

But Now

BUT NOW is found in 77 verses in the New American Standard version. Some of these uses serve to introduce a striking and/or significant contrast. Each use provides an opportunity to the reader to "P & P", that is to Pause and Ponder (meditate) on the living and active Word of Truth. As one pauses, this "paired conjunction" usually begs several simple questions, why now, what now, when is now, etc. As you pause and ponder these questions, you are giving your Teacher, the Holy Spirit, an opportunity to illuminate the text to your mind and heart. You are more likely to remember the gist of this text later in the day because you carried out this simple exercise, in essence performing what I like to call a "mini-meditation." And we all know the glorious promises that are linked to meditation on God's Word such as...

Joshua 1:8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Ps 1:1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

Ps 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he **meditates** day and night.

Ps 1:3 And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

So take a moment and observe these uses of **'But Now'** in Scripture, remembering that this conjunction combination usually introduces a sharp contrast with the receding passages. May the eyes of your heart be enlightened to behold wonderful, life transforming truths in God's precious Word of Truth. Amen.

NEW TESTAMENT USES OF BUT NOW

Luke 16:25 "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; **but now** he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.

Luke 19:42 saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! **But now** they have been hidden from your eyes.

Luke 22:36 And He said to them, **'But now**, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one.

John 15:22 "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, **but now** they have no excuse for their sin.

John 15:24 "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin, **but now** they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well.

John 16:5 **'But now** I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?'

John 17:13 **'But now** I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.

Romans 3:21 (Ro 3:20) **But now** apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

Romans 6:22 (Ro 6:21) **But now** having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

Romans 7:6 (Ro 7:6) **But now** we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

Romans 11:30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, **but now** have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,

Romans 15:23 (Ro 15:22) **but now**, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you

Romans 15:25 (Ro 15:24) **but now**, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.

Romans 16:26 (Ro 16:25) **but now** is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the

eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;

1 Corinthians 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, **but now** they are holy.

1 Corinthians 12:18 (1Cor 12:17) **But now** God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

1 Corinthians 12:20 (1Cor 12:19) **But now** there are many members, but one body.

1 Corinthians 13:13 (1Cor 13:12) **But now** faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 14:6 (1Cor 14:5) **But now**, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching?

1 Corinthians 15:20 (1Cor 15:19) **But now** Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.

2 Corinthians 8:11 (2Cor 8:10) **But now** finish doing it also, so that just as there was the readiness to desire it, so there may be also the completion of it by your ability.

2 Corinthians 8:22 We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, **but now** even more diligent because of his great confidence in you.

Galatians 3:25 (Gal 3:24) **But now** that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Galatians 4:9 (Gal 4:8) **But now** that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?

Ephesians 2:13 (Eph 2:12) **But now** in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Colossians 1:21-22NIV - **Once** you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. **But now** (NIV is more literal rendering of the Greek "nuni de" = now but) he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation (**Hallelujah!**)

ONCE YOU... BUT NOW

Devotional on The Ardabil Carpet is regarded by experts as "one of the two greatest Persian rugs ever woven." Dating from the sixteenth century, it was originally made for a religious shrine in the city of Ardabil (modern Iran) and is now housed in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. It was created by "Maqsud of Kashan"—probably a court official supervising a team of weavers—and consists of 35 million knots, or an amazing 800 knots per square inch. It measures 23 feet long by 13 feet wide, and pictures a garden of paradise through intricate floral patterns and geometric shapes. Just as the Ardabil Carpet is an artistic masterpiece, so also is Christ's work of redemption a spiritual masterpiece. Today's verses are a classic "**once you... but now**" before-and-after picture that Paul loves to use. "**Once you** were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior" (Col 1:21). While the preceding verses position Christ with reference to people, these verses position people with reference to God. Due to sin, we were disconnected from our Creator and in a state of rebellion against Him. Paul located this rebellion in our minds, because in this epistle his emphasis is on knowledge and truth and their consequences.

But then... the alienation turned to friendship and the rebelliousness to obedience (Col 1:22). The relationship was transformed. How did this miracle occur? "By Christ's physical body through death" (cf. Col 2:15). And the fact is that this miracle is still occurring. We're being purified and made holy through God's ongoing work of sanctification in our lives. Salvation is a one-time event that changes our life forever; it's a process or pilgrimage that continues until we reach our destination. That's what Paul meant when he said, "if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel" (Col 1:23). Letting God do His work in us is what faith is all about. If the Colossians and Paul have learned anything from their experience with the gospel, this is it!

Apply the Word -For those of us who live on the "**but now**" side of redemption, the issue is whether we are living as if Christ really does have the supremacy in everything (Col 1:18). Does He hold first place in our thoughts and feelings? Is He preeminent in our marriage, family, work, and play? Is He glorified above all else in our words and actions, including in our leisure, media, and music choices? Is He honored and worshiped as Head of the church and of every dimension of our lives? (Today in the Word Devotional)

Ephesians 5:8 for you were formerly darkness, **but now** you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light

Philippians 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, **but now** much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;

Colossians 3:8 (Col 3:5-7) **But now** you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.

