

David Robert Palmer's response to James Snapp's document: "Snapp-MACARTHUR-BAD-ENDING-Dec-2023.doc" which Snapp sent to him personally and asked him to read. It is regarding the LE (longer ending) of the gospel of Mark, and John MacArthur's teaching about it. I read it, January 27, 2024, and made this document in response. I made a PDF of Snapp's document and you can download that [PDF here](#). The title of Snapp's document in the Word properties window is "JOHN MACARTHUR LIAR."

p. 5, Snapp wrote: "If John is going to say that the Holy Spirit preserved the Scripture in its pure state through all history, how can he turn around and reject these twelve verses?"

Palmer: For textual criticism reasons, like any other variant. Not everything preserved by the bishops and scribes is scripture.

P. 6, Snapp wrote: "John, you can't have it both ways: either the Holy Spirit kept the Scriptures in a pure state, or else the Holy Spirit allowed thousands and thousands of manuscripts in Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic were contaminated by twelve verses that the Holy Spirit did not want to be in the text of the Gospel of Mark."

Palmer: These two options stated by Snapp are no different than in the situation of any other textual variant. Yes, clearly the Holy Spirit did allow the scriptures to be contaminated, that's why we have textual variants, and textual critics trying to ascertain the authorial texts. The Holy Spirit also allowed religious leaders to set aside the Word of God in order to set up their own traditions of men.

p. 6, Snapp wrote: "Once the premise is accepted that the Holy Spirit has providentially preserved the purity of Scripture for the church in all ages,"

Palmer: I imagine MacArthur's view of this is the same as mine: The Holy Spirit did preserve the pure text of Mark 16 in Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, plus in all the other manuscripts in any era and any age, which did not include the Longer Ending of Mark. REMEMBER, there were dark ages when the regular people had **no access** to any written form of the word of God **at all**, but that was the fault of the type of high-church "bishops" whom Snapp trusts to have preserved the Word of God for us!

p. 9, Snapp wrote: "and you will see that over 99.9% of these manuscripts support including Mark 16:9-20."

Palmer: That is, 99.9% of all currently existing manuscripts. But as MacArthur knows, Eusebius indicates that the majority of manuscripts in his day did not contain the Longer Ending of Mark. And in the 5th century, Victor of Antioch says that was still the case, that most manuscripts did not have it, and he and his colleagues set about the task of adding the Longer Ending of Mark to the manuscripts. Snapp knows this, or should know.

Snapp next rebuts some minor points of MacArthur that do not pertain to Mark in particular, so I will skip ahead.

p. 13, Snapp clarifies what "oldest manuscripts mean" and says the Dead Sea Scrolls are older, etc. Well this is not relevant because we all know MacArthur meant the oldest manuscripts which contain the whole gospel of Mark.

p. 21, Snapp disagrees with MacArthur's claim that one can reconstruct the entire NT text from quotations of the Fathers. I don't have an opinion on that.

p. 24, Snapp addresses preservation again, and my response would be the same as previously.

p. 25, Snapp asks "Did generation after generation of Vulgate-readers use a "bad ending"? Did all the Greek-speaking Orthodox believers, gathering annually on Ascension-day, read 12 verses that the Holy Spirit did not want them to read?"

Palmer: I don't know MacArthur's answer to that, but my answer is "Yes." The "high church" denominations like the Roman Catholic church have many things that were added by the traditions of men, by "bishops" who granted themselves unwarranted authority, which I reject.

p. 25, Snapp: Did the Reformers develop doctrine based on this passage that they never should have used?

Palmer: I don't know that the reformers based doctrine on the LE of Mark, but if they did, they should not have.

p. 37, Snapp says MacArthur says Irenaeus, Justin Martyr and Tatian showed knowledge of other endings. Snapp says they did not.

