

**When is an ending not the end?**

**When a dead man rises from the tomb – and when a Gospel ends in the middle of a sentence**

- Verse 8 in Greek ends with word, 'for,' (*gar*). It is a participle normally coming second in a clause of several clauses or many words. No words follow *gar*, and no appearances of Jesus follow in the most reliable manuscripts of Mark.
- There are three movements in the 8 verses:
  - 1-4:** Women come to the tomb
  - 5-7:** Young man gives them a message
  - 8:** Women leave the tomb
- Was the ending lost? Or did the Gospel, in fact, end right there?
- Verses 9-20:
  1. These verses are not found in the oldest or most reliable manuscripts. Clement of Alexandria and Origin show no knowledge of their existence.
  2. Older Greek manuscripts either lack it or the passage is marked in a way to indicate that it was an addition
  3. An immediate ending ("But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told" is present in 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts, and some in Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopian.
  4. The long ending is found in the Vulgate, Syriac and Coptic. It is probable that Justin Martyr in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century knew of this ending. His disciple, Tatian, wrote the Diatessaron which is a blend of all four gospels.
  5. There is an even longer, expanded form so Jerome tells us in Greek copies in his day:

And they excused themselves, saying, 'This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits. Therefore reveal your righteousness now" – thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, "The term of years of Satan's power has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was delivered over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin no more, that they may inherit the spiritual and imperishable glory of righteousness that is in heaven.

Sources:

Lamar Williamson, Jr. (1983). **Mark: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching**. Louisville: John Knox Press.

Bruce Metzger and Bart Ehrman (2005) **The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition**. NY: Oxford University Press