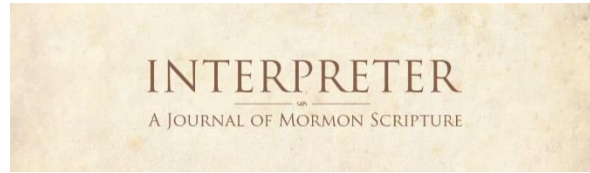




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The Book of Mormon Versus the Consensus of Scholars: Surprises from the Disputed Longer Ending of Mark, Part 1

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THE BOOK OF MORMON VERSUS THE CONSENSUS OF SCHOLARS: SURPRISES FROM THE DISPUTED LONGER ENDING OF MARK, PART 1

Jeff Lindsay

Abstract: Following the account of the ministry of Christ among the Nephites as recorded in the Book of Mormon, Christ gave a charge to His New World disciples (Mormon 9:22–25). These words are very similar to the commission of Christ to His apostles at the end of the Gospel of Mark (Mark 16:9–20). According to the consensus of modern Bible scholars, Christ did not speak those words; they are a later addition. If so, this is a problem for the Book of Mormon. Fortunately, recent modern scholarship offers compelling reasons for overturning the old consensus against the longer ending of Mark. Some of the factors from modern scholarship that indirectly help overcome a potentially serious objection to and apparent weakness in the Book of Mormon also help us better appreciate its strength as we explore unifying themes derived from an ancient Jewish perspective. In this Part 1 of a two-part series, we look at the evidence for the unity of Mark and the plausibility of Mormon 9:22–25. In Part 2 we examine further Book of Mormon implications from the thematic evidence for the unity of Mark.

One of the most effective and interesting arguments against the Book of Mormon is that it quotes from the disputed ending of the Gospel of Mark. In Mormon 9:22–25, Mormon quotes words spoken by Christ to His disciples in the New World that gave them essentially the same commission that Christ gave His apostles at the end of the Gospel of Mark in Mark 16:15–18: go preach the gospel, and he that believes and is baptized will be saved; and signs will follow. Some will object to New Testament language being used at all in the Book of Mormon, but there is no problem with Christ quoting Himself, as He does with the Sermon

on the Mount in His words to the Nephites (3 Nephi 12–14). So why should we worry also about Christ using His own words as quoted in Mark?

However, there is a problem, for the quoted words from Mark should not be in the Bible; they are a later, spurious addition, according to the consensus of most Bible scholars. The two earliest extant New Testament manuscripts both have the Gospel of Mark ending at 16:8 with two women, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, fearful and seemingly unwilling to proclaim the gospel message as they stand before the empty tomb: “And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.” According to modern scholars, the following verses, known as the “longer ending of Mark,” covering the appearance of Christ to Mary and then the apostles and the great commission to preach the gospel to every creature, should not be there; allegedly, they were inserted into some manuscripts much later. So what is this ending doing in the Book of Mormon, ascribed to Christ in His teachings to the disciples? If the words in the longer ending of Mark were not in Mark’s Gospel and were not spoken by Christ, it is unlikely that Christ would quote them or words similar to them in the New World.

Fortunately, very recent scholarship on the longer ending of Mark provides many compelling reasons to accept the disputed longer ending after all. It is a fascinating story with many lessons for students of the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

For those interested in this matter, a key resource available in both print and Kindle editions is Nicholas P. Lunn’s *The Original Ending of Mark: A New Case for the Authenticity of Mark 16:9–20*.¹ Lunn, a Bible translation consultant with Wycliffe Bible Translators with a doctorate in Hebrew from the London School of Theology, demonstrates how to dig deeply into the scriptures and explore them from many lines of analysis. Also see James Snapp, Jr., *Authentic: The Case for Mark 16:9–20*, 2016 Edition,² with extensive information about early Christian references to the longer ending of Mark. In another useful resource, cases for and against the longer ending are provided by four differing authors in

1. Nicholas P. Lunn, *The Original Ending of Mark: A New Case for the Authenticity of Mark 16:9–20* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014).

2. James Snapp, Jr., *Authentic: The Case for Mark 16:9–20: 2016 Edition* (James Snapp Jr.: 2016), Kindle edition.

Perspectives on the Ending of Mark,³ though the analysis in favor of the longer ending lacks the benefit of the extensive foundation provided by Nicholas Lunn's later work. William R. Farmer's 1974 work, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*,⁴ examined some of the external evidence relative to the longer ending, finding it unable to resolve the issue on its own, yet concluding that the omission of the longer ending was done deliberately by some Alexandrian scribes who may have been concerned about the possibility of believers picking up snakes and drinking poison.⁵ Farmer also laid a foundation for analysis of the internal evidence. An outstanding review of the literature and the development of related theories over time is provided by David Hester in his 2015 work *Does Mark 16:9–20 Belong in the New Testament?*⁶ (Hester, writing from an openly apologetic perspective, offers analysis that supports the authenticity of the longer ending of Mark.) Many other works on both sides of the debate can be considered,⁷ but Lunn appears to present the most complete, thorough, and far-ranging case for the authenticity of Mark.

Here is the passage in question from Mormon 9:22–25:

22. For behold, thus said Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
unto his disciples who should tarry, yea, and also to all his
disciples, in the hearing of the multitude: Go ye into all the
world, and preach the gospel to every creature;
23. And he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but
he that believeth not shall be damned;
24. And these signs shall follow them that believe — in my

3. *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark*, ed. David Alan Black (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2008).

4. William R. Farmer, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, first published 1974, digital edition 2005), as cited by Lunn; <https://books.google.com/books?id=yT-13BpsyQ0C>.

5. *Ibid.*, 62–72, as cited by Lunn, 13.

6. David Hester, *Does Mark 16:9–20 Belong in the New Testament?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015).

7. E.g., Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 322–27. For a detailed examination of the longer ending that questions its authenticity, see Travis B. Williams, “Bringing Method to the Madness: Examining the Style of the Longer Ending of Mark,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 20/3 (2010): 397–418; https://www.academia.edu/1444542/Bringing_Method_to_the_Madness_Examining_the_Style_of_the_Longer_Ending_of_Mark. For a rebuttal, see Tommy Wasserman, “Maurice Robinson Responds to T.B. Williams, pt. 1,” *Evangelical Textual Criticism*, Oct. 18, 2010, <http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.com/2010/10/maurice-robinson-responds-to-tb.html>.

name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover;

25. And whosoever shall believe in my name, doubting nothing, unto him will I confirm all my words, even unto the ends of the earth.

Here is the related portion from Mark 16:

15. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

20. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

If these verses were made up by some scribe to round out the abrupt ending of Mark at Mark 16:8, and if Jesus did not actually say this to His apostles in the New World, it would seem very odd that Mormon would quote from the teachings of Christ to His New World disciples and end up with the very same content given in the disputed longer ending of Mark. It is an issue that needs to be considered. One could argue, as some Latter-day Saint people have, that the Book of Mormon is somehow an expanded text that builds on ancient gold-plate material or, more extremely, at least on ancient “truthy” ideas, with Joseph’s added commentary and thoughts taken from modern sources, but this is unsatisfying and is inconsistent with the data we have about the translation process, both in terms of the mechanics of dictation and composition as well as the structure and language found in that text.

Fortunately, in spite of an ongoing scholarly “consensus,” there is surprisingly impressive evidence that the longer ending of Mark is authentic. Before we explore some of those details, first note that over

95% of the existing ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament have the longer ending of Mark. The problem came with the relatively recent discovery of the two oldest extant manuscripts, the *Codex Sinaiticus* and the *Codex Vaticanus*, both of which end at Mark 16:8 and lack the longer ending. These mid-fourth-century manuscripts, though, differ from our canon in many other ways and need not be assumed to be the best and most accurate manuscripts simply because they are the oldest manuscripts that have survived intact.

While they are the oldest extant manuscripts, they are clearly not the oldest manuscripts that were used and quoted by early Christians. Dozens of ancient sources provide evidence that at least multiple portions of the longer ending of Mark were known and used in the Christian community before the *Codex Sinaiticus* and the *Codex Vaticanus* came into existence. In fact, both those manuscripts provide evidence that their copyists were at least aware of an alternate ending for Mark (one has an unusually large space after Mark 16:8 as if leaving space for the additional verses, and the other has unusual markings at the end as if to physically prevent insertion of known additional verses). Both come from the same Alexandrian school, or the same “scriptorium,” and so should not be considered as independent witnesses against the longer ending.

The case for the longer ending of Mark, as we explore below, includes an impressive array of insights from various lines of analysis. The evidence from early Christian writers is noteworthy. Lunn’s analysis of individual words, themes such as the Exodus theme, grammatical patterns, parallelism, prophecy and fulfillment, and so on provide a fascinating, multidimensional approach to Mark from an able Bible scholar whose work provides a strong basis for accepting the integrity of Mark as we now have it. As a bonus, along the way we can also apply some interesting approaches to the Book of Mormon to better appreciate several subtleties in that ancient text.

About that Consensus

Looking at statements of Bible scholars, one can easily wonder why anyone would entertain any hope that the longer ending of Mark is authentic. The issue seems to be beyond debate. As New Testament scholar Dr. Stephen C. Carlson of the Australia American Catholic

University reminds us, “This issue is no longer disputed among New Testament textual critics.”⁸ The debate is over.

