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# Is Gail Riplinger Right About the Reina-Valera Gómez Bible?

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## THE DEBATE OVER THE WORDS 'VERBO' AND 'PALABRA' IN THE SPANISH BIBLES

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# **IS GAIL RIPLINGER RIGHT ABOUT THE REINA-VALERA GÓMEZ BIBLE?**

**The Debate over Verbo and Palabra in John 1:1**

By Emanuel Rodriguez  
Missionary to Puerto Rico

*"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1Thessalonians 5:21*

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### What is the RVG?

The “RVG” is an acronym for the *Reina-Valera Gómez* Bible. It is a recent revision of the traditional Spanish Reina-Valera Bible. The Reina-Valera is named after two Protestants: **Casiodoro de Reina** and **Cipriano de Valera**. These men of God translated God’s words into Spanish during the era of the Protestant Reformation and Spanish Inquisition. Although others before him translated portions of the Scriptures into Spanish, Reina was the first to translate the *entire* Bible into Spanish in 1569. Reina’s colleague Valera then revised this text. Valera’s revision was finished and produced in 1602. For the most part, this Spanish Bible was based upon the same family of Traditional texts that underlies the KJB. In other words, the Reina-Valera was a TR-based Spanish Bible which had few flaws doctrinally.

Throughout the years the Reina-Valera went through many revisions. A few revisions were good and a step in the right direction in efforts to eventually render a completely accurate Traditional-text based Spanish Bible. Unfortunately, most revisions were bad as the corrupt Alexandrian Critical Texts, which underlies most modern English bible corruptions, were utilized. The most notable and popular of these corrupted revisions is the 1960 edition.<sup>1</sup>

In recent years (2000-2010), the Reina-Valera was again revised by Dr. Humberto Gómez, a lifetime soul-winning and church-planting missionary to Mexico for over 40 years. Dr. Gómez is a native of Mexico born in Monterrey and as a national he has lived in that Spanish-speaking country nearly all of his life. Therefore, Spanish is his native tongue. Also, as a well sought after Missions conference speaker around the world, he is also familiar with the many nuances of the language that exist in different Spanish-speaking countries having preached in many of them such as Spain, Cuba, Guatemala, Chile, Argentina, Peru, Paraguay, etc. As a missionary, Dr. Gómez is sent out of Charity Baptist Church of Beavercreek, OH where Dr. Tom Gresham is the Pastor.

Most importantly, Dr. Gómez is a Bible-believer who believes that the King James Bible is the perfect, infallible, and inspired word of God in English and has publically and unashamedly stated so on numerous occasions (generating much criticism by those of the opposing viewpoint such as 1960 proponents like Calvin George and others). Dr. Gómez used the KJB as his ‘standard’ to follow for his revision of the Spanish text. His work was also checked with the Received Texts by collaborators with academic training in the original languages. Dr. Gómez was not alone in this work as he was assisted by many nationals representing different Spanish-speaking countries around the world. He was also assisted by many Bible-believing, bi-lingual missionaries who are very familiar with the textual issues involved and who have various training in related subjects which made their contributions, suggestions, and observations very valuable.

Though it has only been in existence for a few years the propagating of the RVG text in the Spanish-speaking world has been successful amongst Bible-believers who desire to have and use a Spanish Bible free of Alexandrian Critical Text errors and of which, consequently, compares with the KJV in terms of accuracy. Bible printers such as Jim Fellure of Victory Baptist Press in Milton, FL have testified that it is impossible to keep up with the worldwide demand for the RVG text.

Also, Gospel literature ministries, such as Chick Publications, have adopted the RVG recognizing it to be the most accurate and pure Spanish Bible available. All of the material in Spanish by Chick Publications now quotes the RVG. In fact they now also print and provide the

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<sup>1</sup> For documentation on the corruption in the 1960 see the book *God’s Bible in Spanish*, available through Chick Publications ([www.chick.com](http://www.chick.com)), or see articles and charts available at [www.reinavaleraGómez.com](http://www.reinavaleraGómez.com) or [www.chick.com](http://www.chick.com).

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RVG in leather, paper-back, and hard-back. Fellowship Tract League, the largest Independent Baptist producer of Gospel tracts, also now exclusively uses the RVG in their Spanish literature.

For years, Bible-believing missionaries have desired and called for a correction of the Alexandrian Critical Text errors in their Spanish Bibles. With the RVG, many Missionaries, Pastors, and Hispanic Bible-believing Christians around the world now rejoice to finally have a Spanish Bible available that is entirely based upon the Received Texts, free of Alexandrian Critical Text corruption, and therefore equivalent to the KJB in purity and accuracy.

### **Gail Riplinger Disapproves of the RVG**

Despite the many Spanish-speaking Bible-believing Christians in foreign fields around the world that enthusiastically embrace the RVG, there are those who protest the RVG as well.

Many critics of the RVG are those who reject the KJB as being the infallible and perfect word of God in English. They do not agree with a strict adherence to the Received Texts, much less the KJB, for a foreign Bible translation. Some have even complained that the KJB should not have even been used at all in the revision of the Reina-Valera. Furthermore, the existence of Alexandrian Critical Text readings which contradict the TR and the KJB does not bother them as much as it does those of us who are King James Bible-believers in English. Therefore, it does not surprise us that those of the Alexandrian persuasion would not approve of an effort to totally rid the Spanish Bible of Alexandrian Critical Text corruption.

What does surprise us, however, are those who also share our position as to the inerrancy of the KJB in English, yet are in disagreement with the RVG as the best Bible to use in Spanish. One such individual is Gail Riplinger, a well-known author and defender of the King James Bible. For example, in one of her latest works entitled *Hazardous Materials* she wrote:

“...stop-gap translations, such as the Reina-Valera-Gómez, which rightly sought to replace the corrupt 1960 Reina-Valera, but which falls short in thoroughness and unwisely introduces modernizations. Among scores and scores of errors, it uses ‘Jehovah’ throughout the Old Testament, breaking the connection between Jesus as Lord of both the Old and New Testament, and missing the old Spanish reading of Pineda.”<sup>2</sup>

Statements such as this cause those of us who over the years have spent countless hours examining this issue to question as to how much Sis. Riplinger has really investigated the Spanish Bibles because this statement is full of inaccuracies. Those of us who actually read, study, examine, compare, use, preach, and teach the RVG on a daily basis in a Spanish-speaking foreign field know that she is wrong in her claim that the RVG “falls short in thoroughness”. We also know that she is wrong in her claims that the RVG “introduces modernizations”. I personally would love to see her try to prove that one. I suspect that she is simply repeating what she has heard from other American critics who may speak some Spanish but do not currently live and minister amongst Spanish-speaking people *in a Spanish-speaking country* and are lying to their American audiences about the quality of Spanish in the RVG, a Bible produced by Bible-believing *Hispanic* nationals.

And in regards to her claims of the RVG containing “scores and scores of errors” she provides no examples in her works except for two disagreements she has as to how the Hispanic nationals that revised the RVG translated a couple words into Spanish. Disagreement over a word choice does not necessarily constitute error.

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<sup>2</sup> *Hazardous Materials* by Gail Riplinger, pg. 1123

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I will not take the time to comment on her remarks about the words ‘Jehovah’ and ‘Lord’ since that subject has already been addressed by Bro. Carlos Donate, veteran Hispanic missionary to Guatemala, in his article entitled The Removal of Jehovah from our Spanish Bibles.<sup>3</sup>

In this article, however, I wish to address her false claims and misinformation concerning the translation of the incarnate Word – Verbo/Palabra – in John 1:1 in the Spanish Bibles.

Sis. Riplinger has written a 33 page article expressing why she feels the Spanish word ‘Palabra’ should be used instead of the word ‘Verbo’ in John 1:1 in the Reina-Valera Bible. Her article is entitled *Catholics Changing God’s Name*. In this article, Sis. Riplinger declares that the RVG should be “rejected and replaced” based on this one disagreement of how a certain word should be translated into Spanish:

“...any Bible which uses Verbo in John 1:1 must be rejected and replaced by a Spanish Bible that uses the historic Palabra.”

Riplinger declares that this one disagreement of word choice in John 1:1 is enough to dismiss the entire RVG Bible. Her line of reasoning is:

“If a Bible, which claims to be the ‘word’ of God, was done by a translator who does not know how to translate the basic word ‘Word’, then all of their other word choices are put in serious doubt.”

Riplinger’s statement here will prove to be self-incriminating because in this rebuttal I will demonstrate why there is absolutely nothing wrong with the Spanish word ‘Verbo’ as a reference to the incarnate Word in John 1:1 and furthermore why on the grounds of grammar it is to be preferred over the word ‘Palabra’ which Riplinger supports.

But Riplinger doesn’t stop there. In regards to those of us who disagree with Riplinger’s viewpoint in this matter, she charges:

Those who insist that *la Palabra* is wrong because of its gender are *denying* God’s preserving work and vilifying *every* Holy Bible he has given *throughout history!*

That’s a pretty stout charge. But as Riplinger’s faulty premises and arguments crumble in light of the facts we will see just who is “*denying God’s preserving work*” and “*vilifying every Holy Bible*”.

Now some of you reading this are already questioning whether or not I should be taking to task someone like Sis. Riplinger who staunchly defends the same Bible in English that we stand for and love – the KJB. But when a misinformed Sister in Christ, who has the type of influence that she does, publically accuses God-called, Church-ordained, Bible-believing men of something as serious as “*denying God’s preserving work*” and “*vilifying every Holy Bible*”, when in fact she is the one in error, she needs to be answered.

