all the people in Galilee, as well as the apostles who were in Judea at the time that there was going to be this gathering at this appointed spot in this mountain in Galilee. And that's why I believe there was a large number of people

there because it had been appointed.

It was something that was a prearranged meeting of Jesus and a lot of disciples. That's what I believe. And so even though Jesus was going to appear to the twelve or to the eleven and then he's going to actually appear to them a couple of times before he goes to Galilee, and he's going to appear to the two on the road to Emmaus that same day.

Yet the Galilean followers will have a chance to meet with him before he ascends. And so he meets the disciples in Galilee as Matthew records. But then he came back down to the Mount of Olives to ascend from Judea and in the sight of his disciples.

That's, of course, Acts chapter one records that. So we've got Jesus appearing after his resurrection in Jerusalem immediately to his disciples and to a few others, the women and such. Then we have a meeting to probably a large group on a mountain in Galilee, and then he's back down in Judea again before his ascension.

And he's on the Mount of Olives when he ascends and he gives his final words there in all three of those places. He gives something like what we call a great commission, something like a commission to the disciples to evangelize or to make disciples in Mark and in Matthew. In both places, he mentions the need to baptize them in Mark.

He mentions preaching the gospel to them in Matthew. He refers to teaching them to observe all things, making disciples in Acts one. He simply mentions bearing witness to all nations empowered by the Holy Spirit.

So these are the various things that I believe in different locations and different occasions as the gospels, when once they are harmonized, would tell us. But getting back to Mark's gospel. We have just read through verse eight, which is, of course, the last verse in the oldest manuscripts.

Now, what are the oldest manuscripts? Well, they are the manuscripts called Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. These manuscripts are considered by most scholars to be the best manuscripts of the New Testament that we have now. The reasons for calling them the best has a lot to do with the fact that they're old.

They date from the early fourth century. That is the early three hundreds. That's about the earliest we have of complete manuscripts of the New Testament.

And there are a few fragments that are older, like there's a fragment of the Gospel of John that dates from about 120 A.D. But these are quite early manuscripts. Remember, early fourth century. That's important to remember when we consider this.

And those two manuscripts do not contain any verses after verse eight. And that's true of some other early manuscripts, too, besides Greek manuscripts. There are some early Latin manuscripts that also lack these verses and some early Syriac and Armenian and

Georgian manuscripts don't have.

So there are the two oldest Greek manuscripts and several translations or versions that have been translated from the Greek early on that don't have don't have them. In addition to that, some of the early church fathers were not familiar with them. Origen, for example, and Clement of Alexandria were in the third century, the two hundreds A.D. Clement about the middle of the third century in origin late in the third century.

And they did not seem to be familiar with these verses at the end of Mark after verse eight, which means the manuscripts they have must not have had them. Well, that makes sense. They were in Alexandria, Egypt, and the Vatican and Sinaiticus come from what we call the Alexandrian texts.

They are of Alexandrian origin. So they are apparently versions of the New Testament, such as Origen and Clement of Alexandria had and used. And so those two church fathers did not seem to be familiar with these verses at the end.

Eusebius, who is also in Alexandria and Jerome, both said that the verses were missing from the most of the manuscripts available to them at the time. They knew of these verses, but they were in the fourth century. Eusebius in Alexandria and Jerome in Rome, I guess he was.

And they knew of these verses, but they said most of the Greek manuscripts they had did not have them. Now, there's for that reason and for several other reasons. Many people think that Mark's gospel does should not include verses nine through 20, as we have them because they're missing from ancient manuscripts.

And yet most would agree that ending the gospel at verse eight is rather unnatural. For one thing, there's an announcement by an angel that Jesus rose from there, but there's no resurrection appearances. And if Mark wanted to convince people that Jesus rose from the dead, it'd be best for him not just have a young man sitting at the tomb telling the women that Jesus had risen.

After all, one could leave that open to all kinds of things. The body might have been stolen and he was a young man there who was not an angel who told women that he'd risen and they were gullible enough to believe it. And so I mean, that'd be a strange way to end with no one but women knowing anything about the tomb being empty and and they haven't even seen Jesus.