1 Thessalonians 3:6 (1Thes 3:5) **But now** that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you

2 Timothy 1:10 (2Ti 1:8-9) **but now** has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

Philemon 1:11 (Philemon 1:10) who formerly was useless to you, **but now** is useful both to you and to me.

Hebrews 2:8 YOU HAVE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET." For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. **But now** we do not yet see all things subjected to him.

Hebrews 8:6 (Heb 8:1-5) **But now** He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

Hebrews 9:26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; **but now** once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Hebrews 12:26 And His voice shook the earth then, **but now** He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN."

1Pe 2:10 for (term of explanation - see 1Pe 2:9 - always ask "What is the author explaining?") you once were NOT A PEOPLE, **but now** you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

1Pe 2:25 For (term of explanation - see 1Pe 2:24 - ask "What is the author explaining?") you were continually straying like sheep, **but now** you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

OLD TESTAMENT USES OF BUT NOW

Genesis 30:30 "For you had little before I came and it has increased to a multitude, and the LORD has blessed you wherever I turned. **But now**, when shall I provide for my own household also?"

Exodus 32:32 (Ex 32:31) "**But now**, if You will, forgive their sin-- and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!"

Numbers 11:6 (Nu 11:5) **but now** our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna."

Numbers 14:17 (Nu 14:16) "**But now**, I pray, let the power of the Lord be great, just as You have declared,

Joshua 9:12 "This our bread was warm when we took it for our provisions out of our houses on the day that we left to come to you; **but now** behold, it is dry and has become crumbled.

Judges 6:13 Then Gideon said to him, "O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' **But now** the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian."

Judges 20:9 (Jdg 20:8) "**But now** this is the thing which we will do to Gibeah; we will go up against it by lot.

1 Samuel 2:30 "Therefore the LORD God of Israel declares, 'I did indeed say that your house and the house of your father should walk before Me forever'; **but now** the LORD declares, 'Far be it from Me-- for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed.

1 Samuel 12:10 "They cried out to the LORD and said, 'We have sinned because we have forsaken the LORD and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth; **but now** deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve You.'

1 Samuel 13:14 (1Sa 13:13) "**But now** your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."

1 Samuel 26:11 "The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD'S anointed;**but now** please take the spear that is at his head and the jug of water, and let us go."

2 Samuel 12:23 "**But now** he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

2 Samuel 13:20 Then Absalom her brother said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you?**But now** keep silent, my sister, he is your brother; do not take this matter to heart." So Tamar remained and was desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

2 Samuel 19:9 All the people were quarreling throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "The king delivered us from the hand of our enemies and saved us from the hand of the Philistines, **but now** he has fled out of the land from Absalom.

2 Samuel 24:10 Now David's heart troubled him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. **But now**, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

1 Kings 5:4 (1Ki 5:3) "**But now** the LORD my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor misfortune.

2 Kings 1:14 "Behold fire came down from heaven and consumed the first two captains of fifty with their fifties;**but now** let my life be precious in your sight."

2 Kings 3:15 "**But now** bring me a minstrel." And it came about, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him.

2 Kings 13:19 So the man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck five or six times, then you would have struck Aram until you would have destroyed it. **But now** you shall strike Aram only three times."

1 Chronicles 21:8 David said to God, "I have sinned greatly, in that I have done this thing.**But now**, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

Ezra 9:8 (Ezra 9:7) "**But now** for a brief moment grace has been shown from the LORD our God, to leave us an escaped remnant and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our bondage.

Nehemiah 6:9 For all of them were trying to frighten us, thinking, "They will become discouraged with the work and it will not be done." **But now**, O God, strengthen my hands.

Job 4:5 "**But now** it has come to you, and you are impatient; It touches you, and you are dismayed.

Job 12:7 "**But now** ask the beasts, and let them teach you; And the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you.

Job 16:7 "**But now** He has exhausted me; You have laid waste all my company.

Job 30:1 "**But now** those younger than I mock me, Whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock.

Job 42:5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear;**But now** my eye sees You;

JOB'S GREAT "BUT NOW"

Tim LaHaye's devotional entitled - EXPERIENCING GOD on Job 42:5 - HOW MUCH of your life has been spent hearing about God? How many hours of sermons have you sat through learning about the way God works and the way he has dealt with people? How many times have you sat around the dinner table discussing God with your friends? talking about his mercy, wrath, holiness, direction, and ultimate intentions? listening to others proclaim their understanding of his will and ways? How many days of your life have been spent in search of the truths about God? Now, how much of that time would you trade for a moment of seeing him with your own eyes? How much more could you learn if you could experience God firsthand? if you could stand in his presence and listen to him speak? I'm convinced that we've all spent too much time talking and hearing about God and far too little standing in silence before him. We're so busy debating his ways that we never take the time to experience them. We're so caught up in questions and answers about God's holiness and mercy that we've never allowed him to show us just how holy and merciful he really is.