Now I acknowledge that Gail Riplinger is a Sister in Christ. She is not our enemy. I believe she has written much good in support of the infallibility of the KJB. As God as my witness, I take no pleasure in taking to task a fellow King James Bible-believer. I am truly grieved by the situation. But in regards to her views on the Spanish Bible issue, in particular her views against the RVG, she is wrong and misguided. No matter how right you are on any particular topic, no one is right about everything. And in this issue, our dear Sister has made

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.reinavaleraGómez.com/node/62>

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some serious errors. Now everyone makes mistakes. But these particular errors have been put to writing and are now public. They must be corrected lest others be misled as well.

### **The Spanish Bible Riplinger Recommends**

It needs to be noted that Riplinger also promotes a Spanish Bible. The Spanish Bible she recommends and sells on her online bookstore is the so-called 1602 Valera “Purified” (in Spanish “Purificada”) or in short – the 1602P. This Spanish Bible revision is the one she suggests should replace the RVG.

The 1602P is another recent revision of the original 1602 Valera. The finished NT has been available since around 1999. It was finally released as a complete Bible (both OT & NT) in 2007. I own a copy of both.

This revision effort was headed up by a former American missionary to Mexico named William Park. Bro. Park joined up with an Independent Baptist church in Monterrey, Mexico where Bro. Raul Reyes is the Pastor. He joined up with that church so that his Spanish Bible revision could be done under the authority of the local church of which some believe that a Bible translation cannot be valid unless it is done as a “local church project”.

Of course, this opinion ignores the fact that the KJB was not a “local church project”. The KJB was actually a government project in the sense that it was authorized by a European king rather than a local church. It was produced by a collection of linguistic scholars and college professors, who were godly men, but were approved and appointed under the authority of a king rather than a local church. No singular local church represented the KJB. (All this just goes to show that God doesn’t always fit in the little boxes that we conceive in our limited minds.)

Since its completion and release in 2007, the 1602 Valera Purificada has not enjoyed any type of significant (or even non-significant) success amongst Hispanic Bible-believers or American missionaries at all. Hardly anyone is using it. The 1602P has been diligently compared by Bible-believing Spanish-speakers and it has been found to be an inferior text to the RVG. For American missionaries who desire to use a Spanish Bible that reads closer in comparison to the KJB, the 1602P is definitely not as comparable to the KJB as the RVG.

For example the 1602P does not have the famous phrase of David “is there not a cause” in 1 Sam. 17:29. Instead, the Spanish Bible that Riplinger promotes says “are these not words” (“Estas ¿no son palabras?”), which makes no sense. The RVG reads exactly like the KJV in this verse – “¿Acaso no hay una causa?” (“Is there not a cause?”).

In Psalms 75:2 the KJB says “When I shall receive the congregation”. The Spanish Bible that Riplinger sells says “When I shall have time” (“Cuando yo tuviere tiempo”) which is something totally different. The RVG says the exact same thing as the KJB – “Cuando reciba la congregación” (“When I shall receive the congregation”).

An example of outright error in the 1602P is found in 2 Sam. 21:19. All defenders of the KJB, including Riplinger, are aware that almost all Alexandrian corrupt English bibles do not include the words “the brother of” in 2 Sam. 21:19. In so doing, they all read that Elhanan instead of David killed Goliath. This is a blatant error because the cross reference to this verse, 1 Chron. 20:5, reveals that the giant that Elhanan killed was Lahmi, not Goliath. Therefore 2 Sam. 21:19 *must* read that Elhanan killed “the brother of” Goliath whose name was Lahmi, because according to 1 Chron. 20:5 that’s exactly who he killed. To omit the words “the brother of” renders an obvious error and contradiction in scripture. The Spanish Bible that Riplinger suggests should replace the RVG also reads just like the NIV, RSV, ASV, NWT, etc and most other Alexandrian bibles by failing to include the words “the brother of”. The RVG is the *only*

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Spanish Bible that reads exactly like the KJB in 2 Sam. 21:19 by including the words “al hermano de” (“the brother of”).<sup>4</sup>

Just like English-speaking Bible-believers reject the NIV, ASV, RSV, etc and all other Alexandrian bibles for errors such as that found in 2 Sam. 21:19 and many others, Hispanic Bible-believers refuse to use a Spanish Bible that claims that Elhanan, rather than David, killed Goliath.

Remember when Riplinger said that the presence of the word ‘Verbo’ was enough to dismiss the entire RVG text altogether? What of places in the 1602P such as 2 Sam. 21:19 that are in blatant error? (There are more.) Should we show grace to those behind the 1602P revision but totally dismiss the work of Dr. Gómez?

I also happen to know that even some who not only once supported the 1602P but who were once involved in its making have jumped off the 1602P bandwagon, which never really had a lot of steam to begin with. One such individual is veteran missionary to Guatemala, Carlos Donate. Bro. Donate was one of the main collaborators in the early stages of the 1602P revision and helped them print the first edition of their New Testament. However, even Bro. Donate has rejected the 1602P. He says:

I respect sister Gail, and thank God for her stand for the KJB; in regards to her defense of Monterrey [the 1602 Purificada], I humbly disagree that it is better than the RVG.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, Donate explains:

Monterrey’s refusal to carry out a joint effort made their project a hard pill to swallow. "It is a local-church project!" Their closed door policy secluded them. Many of us outsiders were eventually told to "bud out"; this seemed strange to us since we were simply trying to help them. However, they dug themselves in their own little world refusing any further assistance. Now, all of sudden, they are wanting the Hispanic world to accept their inclusive or exclusive Bible.<sup>6</sup>

It was never intended to go beyond their few followers. That is why I left-- due to their short-sighted policy of "for-and-by" them (they boast of being the Royal Priesthood when it comes to the Spanish Bible project--bar nobody else; how’s that for humility??)<sup>7</sup>

Concerning the RVG, Donate declares:

“Despite what some may say to the contrary, we have studied all options out there and like yourselves, prayerfully decided that the RVG is indeed the best alternative as far as a pure Spanish Bible. Having been a part of another well known project, I myself took the idea of comparing and checking out in detail what my best option was, and praise God, the RVG is the Bible that the Holy Spirit lead me to adopt. We have concluded that there is absolutely no textual error in the RVG--

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<sup>4</sup> The 1865 Valera was revised and corrected in 2 Sam 21:19 by the Valera Bible Society but in recent years they have voted to undo this good change, which now leaves the RVG as the only Spanish Bible left available which reads like the KJV in this verse.

<sup>5</sup> Email correspondence

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

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-none! What others think are textual departures are actually not departures from the Received Text at all, but rather alternate, polysemic, or variants of formal equivalence readings and/or translational alternates. Dr Gómez did some changes in the receptor language (Spanish) to improve upon the language without affecting the underlying Hebrew and Greek text. He did so with the consent of many of us native Spanish-speaking pastors and missionaries.”<sup>8</sup>

The Spanish text that Riplinger sells through her AV Publications is an inferior text in comparison to the RVG. We refuse to use it. We prefer to use the absolute best text in Spanish which is the RVG. For more examples of deficiencies in the 1602P text see my article entitled [Response to a Concerned Pastor regarding the 1602 Valera “Purificada” in Comparison to the RVG](#) of which the internet link to this article is provided in the following footnote.<sup>9</sup>

### **A Story about a King James Translator**

Before going any further I wish to share a quick story about a King James Bible translator that came to mind as I was examining Riplinger’s arguments. One of the translators appointed by King James to serve with the Oxford team to work on the Old Testament was Dr. Richard Kilbye. He was a Hebrew professor at Oxford as well as a Greek expert. One day Dr. Kilbye and another minister visited a local church. During the preaching segment of the church service, the Pastor of that church spent a great deal of time expressing his disagreement with the way a certain word was translated in the recently made – at that time – King James Version. During his presentation he offered what he felt were three strong reasons why he believed the rendering should had been translated in a different manner.

After services, the Pastor along with Dr. Kilbye and his colleague were invited over to a church member’s house for a meal and fellowship. During this time, Dr. Kilbye took advantage of the opportunity to inform the Pastor that during the work of the KJV translation he and the other translators were actually well aware of the three points raised by the Pastor in his critique of their word choice in the disputed passage. He explained that all three of those points were carefully and closely considered. However, he further explained that the reason they disregarded those 3 points and translated the passage the way they did was because they found THIRTEEN other reasons in favor of the rendering that the King James translators collectively and finally decided upon.<sup>10</sup>

### **Verbo vs. Palabra**

Such is the case with this current debate over the renderings Verbo and Palabra in John 1:1 in the Spanish Bibles. Anyone who thinks that Dr. Gómez and his collaborators did not carefully consider the debate between ‘Verbo’ and ‘Palabra’ during their revision efforts is greatly mistaken.

I will admit that I can see how a non-Spanish speaker, unfamiliar with the issue, and who will not take the time to investigate the issue, could read Sis. Riplinger’s arguments and by taking them at face value would be easily convinced, especially considering the name that Riplinger has made for herself through the success of her books which defend the KJB. Riplinger is talented in presenting a convincing argument *even when she is wrong*.

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<sup>8</sup> Email correspondence between Carlos Donate and Chick Publications – on file

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.4thesaviour.com/resources/My+Response+to+a+Concerned+Pastor+concerning+Purificada.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Which Bible, by David Otis Fuller, p.17

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However, Riplinger’s arguments in this issue have been closely and carefully considered. And in this article we will provide a multitude of reasons as to why her position is wrong and why we therefore refuse to go along with her suggestion to reject our God-given Spanish Bible – the RVG – and replace it for the inferior text – 1602P – that she promotes and sells.

