

Not or Now?

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Changing a single letter of a word can create a statement that directly contradicts the writer's intended expression. To misspell *not* as *now* well illustrates this fact. It is bad enough to unwittingly make such an error in a word relating to the Scriptures. It is manifestly worse when one intentionally makes such substitutions, as illustrated in the following:

- “**Not** every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Mat. 7:21). Jesus spoke these words near the end of His Sermon on the Mount. Perhaps 99% of Protestant churches change *not* to *now* in their *salvation-by-faith-only* doctrine. Belief will not save apart from obedience to the Lord.
- “A disciple is **not** above his teacher, nor a servant above his lord” (Mat. 10:24). Jesus spoke these words to his newly appointed apostles, warning them that, as He was persecuted, so they would be, also. Many seem to believe this should read, “A disciple is **now** above his teacher,” in thinking they should not have to suffer any opposition or persecution for the One who suffered ultimately for them. Many others elevate themselves above the Lord by doing things in religion that please themselves rather than Jesus. All such will be lost when they stand before Him in Judgment (2 Cor. 5:10).
- “It is **not** lawful for you to have her” (Mat. 14:4). John the immerser thus condemned the adulterous marriage of King Herod, for which the prophet died. Multitudes have swapped the inspired *not* for a popular and self-serving *now*. Civil courts did so in the 1960s with their “no-fault” divorce decrees. For years, few who stand in pulpits have dared to preach faithfully Jesus’ law on divorce and remarriage, failing to warn millions of couples living in adultery – and lost (1 Cor. 6:9–11).
- “But be **not** ye called Rabbi” (Mat. 23:8a). In this proscription, Jesus not only condemned the use of one particular title, but by implication, the use of religious titles altogether. From the wide assortment of titles modern religious leaders have applied to themselves (e.g., Rev., Right Rev., Bishop, Arch-bishop, Cardinal, Pope, Monsignor, Father [specifically forbidden, v. 9], Mother Superior, et al.), one would think the Lord said, “But be ye **now** called Rabbi.”
- “For I am **not** ashamed of the gospel” (Rom. 1:16a). Paul proved the sincerity of this statement by his sufferings for the Gospel. “I am **now** ashamed of the Gospel” seems now to describe the vast majority of men, including many professed believers.

Men tamper with Holy Writ at their own eternal peril.

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