Jesus Gives the Great Commission

Here's the **Great Commission** comparison:

📖 Texts

- 🔵 **Matthew 28:16–20**
  Jesus meets the Eleven on a mountain in Galilee. He declares His universal authority, commands them to make disciples of all nations, baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, and teach obedience. He promises His presence to the end of the age.
- 🟢 **Mark 16:15–18**
  Jesus commands them to go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to all creation. Belief and baptism bring salvation; unbelief brings condemnation. Signs will accompany believers: casting out demons, speaking new tongues, protection from deadly harm, and healing.

✨ Comparison Table

Feature	🔵 Matthew 28:16–20	🟢 Mark 16:15–18
Setting	Mountain in Galilee	Commissioning scene
Audience	The Eleven	The disciples
Authority	"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me"	Not emphasized directly
Command	"Make disciples of all nations"	"Preach the gospel to all creation"
Method	Baptizing & teaching	Proclaiming & confirming signs
Scope	Nations (ethnē)	All creation (pasē ktisei)
Promise	"I am with you always"	Signs will accompany believers
Trinitarian Formula	Yes (Father, Son, Spirit)	Absent
Outcome	Discipleship & obedience	Salvation or condemnation

🌍 Context & Meaning

- 🔵 **Matthew** highlights **discipleship, teaching, and Christ's abiding presence**.
- 🟢 **Mark** highlights **proclamation, visible signs, and salvation/condemnation**.
  Together, they show **word + deed, teaching + power, presence + confirmation**.

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This is one of the **most intriguing and debated passages** in the New Testament! Let's carefully unpack the **"mysterious ending" of Mark."**

📖 The Textual Situation

- **Earliest manuscripts** of Mark (Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus, 4th c.) **end at 16:8**: "They went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid."
- Later manuscripts add extra verses (16:9–20), the so-called **"Longer Ending"**.
- A few even have a **"Shorter Ending"** (a brief summary after v. 8, saying Jesus sent them out to preach eternal salvation).
- Some manuscripts include **both endings together**.

📜 Three Endings of Mark

1. **The Short Ending (16:1–8 only)**
   - Women flee in fear; no appearances of Jesus.
   - Abrupt, leaves tension — disciples never see the risen Christ in Mark's "original" version.
2. **The Longer Ending (16:9–20)**
   - Appears in many later manuscripts (5th c. onward).
   - Summarizes resurrection appearances (to Mary Magdalene, two travelers, the Eleven).
   - Includes **Great Commission**: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel."
   - Mentions **signs**: casting out demons, tongues, immunity from deadly things, healing.
   - Ends with the **Ascension** (v. 19–20).
3. **The Shorter Ending** (rare, only in a few manuscripts like the Old Latin, Syriac, and Armenian versions)
   - Summarizes: "They reported briefly to Peter and those with him… after this, Jesus sent out the holy proclamation of eternal salvation."

🧐 Why the Differences?

- **Possibility 1: Mark originally ended at 16:8.**
  - Abrupt, but intentional. Leaves the reader to respond in faith.
  - Fits Mark's style: open-ended, paradoxical, stressing fear and amazement.
- **Possibility 2: The ending was lost.**
  - A missing final leaf of a scroll or codex.
  - Later scribes added summaries to "complete" it.
- **Possibility 3: Longer Ending was added by another hand.**
  - Style and vocabulary differ from Mark's Greek.
  - Resembles summaries of resurrection appearances in Matthew, Luke, John, and Acts.

📚 Early Church Evidence

- **Eusebius (4th c.)**: notes most manuscripts end at 16:8.
- **Jerome (late 4th c.)**: says almost all Greek copies end at 16:8.
- **Irenaeus (2nd c.)**: surprisingly, quotes Mark 16:19 — showing the Longer Ending was already known by 180 AD.
- Thus: the Longer Ending circulated early, though not universally.
- The **original ending** is likely **at 16:8** — abrupt, but in line with Mark's style.
- The church has historically **preserved both**, with many Bibles today including 16:9–20 but marking it with brackets or notes.