Palmer: I do not know what MacArthur is basing his statement upon. I don't know that Snapp knows either, but Snapp proceeds to affirm that those men believed that the Longer Ending was scripture. I cannot imagine that those men were unaware that there were manuscripts of Mark that did not have the Longer Ending. I do not believe that they were unaware. Since Eusebius and Victor were aware of this, why would the others not be aware of it.

Snapp ends his document by giving a long list of scholars and pastors and text books that state opinions about the evidence for this textual variant. My impression is that Snapp is giving them as examples of misinformation. But Snapp fails to say which fact from these quotations are in error according to him, and therefore which facts John MacArthur should not also be stating. So this long section was really not helpful.

p. 42, Snapp says "Finally: REPENT. Stop spreading falsehoods about the ending of Mark. If you need to become better-informed about Mark 16:9-20, I offer to you, and to each of the elders of Grace Community Church, a copy of my book, Authentic: The Case for Mark 16:9-20 (Fourth Edition)."

Palmer: I do not think that anything MacArthur said warrants this level of rebuke. He interprets the historical evidence differently than Snapp does, and granted might have made a few very minor mistakes based on outdated information,

since he is quite advanced in age and had his training many decades ago. But those are very minor and do not warrant this level of rebuke.

p. 92, Snapp says: "Be careful of what you say, John, lest on the day of judgment you come to a "bad ending." REPENT and trust the word of God. NOW

Palmer: To demand that John MacArthur "trust the Word of God" is ignoring the very point of controversy, that is, whether Mark 16:9-20 is the word of God. I do not believe Mark 16:9-20 is the word of God, and I take it that MacArthur does not believe it is the word of God. If anyone is in danger, I think it is the person who ADDED the LE to the word of God. I agree with MacArthur that Mark 16:9-20 is a bad ending. See my [translation of Mark](https://bibletranslation.ws/trans/mark.pdf) for my main reasons: <https://bibletranslation.ws/trans/mark.pdf>

Snapp takes a lot of space giving places where church fathers quoted the Longer Ending of Mark as scripture. This is not what is in dispute. The question is, "should they have quoted Mark 16:9-20 as scripture?" The answer is no. I say that Snapp and others are in denial about the evidence found in the writings of Eusebius, Victor of Antioch, etc. that most manuscripts at that time did not contain the LE of Mark. In view of that evidence, those church fathers should not have made any strong doctrinal assertions based on a passage that was clearly disputed. Nor should we today. I know, Snapp will respond that Eusebius could not know what all the manuscripts of Mark in the world said. True enough, but he quoted people who said that most manuscripts did not have the LE, and he did not correct them on that. It was apparently common knowledge.

I also want to say that John MacArthur is to be commended for not closing his church during "Covid." On the day of Judgment, I believe most pastors in America will have cause to be ashamed that they let a mayor or governor or president use false authority to get them to close their churches. This latter is relevant because it is also a question of authority true authority versus false authority. We must have spiritual discernment from God in order to discern truth from error.

This [document by Palmer](https://bibletranslation.ws/down/Palmer-Response-to-Snapp-RE-MacArthur.pdf) can be downloaded as a PDF here. <https://bibletranslation.ws/down/Palmer-Response-to-Snapp-RE-MacArthur.pdf>

One of the sermons given by John MacArthur, containing the points which Snapp rebuts, is found in this 12 year old video by John MacArthur entitled "The Fitting End to Mark's Gospel (Mark 16:9-20)" here: <https://youtu.be/NmudwnVPQ7A>

The [document by Snapp](https://bibletranslation.ws/down/Snapp-MACARTHUR-BAD-ENDING-Dec-2023.pdf) here. <https://bibletranslation.ws/down/Snapp-MACARTHUR-BAD-ENDING-Dec-2023.pdf>

David Robert Palmer's translation of the [gospel of Mark](https://bibletranslation.ws/trans/mark.pdf) with a long endnote discussing Mark 16:9-20: <https://bibletranslation.ws/trans/mark.pdf>