So almost all scholars, even though many of them reject verses nine through 20, as we have them, they believe there was some kind of other ending of Mark after verse eight, but that it has been lost. Remember, the oldest manuscripts we have from the fourth century are not the oldest that used to exist. There were there were manuscripts in the first and second and third century.

There's a lot we've lost them. And the fourth century manuscripts are they they apparently have lost the last part of Mark. Well, there's reasons why many scholars do not think that verses nine through 20, which we have here, were the original ending, even though they they suggest there probably was an original ending that has now been lost because verse eight is a strange place to end the gospel.

They often are suspicious about these verses for a number of reasons. One of them is they say that the vocabulary in these verses is not characteristic of Mark. That is what they call non-Markan vocabulary, non-Markan, not not not like Mark's vocabulary.

What do they mean? Well, there's 183 words in the Greek text. Of verses nine through 20, there's 183 words of those, 53 of them are not found elsewhere in Mark. That is almost a third of the words in verses nine through 20 are not found elsewhere in Mark's writing.

They're unique to that section and therefore they're conserving non-Markan, not not written by Mark or not. They're not the vocabulary that Mark normally would use. In fact, 21 of those words that are in the long ending are not found anywhere else in the New Testament at all.

So they're kind of there's some uncharacteristic words, then also another reason for not accepting verse nine is the correct verse after verse eight is because they say the transition from verse eight to verse nine is grammatically awkward because the subject of the sentence in verse eight is they. Which is a reference to the women. But the subject of verse nine is absent.

You can see it's an italics. The word he is an italics. It's not the Greek.

There is no subject in verse nine, but it's clear that the implied subject is Jesus. It says now when blank rose early on the first day. And they say, well, when he well, but but the women are the last person's mention.

So he would be a strange transition. But on the other hand, since the word he isn't in it, it might have originally said Jesus, which would have been a clean transition. And so it's really hard to know exactly what the original said there.

Also, they say that Mary Magdalene, the way she's described in verse nine, is, well, look at how she's described verse nine. I said he appeared the first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven demons. Now it tells out of whom she cast him, deems as if we are being introduced to her for the first time here.

And yet she was mentioned in verse one. Without all that description, she was mentioned in verse one. And of course, in an earlier in chapter 15, verse 40, without any such complex introduction.

And they say it wouldn't be normal for Mark after having spoken quite off the cuff about Mary Magdalene previously to feel like he has to introduce her so thoroughly in verse nine. So they say it's not likely that Mark wrote that. So the main issues here are as follows.

Our oldest manuscripts and several in Greek and several others do not contain anything after verse eight, though most scholars think that something once was there, but has been lost. But most of them don't think that verses nine through 20 were the original ending. But as I pointed out, the reason for saying so, they have three essential reasons for rejecting verses nine through 20.

One is the transition grammatically between verses eight and nine. But there are in Mark's other parts of his gospel places where there's that kind of a transition of pronouns. And it's not really unlike Mark necessarily to do that.

I mean, if that was the only objection, it wouldn't be a sufficient objection. Likewise, the rather comprehensive description of Mary Magdalene in verse nine, compared to the simple description of her in verse one, isn't necessarily an argument against Mark having written both. Since whoever wrote verse nine would have seen Mary's name in verse one and would have therefore known that she's already been introduced, that he might add additional information about her in verse nine is not too surprising since it's saying that he appeared first to her.

And it mentions, of course, her as one that he had done a tremendous favor for in casting demons out of her earlier. It's true. He could have mentioned that the first time he introduced her.

But whoever wrote that, if it was Mark or anyone else, would be aware of the previous mention of her in verse one. And so the mention of the seven demons must be deliberate anyway, whether it was Mark or someone else. And it could as well have been Mark as anyone else.

But the one thing that remains as a seeming objection. To Mark, having written verses nine through 20, would seem to be. The vocabulary again, there's 183 words of which 53 are not found elsewhere in Mark.

