

## Understanding the Times: A Theology of Textual Transmission

It is important to have a theological framework to understand the reasons why the church has to work hard on the preservation of Scripture. Clearly the current situation with differences in wording between manuscripts is something God has allowed to happen and therefore it cannot be an altogether bad thing: there is a positive story to tell about the church which is destined to be without an earthly supreme authority or central place of worship. And in the end, differences in wording do not obscure the communicative power of the New Testament.

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- I. Why Did God Allow Textual Variants to Happen?
  - A. He does not tell us
  - B. He has preserved the text
  - C. ... but has put limits to our knowledge (not his)
- II. The Old Testament
  - A. Levites carrying the ark made responsible
  - B. Temple as central authority
  - C. Jerusalem destroyed in 70AD
  - D. Mediaeval Masoretic manuscripts reflect the temple text
- III. The New Testament
  - A. Preaching and teaching first
  - B. Writing came later
  - C. No central authority
  - D. Ongoing special work of the Holy Spirit
- IV. How Does this History Help Apologetically?
  - A. History as Explanation (biblical pattern)
  - B. Why did God not do ...?
  - C. God of history; what he does is good