Look at the way “the Word” in John 1:1 was translated in both the RVG and the 1602P:

KJV	RVG	1602 P
<b>John 1:1 In the beginning was the <u>Word</u>, and the <u>Word</u> was with God, and the <u>Word</u> was God.</b>	<b>Juan 1:1 En el principio era el <u>Verbo</u>, y el <u>Verbo</u> era con Dios, y el <u>Verbo</u> era Dios.</b>	<b>Juan 1:1 EN el principio era la <u>Palabra</u>; y la <u>Palabra</u> era con Dios, y la <u>Palabra</u> era Dios.</b>

In John 1:1, Jesus is called “the Word”. He is the incarnate Word. For the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us according to John 1:14. The underlying Greek word is “logos”. In this context, the RVG translated the divine Logos as “el Verbo”.

On the other hand, the Spanish Bible that Riplinger sells, the 1602P, translates “the Word” as “la Palabra”.

Riplinger claims that ‘la Palabra’ is correct and ‘el Verbo’ is not only wrong but corrupt. The three reasons she gives to try to prove that ‘Verbo’ is a corrupt word are:

1. The word ‘Verbo’ was not used by the original Spanish Bible translators.
2. The word ‘Verbo’ is a Catholic word because it is based in a Latin word – Verbum – which was supposedly introduced by a Catholic Pope and then later adopted by a Catholic Priest named Jerome in his 4<sup>th</sup> century Latin translation known as the Latin Vulgate.
3. Supposedly, the word ‘Verbo’ is an occultic word based in the Jewish New Age cult known as the Kabbalah.

For the rest of this article, let us closely consider all three of Riplinger’s points. When it’s all said and done, it will be demonstrated that Riplinger’s claims of Verbo being a corrupt, Catholic, occultic word are based upon nothing but a whole lot of assumptions, speculations, and guesswork. It will be seen that in order to support her argument Riplinger develops theories that are based upon other theories. She then presents all this fancy guesswork as if they are documented facts by trying hard to connect a bunch of dots that aren’t there.

### **RIPLINGER ARGUMENT #1**

#### **‘Verbo’ was not used by the translators of old**

On page 4 of her article – [Catholics Changing God’s Name](#) – Sis. Riplinger complains:

Just as the 1611 KJB reigned supreme for 270 years, until the 1881 Revised Version, so the word *Palabra* reigned from the Enzinas Spanish edition of 1543, for 250 years, until Father Scio changed it along with scores of other words. Enzinas in 1543, Pineda in 1556, Reina in 1569, and Valera in 1602 all continued using the word *Palabra*.

Also, on page 13 she says:

Those who use Verbo must give in to the following errors...They must reject the use of the word *Palabra* by both Reina and Valera.

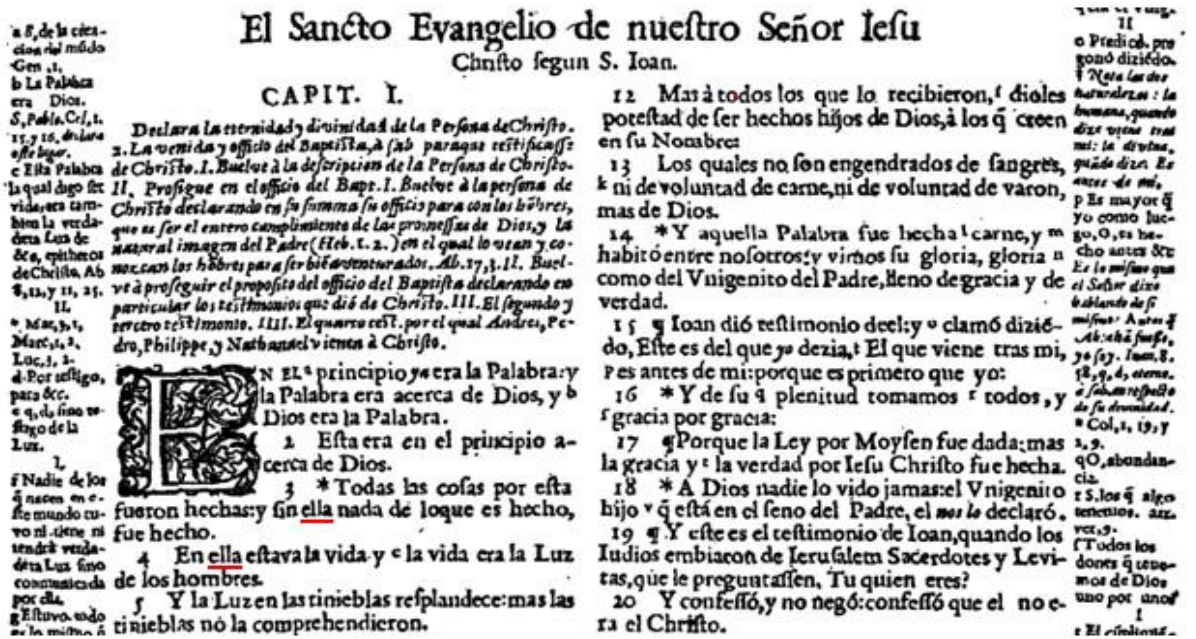
### Was Jesus a female?

Now we do not deny that the ancient Spanish Bible translators – Francisco de Enzinas, Juan de Pineda, Casiodoro de Reina, and Cipriano de Valera – used the word *Palabra* in John 1:1. However, here is what Riplinger forgot to mention in all 33 pages of her dissertation for *Palabra*. **She failed to mention that because those Bibles used the word *Palabra* in John 1:1, due to the rules of Spanish grammar, the context of that word forced Jesus to be referred to as a FEMALE in John 1:3-4.**

That's right! In the original Reina and Valera Bibles, Jesus is referred to as a female through the feminine pronoun HER (in Spanish "*ella*") in verses 3 and 4 of John chapter 1. In the *original* 1602 Valera – not to be confused by the revision of the 1602 that Riplinger sells – it reads:

**John 1:3** Todas las cosas por *ella* fueron hechas; y fin *ella* nada de lo que es hecho, fue hecho.

**John 1:4** En *ella* estava la vida y la vida era la Luz de los hombres.



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Notice in the verses above, as rendered in the *original* 1602 text of Cipriano de Valera, the Spanish word for ‘HER’ – *ella* – is used 2 times in reference to Jesus Christ. The reason for the presence of the feminine pronoun is because in this context the subject word ‘Palabra’ is a feminine proper noun. And in Spanish grammar, the gender of the pronoun must reflect the gender of the name being modified.

Valera, who obviously knew Spanish grammar – yea, he was a linguist being fluent in 9 different languages who served as a professor in Oxford University – was forced by the rules of grammar to stay consistent in his translation of the pronouns in verse 3 and 4 of John chapter 1 by using feminine pronouns (*ella*) since the subject’s name being referred to was a feminine name (*palabra*).

The fact is that if you go with a feminine name in Spanish to translate the proper noun, which in this context happens to be Jesus Christ, then the pronoun *has* to be a feminine pronoun (*ella*). This is the way it HAS to be done in Spanish and to deny it is to deny basic Spanish grammar. To deny this you would also have to challenge the grammatical expertise of Valera himself, which I’m sure Riplinger has no desire of doing because that is a battle she knows she would lose. And this is probably why she did not mention in her article how John 1:3-4 actually reads in the original 1569 Reina and 1602 Valera Spanish Bibles.

Nevertheless, not one time in 33 pages did Riplinger tell her readers that the word she suggests we use today forced Jesus to be referred to as a female when translators in the past used that rendering in Spanish. Why didn’t she mention that?

### **How Riplinger Justifies the Feminizing of Jesus**

Now how does Riplinger justify the feminizing of Jesus in John 1:3-4 in the original Valera Bible? The argument Riplinger provides is as follows:

False assertions that the masculine word *Verbo* is preferable to the feminine *Palabra* are not Biblical. Jesus is described using feminine Spanish nouns such as the door (*la puerta*), the vine (*la vid*), the light (*la luz*), and the truth (*la verdad*).

On the surface this argument sounds good but the reason why it does not work is because Riplinger is arguing something totally different. The door, the vine, the light, etc. are *symbols* that illustrate a spiritual truth concerning the characteristics of Jesus Christ. But with *the Word* we are dealing with an actual **proper name** of the Lord. In her article Riplinger herself acknowledges that “the Word” in John 1:1 is an actual name of Jesus Christ as manifested in Rev. 19:13 which states “...and his name is called *The Word of God*.”

There is a difference between an actual proper name and a symbolism or illustration. It is acceptable to use symbolism that in Spanish is feminine in gender such as the door (*la puerta*) or the light (*la luz*) to illustrate a spiritual truth about the Lord. But it is grammatically inappropriate to give the Lord Jesus Christ a feminine name. And the proof that referring to Jesus with a feminine name is inappropriate in Spanish is the fact that by doing so you would have to refer to Christ as a “she” or a “her”, just as Valera was forced to do so by the rules of basic Spanish grammar in the original 1602 Valera Bible in John 1:3-4.