"Be silent, and know that I am God!" he tells us (Psalm 46:10). "Be silent before the Lord, all humanity," proclaims the prophet Zechariah (Zech 2:13). Standing in God's presence, Job replies in total humility, "I will put my hand over my mouth in silence. I have said too much already. I have nothing more to say" (Job 40:4-5). How many of us have said too much already? How many of us continue to talk long after we have nothing more to say? How much more could we gain if we simply learned to

stand still and quiet in the presence of God? "I had heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes," says Job. "I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance" (Job 42:5–6). When we see God, it changes everything. It silences our heart and soul in a way that nothing else can. It makes every word we've ever spoken and everything we've ever heard about God seem foolish. It is the only way we will ever truly come to know him.

REFLECTION How much time do you spend in silence before God? How often do you take time each morning to listen instead of talk to him? (Embracing Eternity: living each day with a heart toward heaven)

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Tony Evans - Only the Spirit Can Illuminate the Bible - There are many examples of illumination we could draw on. One dramatic instance is the patriarch Job's encounter with God at the end of his long period of severe testing and suffering. God did a face-to-face with Job in Job 38–41 that revealed His awesome sovereignty and power and left Job on his face. When it was all over, Job said, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eyes see You" (Job 42:5). Job was illuminated in a big way—and notice his response in Job 42:6: "Therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes." Illumination is not always a walk in the park for the one who has been enlightened. Job's enlightenment is different from ours in at least two important ways. First, God does not confront people today and speak audibly with them the way He did with Job or other people in the Bible such as Moses or Saul. Watch out for people who say God appeared to them or spoke out loud to them. They probably just had too much pizza the night before. God has spoken fully and finally in Jesus (Hebrews 1:1–3), and **our responsibility is to respond to His voice in the Word**. A second way that Job's enlightenment differs from ours is that he did not have any written Scriptures that the Spirit of God could point him to and use to enlighten him. Many scholars believe that Job actually predates Moses, the first writer of Scripture. But despite this, Job definitely experienced enlightenment from the Lord. Job knew and worshiped God before his time of testing, but after God opened Job's eyes in this new way, Job said his previous knowledge was similar to just hearing about someone as opposed to meeting that person face-to-face. I often compare illumination to a blind date. The one making the arrangements can tell you a lot about the person you are going to meet, but it's an entirely different matter to ring the doorbell, or open the door, and see that person for yourself. (The transforming Word: discovering the power and provision of the Bible)

Comment: While I agree with Tony Evans that Job did not have the written Scriptures, he clearly had some knowledge of God which undoubtedly sustained him during his time of intense suffering. Study Job 23:12-note and the preceding context (Job 23:10-11-note) and notice also what Job said in Job 23:9. How does that statement contrast with what he said in Job 23:10? And what is Job's response based on the truth of Job 23:10? What is he confident will transpire, in spite of his dire present circumstances? How important is it for us to cling to the Word of God when we are experiencing adversity? Am I treasuring God's Word in my heart (cp Ps 119:9-11)? If not, why not? Nothing is more precious according to Job, a man who knew this truth like few have ever known it!

Job was a "chastened and changed person" (Tony Evans)

Psalms 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word.

Isaiah 1:21 How the faithful city has become a harlot, She who was full of justice! Righteousness once lodged in her, **But now** murderers.

Isaiah 16:14 **But now** the LORD speaks, saying, "Within three years, as a hired man would count them, the glory of Moab will be degraded along with all his great population, and his remnant will be very small and impotent."

Isaiah 43:1 **But now**, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!

Isaiah 44:1 "**But now** listen, O Jacob, My servant, And Israel, whom I have chosen:

Isaiah 64:8 (Isa 64:7) **But now**, O LORD, You are our Father, We are the clay, and You our potter; And all of us are the work of Your hand.

Jeremiah 2:18 (Jer 2:15-17) "**But now** what are you doing on the road to Egypt, To drink the waters of the Nile? Or what are you doing on the road to Assyria, To drink the waters of the Euphrates?

Jeremiah 37:20 (Jer 37:19) "**But now**, please listen, O my lord the king; please let my petition come before you and do not make me return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, that I may not die there."

Jeremiah 40:4 (Jer 40:3) "**But now**, behold, I am freeing you today from the chains which are on your hands. If you would prefer to come with me to Babylon, come along, and I will look after you; but if you would prefer not to come with me to Babylon, never

mind. Look, the whole land is before you; go wherever it seems good and right for you to go."

Haggai 2:4 (Hag 2:3) **'But now** take courage, Zerubbabel,' declares the LORD, 'take courage also, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you people of the land take courage,' declares the LORD, 'and work; for I am with you,' declares the LORD of hosts.

Haggai 2:15 (Hab 2:14) **'But now**, do consider from this day onward: before one stone was placed on another in the temple of the LORD,

Zechariah 8:11 (Zech 8:10) **'But now** I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,' declares the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 1:9 (Mal 1:8) **"But now** will you not entreat God's favor, that He may be gracious to us? With such an offering on your part, will He receive any of you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts.