

## *Mark: The Mysterious Messiah*

Week 29: Mark 16:1-??

**Introductory Exercise:** How should editors decide which scrolls get translated for English Bibles?

Mark 16 is uniquely challenging among the ends of the four gospels because, as early as the third century, traveling Christian preachers and scholars started to notice a plurality of endings to the book depending on which town the book was being read in. There are three basic groups of endings:

1. **Those manuscripts that go to Mark 16:8 and then end** (all MSS include all text up to the end of 16:8)
2. **Those manuscripts that include the “shorter ending”:**  
9 They reported briefly to those around Peter all that they had been commanded. After these things Jesus himself sent out through them, from the east to the west, the holy and imperishable preaching of eternal salvation. Amen.
3. **Those manuscripts that include the “longer ending”:**  
9 Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. 10 She went out and told those who had been with him, while they were mourning and weeping. 11 But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it. 12 After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. 13 And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them. 14 Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. 15 And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. 16 The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover." 19 So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.

Looking at Mark 16:1-8, what sort of ending would this have been for an ancient reader? What sorts of New Testament passages would resonate with this ending?

How would the experience of reading Mark change with the addition of the shorter ending? With the longer?

If you were the editor, how would you handle the question of what to include, how to indicate the textual variations, and other such questions?

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