Some examples of scholarly statements on the issue have been compiled by Snapp.⁹ In light of abundant evidence relevant to the controversy (or *non-controversy*, according to many), the following statements are all surprisingly wrong or at least incomplete and misleading. For example, many scholars have informed their readers that verses 9–20 of Mark 16 “are lacking in many of the oldest and most reliable manuscripts” (Norman Geisler¹⁰) and that “many” ancient Greek manuscripts simply end at Mark 16:8 (e.g., Larry O. Richards, Wilfrid J. Harrington, Jim Levitt). Eugene Peterson notes that the long ending “is contained only in later manuscripts.” Donald Juel even speaks of the “almost unanimous testimony of the oldest Greek manuscripts” in excluding the longer ending. This error is further amplified by Ernest Findlay Scott’s claim that the 12 verses of the longer ending “are found in no early manuscript,” and David Ewert takes that error to its zenith with “all major manuscripts end this Gospel at 16:8.” Craig Evans says, “Many of the older manuscripts have asterisks and obeli marking off the Long or Short Endings as spurious or at least doubtful” and “later copies contain vv. 9–20, but they are marked off with asterisks or obelisks, warning readers and copyists that these twelve verses are doubtful.” Evans continues: these verses “were added at least two centuries after Mark first began to circulate,” which would seem to put the origins of the longer ending to sometime after AD 260. Tim Geddert writes, “Not only do some of the most ancient authorities” lack these verses (as NRSV reads) — “they all do.”¹¹

To Snapp’s lengthy list we could add many further statements. For example, Dillon Burroughs, an associate editor for *The Apologetics Study*

8. Stephen C. Carlson, “Review of a Book by Nicholas P. Lunn, *The Original Ending of Mark: A New Case for the Authenticity of Mark 16:9–20*,” *Australian Biblical Review* 63 (2015); available at https://www.academia.edu/22718193/Review_of_Nicholas_Lunn_The_Original_Ending_of_Mark_2014_.

9. The examples that follow are as cited by Snapp, Jr., *Authentic: The Case for Mark 16:9–20: 2016 Edition*, Kindle edition, “Introductory Summary: Mark 16:9–20: A Scholarly Consensus?” in the section “Manuscript Evidence.”

10. Norman Geisler, *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties* (Ada, MI: Baker Books, 1992), 377–78, as cited by Snapp, *Authentic*, Kindle edition, “Introductory Summary.”

11. Tim Geddert, “Beginning Again (Mark 16:1–8),” *Direction Journal* 33/2 (Fall 2004), as cited by Snapp, Jr., *Authentic*, Kindle edition, “Introductory Summary: Mark 16:9–20: A Scholarly Consensus?” in the section “Patristic Evidence.”

Bible for Students, author of over 60 books, and graduate of the Dallas Theological Seminary, wrote on his blog *Holy Writ* that, “The earliest manuscripts, including our earliest Greek Bible called *Codex Sinaiticus*, do not include the longer ending. In fact, it is some centuries after Mark was written that we first find a longer ending.”¹²

This is only a sampling of the sometimes egregious claims made by scholars as they quote one another in perpetrating and amplifying errors from this “non-controversy.” In light of numerous such statements regarding the manuscript-evidence, the evidence from early Christian fathers, the evidence from various early versions (translations) of the New Testament, and the evidence from lectionary sources, all used to deny the genuineness of Mark 16:9–20, Snapp observes that this obliges us to make an important choice:

Regardless of how fond we may be of 12 verses that have appeared in cherished English translations, this evidence presents all honest Bible-readers with a choice: you must either acknowledge that Mark 16:9–20 was added by copyists, and is not part of the Word of God, or else you must ignore these scholars. I recommend ignoring these scholars, because almost all of the statements that I have just quoted are incorrect, and the ones that are not flatly incorrect are deceptively vague and one-sided.¹³

The apparent consensus of scholars becomes less impressive once the pervasively overlooked evidence in favor of the long ending of Mark is brought to light. While the works of Lunn, Snapp, and others might not change that consensus in the eyes of many scholars, it can change things for some. After reading Lunn, Bible scholar Craig A. Evans, Dean of the School of Christian Thought at Houston Baptist University (and author of some of the questionable quotes listed by Snapp above), wrote:

Nicholas Lunn has thoroughly shaken my views concerning the ending of the Gospel of Mark. As in the case of most gospel scholars, I have for my whole career held that Mark 16:9–20, the so-called “Long Ending,” was not original. But in

12. Dillon Burroughs, “Mark 16: The Alternative Ending of Mark,” *Holy Writ*, Patheos.com, March 3, 2011; <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/holywrit/2011/03/mark-16-the-alternative-ending-of-mark/>.

13. Snapp, Jr. *Authentic: The Case for Mark 16:9–20: 2016 Edition*, Kindle edition, “Introductory Summary: Mark 16:9–20: A Scholarly Consensus?,” section “Lectionary Evidence.”

his well-researched and carefully argued book, Lunn succeeds in showing just how flimsy that position really is.¹⁴

Evans is a welcome example of a scholar changing his mind in light of the evidence on this matter. Many scholars feel there is no need to even consider the questions Lunn and others raise about the consensus rejection of the longer ending of Mark, but this is unfortunate and might remind us to exercise caution when adjusting our faith based on a purported scholarly consensus.

Some Basic Problems with the Consensus View

The widespread view that Mark should end at Mark 16:8 poses *prima facie* problems that need to be recognized. Robert H. Stein, while accepting the consensus about the longer ending, notes that an ending at v. 8 is problematic:

The troublesome nature of this ending, however, is apparent at first glance. It is acknowledged as a theological “scandal,” creating “an intolerable discontinuity in the narrative and in the readerly expectations created by it,” “a shocking reversal of expectations,” and a “mysterious anti-climax.” These quotations, it should be noted, come from advocates of the view that 16:8 is the intended ending of the Gospel. Nevertheless, they acknowledge the difficulty involved in assuming that Mark 16:8 is the Evangelist’s intended ending.¹⁵

Among the many challenges is that a Gospel of Mark ending at 16:8 seems obviously incomplete. The tomb is empty, and a young man states that Christ is risen, but we are left with merely the empty tomb, women being afraid, and failure to spread or even recognize the good news of Christ’s majestic triumph over death. The earliest expressions of Christian belief emphasized the resurrection and the appearance of Christ to witnesses (see Acts 2:23–24, 31–32, 3:15, 10:39–40, 13:29–31, 17:31; 1 Corinthians 15:3–5). Of 1 Corinthians 15:3–5 — which states that Christ died for our sins, was raised on the third day, and was seen by the twelve — Gordon Fee concludes that “it is generally agreed that in vv. 3–5 Paul is repeating a very early creedal formulation that was

14. Craig A. Evans, statement printed on the back cover of Lunn, *The Original Ending of Mark*, back cover, see also <http://www.jeffriddle.net/2015/04/new-book-defends-traditional-ending-of.html>.

15. Robert H. Stein, “The Ending of Mark,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 18/1 (2008): 79–98.

common to the entire church.”¹⁶ Without the longer ending, the basic creedal system of the early Church is incomplete in Mark. For this fundamental and vital aspect of the Christian message to be left muted without the clear and emphatic emphasis that the resurrected Lord was alive and seen by witnesses is inconsistent with the early Christian message and with Mark’s apparent purpose in writing.

Mark repeatedly provides evidence that prophecies made by or related to Christ are fulfilled, but we are left without important evidence if the longer ending is abandoned, as Lunn observes:

As Robert Gundry comments: “Mark has repeatedly and in detail narrated the fulfillments of Jesus’ other predictions so far as those fulfillments occurred during Jesus’ time on earth They include the seeing of God’s kingdom as having come with power at the Transfiguration, the finding of a colt, some disciples’ being met by a man carrying a jar of water, the showing of the Upper Room, the betrayal of Jesus by one of the Twelve, the scattering of the rest of the Twelve, the denials of Jesus by Peter, and of course the Passion....”¹⁷ In this light, having created the strong expectation of a resurrection through repeated predictions it conflicts with his practice elsewhere for Mark not to incorporate a narration of the fulfillment of these predictions. Consequently, it is extremely unlikely that this Gospel did not originally include such an account of the risen Jesus.¹⁸

Snapp likewise explains:

Another difficulty with the whole idea that the abrupt ending was intentionally designed by Mark is that when Mark presents predictive statements made by Jesus which are imminently fulfilled, he describes their fulfillment explicitly. Mark does

16. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 718; <https://books.google.com/books?id=XlBp10nUTXAC>.

17. Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 1009; visible at [https://www.amazon.com/Mark-Commentary-Apology-Cross_Chapters/dp/0802829112/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1474901832&sr=8-3&keywords=Gundry%2C+Mark%3A+A+Commentary+on+His+Apology+for+the+Cross#reader_0802829112](https://www.amazon.com/Mark-Commentary-Apology-Cross-Chapters/dp/0802829112/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1474901832&sr=8-3&keywords=Gundry%2C+Mark%3A+A+Commentary+on+His+Apology+for+the+Cross#reader_0802829112). Gundry advocates a lost ending of Mark, but his point on the inadequacy of an ending at Mark 16:8 without fulfilling the Galilee prediction is still relevant to Lunn’s analysis of the longer ending.

18. Lunn, *The Original Ending of Mark*, 12.

this so often that it may be called a strong characteristic of Marcan style. Mark 10:33 to 34, for example, is fulfilled in step-by-step detail. The predictive aspect in 11:2 to 3 is fulfilled completely in 11:4 to 6. Jesus' words in 14:13 to 15 come true in 14:16. After Jesus predicts that "one of the twelve" will betray Him in 14:20, Mark adds, in 14:43, "one of the twelve" when describing Judas Iscariot, even though Judas Iscariot has already been introduced; the reason for the insertion of the phrase is to make explicit the fulfillment of Jesus' prediction. And, in Mark 14:30, Jesus predicts that Peter will deny Him three times before the rooster crows — a prediction which is fulfilled step-by-step in Mark 14:66 to 72. The reader is thus led to expect an explicit fulfillment of the angel's prediction that Jesus will be seen in Galilee [Mark 16:7, see also 14:28]. With the abrupt ending, however, the expected fulfillment never comes [this issue is discussed in the following section on problems in the longer ending, since the longer ending does not explicitly mention Galilee as we might expect]. No stylistic irregularity in Mark 16:9–20 is nearly as unMarcan as the irregularity of the abrupt ending.¹⁹

The abrupt ending at Mark 16:8, which leaves readers in suspense in a way that many modern novels do, seems out of place for Mark to some scholars, such as Wilfred Lawrence Knox,²⁰ while others have argued that the approach in Mark 16:8 is actually consistent with Mark's style²¹ or that the tension created between fear and the need to proclaim the gospel is a brilliant literary device and an appropriate ending.²² But in terms of content, it defies logic, as Snapp observes, that Mark would end the Gospel with the women fearful and silent, as if they had disobeyed the commandment to tell others about the resurrection, when it was well

19. Snapp, Jr., *Authentic: The Case for Mark 16:9–20: 2016 Edition*, Kindle edition, Part Two: Internal Evidence, Chapter 9, Section "Efobounto Gar."

20. Wilfred Lawrence Knox, "The Ending of St. Mark's Gospel," *Harvard Theological Review*, 35/1 (Jan. 1942): 13–23; <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1508349>.

21. Thomas E. Boomershine and Gilbert L. Bartholomew, "The Narrative Technique of Mark 16:8," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 100/2 (June 1981): 213–23; <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3266065>.

22. Thomas E. Boomershine, "Mark 16:8 and the Apostolic Commission," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 100/2 (June 1981): 225–39; <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3266066>.

known in the Christian community (e.g., Matthew 28:5–8) that they had shared that information.²³

Other fair questions remain. For example, if the longer ending was a late fabrication and obvious forgery, one that added strange foreign material involving snakes and poison, how did it gain such widespread acceptance in the early church — and do so without vocal objection from any of the early Church fathers?²⁴ If the longer ending is so obviously a fraud, how could it have been used and apparently accepted by Irenaeus, and how did it enter his copy of Mark, one of the earliest known (but not extant) New Testament manuscripts?²⁵

The propriety of ending a verse, pericope, or entire book with the Greek particle γὰρ (*gar*) at the end of Mark 16:8 has also been debated, and while it is unusual, reasonable responses support the possibility that in terms of grammar and language, Mark 16:8 could be Mark's intended ending.²⁶ On the other hand, while Snapp recognizes that the grammatical problem of ending with γὰρ is surmountable, the stylistic problem is not so easily resolved. The three instances that have been offered as examples of γὰρ ending a book or narrative²⁷ do not withstand scrutiny and led Snapp to point out that there are *no examples* in Greek literature prior to the Gospel of Mark showing a narrative end the way Mark would if 16:8 were his intended ending.²⁸ More decisive than the debate around whether or not v. 8 *could* end the Gospel of Mark is the external evidence showing that it most likely did not, the internal evidence showing the

23. Snapp, Jr., *Authentic: The Case for Mark 16:9–20: 2016 Edition*, Kindle edition, Part Two: Internal Evidence, Chapter 9, Section “Efobounto Gar.”

24. This question is raised, for example, by David Hester in *Does Mark 16:9–20 Belong in the New Testament?*, Kindle edition, “Foreword.”

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.* See also N. Clayton Croy, *The Mutilations of Mark's Gospel* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2003), 48, as cited by Snapp, Jr., *Authentic: The Case for Mark 16:9–20: 2016 Edition*, Kindle edition, Part Two: Internal Evidence, Chapter 9, Section “Efobounto Gar.” For evidence offered in favor of closing a book with γὰρ, P. W. van der Horst, “Can a Book End with Γαρ? A Note on Mark Xvi. 8,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, new series, 23/1 (April 1972): 121–24; <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23960017>.

27. See James Edwards' commentary *The Gospel of Mark*, Pillar Commentary series (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 501, as cited by Snapp, Jr., *Authentic: The Case for Mark 16:9–20: 2016 Edition*, Kindle edition, Part Two: Internal Evidence, Chapter 9, Section “Efobounto Gar.”

28. Snapp, Jr., *Authentic: The Case for Mark 16:9–20: 2016 Edition*, Kindle edition, Chapter 9, Section “Efobounto Gar.” On the extreme rarity of statements ending in γὰρ, see also Hester, *Does Mark 16:9–20 Belong in the New Testament?*, 48–50.

arguments against the longer ending are inadequate, and that the content of the longer ending is consistent with Markan authorship.

Basic Problems with the Longer Ending

The longer ending does have some problems which may be related to the reasons why a school of scribes in Alexandria produced two early Greek manuscripts without it. There was obviously some kind of issue in some Christian circles with the ending, given that a few manuscripts end at Mark 16:8 (sometimes called “the abrupt ending”), and a few have what is known as the “Shorter Ending” which, with some variation, is basically this sentence: “But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this, Jesus himself (appeared to them and) sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.” This is attested in only a handful of sources and is universally recognized to be a late attempt to repair the ending of Mark. Another obvious forgery is found only in the *Codex Washingtonianus* (dating to about AD 400, likely from Egypt) called the “Freer Logion.”²⁹ The variability in the ending of Mark points to some problem encountered in the early scriptural records, even though the longer ending is found in an overwhelming majority of manuscripts, lectionary materials, and versions.

One of the obvious problems is that the transition between verses 8 and 9 in Mark 16 is choppy. It is a non-transition, actually. This, however, does not require rejecting the longer ending as part of the canon. It could still have been written by Mark, perhaps at a later time than the earlier verses, or under his direction by an assistant or follower who wrote the longer ending some time after v. 8.

A reasonable hypothesis proposed by Snapp is that while Mark was composing his Gospel in Rome, persecution or some other urgent problem prevented him from completing or polishing the ending of his manuscript.³⁰ He may have passed on a rough draft of the conclusion to others, asking them to complete the text and distribute it. His final notes simply may have been attached by someone unwilling to use his

29. See Lunn, *The Original Ending of Mark*, 58–59. The Freer Logion is a passage inserted into and dependent on the longer ending of Mark. Thus, while the Freer Logion is a forgery, it also requires the existence of the longer ending. Thus *Codex Washingtonianus* actually stands as one of many witnesses for the longer ending.

30. Snapp, Jr., *Authentic: The Case for Mark 16:9–20: 2016 Edition*, Kindle edition, “Introductory Summary: Mark 16:9–20: A Scholarly Consensus?,” section “Lectionary Evidence.” See also “Preface.”

own words for a sacred text. Alternatively, Mark may have written the ending later. Snapp is convinced the ending is Markan, but it could have been completed under Mark's authority by someone else or by Mark's own hand. For Snapp, the vital question is not if Mark himself wrote it, but rather if the final manuscript, once production was completed and authoritative transmission begun, included the longer ending.

Snapp suggests that if the Gospel of Mark was prepared in two stages or parts, perhaps a Christian scribe in Egypt later dealing with a copy of the manuscript may have remembered seeing the first portion of Mark as a separate text and felt that only the recollections of Peter in that document should be included in the Gospel, feeling perhaps that the longer ending should be a separate document.³¹ Thus, some manuscripts were made that ended at Mark 16, and later an additional ending, the Shorter Ending, was prepared by someone in Egypt who could not bear the abrupt stop at v. 8. There is speculation in this scenario, as there must be in any attempt to explain how we reached the state of documents we now have, but the theory seems to account for the major issues in the controversy.

Lunn offers a different theory for the state of Mark in ancient documents. He suggests the loss of the longer ending may have been deliberate and took place in Egypt. He speculates that a Gnostic group in Egypt, antagonistic to the concept of physical resurrection, deleted the final portion of Mark. Their manuscripts may have been picked up by neighboring Christian groups. Thus, by the early fourth century, Eusebius in Egypt felt that a majority of manuscripts he had seen lacked the longer ending. Interestingly, Tertullian and Irenaeus accuse the Gnostics of excising portions of the scriptures that they disliked, and Irenaeus specifically mentions the doctrine of the physical resurrection as one of the topics targeted for deletion of offending passages.³²

Whether Lunn's theory, Snapp's theory, some combination of both, or some other route led to the rejection of the longer ending in Alexandria and in a minority of New Testament manuscripts and versions, the abundance of evidence, as discussed below, points to the longer ending being a legitimate part of the canon that should not be rejected, in spite of the choppy transition or other cited problems.

A frequent objection to the longer ending is that it introduces many new words that Mark does not use elsewhere, but it is easy to demonstrate that other undisputed passages of Mark contain even higher rates of new

31. Ibid.

32. See Lunn, *The Original Ending of Mark*, 349–51.

words introduced and that the rate of unique words in the longer ending is about what one would expect based on passages of related length elsewhere in Mark.³³ Differences in grammar are also pointed to, though this can also be done with many sections of Mark, since it is a relatively short work with a good deal of variety. In my opinion, Lunn examines these charges in great detail and with strong effect.³⁴

There are also objections to the grammar in the longer ending as being uncharacteristic of Mark. For such a short work, however, almost any section can be shown to have unique features that stand out from the rest of Mark. The details of the grammar, like the details of the vocabulary, are handled verse by verse and element by element in Lunn and shown to be within a plausible range of variation for Mark.³⁵ Lunn also explains the many factors that can lead to linguistic variation in a text, including accidental variation, intentional variation to avoid repetitiveness, a deliberate literary device, dependency on another source, the involvement of a co-author, or the work of a second author under the direction of the first. Lunn also observes that even the latter possibility would still make the longer ending categorically Markan.³⁶

Perhaps one of the most commonly cited objections is the passage about the signs that would follow believers, including being able to handle snakes and drink poison (Mark 16:18). The possibility of experiencing such miracles of protection did not seem to cause serious objections among early believers, nor did it lead large number of Christians to deliberately handle snakes or ingest poison. In fact, divine protection from a snake bite is one of the miracles that attended Paul's ministry (Acts 28:3). Though not designed to appeal to modern sensibilities, especially in light of concerns about snake-handling Christians who may abuse the intent of Christ's words, the strangeness of that passage is not a sound reason for rejecting it, though it may have been a motivation for some scribes to reject it in a small percentage of ancient manuscripts. The issue of taking up serpents, strange as it may seem to us, also strengthens the subtle Exodus overtones in Mark, as we will see below. As an aside, the uniqueness and strangeness of some parts of the longer ending also weigh against the possibility of its being a late forgery by someone trying to convince early Christians to add some strange foreign material

33. Hester, *Does Mark 16:9–20 Belong in the New Testament?*, 129–35, and Lunn, *The Original Ending of Mark*, 118–27.

34. Lunn, *The Original Ending of Mark*, 118–57.

35. *Ibid.*, 117–64.

36. *Ibid.*, 133–34.

to their scriptures, especially in a community trained to respect and preserve scripture, not adding or subtracting to the word (Deuteronomy 4:2). Those who wish to claim the longer ending was a forgery have failed to provide a plausible mechanism for how it could have been passed off as legitimate and gained such widespread acceptance without howls of disapproval.

Another challenge in the longer ending involves the prophecy regarding Christ and Galilee mentioned above (Mark 14:28 and 16:7). Without the longer ending, the prediction is left completely unfulfilled, whereas with it, Christ is definitely seen by His apostles, but the location of Galilee is not specifically mentioned. Some use this as an argument against the validity of the longer ending. In response, Lunn offers this explanation:

So what of the Galilean appearance in Mark? While it is evident that this is not explicitly mentioned in 16:9–20, its occurrence may be assumed as an implicature. One of the telescoped events in the mind of the author is doubtless that in Galilee. At least one commentator on Mark is of the opinion that a “possible connection with Galilee is found in 16:15–20; for Mark’s verses 15, 16 resemble Matt. 28:19, which records words spoken by the resurrected Lord in Galilee.”³⁷ The similarity of contents, though not so much of language, between Matthew 28 and Mark 16 at this particular point would seem to indicate that within the larger compressed account the specific event upon which Mark 16:15–18 is based is that of the Galilean appearance.

The indications then are that the author of the ending consciously incorporated material relating to Jesus’ resurrection appearance in Galilee. He might also have expected his readers to appreciate this, just as he expected them to understand that his closing narrative did not portray the happenings of a single day. As his intended audience would probably have been aware that the ascension he recorded was separated from the preceding events by an interval of time, so the actual occasion of commissioning the apostles would perhaps have been understood to be in reality separated

37. William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel according to Mark*, Reprint. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 686, as cited by Lunn, *The Original Ending of Mark*, 323.

from the events of the adjoining narrative by a distance of both time and space. Regarding this, of course, we cannot be certain, and in the final analysis it is not of great consequence. What is important is that to the mind of the author, according to the literary conventions of the time, a Galilean appearance has been taken into account, being represented, though not explicitly, within the telescoped section consisting of 16:14–20.³⁸

Lunn goes on to conclude that Mark's failure to mention Galilee explicitly is a minor issue and that the primary objective in the longer ending was the reality of the physical resurrection, fulfilling the multiple predictions given earlier in Mark.

External Evidence for the Authenticity of the Longer Ending of Mark

Let us now review a portion of the external evidence for the authenticity of the disputed longer ending of Mark (Mark 16:9–20). Snapp explains that the evidence from New Testament manuscripts does not present an overwhelming case for rejecting the longer ending:

Regarding the Shorter Ending [a later addition to round out the abrupt ending at Mark 16:8], it is very misleading to vaguely say that some manuscripts have the Shorter Ending and some manuscripts have verses 9–20, because only six Greek manuscripts contain the Shorter Ending. The Shorter Ending was composed in Egypt, where the abruptly-ending text had previously circulated, in order to round off the otherwise sudden stoppage of the narrative. All six of the Greek manuscripts that contain the Shorter Ending also present at least part of the usual 12 verses, showing that they contained the entire passage when they were in pristine condition. The rest of the Greek manuscripts, that is to say, the remaining 99% of the manuscripts, uniformly present Mark 16:9–20 after verse 8. Gundry's assertion that these manuscripts (over 1,600 in number) "hopelessly disagree" with each other is absurd.³⁹

38. Lunn, *The Original Ending of Mark*, 323.

39. Snapp, Jr., *Authentic: The Case for Mark 16:9–20: 2016 Edition*, Kindle edition, "Introductory Summary: Mark 16:9–20: A Scholarly Consensus?" in the section "Manuscript Evidence."

In the following section, “Patristic Evidence,” Snapp summarizes evidence from the earliest references to Mark (discussed in much detail in later sections):

Four compositions from the 100s attest to the existence of copies of Mark which contained Mark 16:9–20: *Epistula Apostolorum* (by an unknown author), *First Apology* (by Justin Martyr), the *Diatessaron* (by Tatian), and *Against Heresies* (by Irenaeus).

Epistula Apostolorum (150) echoes the narrative structure of these 12 verses; it depicts the disciples not believing the report of a woman who had seen the risen Jesus — an event unrecorded in the Gospels except in Mark 16:10–11. The author also mentions the command of Christ to the apostles to “Go and preach” (resembling Mark 16:15), and his use of the phrase “mourning and weeping” resembles wording in Mark 16:10.

Justin Martyr (155), in *First Apology* chapter 45, as he interprets Psalm 110, makes a strong allusion to Mark 16:20 (blended with Luke 24:52, just as one would expect a person to do who was using a Synoptics-harmony, as Justin did). As Justin refers to how the apostles went forth from Jerusalem preaching everywhere, he used three words — *exelthontes pantachou ekeruxan* — which appear together nowhere else except in Mark 16:20, in a different order. In chapter 50 of *First Apology*, Justin alludes to the scene in Mark 16:14, using the phrase, “And later, when he had risen from the dead and was seen by them.”

Tatian (c. 172) incorporated all twelve verses into his *Diatessaron*, which expanded on his predecessor’s Synoptics-harmony by including the text of the Gospel of John. In the Latin *Codex Fuldensis* (a Diatessaronic witness from the West), and in the Arabic *Diatessaron* (from the East), the contents of Mark 16:9–20 are given essentially the same arrangement, thus echoing their second-century ancestor.

Irenaeus (c. 184), in the tenth chapter of Book Three of *Against Heresies*, wrote, “Also, towards the conclusion of his Gospel, Mark says: ‘So then, after the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God.’” Like most of Irenaeus’ work, this part of *Against Heresies*

exists only in Latin. A Greek annotation in Codex 1582 (based on an ancestor-manuscript produced in the mid-400's) next to Mark 16:19 affirms the genuineness of Irenaeus' statement; the annotation says, "Irenaeus, who lived near the time of the apostles, cites this from Mark in the third book of his work *Against Heresies*." This annotation also appears in minuscule 72, and in an uncatalogued manuscript recently described by the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts.

Papias, a writer very early in the 100s (c. 110), wrote something that may relate to the contents of Mark 16:18. Eusebius of Caesarea, in Book 3, chapter 39 of his *Church History*, quotes Papias along the following lines: "Papias, who lived at the same time, relates that he had received a wonderful narrative from the daughters of Philip. For he relates that a dead man was raised to life in his day. He also mentions another miracle, regarding Justus surnamed Barsabbas: he swallowed a deadly poison, and received no harm, on account of the grace of the Lord."

Papias describes a believer who was not harmed by poison, but he does not explicitly say that he is providing an example of the fulfillment of the prophetic words of Mark 16:18. It is possible that he mentioned this anecdote as an illustration of how Mark 16:18 was to be understood — that is, as a prophecy about incidental dangers, rather than deliberate self-endangerment — but it is also possible that he told the story simply because it was interesting.⁴⁰

Snapp addresses widespread claims that Clement and Origen show no knowledge of the longer ending, which turn out to be arguments from silence that bear little evidentiary weight. But in fact, there is a compelling case that Clement actually was aware of the longer ending, as discussed below.

Further, Jerome is repeatedly said, by commentator after commentator, to have regarded the longer ending of Mark as spurious and to have known of no Greek manuscripts supporting it. But those claims arise from his tendency to freely copy the text of others with minimal change, resulting in his use of a passage deriving from Eusebius that questioned the longer ending. However, Jerome himself actually supported the longer ending by including it in his Vulgate Gospels.

40. Snapp, Jr., *Authentic: The Case for Mark 16:9–20: 2016 Edition*, Kindle edition, section "Introductory Summary," subsection "Patristic Evidence."

As for Eusebius, who is perhaps the main early Christian voice cited to support rejection of the longer ending, he was clearly aware of New Testament manuscripts that had the longer ending, did not insist that it should be rejected, and “recommended to Marinus that the passage be punctuated and retained.”⁴¹

The patristic support for the longer ending includes Tertullian (documents from AD 195–220), Hippolytus (AD 235), Vincentius (AD 256), and many more. Snapp has chapters dealing with evidence from the 100s, the 200s, the 300s, the 400s, and later evidence for the authenticity of the longer ending. It is also clear that the longer ending was an important part of early Christian lectionary documents used in worship.⁴²

If the concepts in Mark 16:9–20 were fabricated long after the Gospel of Mark was written, it is difficult to understand how some of the earliest Christian documents we have provide support for their authenticity. Many of these documents existed long before the two related manuscripts, the *Codex Vaticanus* and *Codex Sinaiticus*, were composed, the earliest extant Greek manuscripts that are the primary tools used to reject the longer ending of Mark. What we learn from the early Christian evidence is that much earlier manuscripts of Mark were known in the Christian world but are not extant today, which support the authenticity of the longer ending of Mark. This strengthens the possibility that Christ actually spoke the words quoted at the end of Mark 16 and that he could have spoken similar words to His New World disciples in the Book of Mormon, as quoted in Mormon 9.