### **Riplinger Suggests the Translation Method of the Jehovah’s Witnesses**

So basically Riplinger insists that Spanish grammar can be and should be ignored in John 1:1. She argues that just because this term ‘Palabra’ is feminine we should just go ahead

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and ignore that fact and translate the pronouns that modify that feminine word as masculine anyways. Now it is interesting to note that a precedent for what Riplinger is suggesting was already set *by the Jehovah's Witnesses!*

Notice that what Riplinger suggests is exactly what the Jehovah's Witnesses did in their Spanish version of their corrupt bible known as the New World's Translation:

1 En [el] principio la **Palabra** era, y la **Palabra** estaba con Dios, y la **Palabra** era un dios. 2 Este estaba en [el] principio con Dios. 3 Todas las cosas vinieron a existir por medio de él, y sin él ni siquiera una cosa vino a existir. Lo que ha venido a existir 4 por medio de él era vida, y la vida era la luz de los hombres.<sup>11</sup>

It also needs to be noted that while Riplinger tries to make it appear as if we are going against Valera by using a masculine word in reference to Jesus Christ instead of the feminine word that he chose to use, in reality it is Riplinger who is going against Valera by insisting that we totally ignore Spanish grammar rules by using a masculine pronoun to modify a feminine name. For Valera never did what Riplinger is suggesting.

You see, at least Valera was consistent. He did not sacrifice proper grammar by pretending it is OK to use a masculine pronoun in reference to a proper noun that is feminine. Valera understood that using a feminine word such as 'Palabra' as the name for Christ he would have to make the pronouns in the context also feminine. He stayed true to the language. Spanish grammar dictates that it must be done this way. Valera knew it. Hispanics today know it. What is Riplinger's problem?

Bible translators are not at liberty to start changing grammar rules. Riplinger has no right to insist that Bible translators ignore, change, and sacrifice Spanish grammar in order to use the words that she prefers that Hispanic Bible translators use in the text. That is why God called people like Cipriano de Valera and Humberto Gómez to translate Bible passages and not Gail Riplinger.<sup>12</sup>

### In Valera's Defense

It needs to be said that the deficiency of John 1:3-4 in Valera's 1602 text is not being pointed out to denigrate his noble work. In Valera's defense, he admitted that his revision in 1602 needed more work. Reina and Valera both did not consider their work to be the final standard or the *'be all – end all'*. Valera recognized that his work was not complete and that it needed further revision, which he called for himself in his own preface when he wrote:

“Oh that it would please God that by His infinite mercy He inspire in the heart of the King to mandate throughout his coasts the gathering of pious and learned men in the Hebrew and Greek tongues that they would view and review this translation of the Bible; whom with a sincere and pious desire, that desire to serve God and do good to their nation, that they compare and challenge it with the Hebrew text that God dictated to his holy Prophets before the coming of Christ, and with the Greek text that He Himself dictated to his holy Apostles and Evangelists after the coming of Christ in the flesh.”

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.watchtower.org/s/biblia/joh/chapter\\_001.htm](http://www.watchtower.org/s/biblia/joh/chapter_001.htm)

<sup>12</sup> Some will argue that what Gómez did was the work of 'revision' and not 'translation'. However, they ignore the fact that it is impossible to do the work of Bible revision without doing some translation work.

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Basically, what Reina and Valera provided in 1569 and 1602 was a rough draft, a foundation to build upon, or a starting point of which others could come behind them and eventually perfect.

Therefore, it is obvious that the flaw of referring to Christ with a feminine pronoun in John 1:3-4 is just one example of a place in the 1602 Valera text that needed correction, as Valera himself called for. Valera is not to be dishonored for problematic passages such as this.

Apollos in the Bible was *“an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures”* – Acts 18:24. But even he needed others to eventually come along and expound unto him *“the way of God more perfectly”* – Acts 18:26.

Likewise, Valera is to be commended for his courage to give the Spanish-speaking world something to work with that through further revision they might eventually have God’s words more perfectly in the Spanish language.

Despite whatever weaknesses can be found in their work, great men of God such as Reina and Valera are to be honored for their sacrifices, initiative, and courageous efforts to give the Spanish world a Bible in a time when it was against the law. The Spanish Inquisition was in full swing in their day and therefore these Protestants were constantly being pursued by the murderous Catholic church for their “crime” of translating God’s words into the language of their people. These men were not allowed the luxuries and resources that the King James translators enjoyed. They had to do the best they could with what they had. And all things considered, they did a good job and God blessed their work regardless of their honest mistakes. Therefore, they should be honored for their efforts.

Considering the circumstances of their time, any flaws that may be found in their translations are to be forgiven. However, they are not to be ignored. And they are surely not to be justified while basic Spanish grammar is kicked to the curb. Reina and Valera themselves would have never approved of what Riplinger is suggesting.

### **Where did Riplinger get this Faulty Argument?**

Now let it be known that Riplinger did not come up with this idea to ignore proper Spanish grammar on her own. She adopted this argument from a former missionary named Robert Breaker.

Bro. Breaker served as a missionary in Honduras for 5 years. He also claims to be one of the collaborators that assisted in the 1602P revision.<sup>13</sup>

During his stint on the foreign field, Breaker’s home church was Bible Baptist Church in Pensacola, FL where Dr. Peter S. Ruckman is the Pastor. Breaker was also a member of this same church’s mission board – Bible Baptist Missions. However, Breaker was eventually confronted by his Pastor and Assistant Pastor, Brian Donovan, for dishonest practices. The following are some excerpts from a letter by Breaker’s former Pastor, Dr. Ruckman. It was Breaker himself who went public with this letter by including it with his bi-monthly prayer letter (and on his prayer letter internet blog). In this letter, Dr. Ruckman explains why he, his church, and their mission board refuse to have anything to do with Breaker. Dr. Ruckman wrote:

“I have neither the time nor the interest to help you into the “big time” after you failed as a missionary AND evangelist. We didn’t dump you as a missionary because of any problem over ANY translation in ANY language. WE dropped you because:

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<sup>13</sup> See his booklet/article entitled [The History and Truth about the Reina Valera Gómez Bible](#)

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1. You lied about being a pastor at Garcon Point – you only – “supplied” a couple of times when the pastor was absent. You didn’t win a soul to Christ the entire time you “pastured” either in Honduras.
2. You did not really pastor anyone in Honduras.

You did exactly what you are doing now – traveling back and forth to the States. THEN you were doing it to visit your girlfriend. You are now doing to establish yourself as an authority on foreign translations – as a “savior” to Hispanics.”

“Your position is so apparent that it is disgusting. There is nothing in anything you write that mentions LOST Hispanics or SOUL winning. Your MOTIVE of getting embroiled in an intellectual discussion over versions is ROTTEN.”

“You, yourself, have never produced anything. Now you are trying to get publicity by attacking BOOKS SO YOU CAN SELL YOUR OWN BOOKS, that is, according to your books which you sent me.

Our Mission Board and Board of Trustees know EXACTLY what you “ministry” is; that is why they dumped you.”

“Your “life work”, sonny boy, is your self-magnification of yourself as an authority on a foreign language.”<sup>14</sup>

As a result, church discipline was administered as Breaker was kicked out of his sending church and mission board.

Since then, Breaker decided not to return to Honduras but to remain in Alabama as a “missionary evangelist to the Spanish-speaking people of the Americas”. And while living and operating in Alabama he claims the church in Monterrey, Mexico, of which the 1602P was produced, as his current home church. His ministry now consists of “exposing apostasy” by writing Internet blogs and making You-tube videos against the RVG, and against the soul-winning methods of other missionaries and ministers who he deems as “apostate”, and also providing information that uncovers secret US government conspiracies.

Despite all of his efforts he has no influence and hardly an audience, especially amongst Hispanic brethren. No Hispanic Bible-believer who understands the issues at hand takes him seriously. However, Riplinger has fallen prey to his false accusations and erroneous arguments against the RVG. Not only has she adopted some of his arguments as her own she has decided to make his material against the RVG available through her online bookstore.

One such article, or booklet, of Breaker’s that Riplinger is making available to her customers is The History and Truth about the Reina Valera Gómez Bible. This booklet is filled with errors, rumors, false accusations, libelous charges, and ridiculous arguments. When Breaker first posted this article on the internet I contacted Dr. Gómez to ask if he had heard about it. Dr. Gómez said that he didn’t and that he was too busy forming RVG templates for printing presses, preaching in conferences, and planting churches amongst the Aztec Indians in the mountains of Mexico to bother with anything Breaker was writing. But while Bro. Gómez refused to waste time reading Breaker’s article, he did have some of his collaborators look over

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<sup>14</sup> These excerpts are from a letter by Breaker’s former Pastor, Dr. Peter S. Ruckman, which Breaker sent out to his supporting churches in his March/April 2010 prayer letter.  
[http://breakerprayerletters.blogspot.com/2010\\_04\\_01\\_archive.html](http://breakerprayerletters.blogspot.com/2010_04_01_archive.html)

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Breaker's ramblings just in case any of his arguments were valid. For as the old saying goes "even a blind hog finds a nut every now and then." This has always been Bro. Gómez's practice. Instead of responding to his critics and defending himself he has always set his emotions aside for the sake of objectively considering even his harshest critics' complaints to see if perhaps in their critiques of the RVG they might have come across some readings in the RVG that indeed needed some fine-tuning. I believe this type of humility and honesty on Bro. Gómez's part is one of the reasons why God has so greatly blessed the RVG effort.

