

A Critical Analysis of the Ending of Mark and its Placement in Contemporary Scholarship

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Abstract

This article examines the Long ending of Mark which has generated controversy among Scholars of the New Testament. Scholars like Blomberg, Elliot and Wallace favour the short ending of Mark reason being that vv1-8 has a natural flow of thought without any hindrance that disrupts the narrative of the passage. while Maurice et al posit that the gospel of Mark ends Mark 16:9-20. The method used is a text-critical, analytical and conjectural emendations approach, we discovered that although the Long ending of Mark is declared not to be found in the most accurate and approved manuscripts, its contents are related to other books of the Bible and are capable of impacting the lives the readers, however, doctrinal positions cannot be built on these verses. We, therefore, recommend that ministers of the Gospel, students and biblical scholars should not see the arguments as a tool to water down the authenticity of the scriptures but to verify the truths therein.

Key Words: Textual criticism, conjectural emendations, long ending, short ending, Manuscripts.

Introduction

In understanding the long ending of Mark and its placement in contemporary scholarship, it is necessary to understand the concept of Textual Criticism because the process from which the issue (s) of the ending of Mark arises is traceable to finding what the original intent of the author of Mark was and this constitutes Textual Criticism. Understanding Textual Criticism and brief background information of the Gospel of Mark will be a good starting point in this work.

Martin and Davies see Textual Criticism as a profession whereby trained and skilled individuals critically investigate the differences that occur in numerous manuscripts with the sole aim of extracting and establishing the exact words embedded in the text. The examination is very useful for the books and literature of the New Testament including old manuscripts that are no more in existence. Over the years, the textual past events of the books of the New Testament have been well-kept and exact. However, as a result of the copying of the manuscripts with hands from generation to generation the autographs of the manuscripts were distorted and there is a need to recover them back.¹ This points out clearly that Textual Criticism is a career itself that involves special training and a lot of logical reasoning and presupposition in order to ascertain the closest scripts to the original. Adejare notes that the value of the manuscripts is weighed on their closeness to that of the actual author and not the excellence of words used.² Evans and Porter define Textual criticism

as a discipline that attempts to establish an authoritative text for a given author's work. It involves the informed comparison of all the known copies of a given text in order to ascertain the earliest recoverable and, if possible, the original form of the text and to trace the history of its development...it applies to any or all of the documents from the ancient world.³

Scholars like Green and McKnight define Textual criticism as a systematic study which attempts to know the autograph of a subject by examining side by side all the available manuscripts.⁴ This definition by the authors establishes the fact that it is possible to retrieve relevant ancient information from a manuscript by a deliberate comparative examination of currently available manuscripts.

On the other hand, Wallace states that Textual criticism is a process of comprehending the motif of the author in a text.⁵ Bloomberg's perspective is worthy of note who opines that Textual Criticism or Lower Criticism is derived through the

¹ Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Development* (Illinois: Intersarsity Press, 1997), 1171.

² Joshua Adejare, *The Impact of New Testament Textual Issues Passages to Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Jos: Tambiyi Research Foundation, 2022)

³ Craig. A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Illinois: Intersarsity Press, 2000), 1210.

⁴ Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight et al, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Illinois: Intersarsity Press, 1992), 827.

⁵ Daniel B. Wallace, *Challenges in the New Testament Textual Criticism, for the Twenty First Century* in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. (No 1, Vol. 52, March 2009) 82.



use of laid down procedures and principles; and through this means, the authenticity of a primitive manuscript is traced and retrieved.⁶ The definitions above set the foundation for the proper understanding of the ending of Mark. Textual Criticism is the tool that enables us to know if the Long ending of Mark is authentic or not. Irrespective of the various assumptions of scholars about the ending of Mark, it is imperative to make a critical analysis of the Long ending of Mark in order to deduce its relevance in our present-day scholarship. In giving the relationship between Old Testament and New Testament criticism, Nggada and Adejare note that the extraction and recovery of great ideas of primitive scholars have played a key role in scholarship.⁷ This is one of the focuses of this paper to discover what scholars have said in regard to the Long ending of Mark.

Thomas C. Oden, the author of *The African Memory of Mark*, gives an African perspective on the background and history of the author of the Gospel of Mark. Oden declares that John Mark wrote the Gospel; John (Hebrew name) and Mark's (Latin name) parents were from the lineage of Levi and their names were Aritopolus and Mary. Because they were committed to Jewish practice, they visited Jerusalem occasionally during their festive periods. John Mark was given birth to in Cyrene and became extinct in Alexandria.⁸ John Stott adds that the most concise and under probability number one Gospel to be written was Mark, the way the book is written, vocabularies, words and stories are unique. It is clear that the teachings of Peter can be found in Mark's Gospel being his son (in the Lord) and his translator. There are also common features within the Gospel of Mark and Epistle of Peter (1 Peter 5:13: Acts 12:11-12).⁹

⁶ Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey* (England: Apollos, 2009), 83.