Lunn’s take on the extensive evidence from early Christianity is also valuable. Among the many sources he considers, one of the more important is the work known as First Clement, the book authored by Clement of Rome and one of the earliest Christian writings we have after the New Testament. Lunn illustrates Clement’s awareness and use of the Gospels in several ways, with language and teachings drawn from Mark, Matthew, and Luke. Words and phrases unique to Mark are used in several cases, such as in Clement’s allusion to the parable of the sower (First Clement, 24:4–5⁴³).

41. Ibid.

42. Snapp, Jr., *Authentic: The Case for Mark 16:9–20: 2016 Edition*, Kindle edition, “Introductory Summary: Mark 16:9–20: A Scholarly Consensus?,” section “Lectionary Evidence.” See also Chapter 7, section “Lectionary Evidence.”

43. Lunn, *The Original Ending of Mark*, 65–6.

In First Clement 42:3–4, right after a discussion of the apostles having received the gospel from Jesus Christ, who was sent by God (42:1–2), Clement uses language with striking parallels to the longer ending of Mark, compared below:

Having therefore received their orders, and being fully assured by the resurrection [ἀναστάσεως] of our Lord Jesus [κύριος Ἰησοῦς] Christ, and full of faith in the word [τῷ λόγῳ] of God, with full assurance of the Holy Spirit they went out [ἐξῆλθον] proclaiming the good news [εὐαγγελιζόμενοι] that the kingdom of God was about to come, ... preaching [κηρύσσοντες] in the country and in the towns (1 Clement 42.3–4)...

Having been raised [ἀναστὰς] ... he appeared to the Eleven ... and he said to them, “Go into all the world and preach [κηρύξατε] the gospel [τὸ εὐαγγέλιον] to all creation “So then, after the Lord Jesus [κύριος Ἰησοῦς] had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And going out [ἐξελθόντες] they preached [ἐκήρυξαν] everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word [τὸν λόγον] through the accompanying signs. (Mark 16:9, 14–15, 19–20).⁴⁴

Lunn notes that the setting in both passages is similar, dealing with the commissioning of the apostles and their going forth to preach the gospel. There is also “obvious thematic coherence” and in some cases “words unique to that ending among all the Gospel accounts.” Lunn explains:

Regarding the apostles going out to preach, the particular verb chosen by Clement to describe that event (ἐξελθεῖν) is the same as that occurring in Mark 16:20 of precisely the same action. None of the other Gospel writers uses this verb in this context. This uniqueness with respect to the verb found in the Markan ending makes a strong connection between Clement and that intertext. The verb “preach” in the active voice with the apostles as grammatical subject appears in both Clement (κηρύσσοντες) and the disputed verses of Mark (κηρύξατε, ἐκήρυξαν), yet not in this particular way in any of the other Gospel endings. Luke is the only one here to employ the same

44. Ibid., 66.

verb, though evidently in quite a different manner. Luke makes no explicit mention of the apostles as the agents of preaching, while his use of the verb is passive with the abstract noun “repentance” as the grammatical subject. Moreover, Clement and Mark are further united in using “preach” absolutely, that is, without an explicit grammatical object. The former has the phrase “preaching [κηρύσσοντες] in the country and in the towns,” and the latter “they preached [ἐκήρυξαν] everywhere.” In each instance the absolute verb is qualified by a locative expression. Undoubtedly there is much semantic overlap between “in the country and in the towns” and “everywhere.” Indeed, it may be the case that, for stylistic reasons, Clement here consciously avoided using “everywhere” (πανταχοῦ) since he had used this very term just a few sentences before in 41.2. Whether this is so or not, there is a specific semantic and structural correspondence at this point between the two phrases which is unparalleled in the other Gospels. Also found in both writers is the definite noun “the word” referring to the message preached. This sense of λόγος is another uniquely Markan feature in the Gospel endings. The presence of all these elements together in a passage relating an identical setting, plus the fact that the other Gospel endings do not contain such usages, makes not merely a good case but an extremely forceful one for Clement’s familiarity with the questioned ending of Mark. If so, the significance of this cannot be overestimated since Clement’s letter is generally dated to the late first century.⁴⁵ [*footnotes omitted*]

Lunn also considers the possibility that another document from the Apostolic Fathers alludes to the longer ending of Mark as Lunn examines the Shepherd of Hermas, a document often mentioned by LDS apologists for its vivid reference to early Christian baptism for the dead. Like First Clement, the Shepherd of Hermas was also written in Rome, where by tradition Mark was said to have written his Gospel. Since the Shepherd of Hermas was mentioned by Irenaeus and the author of the Muratorian Canon, both dating to around AD 175–190, it was likely written around AD 150 or earlier, and some authorities give much earlier dates. While it does not directly quote from Mark or any other scriptural source, it has apparent allusions to scripture. Lunn says, “It is certain that the author

45. *Ibid.*, 67.

was familiar with the Gospel of Mark seeing that in 97:2–3 unmistakable reference is made to Mark 10:23–24.⁴⁶ The passage in question is part of a parable involving twelve figurative mountains, compared with a part of the longer ending of Mark below:

And from the eighth mountain, where there were many springs and all the creation [πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις] of the Lord drank from the springs, are believers [οἱ πιστεύσαντες] such as these: apostles and teachers who preached [κηρύξαντες] to the whole world [εἰς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον], and who taught the word [τὸν λόγον] of the Lord [τοῦ κυρίου] soberly and purely, and who misappropriated nothing for evil desire, but always walked [πορευθέντες] in righteousness and truth. (Herm. 102:1–2) ...

And he said to them, “Go [πορευθέντες] into all the world [εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα] and preach [κηρύξατε] the gospel to all creation [πάση τῇ κτίσει]. Whoever believes [ὁ πιστεύσας] and is baptized will be saved” And going out they preached [ἐκήρυξαν] everywhere, the Lord [τοῦ κυρίου] working with them and confirming the word [τὸν λόγον] through the accompanying signs (Mark 16:15–16, 20).⁴⁷

Lunn offers this analysis:

Here the mountain with its springs that give water to all creation represents those who preach the gospel to the world. Obviously there are several NT texts that deal with a similar subject. Yet of these, the phraseology of one in particular is traceable in the Hermas passage significantly more than any other, and that is the commissioning and preaching of the apostles recorded in Mark 16:15–20. The most conspicuous link between the two texts is the occurrence in each of not just one but both of the semantically related phrases “all creation” and “the whole world.” The former phrase, apart from grammatical case, is identical in words and order (πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις/πάση τῇ κτίσει), while the latter in both instances consists of the basic prepositional phrase εἰς τὸν κόσμον with a synonymous quantifying adjective adjoining the noun. *Mark 16:15 is, it should be stressed, the only verse in the entire*

46. Ibid., 68.

47. Ibid.

NT where both these ideas are expressed together. Elsewhere in the NT the phrase “all creation” also appears in Romans 8:22; Colossians 1:15, 23. The first two of these three texts do not concern the subject of preaching. Though Colossians 1:23 does relate to preaching, the use of the verb “preach” in this text differs from that found in *Hermas* in three ways: the subject is not the third person plural referring to the apostles but the third person singular of the gospel, the verb is passive not active, and the context lacks any equivalent phrase “to the whole world.” *Hermas and Mark 16, on the other hand, agree in all these specifics.* Speaking of the apostles each employs the aorist active of the verb κηρύξαι which, as explained earlier, is a form particular to Mark among the four Gospel endings. Additionally, both *Hermas* and the Markan passage contain the noun “the word” of the gospel message, which in each case is associated with “the Lord.” Both passages also refer to believers by means of an aorist participle. These several verbal connections, some quite specific, and especially the co-occurrence of the two phrases relating to κτίσις and κόσμος, lead to the conclusion that the author of the *Shepherd of Hermas* was in fact familiar with the final verses of Mark.⁴⁸ [emphasis added]

Lunn also points to the early Epistle of Barnabas, which has some specific parallels to the longer ending, though the evidence is not as strong as the two cases considered above. Lunn also explores a variety of noncanonical or apocryphal sources which provide early allusions to the longer ending of Mark⁴⁹ before delving into evidence from AD 150 to AD 300⁵⁰ and later sources.

The evidence in favor of the longer ending is not limited to Greek writings. Snapp weaves together numerous threads from other parts of early Christianity. Among the Armenian evidence, for example, we have this:

Eznik of Golb (440) was one of the Armenian scholars who took part in the revision of the Armenian translation of the Bible in the 400s. Eznik quoted Mark 16:17–18 in part 112 of his composition “Against the Sects” (also known as “De Deo”) 1:25: “And again, ‘Here are signs of believers: they will dislodge

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid., 71–76.

50. Ibid., 76ff.

demons, and they will take serpents into their hand, and they will drink a deadly poison and it will not cause harm.” This evidence is over 400 years earlier than the earliest Armenian manuscript of Mark which does not contain Mark 16:9–20.⁵¹

The wide variety of early Christian sources pointing to the authenticity of the longer ending of Mark strike me as compelling and impressive evidence. But for Lunn, it is just the beginning of the extensive analysis and evidence to be considered. Here we survey a few highlights of the internal evidence, and in Part 2 find that there may even be some lines of analysis that can help us better appreciate some details in the Book of Mormon.