In this regard even the RVG critics have proven to be a valuable asset as a check and balance in ensuring accuracy in the RVG text. Unfortunately, once Breaker's article was examined, any points that he brought up that were close to being valid were instances that were already revised and corrected in the RVG way before he wrote his article. In fact, *Breaker himself admits this much in his article*. Breaker admits in his article that most of the readings he "critiqued" were debatable readings that existed in the 2004 rough draft of the RVG which since then have been cleaned up. So in other words, much of Breaker's ramblings were a big waste of time. Most of the readings Breaker brought up were non-issues to begin with. Many times, and amazingly, it was Breaker's attempt to critique the Spanish grammar abilities of a native Hispanic who has lived in his native land of Mexico nearly all of his life. Dr. Gómez was starting his first church in Mexico and winning souls in Spanish, his native language, before Breaker spoke his first word in English, yea, before Breaker was born!

For example, in one of his attempts to discredit the RVG and the Spanish abilities of Dr. Humberto Gómez, Breaker wrote:

**2 Cor. 10:9** Gómez uses the strange word "*mezquindad*." 1602 and 1602P say *avaricia*. KJV reads *coveteousness*. (Note: Because of so many synonyms in the Gómez, some have called it "A MEXICAN BIBLE." I'll not call it this, but you must admit, the word *mezquindad* does sound a lot like the word *Mexican*.)<sup>15</sup>

(Note: Breaker gives the wrong address. The correct address is 2 Cor. 9:5.)

One of Dr. Gómez's collaborators in the RVG revision was Pastor Nelson Giménez. Bro. Giménez is a native of Paraguay, South America. He has lived in this Spanish-speaking country all of his life and now serves as an ordained Pastor who is fluent in 3 different languages, including his native tongue of Spanish. He is also a professional translator of legal documents for companies in Paraguay so if anyone knows about proper Spanish grammar it is this man. In response to Breaker's criticism of the word "mezquindad" in the RVG, Pastor Giménez says:

The word "mezquindad" can only sound strange to someone who is not a native Latin American or Spaniard. This word is not just used in Mexico. It is used all throughout Latin America and Spain. If Breaker was a native Paraguayan, or Chilean, or Peruvian, or any other native of South America, he would be very familiar with this word. Here in South America we use this word, and variations of it, on a common basis. For example, we use this word in reference to a covetous person who is very stingy with their money. We use it the same way that an American refers to someone as a "tightwad" or a "skinflint". In Spanish we call such a person "un mezquino".

So in the Bible, the word "mezquindad" is used as another word for "coveteousness". It is a valid and common Castilian word. It is primarily defined

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<sup>15</sup> [The History and Truth about the Reina Valera Gómez Bible](#) by Robert Breaker

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in the Real Academy Dictionary of Spain (the official standard of all words in the Castilian Spanish language) as: “He that gives as little as possible.” In other words, a covetous and stingy person.

It is stupid to imply that “mezquindad” is just a Mexican word (as if our Mexican brothers don’t know Castilian, but he does) simply because it *sounds* like the word “Mexican”.

Also, Breaker is a hypocrite for criticizing the RVG for using this perfectly fine word when the Bible he promotes uses the same, exact word in Isa. 32:5-6. In fact, if Breaker would read his own 1602 “Purificada” he would find that the word is defined for him IN HIS OWN BIBLE. In the Purificada, as well as the RVG, a “mezquino” is defined in Isa. 32:5-6 as someone who withholds his possessions when he ought to give to those in need. Does Breaker read the very Bible he is trying to defend?<sup>16</sup>

In addition to Pastor Giménez’s commentary here I’d like to also point out that the word “mezquino” also shows up in the *original* 1569 translation of Reina as well as the *original* 1602 Valera (in Isa. 32:5-6) of which Breaker and Riplinger’s “Purificada” is supposed to be based upon. So if that word is some kind of “strange Mexican” modernization, what of Reina and Valera? I guess these natives of Spain were really Mexicans and didn’t know it. If only they had Breaker and Riplinger around to instruct them in what is real Castilian Spanish!

I have compiled notes such as the above comments by Pastor Giménez and other Hispanic men of God (such as Pastor Ulises Velázquez of Mexico) that I am strongly considering using if I decide to write a full refutation of Breaker’s erroneous booklet. (Many of my friends seem to think that would be a waste of time on my part considering Breaker’s irrelevance and lack of influence.) As you can see, Bible-believing Hispanics see right through Breaker’s ridiculous arguments. Yet this is Sis. Riplinger’s authority on the Spanish Bible issue and she propagates his misinformation through her bookstore in addition to adopting some of his insane arguments for her own material. This calls into question her credibility and ability to properly discern this issue.

### **A Hypocritical Argument**

Now Riplinger says we are going against Cipriano de Valera by using and supporting a different word than the one he chose in John 1:1. But if that is so, what are we to think of the Bible that Riplinger promotes – the 1602 Valera “Purificada”? The revisers behind that Bible also changed words. For example, they changed “salud” to today’s more common designation “salvacion”. Now personally I am not against this change. The RVG did the same thing and I believe it is a good change. However, what I am against is Riplinger’s bias and arbitrariness in this matter. If it is wrong for us to change the word (Palabra) that Valera used in John 1:1, what gives her friends the right to change the word that Valera used for “salvation” (salud) for the more modern and common word ‘salvacion’?

I could give more examples here of Valera’s word choices that were changed by the 1602P revisers but they are too numerous to list. And if anyone has any doubt as to what I just said I challenge them to pick up a copy of the Valera “Purified” that Riplinger sells and compare it to any facsimile of the original 1602 Valera. Check them out in any part of the Bible and I guarantee you that it won’t take you more than 3 minutes to see that they are definitely not the same. They have MANY word differences due to many changes made.

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<sup>16</sup> [When Gringos Criticize What They Don’t Understand](#) by Nelson Giménez (unpublished article)

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The Valera “Purified” that Riplinger recommends is not just a “restoration” of the original 1602. It is a revision. Why else do you think they called it “purified”? It cannot be a revision unless things in the original were changed. They changed words used by Valera just as much, *if not more*, as Dr. Gómez did! In fact, they claim that their revision is a more thorough work (which it is not) than Dr. Gómez’s. If that is so, that would imply that they indeed made more word changes to Valera’s work than Dr. Gómez did.

So again, why is Riplinger complaining about RVG revisers using words that Valera didn’t use when the revisers behind the Spanish Bible she recommends and sells DID THE EXACT SAME THING in many places, probably more? Isn’t that hypocritical? What gave William Park the right to change words yet Dr. Gómez and his collaborators didn’t have the same right to do so? This is the very epitome of **bias** on Riplinger’s part.

### The Dictionary vs. Riplinger

Something else that Riplinger forgot to mention in her article is how the word ‘Verbo’ is defined in the Spanish dictionary. You see, Riplinger has a thing against dictionaries. She discourages the use of dictionaries and lexicons in her books especially in her latest work entitled *Hazardous Materials*. Likewise she chides those who support the word ‘verbo’ with the use of dictionaries and lexicons. For example, on page 12 of her article, in regards to “those who use Verbo”, she falsely accuses:

They must believe that the source for translating Bibles is lexicons and dictionaries by unsaved liberals, and not by comparing “spiritual things with spiritual” in cognate language Bibles.

In regards to the RVG revision this accusation is certainly not true because Bro. Gómez has made it abundantly clear that the standard that he followed to ensure purity in his revision effort was the KJB along with a comparison of the Received Texts as well as the original 1602 Valera.<sup>17</sup>

What’s interesting about this charge, however, is that Riplinger will not hesitate to reference a dictionary when it serves her cause. For example, on page 13 of her article, she rebukes us for not using the Latin dictionary that she recommends:

Those who use *Verbo* must give in to the following errors:

1.) They must reject the most widely accepted Latin Dictionary, that of William Whitaker, which gives definitions for *sermo*, which include “the word,” while calling *verbum* a “word” (<http://archives.nd.edu/words.html>). Jesus Christ is definitely “the word.” All dictionaries give several so-called meanings, not necessarily as synonyms of each other, but as meanings in different contexts. For example the word ‘save’ can mean ‘back up a computer,’ ‘put money in the bank,’ ‘a baseball term,’ or the theological definition ‘save from sin.’ The definitions cannot be mixed between contexts. Whitaker gives several definitions of ‘sermo’ and, as the precedence of the OED dictates, the theological definition (“the word”) is fourth, or so.

Notice that in this part of her article Riplinger calls it an “error” for not referencing “the mostly widely accepted Latin Dictionary” which she recommends. Riplinger is very confusing.

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<sup>17</sup> See chapter 4 of my book *God’s Bible in Spanish* available in English or Spanish through Chick Publications – [www.chick.com](http://www.chick.com).

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On one page she rebukes you for using a dictionary. Then on the very next page she rebukes you for *not* using a dictionary. Riplinger needs to make up her mind on whether or not it is OK to use a dictionary. And then she needs to practice what she preaches.

Also, why is it OK for Riplinger to use a Latin dictionary to support the Latin word ‘sermo’ but it is somehow wrong for us to use a Spanish dictionary to support the *Spanish* word ‘verbo’? Again, Riplinger’s double-standard here is perplexing.

In her books defending the KJB, Riplinger greatly opposes those who try to impose the grammar of Greek texts to interpret and change the infallible KJB and rightfully so. She also repudiates the use of Greek dictionaries and lexicons over the English Bible. Yet she turns around and insists we distort Spanish grammar to change certain words in our God-given Spanish Bible based on what “the original Latin” says. And she supports this recommendation with the use of Latin dictionaries, lexicons, and modern-day scholars. This is a blatant double-standard.