But compare some other similar biblical material in the rest of Mark, which everybody believes that he wrote there are one hundred and one hundred and two words in the rest of Mark, which are unique. That is not found anywhere else in Mark. Hundred and two words are used only once anywhere in Mark.

So if there's another 53 of them in the long ending, that wouldn't be so amazing. He already uses quite a few words that are only appearing one time in his gospel. And here's some comparisons to both Luke and Matthew.

There are 12 verses at the beginning of Luke, Luke one versus one through 12 that contain 20 words in the Greek that are not found anywhere else in the New Testament. Obviously not found anywhere else in Luke because he's in the New Testament, but they're not anywhere else in the New Testament in 12 verses, which is the same number of verses we have in the long ending of Mark. There are 20 unique words that are not found anywhere else in the New Testament.

And that's just the difference from Mark's long ending and the statistics system of magnitude. But it's not unheard of in a short space of narrative, depending on context and subject matter, to use different words. Matthew has 137 unique words in his gospel that are not found anywhere else in the New Testament.

137 words in Matthew in Luke is 312 unique words in Luke's gospel, not anywhere else in his gospel or anywhere else in the New Testament. 312 and John has 114. So in other words, it's not that strange to have the occurrence of a word in a passage that it doesn't appear anywhere else.

Luke's gospel only has 24 chapters, but it's got 312 words that appear only once. And so it's really hard to make any real decisions based on that kind of vocabulary consideration on similar vocabulary consideration. Scholars had decided that Paul didn't write 1st and 2nd Timothy in Titus, the pastoral epistles, because he uses vocabulary in there that is not found in his other epistles.

So what? He's writing at a later time in his life and writing on different subject matter. It's kind of a pseudo-scientific way to decide if somebody really wrote something or not, because all writers use a certain number of unique words in their writing, which they use only once. And you can't exactly quantify what's a normal amount to use in any given time.

So the main reasons for rejecting Mark 16, verses 9 through 20 are not really very compelling reasons. And therefore, the possibility that Mark 16, 9 through 20 are authentic has got to be considered, and there is reason to consider that. First of all, these verses are found in this Syriac Peshitta version, which is a translation of the Greek New Testament into Aramaic or Syriac.

And that translation was made in the 2nd to the late 4th century. In other words, the Peshitta could be earlier than our oldest Greek manuscripts. Peshitta was translated sometime between the 2nd and the late 4th century.

Now, the Greek manuscripts that lacked this section were in the early 4th century. So the Peshitta could easily predate those manuscripts. They're also included in the Old Latin version, which is prior to the Vulgate, which dates from AD 150 to AD 170.

Easily a full century and a half before our earliest Greek manuscripts, which lacked the

section. But the Old Latin actually contains them. And so does the Gothic translation from AD 350.

They all include the long ending. What I'm saying is these are all different manuscripts that do include it, that are from the same time or earlier than the oldest Greek manuscripts. So the Syriac, the Old Latin, and the Gothic Bibles, which were all about as old or older than the oldest Greek manuscripts, they all contain these verses as if they are part of the original.

Furthermore, Church Fathers quote from these verses as if they're original, and long before these Greek manuscripts came into existence. For example, Irenaeus, who all agree wrote in AD 170, quotes from these verses in the long ending in Mark. Also in the same year or thereabouts, a man named Tatian wrote a harmony of the Gospels.

It was the first harmony of the four Gospels ever written. And he called it the Diatessaron. It's a very famous work.

And it exists in its entirety. And in using Mark's Gospel, it used the long ending. Now that was in AD 170.

That's a lot earlier than our oldest Greek manuscripts that lack it. So we have Church Fathers who are quoting and using that long ending as part of Mark at least 150 years before these oldest manuscripts came into existence. And what that means, of course, is that Irenaeus and Tatian had even older manuscripts than the ones that have survived to our time.

And the ones they had had the long ending. Furthermore, and they were in the second century, in the third century, Tertullian refers to Mark 16:19 in his writing. That was in 215 AD, Tertullian 215.