⁷ Asura Nggada and Joshua Adejare, *The Relationship between Old Testament and New Testament Textual Criticism and Its Impact on Biblical Scholarship* (Abuja: The Noun Scholar Journal of Arts and Humanities, 2021), 51.

⁸ Thomas C. Oden, *The African Memory of Mark*. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011) 21.

⁹ John Scott. *Understanding the Bible* (United Kingdom: Scripture Union, 2003) 89. According to Tenny, Mark wrote in Rome. Throughout the New Testament, there are about 10 Latin peculiar words used in Mark. Because the Gentiles were his audience, he had to elucidate Jewish practices. Jesus was projected as a suffering Servant and a great victorious warrior to his readers who were Romans. The general presupposition of the date of this Gospel is between A.D. 65 and A.D. 70 (510). This brief information about the author of the Gospel of Mark highlights the background details of the author such as his parent, place and date of writing, audience, contents and its value among other Gospels of the New Testament. Some scholars believe that among the Synoptic Gospels, Mark wrote first but this is also subject to conjectural emendation. An important thing to note is that John Mark was not a direct disciple of Jesus Christ but was a major disciple and follower of Apostle Peter and probably Apostle Paul also.

Categories of the Ending of Mark

Many scholars over the years have been able to deduce and conclude the various types or forms of the ending of Mark. Although the focus of this work is to critically analyze the long ending, it is imperative to have a general idea of the various forms of the ending of Mark as unveiled by scholars. Ladd documents five positions that have existed in history for the ending of Mark.¹⁰ Metzger unveils the content of the expanded version of the ending of Mark. He says that this ending is preserved by Jerome and present in the Codex Washingtonianus. He believed that a scribe between the second and third century might have added this ending.¹¹

The two common endings are the short endings and the long endings. Many scholars seem to support that short ending over the long ending. Both the short ending which ends at 16:8 and the long ending which ends at 9-20 are contained in our contemporary Bible with few versions indicating the absence of the Long ending in

¹⁰ George Eldon Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism*. Grand Rapids: (Williams B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967) 72-73. The types of endings are 1. **The Long Ending:** The Long ending of Mark 16 starts from verse 9 and ends in verse 20. The Long ending can be found in the Syriac harmony of the Gospel founded by Tatian within the second century. From the sixth century, it is evidence in the Greek history. It was also universally recognized in the seventeenth century because it is present in a lot of early minuscules and uncials. It is also contained in the Authorized Version. 2. **The Short Ending:** The Short ending ends in verse 8 with the phrase “for they were afraid.” It was in the nineteenth century that the well-recognized and authentic manuscripts, which were founded in the fourth century were accessible to scholars. Some early fathers and other manuscripts containing the Long ending clearly state that the Long ending was not found in Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus which are the closest to the autograph. 3. **The Short Addition Ending:** This ending became popular from the seventh century in many uncials’ manuscripts and early minuscules of old versions. This ending neither has the long ending nor the short ending of verse 8. It was initially seen probably in the fourth century from primitive manuscripts in Latin and later in the footnote of the Revised Standard Version. Since verse 8 has an abrupt ending, the short addition ending gives a smooth and concise version of it. 4. **Both Endings:** This ending consists of the ending of the short additions and the long ending. It is not so common in many manuscripts. 5. **Novel Form Ending:** This type of ending is specifically known to Jerome because he possessed a lot of Greek manuscripts. Jerome had access to many manuscripts of verse 8 and he also possessed manuscript of an expansion of verse 14 in a novel form of the Long ending.

¹¹ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. (New York: United Bible Societies,

1971), 124. “And they excused themselves saying, ‘this age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and the power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirit [or, does not allow what lies under the unclean spirits to understand the truth and power of God]. Therefore, reveal thy 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 have delivered to Satan that they may return to the truth and sin no more, in order that they may inherit the spiritual and incorruptible glory of righteousness which is in heaven’”



the ancient most accurate manuscripts. This makes the study of the Long ending crucial to know how it is useful to our contemporary world.

Textual Analysis of the Long-Ending

The Greek New Testament of Mark 16:9-20 is given below which is taken directly from *the UBS Greek New Testament by Aland, Barbara*. Each verse is critically analyzed from a biblical and textual perspective.