Nevertheless, the fact is that while Riplinger scolds us for “rejecting” the “widely accepted” Latin dictionary she ignores the official Spanish Dictionary. She never mentioned in her article how the most authoritative Spanish Dictionary of Spain defines the word ‘verbo’. The official worldwide standard and authority for Castilian Spanish words is the Royal Academy of Spain (Real Academia Española). They are the ones that standardize what words are to be considered official Spanish words in the Castilian language. Their dictionary is the worldwide standard and gives the official definitions for all Castilian Spanish words. In their dictionary, entitled Diccionario de la Lengua Española, the word ‘Verbo’ is defined as:

“Segunda persona de la Santísima Trinidad”<sup>18</sup>

(Translation: “The second person of the most Holy Trinity.”)

All Christians know that the second person of the Holy Trinity is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ – the incarnate Word. And every Spanish-speaking Christian in every Spanish-speaking country in the world knows that the word ‘Verbo’ in John 1:1 is a reference to none other than the second person of the trinity – el Señor Jesucristo (the Lord Jesus Christ).

Every Spanish dictionary I have in possession, as well as others I have referenced, likewise defines ‘verbo’ as ‘the Word’ as a theological term in reference to Jesus Christ. For example, on page 483 of the Langenscheidt Standard Dictionary of Spanish/English words, the word ‘Verbo’ is simply defined as “the Word” (capital ‘W’ in reference to Jesus Christ).

On page 587 of the Harper Collins Spanish College Dictionary (5<sup>th</sup> edition) ‘El Verbo’ is again defined as “the Word”.

Riplinger suggests we should reference the “widely accepted” Oxford Latin Dictionary. But what about the Oxford *Spanish* Dictionary? On the online Oxford Spanish Dictionary, based upon the Concise Oxford Spanish Dictionary published by Oxford University Press, it defines ‘El Verbo’ as ‘the Word’.

Likewise it is also interesting to note that when you look up the word ‘Palabra’ in the official Royal Academy dictionary of Spain, there is absolutely no mention of it being a possible reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. So in Hispanic culture, it is ‘Verbo’, not ‘Palabra’, that is officially recognized as the Spanish designation for the incarnate Word.

No native Spanish-speaker on any continent has any problems whatsoever with the rendering ‘El Verbo’ as a reference to the incarnate Word of John 1:1. When you talk about “el Verbo Encarnado” (the incarnate Word) they know exactly what and Who you are talking about. When they sing the Spanish hymn entitled “Oh Verbo Encarnado” on page 284 of one of the most widely used Spanish hymnals – *Celebremos Su Gloria* – amongst conservative and

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<sup>18</sup> [http://buscon.rae.es/draeI/SrvltConsulta?TIPO\\_BUS=3&LEMA=verbo](http://buscon.rae.es/draeI/SrvltConsulta?TIPO_BUS=3&LEMA=verbo)

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Protestant Hispanic churches today they think of nothing Catholic nor Kabbalic. Nothing other than worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ in song is upon their hearts and minds when they sing of “el Verbo Encarnado”.

Dr. Thomas Holland, KJV defender and author (of which Riplinger sells his book entitled A Critique of James White’s Book through AV Publications), explains in an article he wrote concerning the Spanish Bible issue:

“Some have objected because the Valera uses the Spanish word Verbo instead of Palabra. Both can mean, “Word,” but sometimes verbo can mean verb. However, in the Spanish mind, Verbo means nothing less than the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Standard English-Spanish and Spanish-English Dictionary, (by Dr. Emilo M. Martinez Amador), the following is found under the listing for verbo. “m. Word, second person of the Trinity: (gram.) verb; curse; swear: en un verbo, at once, without delay: convertir en verbo, to verbify.” The Spanish-English and English-Spanish Dictionary (prepared by Mario A. Pei and edited by Salvatore Ramondino, Signet Books) reads: “n.m. 1. verb. 2. cap., theol. Word.) Again, the evidence supports the reading of the Valera.”<sup>19</sup>

You see, this is not even a debate amongst Hispanic Christians. It is only contested by Riplinger and Robert Breaker, both of whom are non-Latinos, who do not live in a predominately Spanish-speaking country, and therefore do not have to use a Spanish Bible on a daily basis for their personal lives and ministry.

Nevertheless, let it be established that no Spanish dictionary on earth supports their disapproval of ‘Verbo’.

### **RIPLINGER ARGUMENT #2**

#### **‘Verbo’ is a Catholic word**

This is where Riplinger tries to connect a lot of imaginary dots. Riplinger claims that the word ‘Verbo’ is a Catholic word because it is based in a “Catholic” Latin word – ‘Verbum’. And the reasons why she knows ‘Verbum’ is a Catholic word are because according to Riplinger:

1. ‘Verbum’ was supposedly first introduced as a reference to Christ in John 1:1 by Novatian who was supposedly a Catholic Pope.
2. ‘Verbum’ was supposedly then introduced into the Latin Bible by the Catholic priest, Jerome, who supposedly adopted it from the supposed Catholic Pope Novatian.
3. ‘Verbum’ was supposedly then adopted and introduced into the Spanish Bible by another Catholic Priest named Father Scio who translated ‘Verbum’ as ‘Verbo’.

We will see through the facts of history that all 3 of Riplinger’s presuppositions here are incorrect and that there is absolutely nothing “Catholic” about the Latin word ‘Verbum’.

Of course, even if all of Riplinger’s dot-connecting was accurate you have to wonder what exactly would be the Catholic church’s “evil” purpose for wanting to replace the Latin word ‘Sermo’ for ‘Verbum’ in John 1:1. Well you see, this is where Riplinger’s occult theory comes in. Once all of Riplinger’s dots are connected, it is supposed to be revealed that this is Satan’s way of infiltrating the Bible and the church with mystic New-Age occultic doctrine since according to Riplinger ‘Verbo’ is also an occultic word based in the Jewish Kabbalic cult. In other words, by connecting all the dots for us Riplinger believes she has uncovered Satan’s evil plot behind the

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<sup>19</sup> Thomas Holland, The Spanish Fountain, <http://www.biblebelievers.com/Holland2.html>

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“evil” word ‘Verbum’. However, when it’s all said and done we will see that our dear Sis. Riplinger’s position on this issue is not only full of error but full of madness as well.

### **No official position by the Catholic church in favor of ‘Verbum’**

One Catholic and Erasmian scholar states:

*Verbum* and *sermo* may both be orthodox, for the Church has not designated any Latin translation of *logos* singularly correct, but *sermo* is the choicer word.<sup>20</sup>

The “church” mentioned here is in reference to the *Catholic* church. The Erasmian scholar here reveals that the Catholic church has NEVER taken an official position in favor of or against either Latin word – ‘verbum’ or ‘sermo’. In fact, the debate over which of those two words is more accurate for the Latin Bible still rages on amongst Catholic scholars even today.

Thus, Riplinger’s claim that ‘verbum’ is a “Catholic word” is totally unfounded. There is absolutely no evidence anywhere in history to support her theory that this Latin word was invented by the Catholic church to replace the Latin word ‘sermo’. In fact, that would be impossible since the word ‘verbum’ was in use by early Bible-believing Christians as a reference to Jesus Christ as the incarnate Word *before the Catholic church ever existed*, as we are about to demonstrate.

### **Was ‘Verbum’ really introduced by a Catholic Pope?**

Riplinger claims that a Catholic “Pope” is responsible for introducing the use of the Latin word ‘verbum’ in John 1:1 in a tract as a plot to replace the word ‘sermo’. She wrote:

“The word Verbum was originally introduced by Pope Novation in a pamphlet.”

“Wouldn’t you know that Pope Novation changed it in a tract and later Jerome arranged its place in the Latin Bible.”

Hence according to Riplinger the Catholic priest Jerome, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, adopted a “Pope’s” use of the word ‘verbum’ as a reference to the incarnate Word for his Latin translation of John 1:1. Riplinger:

“It also becomes clear which editions are rooted in or have been tainted by the fourth century Latin corruption of the Roman Catholic, Jerome, who copied Verbum from its originator Pope Novation.”

Now it is true that Novatian used the word ‘verbo’ in reference to Christ in a tract. However, the problem with Riplinger’s claim of ‘verbo’ being introduced by a *Catholic Pope* is that it is **TOTALLY FALSE** (to put it mildly) because **Novatian was not a Catholic pope!** In fact, it would be **IMPOSSIBLE** for Novatian to be a Catholic pope since the papal system of the Catholic church wasn’t even in existence during Novation’s lifetime. Novation lived during the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century – 200-256 AD (the same dates that Riplinger herself gives for

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<sup>20</sup> A companion to rhetoric and rhetorical criticism, by Walter Jost & Wendy Olmsted, p 61

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Novatian's lifetime in her article). The Catholic papacy didn't come into existence *until the 4<sup>th</sup> century*.

Every Bible-believing student of church history knows that the Catholic papal system was formed through the leadership of the Roman Emperor Constantine as a political effort to try to unite the Roman pagans and Christians of that time under a state religion. Many Protestant and Bible-believing church historians date the true inception of the Catholic church back to the Council of Nicea, called for by Constantine in 325 AD. Constantine lived from 272 to 337 AD. *Novatian was dead and gone decades before Constantine was born!* So there is no way in the world that Novatian could have been a part of the Catholic papacy, much less could he have been one of their Popes.

Even if some would try to trace the roots of the Catholic church before Constantine's time, the fact remains that the Papal system itself, the establishment of Popes, was set up by Constantine when he proclaimed himself as the "Bishop of bishops" and tried to unite all the churches in his empire under one umbrella and all the church leaders under one hierarchy.

