

Based on what I have said about the textual variant of 666 and 616 in the book of Revelation, several readers have asked a distantly related question. Here is how one of them phrased it:

### **QUESTION:**

If the biblical scholars know with certainty that Mark 16:9-20 and John 7.53-8.11 were added by later scribes, why are they still in the modern bibles, that is, why are they not \*completely\* removed? I know these verses were removed in the RSV but added back in the NRSV.

### **RESPONSE:**

This is a great question. On one level it doesn't make sense. If textual scholars go to all the trouble of trying to figure out what the "original" text of the New Testament was, and they decide that some passages were not originally there in the originals, why do translators (who are often themselves the textual scholars who have made these decisions!) include such passages in their translations?

The problem is exacerbated by looking carefully at what translators have done, because strictly speaking they are not consistent. In the vast majority of instances ...

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