Internal Evidence

Much of Lunn’s lengthy book deals with the internal evidence that supports the authenticity of the longer ending as a genuine Markan product. He begins by pointing out the serious flaws in the arguments used to reject the longer ending, such as the previously discussed argument based on the number of new words found in those verses.

Lunn’s significant, detailed, and lengthy analysis of the internal evidence involves many technical issues that require a good knowledge of biblical Greek. I am unable to assess the accuracy of many of these points, but much can still be appreciated and understood by laymen and by those who have explored authorship in terms of statistical analyses like word prints and other measures. While Lunn is not a statistician and could certainly refine the statistical tools he applies, the analyses he conducts generally strike me as reasonable in principle and often quite compelling. The extensive and multidimensional nature of the arguments is generally impressive. Some of the subtle points he makes suggest lines of analysis that might bear fruit in exploring the Book of Mormon, though we lack the benefit of the text in the original language of the authors.

As one of several aspects of his exploration, Lunn examines each of the major words in the disputed ending as well as the grammatical patterns employed and compares them to Mark and other texts, providing evidence pointing in many cases to Markan origins. For example, except for a related instance in Luke said to be dependent on

51. Snapp, Jr., *Authentic: The Case for Mark 16:9–20: 2016 Edition*, Kindle edition, “Introductory Summary: Mark 16:9–20: A Scholarly Consensus?” in the section “Patristic Evidence.”

Mark, the only occurrences of the form “cast out/demons/in the name of” are found in the longer ending of Mark and earlier in the main body of Mark, consistent with common authorship.⁵²

Analysis of Jesus’s statement “they shall lay hands on the sick” shows that the collocation of “lay hands upon” and a sick person occurs five times in Mark, including the longer ending, but just once in Matthew and twice in Luke. In Matthew and Luke, the healed person is represented with a pronoun, while Mark alone uses a noun to refer to the infirm/infirmity (6:5, 8:25, and 16:18 in the longer ending).

More than this, in 6:5 those upon whom Jesus lays His hands are described as ἀρρώστοις (“sick”), an adjective that we have previously noted to be more frequent in Mark than the other Synoptics. What is significant here is that this is the very same word as that appearing in the collocation of 16:18. So with that specific object in view, this three-part collocation is found only in Mark 6:5 and 16:18. In the whole of NT literature, the grouping “lay/hands/on the sick” is seen to be an exclusively Markan collocation.⁵³

This kind of thing crops up over and over in the analysis and may create another compelling case for common authorship. Of course, other scholars argue that the use of Markan words, phrases, and grammatical patterns is evidence of deliberate imitation. Lunn properly objects to that argument as wanting to have it both ways: unique words or grammatical patterns are said to be evidence of a second author, and common words and style are also evidence of a second author just trying hard to imitate Mark. But it is in the abundance of subtle consistency that the “just imitating Mark” argument becomes implausible, for many of the details favoring Markan authorship require scholarship, analysis, and attention to detail that just doesn’t make sense for a plagiarizer, much as most of the plagiarism charges against the Book of Mormon don’t make sense if one wishes to offer a coherent theory of how the Book of Mormon was concocted.

Here are some summaries from a couple of the chapters dealing with internal evidence to give a flavor for the work:

52. Lunn, *The Original Ending of Mark*, 187–88.

53. *Ibid.*, 189.

Summary for Chapter Five, “Linguistic Evidence (2)”

In this chapter I have studied a selection of different linguistic features present in Mark 16:9–20. From this I have observed the following significant facts:

- The analysis of the various parts of speech, regarding their range of frequency in individual sections, their hierarchy, and their deviation from the Markan average, results in the inclusion of the longer ending within the parameters exhibited by the rest of Mark. The same cannot be said of the undoubtedly spurious Shorter Ending and Freer Logion.
- The implicit manner of participant reference used with respect to Jesus at the beginning of the distinct units within the longer ending (16:9, 12, 14) matches that commonly found in the same episode-initial position in the preceding part of Mark.
- The majority of the two- or three-part collocations found in the longer ending have their exact or closest parallels elsewhere in Mark.
- The rare temporal phrase μετὰ τὸ + infinitive (16:19), attested only five times elsewhere in the Gospels, has its only exact Gospel parallels earlier in Mark.
- The particular form of juxtaposed genitive absolute phrases (16:20) has three matching constructions in Mark, which is more than appear in all the other Gospels.
- For the verb ἀκούειν followed by a complement clause in the present tense (16:11) the majority of its Synoptic parallels occur in Mark.
- The partitive phrase with preposition and pronoun (16:11) conforms to the pattern seen elsewhere in Mark’s Gospel.
- The form of the conjoined noun phrases with possessive pronoun (16:14) corresponds precisely to the preferred configuration for such constructions in Mark.

The commonality of these very specific and very varied features with known Markan usage carries considerable weight. This contrasts with the weakness of the usual linguistic arguments against the genuineness of the longer ending discussed and refuted in the previous chapter. Here then we have noted positive linguistic indicators that collectively form another important element of our case for Markan authorship.

We note in conclusion that the findings of this chapter effectively refute Kelhoffer's thesis that the supposed later author of the longer ending actually sought to deliberately imitate Mark. Kelhoffer's arguments are based largely upon surface features of the language, in which it is posited that the hypothetical writer only partially imitated the earlier Evangelist, leaving the basic non-Markan nature of his work detectable to the scholar. This, however, raises an insurmountable objection. Assuming the correctness of this thesis, if even regarding the more obvious features, he only managed to imitate some and not others, how do we explain the fact that he went to even greater efforts to conform to Markan usage in less evident features of the language, such as those dealt with above? The greater subtlety of such linguistic components as discussed in this chapter is supported by the fact that no scholar, either in antiquity or in recent times, has remarked upon these within the context of the present debate. Almost certainly our hypothetical writer would have been completely ignorant of such things. Furthermore, assuming he or she was so linguistically informed to have taken the trouble to have included these elements would have been pointless, since their significance would have remained almost entirely unappreciated by those who read or heard his or her work. Consequently, to claim imitation with respect to such details is quite groundless.

To bring our consideration of language-related matters to a close, we may conclude that the findings of this chapter, plus the conclusions of the previous, contrary to popular scholarly opinion, enable us to firmly set Mark 16:9–20 linguistically within the Markan domain.⁵⁴

54. *Ibid.*, 200–201.

Summary for Chapter Six, “Literary Evidence”

This chapter has looked to literary factors for the resolution of the question concerning the authenticity of the longer ending. Through the examination of a range of diverse rhetorical techniques commonly used by the biblical writers, I have demonstrated that these disputed verses show no signs of being a late appendage, but rather form an integral and indeed essential part of the author’s original composition. Several strands of literary evidence, both structural and intratextual, confirm the church’s traditional acceptance of this portion of the Gospel. Here, by way of conclusion, I summarize the findings of this chapter. My investigation has demonstrated that

- (a) the longer ending, by the recurrence of particular themes, words, and phrases, establishes an *inclusio* with the opening passages of the Gospel (1:1–20),
- (b) the longer ending conforms to a specific form of episodic structure (ABCX) that is exclusively Markan,
- (c) the longer ending relates to the immediately preceding verses (16:1–8) by way of a formal parallelism with distinct verbal and thematic correspondences,
- (d) the unified narrative of chapter 16, in displaying a resurrection-unbelief-preaching sequence, aligns closely with the material closing the first major section of the Gospel (5:21–6:13), with which it also correlates at a macrostructural level,
- (e) the unified narrative of chapter 16 relates intratextually to material of 5:21–6:13 through multiple verbal linkages,
- (f) the resurrection-unbelief-preaching accounts of 5:21–6:13 function as narrative anticipations or foreshadowings of the events recorded in 16:1–20.

Had my findings merely consisted of one or two possible literary features, these might have been dismissed as coincidental. The literary evidence, however, is plainly manifold and in most instances quite objective. Such testimony cannot so readily be dismissed, especially when to it we add the corroboration

of the thematic evidence, the topic that next falls to my examination.⁵⁵

Lunn is not alone; many others have seen evidence of unity between the longer ending and the rest of Mark based on literary evidence. For example, Maurice Robinson sees what appears to be deliberate parallels between Mark 1 and the longer ending,⁵⁶ as shown in Table 1. Additional relationships of longer ending elements are shown for Mark 3:14–15 in Table 2. Relationships for Mark 6:7–13 and 16:9–20 are shown in Table 3, and relationships for Mark 7:24–8:38 are shown in Table 4.

Table 1. Maurice Robinson’s Comparison of Common Elements in Passages from Mark 1 and 16.

| Mark 1:32–39 | Mark 16:9–20 |
|---|---|
| 1:32 Narrative setting: as the sun goes down | 16:9 Narrative setting: when the sun rises early |
| 1:33 Many people | 16:9 one alone (Mary Magdalene) |
| 1:33 People appear at the door of the house where Jesus was | 16:9 Jesus appears to Mary outside the door of the tomb (cp. 16:3, 8) |
| 1:34 Healing many having diseases | 16:18 Laying hands on the sick for healing |
| 1:34 Casting out many demons | 16:17 Casting out demons |
| 1:34 No speaking by demons | 16:17 Disciples to speak in various languages |
| 1:34 (Unbelieving) demons knew him to be Christ | 16:16 Unbelieving humans will be condemned |
| 1:35 Having risen very early he went forth | 16:9 Having risen early he appeared |
| 1:35 And he departed into a desert place | 16:20 Having gone forth |
| 1:35 Simon [Peter] and those with him followed | 16:13 Having departed (cp. 16:6 a place) |
| 1:38 And Jesus said to them, Let us go into the surrounding towns | 16:10 She reported to those with him [and (16:7) to Peter] |

55. Ibid., 240.

56. Maurice Robinson, “Amid Perfect Contempt, a Place for the Genuine: The Long Ending of Mark as Canonical Verity,” in *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark: Four Views*, ed. David Alan Black (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2008), Kindle edition, chapter 2

Mark 1:32–39

1:38 in order that also there I might proclaim

1:39 And he was proclaiming ... in the whole of Galilee

Mark 16:9–20

16:15 And Jesus says to them, Go into all the world

16:15 Proclaim the Gospel

Table 2. Robinson’s Comparison of Elements in Passages in Mark 3:14–15 and 16:9–20.

