

## APPENDIX VII: Changes in German Orthography

A reform of German **Rechtschreibung** (orthography) went into effect in 1998 but was revised in 2006. An understanding of some of these changes may be important when reading some of the latest theological publications. Although this may apply more to publications geared towards the lay-public than to highly scholarly publications because the older German writers and scholars as well as most of the more renowned German publishing houses tend to ignore, even right out oppose these reforms.

Nevertheless, as time goes on, many of the German scholars will inadvertently use some of these changes in their writings. The brief discussion here will, without going into the rules and rationales for those changes, deal only with the most important aspects of the orthographic changes of the German language relevant to reading theological German publications.

*It is important to note that these orthographic changes have no effect on the translation of a text.*

### 1. Letter and Sound Changes

#### 1.1 The diphthou **ß**, **ss**

One will find the **ß** more frequently rendered with an **ss**, e.g.

<b>daß</b>	▷	<b>dass</b>
<b>muß</b>	▷	<b>muss</b>

#### 1.2 Diphthongs and other sound combinations in some foreign words are shortened to harmonize more with the German sound-rendering of letters.

<b>ph, th, rh</b>	▷	<b>f,t,r</b>
<b>Delphin</b>	▷	<b>Delfin</b> or <b>Delphin</b>

<b>é,ée</b>	▷	<b>ee</b>
<b>Exposé</b>	▷	<b>Exposee</b> or <b>Exposé</b>
<b>Kommuniqué</b>	▷	<b>Kommuniquée</b> or <b>Kommuniqué</b>

<b>tial, tiell</b>	▷	<b>zial, ziell</b>
<b>Essenz - essentiall</b>	▷	<b>essenziell</b> or <b>essentiell</b>
<b>Potenz - Potential, potentiell</b>	▷	<b>Potenzial, potenziell</b> or <b>Potential, potentiell</b>

**Substanz - sustantiell**      ▷      **sustanziell** or **substantiell**

1.3 In some words a doubling of letters may be found, e.g.

**Mesner**      ▷      **Messner** (because of **Messe**)  
**numieren**      ▷      **nummieren** (because of **Nummer**)

1.4 Umlautchanges: **ä**      ▷      **e**

**überschwenglich**      ▷      **überschwänglich** (because of **Überschwang**)

1.5 Double or Triple Letters in compound nouns:

**selbständig**      ▷      **selbstständig** (because of **selbst + ständig**)  
**Roheit**      ▷      **Rohheit** (because **roh + heit**)  
**Schrittempo**      ▷      **Schritttempo** (because of **Schritt + Tempo**)

For easier reading, the reform allows for a more frequent use of word hyphenation, e.g.  
**Schritt-Tempo**

## 2. Capitalization and Compounds

2.1 After a colon, the text may continue with or without capitalization, e.g.

.....: **Er sagte es.**    or    .....: **er sagte es.**

2.2 Words that can be understood as nouns can be capitalized and/or compounded. These are compounds that may consist of any combination of adverbs, adjectives and nouns, verbs, particles, or participials. However, the changes go back and forth and in many cases, again, the old and the new rules can be applied. Here are a few examples given at random, just as illustrations:

**außer Acht lassen** or **außerachtlassen**  
**heute Abend** or **heute abend**  
**am Sonntagmorgen** or **am Sonntag morgen**  
**Leid tun**      ▷      **leidtun**  
**Not tun**      ▷      **nottun**  
**in frage stellen** or **in Frage stellen**

<b>nahe liegend</b>	▷	<b>naheliegend</b>
<b>hoch zivilisiert</b>	▷	<b>hochzivilisiert</b>
<b>selig sprechen</b>	▷	<b>seligsprechen</b>
<b>aneinander reihen</b>	or	<b>aneinandereihen</b>
<b>bekannt werden</b>	or	<b>bekanntwerden</b>
<b>frei geben</b>	or	<b>freigeben</b>
<b>das goldene Zeitalter</b>	or	<b>das Goldene Zeitalter</b>
<b>der heilige Krieg</b>	or	<b>der Heilige Krieg</b>

### 3. Punctuation

- 3.1 Commas are now not absolutely required before co-ordinate conjunctions joining two main clauses.

**Das steht in der HI. Schrift(,) aber wir sehen es nicht.**

*This is found in Scriptures but we do not see it.*

- 3.2 Simple infinitive clauses are not separated from the main clause by a comma; however, more extended clauses should again be separated with a comma.

**Der Samariter kam(,) um ihn zu helfen.**

*The Samaritan came to help him.*

**Er versuchte(,) den Inhalt des Werkes wiederzugeben.**

*He tried to give an account of the content of the book.*

### 4. Syllabifications

There are also syllabification changes. Separations are generally set according to natural speaking-syllables, e.g.

hin-aus	bli-cken
wa-rum	bei-ßen
nie-drig	Zy-klus or Zyk-lus

**Note:** *These changes, like all the other orthographic changes, do not influence the meaning of your translations!*