

In yesterday's post I began to explore a textual variant in Mark 1:1 that could be explained either as an accidental slip of the pen or an intentional alteration of the text. We're plowing into some heavy waters here - I know some members of the blog like me to go deeper into serious scholarship on occasion, and others would rather prefer that I not. But here I am, in the thick of it.

All of the posts in this thread are a lead up to answer the question from weeks ago now, about what led me to write [The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture](#). I've found that I can't really get to that without providing some substantial background on what it is the field of textual criticism actually does.

So where we are just now, by way of review: there are thousands of textual witnesses to the NT (Greek manuscripts, manuscripts of the versions, writings of the church fathers who quote the text); these witnesses attest hundreds of thousands of variance among themselves; the vast majority of those differences are immaterial and insignificant and don't matter for much of anything; some of them are highly significant indeed. Most of the changes were made by accident. Some were consciously made by scribes who wanted to change the text. And in Mark 1:1 we have a variant where it is hard to tell which it is.

At issue are the words "Son of God." Did Mark begin his Gospel by announcing that it was about "Jesus Christ"? Or about "Jesus Christ the Son of God"? It is a difference of four letters in Greek (since "the Son of God" would have been abbreviated as one of the nomina sacra)

Yesterday I argued why the change could be seen as a slip of the pen. The letters, it has been widely argued by textual experts, could simply have been skipped over - especially since the fourth letter is the same (upsilon) as the letter before the first.

In my book [Orthodox Corruption](#) I argued against that view. My argument was...

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