Mark 3:14–15

3:14 Christ appoints Twelve

3:14 That he might send them out to proclaim

3:15 He gives them authority to heal diseases

3:15 And to cast out demons

Mark 16:9–20

16:14 Christ appears to the Eleven

16:15 He tells them to go and proclaim

16:18 They shall place hands on the infirm and they shall recover

16:17 They shall cast out demons

Table 3. Robinson’s Comparison of Elements in Passages in Mark 6:7–13 and 16:9–20.

Mark 6:7–13

6:7 Christ calls toward the Twelve

6:7 And he begins to send them out

6:7 He gives them authority over unclean spirits

6:12 Having gone forth they were proclaiming

6:13 They cast out many demons

6:13 They anointed with oil many infirm

6:13 And they shall recover

Mark 16:9–20

16:14 Christ appears to the Eleven

16:15 He tells them to go and proclaim

16:17 They shall cast out demons in my name

16:20 Having gone forth they proclaimed

16:17 They shall cast out demons

16:18 They shall place hands upon the infirm

16:18 And they shall become well

Table 4. Robinson’s Comparison of Elements in Passages in Mark 7:24–8 :38 and 16:9–20.

Mark 7:24–8:38

7:24 Having risen, he departed

7:24–30 Into Tyre

7:31–37 Into Sidon

Mark 16:9–20

16:9 Having risen

16:13 Having departed

16:15 Go into all the world

Mark 7:24–8:38**Mark 16:9–20**

| | |
|--|--|
| 8:22 Into Bethsaida | 16:17 They shall cast out demons |
| 7:24–30 Cast out demons | 16:17 They shall speak with new tongues |
| 7:31–37 Dumb man healed, speaks for the first time with a “new” tongue | 16:15 proclaim the gospel to all creation |
| 7:36 And he the more proclaimed | 16:20 And these having gone forth proclaimed everywhere |
| 8:11 Seeking a (refused) sign from him | 16:17 And (accepted) the signs will follow |
| 8:13 Jesus departs to the other side, after speaking to them | 16:19 Jesus departs into heaven after speaking to them |
| 8:23 And having laid his hand upon them | 16:18 They will lay hands upon the sick and they shall recover |
| 8:25 And again he laid his hands upon them | |
| 8:29 Peter proclaims Jesus is the Christ | 16:19–20 Jesus is proclaimed the Lord |
| 8:31 After three days he will rise; Peter rebukes him | 16:9 Now when he had risen (16:7 Tell Peter) |
| 8:34 If anyone wants to follow behind me | 16:17 Signs will follow those who believe 16:20 who believe, By the signs following |
| 8:35 ... will save it | 16:16 ... will be saved |

This level of relationship is most naturally explained by some degree of authorial intent and craftsmanship unlikely to be matched by a forger attempting to emulate Mark’s style.

In Chapter 7, “Thematic Evidence,” Lunn explores the extensive foreshadowing in Mark that points to multiple elements in the longer ending that are needed to complete prophecy or complete themes raised by Mark earlier.⁵⁷ Lunn finds that a relatively unique aspect of Mark is the way he lays out forthcoming themes (foreshadowing) “with distinct verbal links in the narrative fulfillments.”⁵⁸ With that in mind, Lunn explains that the multiple predictions of the resurrection of Christ, Mark 8:31, 9:31, and 10:33–34, are not completed by the empty tomb alone if Mark ends at 16:8, but require the declaration that Christ has arisen.

57. Lunn, *The Original Ending of Mark*, 241–72.

58. *Ibid.*, 246.

“Having risen ... “ in 16:9, the first verse of the disputed longer ending, does precisely that with a “resounding” echo of Christ’s words.⁵⁹

Another unifying theme in Mark reviewed by Lunn is the contrast between fear and faith, with fear often giving way to faith in God. Given this trend in Mark, terminating the Gospel on the note of fear seems implausible. The longer ending in this aspect is much more appropriate.⁶⁰

Mark’s frequent treatment of the unbelief of his followers was noted by W. S. Vorster as a significant theme in Mark:

In Mark’s Gospel, like in any other narrative, the story of Jesus is presented by the narrator from a certain perspective or viewpoint. Narrative point of view signifies the perceptual, conceptual, and ideological way in which the story gets told. It is the means by which the reader is directed to identify with the message of the narrative and to accept the norms of judgement presented in the text. Petersen⁶¹ has correctly observed that until chapter 13 the reader is educated to accept the view presented by Jesus and the unclean spirits and to view Jesus in terms of the things of God (cf. 8:33) and not in terms of man, as the other characters in the narrative, including the disciples, do. The other characters wrongly view Jesus as the worldly messiah and do not understand his mission. The disciples’ lack of understanding is woven like a golden thread through the fabric of the text. The reader knows, because he is given the information by the narrator, that Jesus is the Son of God and what his fate as Son of man is (cf. 4–10); that death, resurrection and parousia await Him. The disciples, however, are presented as characters who are unable to comprehend.

... They do not comprehend what the reader is given to comprehend, namely that messiah and kingdom are to be understood in terms of death, resurrection, and parousia of Jesus, the Son of man who is the Son of God.⁶²

59. Ibid., 246–47.

60. Ibid., 265–68.

61. N.R. Petersen, “Point of View’ in Mark’s Narrative,” *Semeia* 12 (1978): 97–121, as cited by W.S. Vorster, “Literary Reflections on Mark 13:5–37: A Narrated Speech of Jesus,” *Neotestamentica*, 21/2 (1987): 203–24, citation at 213; <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43070392>.

62. N.R. Petersen, “The reader in the gospel,” *Neotestamentica* 18 (1984): 38–51, as cited by Vorster, “Literary Reflections on Mark 13:5–37,” at 213.

In literary terms, it means that Jesus is a reliable character because his perspective is presented by the narrator as trustworthy, while the disciples are unreliable.⁶³

The longer ending of Mark continues to display the “golden thread” woven into the fabric of the text. The theme of unbelief continues as Jesus dines with those who are still His disciples and “upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen” (Mark 16:14). This is followed by promises of salvation to those who believe and are baptized, and the commission to take this message to all the world, with the promise of signs that would follow them that believe (Mark 16:15–18). Then in the last verse we learn that they did go forth and signs followed them (Mark 16:20), showing that the disciples, of course, had overcome their doubts and become men of faith and courage.

Among other persistent themes in Mark, Lunn shows that subtle Exodus themes unite Mark.⁶⁴ Lunn details numerous references to the Exodus in the language of Mark, suggesting that Mark has framed the mission of Christ as a New Exodus. Christ seeks to bring Israel across the waters of baptism into a spiritual Promised Land, and in so doing, rather than casting out Gentile nations, Christ’s work is to cast out Satan and his demons.

As one of many examples, Lunn explains how the transfiguration in Mark 9 points to Moses at Mount Sinai, something which a variety of scholars have previously observed.⁶⁵ Both take place in a mountain, and Moses and Jesus both take three persons with them (Exodus 24:1,9; Mark 9:2). In both cases, a cloud overshadows the mountain. A voice is heard from the cloud. There are references to tabernacles in both (Exodus 25:9; Mark 9:5). The appearance of both principal characters is transformed. The injunction to “Hear him” in Mark 9:7 also has overtones from Moses, with similar words used to describe a Moses-like prophet in Deuteronomy 18:15,⁶⁶ as other scholars have also noted.

Among other details, the miracles of feeding point to manna in the wilderness, and the last supper points to the Passover feast. Christ’s words, “This is the blood of the new testament” (Mark 14:24), have been observed by many commentators to reflect Exodus 24:1–8, where God

63. Vorster, “Literary Reflections on Mark 13:5–37,” quote at 213.

64. Lunn, *The Original Ending of Mark*, 248–63.

65. *Ibid.*, 256–57.

66. *Ibid.*

establishes His covenant through Moses. As Moses throws blood upon the altar, he says, “Behold the blood of the covenant.”

Not surprisingly, the longer ending makes multiple Exodus allusions that are consistent with Mark’s overarching implementation of Exodus themes. The appearance of Christ to the Eleven uses the term *appeared* in a way that recalls the divine commission of Moses. Exodus 3:2 reports that “the angel of the Lord appeared unto him,” but we soon learn it is Jehovah that is appearing to Moses and giving him his commission, just as Christ does for the Eleven.

The call of Moses in Exodus 3 and 4 involves miraculous signs, possibly reflected in the reference to signs in Mark 16:17. In both cases the signs are related to the belief of the people.

Lunn also sees a parallel in the snakes mentioned in the longer ending: “they shall take up serpents” (Mark 16:18). Taking up a serpent with his hand is exactly what Moses does after his rod is turned into a snake by the Lord (Exodus 4:2–3). It is a fascinating parallel that may be new to most of us. Also in this episode, “hands” play an important role in both accounts.

Mark’s use of “hardening” of hearts also has affinity to the Exodus account in the Old Testament, both from the Egyptians’ response to His message and miracles and in the waning faith of the House of Israel.