- Mark 16:9** [[Ἀναστὰς δὲ πρῶτῃ σαββάτου ἐφάνη πρῶτον Μαρία τῇ Μαγδαληνῇ, παρ' ἧς ἐκβεβλήκει ἑπτὰ δαιμόνια.
- Mark 16:10** Ἐκείνη πορευθεῖσα ἀπήγγειλεν τοῖς μετ' αὐτοῦ γενομένοις πενθοῦσι καὶ κλαίουσιν·
- Mark 16:11** Κἀκεῖνοι ἀκούσαντες ὅτι ζῆ καὶ ἐθεάθη ὑπ' αὐτῆς ἠπίστησαν
- Mark 16:12** Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα δυσὶν ἐξ αὐτῶν περιπατοῦσιν ἐφανερῶθη ἐν ἑτέρᾳ μορφῇ πορευομένοις εἰς ἀγρόν·
- Mark 16:13** Κἀκεῖνοι ἀπελθόντες ἀπήγγειλαν τοῖς λοιποῖς· οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνοις ἐπίστευσαν.
- Mark 16:14** Ὑστερον [δὲ] ἀνακειμένοις αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἑνδεκα ἐφανερῶθη καὶ ὠνείδισεν τὴν ἀπιστίαν αὐτῶν καὶ σκληροκαρδίαν ὅτι τοῖς θεασαμένοις αὐτὸν ἐγγηγερμένον οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν.
- Mark 16:15** Καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· πορευθέντες εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα κηρύξατε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει.
- Mark 16:16** Ὁ πιστεύσας καὶ βαπτισθεὶς σωθήσεται, ὁ δὲ ἀπιστήσας κατακριθήσεται.
- Mark 16:17** Σημεῖα δὲ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ταῦτα παρακολουθήσει· ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου δαιμόνια ἐκβαλοῦσιν, γλώσσαις λαλήσουσιν καιναῖς,
- Mark 16:18** [Καὶ ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν] ὄφεις ἀροῦσιν καὶ θανάσιμόν τι πίωσιν οὐ μὴ αὐτοὺς βλάψῃ, ἐπὶ ἄρρώστους χεῖρας ἐπιθήσουσιν καὶ καλῶς ἔξουσιν.
- Mark 16:19** Ὁ μὲν οὖν κύριος Ἰησοῦς μετὰ τὸ λαλῆσαι αὐτοῖς ἀνελήμφθη εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ.
- Mark 16:20** Ἐκεῖνοι δὲ ἐξελθόντες ἐκήρυξαν πανταχοῦ, τοῦ κυρίου συνεργούντος καὶ τὸν λόγον βεβαιούντος διὰ τῶν ἐπακολουθούντων σημείων.]]¹²

Plumber and Metzger give a textual and critical analysis of the Long ending. It should be noted here that these scholars are objective in their analyses as the text speaks for itself. The text is also analyzed in the light of the other Synoptic Gospels that contain the content of Long ending.

¹² Barbara Aland, et' al. *Novum Testamentum Graece: with English Dictionary*: (Germany: Deutsche Biblegesellschaft, 1993) 148-149.

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The Appearance to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18)

9. Αναστα" δε πρωι πρωτη σαββατου εφανε:

According to Plummer, εφανε does not have any nominative, and this passage does not start well. Both the preceding verse and this passage's starting point have a broken edge and they do not suit each other. A fresh account of the initial visit to the grave was given rather than presenting a subsequence of the beginning of the visit to the grave. Mary Magdalene was presented as an unknown person rather than a well-known individual. Additionally, there are words and phrases which are neither found in the Gospel of Mark nor in the New Testament, below are the words and expressions;

πρωτη σαββατου: These words are not used anywhere in Mark. σαββατου has not been used to mean 'week'.

εφανε: The New Testament does not make use of this word. It was used for the re-showing of Elijah and not for the manifestation of the resurrected Christ.

παρ' η" εκβεβληκει: This word is also absent in the New Testament. The right word to be used is either εκ or απο εκβαλλω.

επτα δαιμονια: This gives a bad impression of the personality of Mary Magdalene. She was not a bad person. The seven demons are used in the sense of plurality, which cannot be numbered.

10. εκεινη πορευθεισα: εκεινο" is used consistently in John and not in Mark. πορευομαι is regularly used in Matthew, Luke, John and Acts. These two words both appear more than three times in this ending 10, 11, 20 and 10-15 respectively.

τοις μετ' αυτου γενομενοι": The Gospels do not contain these expressions.

πενθουσι και κλαιουσιν: These verbs are simultaneously used together. While the followers of Jesus were weeping for His crucifixion, the heathens were rejoicing. However, these verbs might not be applicable here because the writer might have ended in verse 8.

11. κακεινοι: This type of crasis is available in authentic manuscripts.



εθεαθη: This word is mostly used in John and not in Mark. It was used to indicate those who had to see Jesus before they believed after His resurrection.

ηπιστησαν: *απιστεω* is not found in Mark. Those who heard about the good news of Christ's resurrection did not initially believe.¹³

¹³ Alfred Plummer, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1914), 369-377.

The Appearance to Two Disciples (Luke 24:13-22)

12. Μετα δε ταυτα: These words are mostly used by Luke and John and it is not in Mark.