That's almost two centuries before. No, I'm sorry, almost one century before our oldest Greek manuscripts. And then Hippolytus, the church father in 235, still almost 100 years before the oldest Greek manuscripts.

Hippolytus twice quotes from Mark 16 verses 18 through 19. So these verses in the long ending were known to at least four of the church fathers in the second and third century. But the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus that lacked them dates from the fourth century.

So it's clear that these church fathers had earlier versions of Mark than the ones that are available to us. And the ones they had apparently included these verses, which is a pretty good reason to consider them to be valid. Now, I'm going to proceed on the assumption that they are valid.

So we'll take those verses as part of Mark's gospel. But I wanted to point out also there are two other endings attested in a few manuscripts to Mark. That is, after verse eight,

there is at least one manuscript that has this short ending of Mark.

After verse eight, it reads, Then they briefly reported all this to Peter and his companions. Afterward, Jesus himself sent them out from east to west with the sacred and unfailing message of salvation that gives eternal life. Amen.

So somebody apparently who probably just had it up to verse eight didn't feel like that was an adequate ending. So it has the women not just running off perplexed, but eventually telling Peter and then Jesus appearing to them and sending them out. That's not a very well attested ending, but it exists out there among the manuscripts.

And there's one manuscript that has a medium length ending, shorter than our long ending and longer than the short ending. This is found in only one ancient manuscript, and it adds these verses after verse 14. It goes to verse 14, which says, Verse 14 says, Afterward, he appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table and rebuke their unbelief and hardness of heart because they did not believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

Then this other ending adds to that. And they excuse themselves saying this age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not permit God's truth and power to conquer the evil spirits. Therefore, reveal your justice.

Now, this is what they said to Christ and Christ replied to them. The period of years of Satan's power has been fulfilled, but other dreadful things will happen soon. And I was handed over to death for those who have sinned so that they may return to the truth and sin no more.

And so they may inherit the spiritual, incorruptible and righteous glory in heaven. Unquote. It's obvious that someone got enthusiastic and wrote those verses who didn't know how to write the way that Jesus or the apostles taught.

I mean, it's not just vocabulary. It's flowery, flowery discourse. That's not anything like the way the disciples or Jesus talked in any of the gospels.

And also the fact that that that ending was written after someone decided that where people go and what the gospel is about is that people can go to heaven. I certainly don't find that taught in any of the gospel presentations in the Bible, but that was soon taught in the church. And that's because so that they may inherit spiritual, incorruptible and righteous glory in heaven.

Like that's going to be Jesus' final words. I don't think so. Anyway, so we have like four different options.

We've got the option of ending Mark at verse eight. Then we've got the option of adding a small bit after verse eight of where the women tell Peter and then Jesus sends them

out. Then you've got the option of adding those verses I just read after verse 14.

And then the option we have besides is the ending as we have it in our Bible here with 12 verses following verse eight. Now, since almost nobody believes that verse eight is the original ending and therefore that there must have been another ending, which many believe is now lost. If we look at the available endings, the long ending is the one that sounds the most like the rest of the Bible.

I mean, it does fit. It might have a few vocabulary words that Mark doesn't use. Most of the time, but but it's it's not as goofy as the other two artificial endings that people came up with.

And the long ending has the attestation of very early manuscripts, not Greek. We don't have early enough Greek manuscripts to find it. But church fathers in the second century and the third century had it in their Greek Bible.

So I'm going to. I'm going to suggest that the verses are authentic. No one knows for sure.

And by the way, the question of whether they're authentic or not is not a question, for instance, that goes between liberals and conservatives. Many conservatives don't accept the long ending and no liberals do. But, for example, in John MacArthur's commentary, I was surprised to find that he he considered the long ending.

He just ruled it out of court. Although he said, since we don't know for sure, he went ahead and gave commentary on those verses in the long ending. But he he said that the evidence he felt was against the long ending.

But he gave the same evidence we've talked about here. And I just don't consider it to be compelling. So I accept the long ending.

You can accept it or not, but we're going to go ahead and treat it as if it's authentic. Now, when he rose early on the first day of the week, verse nine says he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him as they mourned and wept.