Moses is also commanded to “go” and carry out his work of deliverance from slavery (Exodus 3:10), just as the apostles are commanded to “go” and preach the gospel among all nations.

With this perspective, it seems that much in the longer ending resonates subtly with the Exodus theme that permeates Mark, consistent with common authorship and thematic intent.

In addition to the Exodus theme that permeates Mark’s Gospel, references to Elijah play a role in Mark. Lunn writes:

In recent years scholars have detected an Elijah motif in the portrayal of Jesus in the Gospels, or a joint Elijah-Elisha motif. Some studies, like those of Adam Winn and Warren Gage, see such a motif as being particularly applicable to the Gospel of Mark. Here in the prologue John the Baptist is clearly presented as an Elijah-like figure. Yet Jesus too, through his fasting for forty days in the wilderness (Mark 1:13), evokes narratives of both Moses and Elijah. The body of the Gospel then includes nine specific references to Elijah (6:15; 8:28; 9:4, 5, 11, 12, 13; 15:35, 36). Luke and John contain less. Matthew also has nine, though mostly in parallels to Mark. Besides these explicit

references there are also further allusions. Gage shows how “the undisputed portions of Mark’s Gospel allude to five of the six major narratives in the Old Testament accounts of Elijah’s life, as well as several events from the life of Elijah’s successor, Elisha.” Among these are the question concerning Baalzebub (Mark 3:22; cf. 2 Kings 1:2–8), and the theophany on Mount Horeb evoked in the account of the transfiguration (Mark 9:2–8; cf. 1 Kings 19:9–15). In this latter passage Mark is the only evangelist who produces the names in the order “Elijah” then “Moses” (9:4). Further, Mark alone of the Gospel writers presents not one but two versions of the saying that some held Jesus to be Elijah (6:15; 8:28).

Considering the nature of the Markan *inclusio*, noted earlier, the strong Exodus overtones in the prologue accompanied by less prominent Elijah allusions may be matched by similar features in the Gospel’s conclusion. In the latter the Moses-Exodus connections, as already outlined, are reasonably pronounced. What of Elijah? Interestingly, there is a possible echo in the Markan ending of the final event involving the prophet. When Elijah was taken up, witnessed by Elisha his successor, the LXX text says “As they were walking along talking [ἐλάλουν] ... Elijah was taken up [ἀνελήμφθη] in a whirlwind as into heaven [εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν]” (2 Kings 2:11). This exhibits the same words as used in Mark’s ending with reference to Jesus’ ascension (16:19), “the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken [λαλήσαι] to them, was taken up [ἀνελήμφθη] into heaven [εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν].” The sequence ἐλάλουν ... ἀνελήμφθη ... εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν in 2 Kings is matched by λαλήσαι ... ἀνελήμφθη εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν in Mark. Since each contains three related elements occurring in the same order, with the verb in identical form, the similarity is not likely to be purely coincidental. The deliberateness of it has been firmly advocated by Gage, who also contends that with regard to Elijah “thematic analysis of the Gospel supports the conclusion that the longer ending of Mark fits within the typological structure of the Gospel.” Accepting the validity of this allusion results in further evidence of an essential unity

of thought between the ending and the opening, as well as the body, of the second Gospel.⁶⁷

Maurice Robinson also points to the Elijah themes in Mark to strengthen the case for the authenticity of the longer ending.⁶⁸

Importantly, Mark's references to Elijah should be understood in the context of the common misunderstanding during and after the ministry of Christ that Christ was merely another prophet like Elijah. The Jews were waiting for Elijah to return, and many said this miracle worker was Elijah or an Elijah. Mark, aware of this misunderstanding, is careful to show that Christ transcends the role of Elijah as Savior and Son of God. Mark F. Whitters explains:

The reader is to infer that John the Baptist has played the role of Elijah and that he has suffered the very fate awaiting Jesus (9:12–13). This is how the Malachi passages about Elijah have been fulfilled according to the gospel of Mark. The “messenger to prepare the way” (Malachi 3:1a) is John the Baptist; “the Lord whom you seek [and who] will suddenly come to his temple” (Malachi 3:1b) is Jesus; “the great and terrible day of the Lord” (Malachi 3:23 [4:5]) is the day of Jesus. This narrative background explains the misinterpretation of Jesus' cry on the cross before he died. In effect the account of Jesus' last words recapitulates the earlier debate between those who believed Jesus was Elijah and those who believed that John the Baptist was Elijah.

The reader's attention is drawn to vv. 34–36 by the fact that the quotation (Psalm 22:1 [2]) is not in Greek. Jesus's words first appear as a transliteration into Greek letters of what is apparently his own language, and a Greek translation follows. Scholarly interest has tended to focus on the confused transliteration, which reflects a quotation that is neither pure Aramaic nor pure Hebrew. But it is the misunderstanding

67. Ibid., 263–64. Unfortunately, the work of Warren A. Gage that Lunn cites is an unpublished document.

68. Robinson, “Amid Perfect Contempt,” in *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark: Four Views*, Kindle edition, chapter 2, section “‘Literalists of the imagination’: The Elijah Emphasis.” Like Lunn, Robinson also refers to the unpublished study of Warren Gage.

of the crowd, not the accuracy of the transliteration, which rivets the reader's attention.⁶⁹

Lunn's examination of unifying Exodus and Elijah themes throughout Mark is not only useful in assessing the authenticity of the longer ending of Mark, but may also be useful to students of the Book of Mormon in considering the allusions and themes woven into the account of the ministry of the Savior to the Nephites. In a sense, the works of Lunn and others in defending the longer ending of Mark are doubly relevant to the Book of Mormon, first in clarifying the alleged weakness of Christ quoting from His own words given in the longer ending of Mark; and second in strengthening our appreciation of the literary tools at play in the Book of Mormon's account of the Savior's ministry as well as some related events shortly before it, a topic we take up in Part 2.

Implications of the Evidence for the Origins of Mark and the Book of Mormon

The evidence reviewed and presented by Lunn and other authors considered here does much to refute a long-standing rejection of the longer ending of Mark by many Bible scholars. It also reminds us of the dangers of blindly accepting a scholarly consensus when that consensus may have been driven by limited data and a few influential views repeated and propagated on the basis of previous authority.

The evidence for the early existence of the longer ending, its Markan style, and its thematic unity with Mark, while strongly supporting the propriety of including the longer ending in the canon, does not necessarily mean that Mark wrote it himself or that it was in the initial draft of the Gospel of Mark. It could have been written under Mark's direction or by a follower of Mark and may have been an update or addition to an initial manuscript. For example, David Alan Black argues that Mark wrote the longer ending as a later postscript to his Gospel that had already been in circulation.⁷⁰ However it was produced, the evidence suggests that there was no reason for the early Christian community to question its inclusion in Mark and its sacred nature, and there is no

69. Mark F. Whitters, "Why Did the Bystanders Think Jesus Called upon Elijah before He Died (Mark 15:34–36)? The Markan Position," *The Harvard Theological Review*, 95/1 (January 2002): 119–24, citation at 122; <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4150741>

70. David Alan Black, "Mark 16:9–20 as a Markan Supplement," in *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark: Four Views*, ed. David Alan Black (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2008), Kindle edition, chapter 4.

reason for us to exclude it and condemn it today. Likewise, there is no reason to doubt that Christ gave the apostolic commission recorded in Mark 16 and repeated again to His disciples in the New World, as quoted in Mormon 9:22–25.

As for the disputed passage in Mormon 9, there is no substantial problem in Christ using the same or similar words in the New World that He spoke to His apostles in the Old World. Abundant evidence suggests that the longer ending of Mark belongs in the canon and was not a late forgery, leaving us with good reasons to reject the argument against the Book of Mormon based on the words of Christ cited in Mormon 9.

The commission of Christ to His disciples is more than just a late afterthought from Joseph Smith thrown in near the end of the Book of Mormon. It is placed not in 3 Nephi directly, but later in the final words of Mormon as he speaks to future readers of the Book of Mormon and discusses the significance of miracles and signs, a theme that is motivated by his discussion in Mormon 8 of the ministry of the Three Nephites, the special group from among the original disciples who were translated and given power to continue living and ministering unknown to the world until Christ should return again. In Mormon 8:24, he writes that

[I]n his name could they remove mountains; and in his name could they cause the earth to shake; and by the power of his word did they cause prisons to tumble to the earth; yea, even the fiery furnace could not harm them, neither wild beasts nor poisonous serpents, because of the power of his word.

The power over poisonous serpents is one of the specifically mentioned signs given in the next chapter, Mormon 9:24, which would follow those that believe. The causing of the earth to shake and the (threatened) tumbling of prisons is also found in Helaman 5 in a scene that appears to foreshadow artfully the ministry of Christ in 3 Nephi with connections to the commission of Christ to the disciples, as discussed below.

Interestingly, the Book of Mormon implications from a study of the longer ending and particularly from the work of Nicholas Lunn extend beyond rebutting a significant attack on the authenticity of the text. In fact, there may be other insights to glean from the tools and methods in Lunn's work when applied to the Book of Mormon, particularly to 3 Nephi, which is the subject of Part 2 of this paper.

Conclusion

Modern scholarship provides excellent answers for the alleged Book of Mormon problem of Christ quoting from the longer ending of Mark in His words to the Nephites in the Book of Mormon. Extensive external and internal evidence weakens the arguments against and provides powerful evidence for the authenticity of Mark 16:9–20. There is no reason to suppose that Christ did not speak those words and give His apostles the apostolic commission found at the end of Mark. There is no inherent problem with the similar commission given to the disciples in the New World by the Savior.

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