εφανερωθη: This word is peculiar to John.

εν ετερα μορφη: These words might signify Jesus appearing in a form that His followers don't recognize Him with.

εις αγρον: The assumption of this place (Emmaus) might be El Kubeibeh which is North West of Jerusalem about 7 miles.

13. Ουδε εκεινοις επιστευσαν: These words are completely different from Luke's account.

The Appearance to the Eleven (Luke 24:36-43, John 20:19-23, 1 Cor. 15:5f)

14. Υστερον: This word contains a concise word of the testimonies of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. It is found in the other three Gospels and not in Mark.

αυτοις τοις ενδεκα: The word 'the Eleven or Twelve' is used to refer to the Apostles.

ωνειδισεν: This word used for the disciples being rebuked by Christ is not found in the New Testament.

απιστιαν και σκληροκαρδιαν: This is the only place where the Apostles were accused for the tomb.

15. και ειπεν αυτοις: This indicates that there is a gap between the previous verse and this verse.

πορευθεντες: Their main focus is to spread the Good news.

παση τη κτισει: *κτισεις* is mostly used by Paul. It is not present in the Gospels.

16. πιστευσα": This signifies faith in the risen Son of God and Saviour of the universe and not faith in the resurrection.

βαπτισθει": Baptism is one of the requirements of every believer after salvation.

σωθησεται: Faith is necessary for the healing of the body and soul. A believer must endure to the end to be ultimately saved.

ο δε απιστησα" κατακριθησεται: The word *κατακριθησεται* "shall be damned" is not clear.

17. τοι" πιστευσασιν: Those who believe will possess supernatural powers. This was also taught by Paul.

εν τω ονοματι μου: In the name of Jesus and by the authority of His power, those who believe will work miracles.

γλωσσαις λαλησουσιν: Irenaeus testified that this sign was manifested in his dispensation.

18. οφει" αρουσιν: Although there might be a link between what Jesus said and what happened to Paul, Luke 10:19, Acts 28: 3-6.

θανασιμον τι πωσιν: This might be derived from past legends stories and quotes.

χειρα" επιθησουσιν: Christ and the Apostles healed with their hands. This could also happen for any true believer.

καλω" εξουσιν: This word is classical and it is not found in the New Testament.

The Ascension of the Lord and His Cooperation with His Disciples

In addition, Metzger states that there are some variant readings in Mark 16:9-20. Some of them are

1. **εγγεγερμενον (A):** Some scribes would have unconsciously preferred to add εκ νεκρων after εγγεγερμενον Mark 16:14.
2. **επιστευσαν και ειπεν αυτοι" (A):** There are some additions that are present in the Western Text (Mark 16:14-15).
3. **λαλησουσιν καιναι" (B):** It is of a probability that καιναις might have been included to resemble δλαθηκη and καινος ανθρωπος Mark 16:17.
4. **[και εν ται" χερσιν] οφει" (C):** It is a probability that the word in the bracket was done in order to follow the pattern in Act 28:3-6, the Alexandrian witness was accepted and used Mark 16:18.
5. **κυριο" Ιησου" (C):** The church made use of different designations to refer to Jesus, it was later in history that κυριο" was used independently other than κυριο" Ιησου" Mark 16:19.
6. **σημειων (B):** Some witnesses include αμεν Mark 16:20. ¹⁴

1. Scholarly Observations of the Long-Ending

The following is the information derived from the Long Ending of Mark by Scholars

The Long Ending is Absent in the Most Authentic Manuscripts in Textual History:

In terms of the scholarly position of the Long ending, Daniel Wallace writes in regards to the ending of Mark on "*Mark 16:8 as the Conclusion to the Second Gospel*" that the earliest manuscripts include Codex Sinaiticus (Σ) and Codex Vaticanus (B). They both are from the fourth century and are equally important to the Alexandrian text. These manuscripts are the only main text of Alexandrian witness that contains Mark 16 in Greek. The two texts are also very important to

(Luke 24:50-53, Act 1:9f)

19. Ο μεν ουν κυριο": Both μεν and ουν are not common in Mark.

Ο κυριο" Ιησου": This is commonly used in Acts and the Epistles but barely used in Matthew and Mark.

μετα το λαλησαι αυτοις: This might be interpreted as "After all His commandments with them."

ανελημθη: This same verb is used in Acts 1: 2, 11, 22 and 1Timothy 3:16.

εκαθισεν εκ δεξιων του θεου: This metaphor connotes Christ's supernatural ascension. Eternity, rest and authority are portrayed by Christ sitting at the right hand of the throne of God.

20. εκεινοι δε: "The Apostles and their colleagues in the ministry of the word."

εξελθοντε": The Apostolic assignment is much. The harvest is ripe, but the labourers are few.