And when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe. Now, this would agree pretty much with John's gospel to a certain extent. John has Mary Magdalene, the first one that sees him after his resurrection.

And so does Mark here. And this is Mark's writing. She goes and tells others.

Well, John's gospel tells us in chapter 20 that Mary went and told the disciples, the apostles, which are here mentioned as the ones who had been with him as they mourned and wept. Now, when it says in verse seven, they didn't believe her. That might

explain why only Peter and John jumped up and went to the tomb.

The other disciples didn't believe her. So they stayed where they were. Peter and John ran to the tomb and were told after they'd seen the tomb, it says the beloved disciples saw and believed.

But apparently most of them still didn't believe Mary Magdalene, even after Peter and John had gone to the tomb. Verse 12, after that, he appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. That would be, of course, the two men on the road to Emmaus.

This is recorded only in Luke's gospel, Luke 24. And this was also on Resurrection Sunday. These two men were walking from Jerusalem to their home in Emmaus, which I think was about two hour walk from Jerusalem.

And they had heard already the women's report that Jesus was risen, but they didn't believe it either. And Jesus appeared to them on the road, but they didn't recognize him. And he walked with them and he gave them sort of a Bible study in the Old Testament, talked about all the Old Testament scriptures that were fulfilled.

They still didn't know it was him until he sat down to eat with them. And when he broke bread with them, they suddenly recognized him and then he disappeared from their sight. And they got up and ran all the way back to Jerusalem.

The two hour walk they just made, they went back to Jerusalem and got there by nightfall and told the apostles that Jesus had appeared to them. But by the time they got there, Jesus had appeared to Peter also, according to Luke's gospel. Anyway, all that's given in Luke about these two men.

Mark mentions it here in verses 12 and 13. He appeared in another form, that is, they didn't recognize him. He was not looking like himself to two of them as they walked and went in the country.

And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either. Now, that's strange because they didn't believe them either. Because Luke tells us that when they got to when the two men from Emmaus got to Jerusalem, that they were informed that Jesus had appeared to Peter.

So you would think that they would have already believed. And yet Mark tells us they didn't believe them either. One thing's for sure, if somebody other than Mark wrote this long ending, they aren't depending on Luke for their information about this story.

And Luke's the only one who gives it. In Luke 24, we read about the road to Emmaus and the two men there. And the conversation Jesus had.

And then it says in verse 28, then they drew near to the village. This is Luke 24, 28, where they were going. And he indicated that he would have gone further, but they constrained him saying, abide with us for his tort evening.

And the day is far spent. And he went in to stay with them. Now it came to pass as he sat at the table with them, that he took bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to them.

Then their eyes were opened and they knew him. And he vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us on the road and while he opened the scriptures to us? So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together.

Now, here's the interesting thing. Up to that point, it agrees completely with Mark 16 verses 12 and 13. But then it says, so they met them, gathered together, saying the Lord is risen indeed and has appeared to Simon, that is to Peter.

That is when the two men from the road who may have found the disciples. They were met with the news from the from the eleven that Jesus was risen and that he had appeared to Peter. And then they told their story.

But Mark says. When they told their story, the others didn't believe them. Now, I guess what we're going to have to assume.

Given the assumption that Mark's verses are authentic, is that even after Jesus appeared to Peter, there were still people like Thomas who didn't believe it. Remember, Jesus appeared to ten of the apostles at one time on Resurrection Sunday night. Judas was dead and Thomas was somewhere else.

The other ten all saw Jesus and ate with him. And yet when Thomas came back and they told him he didn't believe them. So these two men on the road, they get back to Jerusalem before Jesus actually appeared to the ten.

But he had appeared to Peter. But apparently some of the ten were not believing Peter either. Or the two men on the road.

They're hearing a bunch of reports they heard from Mary Magdalene. They heard from the other women by now. They hear from Peter and they hear from these two men.

And some are still not believing. And you might say that's unthinkable that they wouldn't believe at that point after hearing after Peter and everything. But if Thomas could still doubt after all ten of them tell him later that evening that Jesus appeared to them, then the doubt must have been very strong in many.