So Riplinger is guilty of distorting and basically trying to rewrite history to support her theories against 'Verbo'. This is dishonest to say the least.

The only other people who claim that Novatian was a "Pope" is the Catholic church itself due to their false doctrine of Apostolic Succession (the heretical teaching that the lineage of the Popes go all the way back to the Apostle Peter). You see in order to deceive people into thinking that the Catholic church can trace their history back to the Apostle Peter, Catholic historians have to claim certain individuals that lived during the first few centuries as their own. In other words, they have to lie about church history, which comes as no surprise to the Bible-believing Christian.

Novatian is one of these individuals that the papal church lies about. Just like the Catholic church claims Patrick as a patron saint and even established a holiday in his memory – *when in reality he was a 5th century Bible-believing Christian who preached salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone without any mixture of works* – they also claim Novatian as having some association with their papal system. Catholic historians claim that Novatian was a priest in the Catholic church who later set himself up as a Pope without the official approval of the Catholic hierarchy which *they* claim existed at that time. Thus, he was declared an "anti-pope" and later ex-communicated for his actions, as the Catholic tale goes, and was even accused by Catholic historians of eventually becoming possessed by a devil.<sup>21</sup>

All Bible-believing students know that whenever the Catholic church speaks evil of someone in church history there's a good chance that individual was a true Bible-believing Christian. The truth is, however, that Novatian's beliefs and practices were too Biblical and too anti-Catholic for the Catholic church to fully claim him.

Novatian was a true Christian leader of great influence in the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and had many followers. Just as the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch (Acts 11:26), those who followed the leadership and teachings of Novatian were labeled "Novationists" or simply the "Novatians". Many non-Catholic Christian church historians recognize the Novationists as Bible-believing separatists who were never a part of the Roman Catholic church. For example, the famous treatise entitled The Trail of Blood by J. M. Carroll mentions the Novationists along with the Montanists, Donatists, Paulicians, Albigenses, Waldenses, and Ana-baptists as groups of Bible-believing Christians, who were never a part of the papal system, and who lived during the first few centuries.<sup>22</sup>

Novatian started a powerful Bible-believing church-planting movement throughout Italy that continued on even centuries after Novatian died. When the papal system was established in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, about 70 years after Novatian died, his followers, the Novatianists, were one

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<sup>21</sup> Online Catholic encyclopedia on Novatian and Novationism - <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11138a.htm>

<sup>22</sup> The Trail of Blood, by J.M.Carroll, p. 6-7 (also see Carroll's chart)

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of many Bible-believing separatist groups that refused to join the Catholic state religion set up by Constantine. The Novationists vehemently preached and stood against the Catholic church. One Baptist historian, G. H. Orchard, writes:

To remove all human appendages, the Novatianists said to candidates, “If you be a virtuous believer, and will accede to our confederacy against sin, you may be admitted among us by baptism, or if any catholic has baptized you before, by rebaptism.” They were at later periods called anabaptists. The churches thus formed upon a plan of strict communion and rigid discipline, obtained the reproach of Puritans; they were the oldest body of Christian churches, of which we have any account, and a succession of them, we shall prove, has continued to the present day. Novatian’s example had a powerful influence, and puritan churches rose in different parts, in quick succession. So early as 254, these Dissenters are complained of, as having infected France with their doctrines, which will aid us in the Albigensian churches, where the same severity of discipline is traced<sup>23</sup>

Another church historian, William Jones, adds:

When the first churches began to swerve from the form of sound words, to corrupt the discipline of the house of God, and to commit fornication with the kings of the earth, by forming an alliance with the state, we cease to trace the kingdom of Christ among them, but we shall find it successively among the churches of the Novatians, the followers of Aerius, the Paulicians, the Cathari, or Puritans in Germany, the Patetines, and the Waldenses, until the times of reformation.<sup>24</sup>

In regards to Constantine’s treatment of the Novatianists, Jones reveals:

“The emperor’s first letters were mild and gentle, but he was soon persuaded into more violent measures; for out of his great zeal to extinguish heresy, he issued edicts against all such as his favorite bishops persuaded him were the authors or abettors of it, and particularly against the Novatians, Valentinians, Marcionists, and others, whom, after reproaching with being “enemies of truth, destructive counselors,” etc. he deprives of the liberty of meeting for worship, either in public or private places; and gives all their oratories to the orthodox church.”<sup>25</sup>

So the man truly responsible for starting the Catholic establishment, Roman Emperor Constantine, persecuted the followers of Novatian. Furthermore, Jones says:

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<sup>23</sup> A Concise History of Baptists, by G. H. Orchard, p.55

<sup>24</sup> THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, from the birth of Christ to the 18th Century: including the very interesting account of the Waldenses and Albigenses By William Jones (1762-1843), p. 21

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 212

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The doctrinal sentiments of the Novatians appear to have been very scriptural, and the discipline of their churches rigid in the extreme. They were the first class of Christians who obtained the name of (CATHARI) Puritans, an appellation which doth not appear to have been chosen by themselves, but applied to them by their adversaries; from which we may reasonably conclude that their manners were simple and irreproachable.<sup>26</sup>

If Novatian was a Catholic priest (as the Catholic church claims) and then later a Pope (as Riplinger claims), he sure was a lousy one for the Catholic cause! Another church historian, Robert Robinson, states:

In the end, Novatian formed a church, and was elected bishop. Great numbers followed his example, and all over the empire Puritan churches were constituted and flourished through the succeeding two hundred years. Afterwards, when penal laws obliged them to lurk in corners, and worship God in private, they were distinguished by a variety of names, and a succession of them continued till the Reformation.<sup>27</sup>

Robinson goes on to say:

They say Novatian was the first Antipope; and yet there was at that time no pope, in the modern sense of the word.<sup>28</sup>

The truth is that Novatian was not a “Catholic Pope” as claimed by the Catholic church and Riplinger. To the contrary he was a Bible-believing Christian who started a movement of Bible-believing churches that for centuries opposed the Catholic church.

By trying to associate Novatian to the Roman Catholic church, which as we have pointed out is historically and ethically impossible to do (unless you believe the Catholic’s version of history and their teaching of Apostolic Succession), Riplinger is in essence supporting the false claims of the papal institution and perpetuating their lies concerning a true 3<sup>rd</sup> century Bible-believing Christian leader.

Now I do not know Riplinger’s heart. But I cannot help but question why Riplinger would do this. Could it be that due to Novatian’s existence in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century she sees his witness to ‘verbum’ as a threat to her case against the word ‘verbo’? Or perhaps she simply fell for the lies of the Catholic church historians and was thereby deceived – Pro. 14:15.

Either way, no matter what the reason is for her misinformation, the fact is that in Riplinger’s efforts to destroy the credibility of an early witness to the Latin word ‘verbum’ she has actually provided *more* evidence, by way of antiquity, in favor of ‘verbum’. It was the great Dean John William Burgon who championed the cause of manuscript evidence through the use of ancient “patristic writings” (quotes of scriptures in the writings of early church leaders and theologians). With the witness of Novatian, we now have manuscript evidence in favor of the word ‘verbum’ that dates back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

### **Tertullian vs. Riplinger**

Now if Novatian’s 3<sup>rd</sup> century witness to ‘verbum’ is not early enough for you consider the following.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 221

<sup>27</sup> Ecclesiastical Researches, by Robert Robinson, p. 126

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

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Riplinger claims that 'sermo', instead of 'verbum', was the Latin word used as the translation of 'logos' in John 1:1 in all the pure Old Latin Bibles that pre-date Jerome's corrupted 4<sup>th</sup> century Latin translation. Of course, there is no way to verify this claim because as Riplinger herself explains on page 12-13 of her article:

“...the true early Old Latin manuscripts from the first through the third centuries were destroyed, along with their owners, in the varied persecutions which took place during the first three centuries.”

Nevertheless, Riplinger persists with her claims that these Old Latin manuscripts which don't exist anymore ALL used 'sermo' in John 1:1 instead of 'verbum'. On page 8 of her article she declared:

“The earliest Latin manuscripts and Christian writers (c. 160-260) do not use the word *Verbum*, but *Sermo* in John 1:1.”

But how does Riplinger know this if these old manuscripts do not exist anymore (according to her) and therefore cannot be used to verify her claims? Unfortunately, all Riplinger offers to support her theory is mere speculation.

First off, she tries to build a case that the Old Latin Bibles (pre-fourth century) all used 'sermo' instead of 'verbum' because other foreign translations that were based in the Old Latin all supposedly use a word in John 1:1 that she claims could only be a formal equivalent of 'sermo' and not 'verbum'. The examples she gives on page 4 of her article are:

For example, the Word, Jesus Christ, in John 1:1 was rendered in the Old Latin as *Sermo*, until Jerome changed it to *Verbum* in the fourth century (See G.A. Riplinger, *Hazardous Materials*, Ararat, VA: A.V. Publications, 2009, p. 1123). Pure Romance language Bibles, deriving from the Latin, did not use the word *Verbo*. Instead they followed the original Old Latin. The French Ostervald said *Parole*, the LeFevre's French said *parolle*, Olivetan's French said *parolle*, the Geneva French said *Parole*, the Italian Diodati said *Parola*, and the Swiss version said *Parole*. The Indo-Portuguese says *Palavra*, Almeida's Portuguese says *palavra*, the Toulouse says *paraoulo*, the Vaudois says *Parola*, the Piedmontese says *Parola*, and the Romanese says *Pled*. Likewise, the word *Palabra* has been used in the Spanish Bible from the earliest days, including the Valera 1602 and the Reina 1569.