συνεργουντο": This verb is not used in the Gospels or New Testament in terms of Christ.

βεβαιουντο": It is only used here. It connotes confirming.

επακολουθουντων: The Gospels does not have this verb.

¹⁴ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 126-128.



consult on any issue in textual studies and were adequately text used by the Christians who were scholars in Alexandria. Wallace states further that Vaticanus has a big space at the end of Mark. It contains 3 columns per page, beneath the second column is where the Gospel of Mark stops there is nothing written on the third column but it is not big enough to contain the Long ending and Luke begins on the following page. A new book follows the next column.¹⁵ Wallace says “Thus the non-unique gap at the end of Mark and the lack of an umlaut here both seem to indicate the scribes knew only that Mark's Gospel ended at 16:8.”¹⁶

Other Endings of Mark Existed in History Apart from the Long Ending

Jerome quoted from Codex W which is also known as Freer Logion founded by Charles Freer. Jerome declared that most Greek manuscripts ended in verse 8, and some of the Greek manuscripts with some other relevant materials ended in verses 9-20. This reveals that the exposition of Jerome to various and numerous manuscripts made him aware of various variations of Mark's ending. Jerome included the ending in the Vulgate. Daniel testifies to Victor of Antioch within the fifth and sixth century states that numerous copies of the gospel ended both in the short and long ending. Victor specifies the copies that were more accurate including verses 9-20. “Victor is important because his commentaries were extremely popular, becoming the established commentary on Mark for the late church”¹⁷

Strong Proofs by Scholars that Favour the Short Ending over the Long Ending

Williams in his article posits that Mark desired to stop at that sudden ending.¹⁸ Blomberg gives reasons why the Long ending is not present in the widely and generally acceptable codices, which are Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. The reasons for making these positions are; that Mark's manner of writing is not the same as the Long Ending, the themes and contents of the Long Ending are contrary to those of Mark, the Long Ending verses can be traced to different sources and lastly, the sources of the Long ending say different things. The contents are not constant. His reasons for this are the probability the original of Mark's ending was nowhere to be found or that the author decided to end it that way in verse 8. This might be the reason the editors might have given the Gospel a suitable ending.¹⁹ Elliot writes in “The Twelve Verses of Mark: Original or not?” and he presents (both internal and external) reasons

¹⁵ David Alan Black, *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark 4 Views*. (Nashville: Broad Man and Holman Publisher, 2008) 14-17.

¹⁶ David Alan Black, *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark 4 Views*, 18.

¹⁷ David Alan Black, *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark 4 Views*, 23-24.

¹⁸ Joel F. Williams, *Literary Approaches to the End of Mark's Gospel*. (In Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society. No 1, Vol. 42, March 1999) 22.

¹⁹ Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. (Nottingham: Apollos, 2009) 84-85.

to prove the authenticity of the Short ending. He professes that the beginning and end of most manuscripts in some cases are worn out. Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus both have their pages that begin the Codices worn out.²⁰ McCain and Keener add that the Long ending is absent in the most accurate manuscripts that existed in the early centuries and this is clearly stated in the NIV Study Bible.²¹

McCain's work on "Notes on New Testament Introduction" fully supports the view of Gromacki on the abrupt ending of the book of Mark.²² During the days of Jerome, the enlarged Long ending was prevalent. The reasons given by Metzger this author to debunk the authenticity of the Long ending are first, the inclusion of seventeen non-Markan words wrongly used in the text. Second, the disconnection between verses 8 and 9 and lastly, the wrong usage of Mary in verse 9. The Short ending of Mark seems to be the proper ending of Mark as supported by Metzger. He posits that the sudden ending of Mark "εφοβουτο γαρ" was not the intention of Mark. The reasons suggested for the sudden ending are:

1. A probability that Mark was disturbed while writing and could not continue.
2. A probability that Mark died before perfecting the work.
3. A probability that the ending of Mark was mistakenly removed and not found.
4. A probability of the production of other copies.

Metzger approves all the reasons given by other scholars to show that Mark intends to end in verse 8. He adds that someone made an attempt to provide the Long ending and the manuscripts must have been in existence at a prime period in the second century. Based on the accuracy of the internal and external evidence of the Short ending, Metzger suggests that the Short ending is the original form of Mark.²³

The reasons for the support of the Short ending by McCain and Metzger are strong and familiar reasons. The non-Markan words present in the Long ending prove that it is most likely that the concluding part of Mark was lost. The poor connectivity from verse 9 and the way Mary was used agrees with the fact that verses 9-20 might not be the appropriate continuation of Mark 8. If truly Mark intended to stop at verse 8, it means that the Long ending was actually added however, that does not

²⁰ David Alan Black, *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark 4 Views*, 81

²¹ Danny McCain and Craig Keener. *Understanding and Applying the Scriptures*. (Bukuru: Africa Christian Textbooks, 2008), 47.