Obviously at this point Peter believed and John believed. And the two men on the road,

he may have believed and the women believed. But apparently there's about eight or nine of the disciples who didn't believe still at this point.

And that's why Jesus had scolded them. In verse 14, Mark 16, 14. Afterward, he appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table.

And he rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart because they did not believe those who had seen him after he'd risen. Now you see over in Luke's version when the two men from Emmaus get there. They tell their story in Luke 24, 35.

And it says, verse 36. Now, as they said these things, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them and said to them, peace to you. But they were terrified and frightened and supposed that they'd seen a spirit.

And he said to them, why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? This is no doubt what Mark is referring to him rebuking them for not believing. Why do doubts rise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see me have.

And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. But while they still did not believe for joy and marveled, he said to them, have you any food here? Well, Mark tells us they were sitting at meal when he appears. So of course they had food there.

So they gave him a piece of boiled fish and some honeycomb. And he took it and ate in their presence. And we don't read any more about his rebuking them.

Although he does say, why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts? And perhaps at that point, unrecorded by Luke, he also rebuked them for not believing the other witnesses. So there's these sections of Mark actually have more parallels with the other Gospels than many of the resurrection accounts have of each other. And then verse 14.

No, we read verse 15. Apparently still there Sunday night in the upper room with these men. He speaks to them and verse 15 said to them, go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

He who believes in his baptized will be saved. He who does not believe shall be condemned. Now, the assumption of this verse is authentic.

Along with the way it's worded has encouraged many people to consider that water baptism is necessary for salvation. It's one of the proof texts of the Church of Christ, for example, and other groups that teach water baptism is essential for salvation. It's a pretty good protect.

I mean, it says whoever believes in his baptized will be saved. And there are some other texts that people sometimes use to prove that. But this one is one of the main ones.

But of course, he contrasts whoever believes in his baptism is saved with whoever does not believe shall be condemned. So he doesn't say whoever is not baptized. It's clear that wherever the gospel is preached, baptism was preached also.

And the idea was that you get saved. If you get saved, you get baptized right then and there. That was the way you came into the fellowship of the saved community.

Now, most of us believe that the Bible teaches that you are justified and cleansed from sin, not by water baptism, but by faith, like Abraham was, like David was, and like the thief on the cross was. None of these men were ever baptized, but they were all justified by faith. And therefore, and Paul indicates that Abraham's justification by faith and David's is a model of our being justified by faith.

Paul always uses that example of Abraham as the example of us being justified by faith. So our belief would be most of us would believe that it's not water baptism that washes away sin and it justifies. However, the early church would have made no distinction until they maybe sat down and tried to explain doctrinally.

But essentially, when you believed you got baptized right then and right there. That's how you transition from being not a Christian to being a Christian. And therefore, to say whoever believes is baptized will be saved.

It would not be telling us that one or both of those in particular would say. But basically, all who believe did get baptized and all who were believed that were, in fact, saved. But then when he says what what will keep a person from being saved is whoever does not believe will be condemned.

And therefore, although baptism is extremely closely joined to faith, that is an obligation of believers. It does not seem that this verse does not necessarily prove that it's essential for salvation, but it would be essential for obedience. It's essential for discipleship, and therefore, it's essential for being a Christian follower of Jesus.

And I don't know salvation apart from that verse 17. These signs will follow those who believe in my name. They will cast out demons.

They will speak with new tongues. They will take up serpents. And if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them.

They will lay their hands on the sick and they will recover. Now, most of these phenomena can be seen to be confirmed in the book of Acts. Certainly, the speaking in tongues occurred in Acts chapter 2. It also occurred in Acts chapter 10 and in Acts chapter 19.

So we've got ample confirmation of people speaking with new tongues in the book of Acts. It says they will cast out demons. Well, we have that too in the book of Acts.

We have Paul casting demons out of a girl in Lystra. And a lot of people in Ephesus got demons cast out through Paul. Even through his handkerchiefs and his aprons, demons came out of people.

