I have been talking about some of the textual variants in Mark, and wanted to address the very first one that can be found in our textual witnesses, one that occurs in the first verse of the Gospel. I have decided to do so by showing how a relatively hard-core argument is made by textual scholars. To do that I have copied in my discussion of the passage in my book *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*. This was not a Barnes & Noble book, but was written for academics. But I think it’s useful to get a sense for that kind of discourse on occasion (OK: rare occasion) on the blog. So here it is. As you’ll see, it presupposes some knowledge of adoptionistic Christologies, the topic of yesterday’s post. (I have eliminated part of the discussion that gets particularly technical, involving the surviving manuscripts that evidence the textual variant) (And apologies for the odd spacing…)

*****************************************************************

The vast majority of manuscripts introduce the Gospel of Mark with the words: “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” But the final phrase, “the Son of God,” is lacking in several important witnesses. This slate of witnesses is diverse both in terms of textual consanguinity and geography. It is this diversity that poses the greatest difficulty for the normal explanation of the problem. Most commonly it is explained that the shorter reading was created by accident: because the words \( \text{Χριστὸς} \) and \( \text{θεός} \) happen to terminate in the same letters (-ο θ), a scribe’s eye inadvertently skipped from one to the other, causing him to leave out the intervening phrase. But since the change occurs in such a wide spread of the tradition, it cannot very easily be explained as an accident. For then the omission would have had to have been made independently by several scribes, in precisely the same way. The explanation is rendered yet more difficult by the circumstance that the same error,

IF YOU’VE READ THIS FAR, you cannot read any farther unless you BELONG to the Blog. If you don’t belong yet, JOIN. There are more juicy bits to come!!!