²² Danny McCain, *Notes on New Testament Introduction*. (Bukuru: African Christian Textbook, 2008) 135.

²³ Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 226-228.



completely invalidate its contents. It is possible that the scribes might have slotted in the Long ending so that the ending would not look sudden.

In contributing to the ending of Mark, Aida Spencer specifies that the message of the Lord Jesus Christ will not necessarily introduce anxiety in the heart of men but the pattern of Mark indicates that the Short ending seems to be the right one.²⁴ The obvious reason why Mark 16:9-20 has not been ultimately accepted is because of the format of its contents.²⁵ Clayton Croy contributes that both the beginning and ending of Mark have issues because some years after the compilation of the Gospel, they were nowhere to be found. Croy holds on to the speculation that Mark intended to finish at the sudden ending...and reaffirms that the scholars who focus on the ending of Mark in speculation are more than the scholars who explore the beginning of Mark.²⁶

Croy gives a catalogue of scholars in history who have contributed in one way or the other to the scholarship of the ending of Mark. The positions of the various scholars were divided into three: Lost ending probably through maiming, Intentionally suppressed ending, and Incomplete Gospel probably through death or arrest. Below is the table of the positions of the scholars in history on the ending of Mark.²⁷

	LOST ENDING	UNFINISHED ENDING	SUPPRESSED ENDING
1	J.J Griesbach (1789-1790)	Karl Lachmann (1830, 841)	Maurice Goguel (1909)
2	Henry Alford (1863-1:431)	August Klostermann (1867, 309)	Rudolf Bultmann (1963, 285)
3	F.C. Burkitt (1901, 28)	A.W.F. Blunt (1929, 268)	Philipp Vielhauer (1975, 348)
4	Allan Menzies (1901, 290)	C.C Martindale (1956, 174)	Jane Schaberg (2002, 293)
5	Adolf Julicher (1904, 329)	C.E.B Cranfield (1959, 471)	
6	Casper Rene Gregory (1907,512)		
7	Kirsopp Lake (1907, 73)		

²⁴ Aida B Spencer, *The Denial of the Good News and the Ending of Mark*. (In Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. No 2, Vol. 17, 2007), 270.

²⁵ Williams, Travis B. *Bringing Method to Madness: Examining the Style of the Longer Ending of Mark*. (In Bulletin for Biblical Research. No 3, Vol. 20, 2010), 399.

²⁶ Clayton N Croy, *The Mutilation of Marks Gospels*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 12-14.

²⁷ Clayton N Croy, *The Mutilation of Marks Gospels*, 174-177.

8	Friedrich Spitta (1893-1907)		
9	J. Rendel Harris (1908, 87)		
10	Benjamin Wisner Bacon (1909)		
11	J. Armitage Robinson (1911, 5)	LOST/UNFINISHED ENDING	LOST/SUPPRESSED ENDING
12	Arthur S. Peake (1912, 121)	B.F Westcott (1882)	Julius Schniewind (1960, 172)
13	George Milligan (1913, 182)	F.J.A. Hort (1882)	
14	B.H Streeter (1925, 337)	H.A.W. Meyer (1884,197)	
15	Henry Barclay Swete (1927,399)	Theodor Zahn (1977, 2:479L/U)	
16	A. H. McNeile (1927-57)	W.L. Knox (1942, 23)	
17	Walter Lowrie (1929, 553)	C.H.Dodd (1953, 440) L/U	
18	Arthur Temple C (1935, 187)	F.G Kenyon (1958, 214) L/U	
19	Adolf Schlatter (1984, 279)	Alfred Wikenhauser (1958,173)	LOST/UNFINISHED/SUPPRESSED
20	Ernest Findlay Scott (1936-61)	Everett F. Harrison (1964, 92)	James Moffatt (1914, 238)
21	Edgar J. Goodspeed (1937-156)	I Howard Marshall (1991,276)	R.T. France (2002, 673)
22	Floyd V. Filson (1938, 158)	Craig A. Evans (2001, 539)	
23	H. A. Sanders (1938, 111)		
24	C.C McCown (1941, 240)		
25	Ethelbert Stauffer (1943-1944)		
26	A. M. Hunter (1949, 149)		
27	Oscar Cullmann (1962, 61)		
28	G. Bornkamm (1975, 213)		
29	Jack Finegan (1956, 88)		
30	C. Leslie Mitton (1957, 138)		
31	Albert E. Baenett (1958, 142)		
32	K. Bornhauser (1958, 211)		