It's probable that we're to understand that Peter and Philip and the others who preached the gospel also were casting out demons out of people. And so that happened. So they'll cast out demons, they'll speak with new tongues.

Now, also at the very end of that verse 18 says they'll lay their hands on the sick and they will recover. Well, certainly there's plenty of that in the book of Acts. Lots of healing.

But there are two other items in the list at the beginning of verse 18 that are not. Well, one of them is confirmed by one event and that was the taking up serpents. Now, taking up serpents sounds like snake handling, like someone actually picks up the serpent on purpose.

We have one incident in the book of Acts in chapter 28 of Paul not intending to pick up a serpent, but gathering sticks for a fire. And a serpent bites his hand and it's a deadly serpent. And the local people of Malta where he is, he's just, you know, dragged himself out of the ocean from a shipwreck.

And now they're gathering sticks to build a fire to warm themselves and he gets bit by this viper. And the locals say, wow, this guy must be a real bad criminal, because although he escaped the judgment of storm, the gods won't let him live. You know, the snake got it.

But Paul just shook the snake off into the fire and went on working and never felt any effects. It says they kept watching him, expecting him to swell up and die. But when he didn't, they decided he was a god.

So pagans in their fickleness, they thought first of all, he's an extreme criminal. And then a few minutes later, they're thinking he's a god. But the fact of the matter is that's the only case we know of, of a Christian being bitten by a deadly snake in scripture and having no harm from it, which is what would be implied by taking up serpents.

Now, of course, Jesus did say to the apostles during his earthly ministry in Luke chapter 10, that he says, behold, I give you authority over serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall by any means harm you. That is verse 19 of Luke 10, Luke 10, 19, authority over serpents and scorpions, over all the power of the enemy. Nothing will harm you.

Now, serpents and scorpions are probably symbolic for demons, especially since the association with all the power of the enemy, which would be Satan. But it may be that that's literal too. It certainly worked for Paul.

And so we may have, in fact, confirmation in the book of Acts for four of these five things. The one that we don't have specific confirmation of is if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. Now, we would usually think of drinking poison as drinking a deadly thing, although it may be talking about unsanitary water.

Very commonly in their travels, I'm sure they were in places like any like you would find in any third world country today, where the water is not safe to drink. And there are times they have no choice but to drink water that isn't really potable, not sanitary. But you got to drink.

You got to take your chances. Water in some areas is safe for the locals, but not safe for outsiders who have not developed immunities. Like everyone knows that down in Mexico, many Americans go down there for vacation and they end up getting amoebas, amoebic dysentery, because they drink the water.

And the local people seem to have immunity to it or are not bothered by it. But strangers come in and they're not able to drink it safely. So with the apostles traveling around and having to drink the water wherever they were, it's possible that the drinking deadly thing that's referred to is the water.

And saying that God would protect them from that. But apparently it's not universal. In fact, none of these things are universal.

It's not saying that all believers will do these things. It's not mandatory for all Christians to take up snakes or to drink deadly things just to show they have faith. It says these signs will follow those who believe.

It doesn't say these signs will follow all who believe. Like every one of the people who believes will do all these things. Like cast out demons and lay their hands on the sick and speak with tongues and do all these things.

It just says those who believe. He's just said whoever believes in his baptism will be saved. He's talking about preaching the gospel, getting people saved.

And now you've got a believing community. And now you've got in that community there are those who believe. Now there will be signs that follow the founding of these believing communities.

And where you find those who believe, you'll find certain signs confirming the gospel that is preached by them. Some will cast out demons. Some will heal the sick.

Some will speak with new tongues. And this seems to agree with Paul's understanding of the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12, where he said to one is given the gifts of working in miracles. To another is given the gifts of tongues.

To another, the interpretation of Christ. To another, prosperity. To another, this.

To another, that. And so this is not saying that everyone who's a believer is going to do all these things. In fact, it's not even saying that everyone who's a believer is going to do one of these things.

Not every believer does cast demons out of people. Now we might say they can, and that's another issue. Not every believer does.