33	Vincent Tailor (1961, 90)		
34	T.W Manson (1962, 30)		
35	Robert M. Grant (1963, 120)		
36	Martin Hengel (1963, 252)		
37	Hans Grass (1964, 86)		
38	C.F.D Moule (1965, 133)		
39	Horst Balz (1969,633)		
40	W.D. Davies (1969,207)		
41	Eta Linnemann (1968, 287) but preserved in Matt 28 & Mark LE		
42	Herschel H. Hobbs (1970, 259)		
43	Eduard Schweizer (1970, 373)		
44	George Eldon Ladd (1975, 84)		
45	Stephen Neill (1976, 77)		
46	Karl Martin Fischer (1980, 52)		
47	Charles W. Hedrick (1983, 263)		
48	C. H. Robert/T. C. Skeat (1983,55)		
49	F. F. Bruce (1984, 74)		
50	Grant R. Osborne (1984, 65)		
51	Walter Schmithals (1985, 322)		
52	Peter Carnley (1987, 216)		
53	Robert H. Stein (1991, 65)		
54	Philip Wesley Comfort (1992a)		
54	Bruce M. Metzger (1992, 228)		
55	N. T. Wright (1992a, 390)		
56	Robert H. Gundry (1993, 1009)		

57	Julio Trebolle Barrera (1998,413)		
58	Udo Schnelle (1998, 207)		
59	George Strecker (2000 266)		
60	J. K. Elliott (2000, 586)		
61	Lee Martin McDonald and Stanley E. Porter (2000, 290)		
62	Ben Witherington III (2001, 49)		
63	James R. Edwards (2002, 503)		

The table clearly shows that issues on the Short and Long endings have been existing for a very long time most especially from the period of enlightenment. The majority of the scholars support the notion that the remaining part of the Short ending was lost possibly by being torn or worn out. Few scholars hold that it was unfinished or suppressed or combined positions. The researchers believe the purpose of this is to get to know what exactly was in the original manuscript, which is lost. Textual critics even in this dispensation are still making more effort to know what the intent of the original author was.

Some Scholars Support the Long Ending and Believe that it is Sacred and Authentic:

The fact that many scholars assume that the Long ending is not authentic does not mean that they are right. Some scholars support the Long ending with accurate proof. Tambiyi writes that before the fifth century, the Long ending of the Gospel of Mark was early noticed by Jerome.²⁸ The identification of the Long ending by some church fathers and the fact that it was present in some early manuscripts gives the possibility that the Long ending was part of Mark 16. Croy, a Professor of theology at the University of Heidelberg, attests that Daniel Schenkel disagrees with the speculations against the Long ending. He believes the Long ending is authentic. Another prominent author of the New Testament series and commentaries Bernhard Weiss debunks the emendation of other scholars against the Long ending and views the Long ending as an important part of the scriptures.²⁹

²⁸ Tambiyi, Gideon. “Metzger on Trial: Re-defining the History of Text- Critical Studies in Africa” Gideon Y. Tambiyi and Umar H.D. Danfulani eds., *Rethinking Biblical Studies in Africa: (An Essay in Honour of Danny McCain*. Bukuru: African Christian Textbooks, 2018), 60.

²⁹ Clayton N Croy, *The Mutilation of Marks Gospels*, 24



The studies on how the Bible was produced are still ongoing because there are new discoveries of information and new manuscripts in our present days as a result of the various research embarked upon by scholars around the world.

In the article “The Gospel of Mark in Recent Study,” Hurtado asserts that many scholars are working with the assumption the Short ending is real in the same article, J. Hug supports the Long ending and debunks the motions that the Long ending was derived from the other Gospels. He professes that the longer ending existed in the second century and was “an independent tradition of some historical importance”.³⁰

Professor Maurice A. Robinson a New Testament scholar at Southern Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary writes on the topic “The Long Ending of Mark as Canonical Verity” supports the Long ending and upholds that the Long ending is original and authentic. He also claims that Mark is indisputable the author of the Long Ending,³¹ in the same book, David Alan Black a Professor of New Testament and Greek at South Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary made a strong position affirming that the Long Ending is “original and canonical.”³²

It’s Placement in Contemporary Scholarship.

In terms of the inspiration of the Scriptures, although the researchers of this work hold firmly to the principles of Textual Criticism. Having studied some manuscripts over the years and using textual tools skilfully to study ancient manuscripts we were able to extract basic and useful information about manuscript studies through the help of Professor Scott and Professor McCain who inaugurated a Centre for the Study of Ancient Religious Scrolls and Manuscripts at the University of Jos, Department of Religion and Philosophy in co-operation with Manuscript Research Group, Grand Haven, MI USA. It can be stated that this work concurs with the discoveries of Maurice and other scholars about the Long ending. There is no doubt about the authenticity of Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus neither does this work disregard other excellent discoveries of the Short ending by great biblical scholars, however, this work affirms at this point, that the Long ending is not completely disjointed from the whole Gospel of Mark and it contains the inspired Word of God. Adejare postulates that the various versions of the Bible that we have are a result of the textual variants and discoveries of better manuscripts.³³ But in this case, some

³⁰ Wenham, David and Wycliffe Hall “*The Gospel of Mark in Recent Study*” (Hurtado L.W. *Themelios*

International Journal for Theological Students. No. 2, Vol. 14, Jan/Feb 1989) 49

³¹ David Alan Black, *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark 4 Views*, 74.

³² David Alan Black, *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark 4 Views*, 103.

³³ Joshua Adejare, *The Significance of New Testament Manuscripts Textual Variants and Its Impact on Religious*

Bible versions indicate in the footnotes that the better manuscripts do not include the Long ending.

Irrespective of the various arguments against the Long ending, the fact remains that the Long ending is still part of the Word of God. F. F. Bruce comments that the various positions for or against the Long ending do not in any way affect the Christian faith and practice because the information derived in the restored text is accurate and not distinct from the autograph.³⁴ The argument for or against the ending of Mark reveals the connectivity between world history and the Christian faith. It can be derived from Mark how men in this physical world wrote the scriptures, how it was re-written and passed on to generations without the absence of error, correction or damages.³⁵

In terms of Biblical Scholarship, from the textual analyses of the Long ending, it is evident that the Long ending is not the continuing part of the Short ending. There seems to be a difference in style and vocabulary between the Long and Short endings. The above statement is in a similar argument to Paul's letter to the Ephesians where the element of *hapax legomena* is found. But growth and development could equally warrant the use of different vocabularies and expressions. The majority of scholars have supported that the ending of Mark was actually lost; others believed that it was either lost or unfinished. Few scholars believe that it was unfinished or suppressed. The research about the ending of Mark has not ended however, it should be noted that the contents of the Long ending are not completely out of place and they are still relevant or impactful in the lives of believers. While Dobson is of the view that the majority of professional with the same position should be given more regard rather than the minority except new unique discoveries has been made,³⁶ in contrast, Croy clearly states that "a legion of supporters does not decide the issue."³⁷

Experience (Jalingo; Jalingo Journal of Christian Religious Studies and Societal Research: 2021)

³⁴ Wenham Gordon J. "The Place of Biblical Criticism in Theological Study" (In Hurtado L.W. *Themelios*

International Journal for Theological Students. No. 3, Vol. 14, April. 1989) 86.

³⁵ Larry W. Hurtado, *New International Bible Commentary Mark*. (USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989) 228.

³⁶ Dobson, John H. *Learn New Testament Greek*. (England: Bible Society, 1999), 268.

³⁷ Clayton N Croy, *The Mutilation of Marks Gospels*, 29. According to the researchers, moreover, it is generally known that the majority on an issue may not have God's approval against the minority. Interestingly, God in His own wisdom created these tools and skills of the various biblical criticisms as a means of extracting the truth in His Word and discovering His inspired Word. Whether it was Mark who wrote the Long ending or one of the reputable scribes does not nullifies the fact that the contents of the Long ending can be traced not only within the Synoptic Gospels but also in other books of the New Testament. Therefore, it is the position of these researchers that the Long ending should not be seen as a completely stale or irrelevant portion of the scriptures but should be treated



The studies and the research on the Long Ending of Mark have proved to us that through the accurate use of the skills and tools of Textual Criticism, it is possible to investigate and critically examine the authenticity of any biblical or religious manuscripts. The studies and the research of the Long Ending of Mark have propelled and encouraged biblical scholars to venture into deeper research on the credibility of available biblical manuscripts and other relevant literature. The studies and the research of the Long Ending of Mark have increased the willingness of biblical scholars to explore the discoveries of new manuscripts when opportunities arise to trace the source, and origin and to derive other relevant information about the manuscripts and how it relates to the Bible. Therefore, the researchers submit that reading the Long Ending of Mark should be seen as the Word of God and be read with an expectant heart as the Word of God which has the power to transform lives positively.

Conclusion

We have examined the critical analysis of the Long Ending of Mark and its placement in contemporary scholarship. Using Textual Criticism, we discovered that the Long ending of Mark 16 is not available in the common and generally acceptable manuscripts of the fourth century but it appears in other manuscripts. The number of scholars who believe that the author of Mark intended to end in 16: 8 completely outweighs those who believe that the Long ending is part of the passage of the Bible. The fact that the Long ending of Mark is contained in other passages of the scriptures, points to the fact that the Long ending of Mark is not a condemned passage but is the Word of God capable of impacting lives positively with the help of the Holy Spirit despite the exposition in the Greek text that completely condemns its authenticity. Ministers of the Gospel, students and biblical scholars should be aware of these observations of the text for proper understanding and application but they should not see the scriptures as an imperfect and ordinary book but a Holy and authoritative book.

with honour just like other books of the Bible; although doctrinal issues may not necessary be created or based on those verses.

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