Not every believer does cast demons out of people. Not every believer apparently speaks with tongues. I know many believers who don't speak with tongues.

Now the United Pentecostals say that you must speak with tongues to prove that you're baptized in the Holy Spirit. But this is not saying these signs will follow those who are baptized in the Holy Spirit. So these, those who believe.

If this is actually giving tongues as a universal sign of anything, it's not of being baptized in the Spirit, it's of being saved. And therefore the United Pentecostals would be the most consistent of all, because the UPCs believe that you do have to speak in tongues to be saved. Which of course limits the number of people saved to Pentecostals and Charismatics.

But what I think this is saying is this, that wherever the gospel is preached, there will be signs following to confirm the word. And that's exactly how the last verse is going to read also. It doesn't mean everybody who believes is going to do all these things, or even any of them.

Because everyone has a gift, but it might be a different gift than those in this list. This is a sampling, just like Paul's list of the gifts of the Spirit are samplings. There's no comprehensive list of the gifts of the Spirit anywhere in the Bible.

But Paul gives a partial list in 1 Corinthians 12. He gives another partial list in Romans 12. He gives another partial list in Ephesians 4. And this would be kind of like a partial list of the supernatural phenomena that will accompany Christians.

Not all Christians individually, but as a collective group, those who believe will have among them signs of this type. Verse 19. Then, so then, after the Lord had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through accompanying signs. So they preached and God worked

with them. Jesus worked with them, confirming their words by giving signs to accompany their preaching.

It says he was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. Now, they didn't see him sit down at the right hand of God. So how did they, how does Mark know that? I mean, they could testify that they saw him go up into the clouds and disappear.

But how could they testify that he sat down at the right hand of God? How would they know that? Well, they knew it from scripture because they knew one of their favorite verses in the Bible is Psalm 110, verse one. The reason I know that's one of their favorite verses, they quoted it more than any other verse in the Old Testament. The New Testament writers quoted Psalm 110 more than they quoted any other chapter in the Old Testament.

And the opening verse of that says, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make their enemies your footstool. The disciples understood that process was fulfilled at the ascension of Christ. And therefore, they could deduce, well, when he went up into heaven, he sat down at the right hand of God, just like it says in Psalm 110.

God said, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. So, no doubt, based on Psalm 110, verse one, primarily, Peter and the apostles knew that when Jesus disappeared from their sight through the clouds, that when he got to the other side, he sat down at the right hand of God. They could have also gotten that from Daniel chapter seven, of course, where Daniel saw in chapter seven, verses 12 and 13, one like the Son of Man coming to the ancient of days, that is, coming into heaven and receiving a kingdom and being given a kingdom.

So he sat on the throne and so forth. So when Jesus went to heaven, he was enthroned. And that's the apostolic teaching about it.

And then the apostles went and preached everywhere. And God confirmed their words with signs following. And the book of Acts is a pretty good record of that happening.

By the way, there's one other way they would have known confirmation that Jesus was at the right hand of God. That when Stephen was stoning, he said, I see heaven open. I see the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God, standing, not seated.

But they would have understood, apparently, that Jesus probably was just standing up on that occasion to receive Stephen into heaven. But that Jesus' normal posture was seated at the right hand of God. Certainly the writer of Hebrews makes a big issue about that.

How Jesus in Hebrews 10 says he offered his sacrifice to himself once and for all. Then he sat down at the right hand of God where he's remaining until he comes. So that is how these verses of the Gospel of Mark bring it to a close.

A much more fitting end than verse 8 provides. And admittedly, one that a Christian who was not Mark could have written using the various accounts from the rest of the Gospels. Certainly the first information given in verses 9 through 11 comes almost directly from John's Gospel.

Then the next verses come almost directly from Luke's Gospel. But the Great Commission, as is given here, is unique to Mark. It's not found in any of the other Gospels.

And so it is an independent witness to some of these accounts, apparently. And at least I accept those verses as authentic, and I believe that's the proper way to do it. All right, so that brings us to the end of our study of the Gospel of Mark.