Riplinger makes a basic “gringo” (or in her case “gringa”) mistake here. She automatically assumes that because these words sound the same or start with the same first letter as 'palabra' they can only be considered equivalent to 'palabra' and not 'verbo'. But this is wrong. As we have seen, the dictionary would beg to differ with Riplinger because according to the most authoritative Spanish dictionary of Spain, as well as every other Spanish dictionary on the planet, the word *Verbo* is defined as a theological term in reference to the incarnate Word, and is therefore equivalent to all the words Riplinger mentions above.

Nevertheless, it needs to be understood that the way John 1:1 reads in Reformation era Bibles in other languages does not prove at all that the Old Latin Bibles before the 4<sup>th</sup> century all said 'sermo' in John 1:1. That is a far-reaching conclusion based upon nothing more than mere speculation. Sis. Riplinger is trying to back up a theory with another theory. Yet, she has produced nothing of any real substance to back either of those theories up. Basically, Riplinger is simply *guessing* here.

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To furthermore support her theory that all the Old Latin Bibles used ‘sermo’ instead of ‘verbum’ she mentions the witness of Tertullian. On page 13 of her article:

It [verbum] was *not* the original pure word from the Old Latin Bible, as demonstrated by the most ancient writers (e.g. Tertullian) and repeated by pure Reformation era scholars. The use of scripture verses by those living in the first three centuries has always been used to give us a view of what scriptures they had in-hand then. Such authors are used to DATE readings, since their scripture citations are in many cases the only witnesses we have for Old Latin Bibles which were destroyed by the persecutors. The theology of the writer does not annul the usefulness of their scripture citations.

Tertullian is another early church leader and theologian who lived from 160-220 AD. Due to the antiquity of his writings, like Novatian, Tertullian is a very weighty witness as to the early scriptures in the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Now it is true that Tertullian used ‘sermo’ in his Latin writings as a reference to the incarnate Word in John 1:1. But what Riplinger does not mention, or perhaps she is not aware, that Tertullian is *also* on record of using ‘verbum’ as a Latin designation of Christ as the incarnate Word in a Latin document that dates back to 200 AD. Observe Tertullian’s exact commentary in Latin:

“Regula est autem fidei, illa scilicet qua creditur, UNUM omnino DEUM esse, nec alium praeter mundi conditorem, qui universa de nihilo produxerit, per Verbum suum primo omnium demissum; id Verbum, FILIUM EJUS appellatum, in nomine Dei varie visum a patriarchis, in prophetis semper auditum, postremo delatum, ex Spiritu Patris Dei et virtute, in Virginem Mariam, carnem factum in utero ejus, et ex ea natum, egisse JESUM CHRISTUM”<sup>29</sup>

Notice the words ‘verbum’ used 2 times by Tertullian. Here is the translation of his commentary into English:

“The Rule of Faith is, namely, that by which we believe That there is but ONE GOD, and not other besides *the Maker of the world*, who produced the universe out of nothing, by his Word sent forth first of all; that this Word, called HIS SON, was seen in the name of God in various ways by the patriarchs, was always heard in the prophets, at last was sent down *from the Spirit* and power of God the Father, into the *Virgin Mary, was made flesh* in her womb, and *born of her*, lived as JESUS CHRIST”<sup>30</sup>

So in addition to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century witness of Novatian, we also have a *witness from the year 200 AD*, Tertullian, to the use of the word “Verbum” as a Latin designation for the incarnate Word. So Tertullian’s use of Verbum in his writings shoots down three of Riplinger’s theories:

1. While Riplinger is right that Tertullian used *Sermo* for John 1:1 in his writings, it is now seen that he also used *Verbum* as a reference to the incarnate Word, which goes to show that the 2 Latin words were indeed **synonymous**.
2. Not only is *Verbum* synonymous with *Sermo*, Tertullian’s use of ‘verbum’ as a Latin designation of the incarnate Word proves that verbum is indeed equivalent to the

<sup>29</sup> De Praescript. Haeret., cap. XIII, [http://www.lamblion.net/Articles/Creeds/terullian\\_iii.htm](http://www.lamblion.net/Articles/Creeds/terullian_iii.htm)

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

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words used in other ancient foreign Bible translations (French, Italian, Portuguese, etc) for the divine 'logos' in John 1:1.

3. Since Tertullian's writings (200 AD) in Latin are considered manuscript evidence, known as **patristic writings**, Riplinger is wrong for insisting that there is no Latin manuscript evidence in support of the word *Verbum* before the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Riplinger tried hard to establish 'sermo' as the more ancient designation for the 'Word' in John 1:1. But with the solid evidence of both Novatian and Tertullian, undeniably proving the pre-Catholic antiquity of the word 'verbum' as a Latin reference to Christ, a strong case can be built to support the possibility that the Old Latin Bibles before the 4<sup>th</sup> century may have rendered 'Verbum' rather than 'Sermo' in John 1:1.

Riplinger's claim that "*all scholars say that Verbum is not the original*" is not true. Consider the following statements given in an email correspondence between a modern day Latin manuscript expert and professor named Dr. Hugh Houghton, and RVG revision collaborator Carlos Donate:

*"Yes - support for 'verbum' appears in writers such as Novatian, Cyprian, Victorinus of Poetovio, Hilary of Poitiers etc. etc.. In fact, the bulk of attestation supports 'verbum' as the best known reading by far, but the writers I mention below provide evidence that it co-existed with 'sermo' in earliest times.*

*Best wishes,  
Hugh Houghton*"<sup>31</sup>

In another email Houghton explains to Donate that the evidence that we DO have point to the idea that *verbum* may have always been the official rendering of the divine Logos in the Latin manuscripts:

*"Dear Carlos,*

*1. We have almost 450 manuscripts of John in Latin copied before the year 1000. None of these has 'sermo' in John 1:1. No Christian writer quotes John 1:1 with sermo after the year 500 (until Beza introduces it in his translation). So for at least 1000 years (and probably always) 'verbum' was the standard Latin reading."*<sup>32</sup>

This Latin scholar's point is that the evidence that we do have available may allude to the possibility of *Verbum* as the Latin designation for the incarnate Word in John 1:1 in the earliest of Latin texts rather than *Sermo*, contrary to Riplinger's guesswork in which she concludes otherwise.

Now, as to whether or not the Latin texts before the 4th century exclusively used 'verbum' or 'sermo', either argument cannot be empirically proven. Maybe Riplinger is right that the earliest Latin texts used 'sermo' or maybe they used 'verbum'. Either is a possibility. The point is to demonstrate that this issue concerning the Latin rendering is no way near as one-sided and conclusive as Riplinger tries to make it appear in order to support her cause against the way the passage reads in our Spanish RVG Bible. Riplinger tried to make it sound as if

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<sup>31</sup> See Carlos Donate's article in Spanish "El Verbo de Dios"

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

there is nothing at all to indicate a possibility that 'verbum' may have been the rendering of John 1:1 in the earliest Latin texts yet as we have seen this is simply not so.

Now I really am not interested in trying to establish a dogmatic position for either perspective concerning the early Latin Bibles anyways. My concern, due to my line of work as a missionary to Hispanic people, is in the Spanish Bible, not the Latin Bible.

At any rate, it is not right for Riplinger to be so arbitrary when providing historical and textual information to try to support her opinion at the expense of other hard-working Bible-believing Christians who do not see things exactly the way she does. This is called "bias" in the English language. It is always best to look at both sides of the story and then make a judgment from there once the WHOLE story has been given and not just one side of it.

### **Verbo and Palabra synonymous according to Erasmus**

Riplinger claims that Erasmus "fought vehemently against" the word 'verbum'.<sup>33</sup> In her article she makes it sound like Erasmus in no uncertain terms declared 'sermo' as the *only* possible correct rendering of the divine 'logos' and that he sorely dismissed 'verbum' as corrupt. But this also is not true. Erasmus was not nearly as hostile against 'verbum' as Riplinger tries to make it seem. In this regard, our dear Sister is simply exaggerating his position.

First off keep in mind that Erasmus DID use 'verbum' in John 1:1 in the first edition of his Latin New Testament text before changing it in his subsequent editions.

Secondly, while it is true that Erasmus eventually preferred the word 'sermo' over 'verbum' for John 1:1 and went through great lengths in his writings to defend his change of wording, Erasmus explained in his writings that 'verbum' and 'sermo' were *synonymous*. One Erasmusian scholar, C. A. L. Jarrot, reveals:

Erasmus repeats that there is "no difference" between *sermo* and *verbum*. This cannot be a sudden denial of his demonstration of the lexical differences between the two words. What he means is that there is no difference for orthodoxy whether one expresses Christ as *sermo* or *verbum*, since the Fathers use them interchangeably.<sup>34</sup>

Erasmus plainly said there was "no difference" doctrinally and in expression. Erasmus acknowledged that *verbum* and *sermo* could be and should be considered synonymous. In fact, if they are not synonymous an argument over which of the two was better would have never existed. Jarrot goes on to explain:

Thus angrily Erasmus begins his *Apologia de In Principio Erat Sermo*, or defense of this phrase in his new Latin translation of St. John's Gospel. Since he goes to great pains to show that "sermo" and "verbum" were used interchangeably by the Church Fathers, as well as in the Vulgate, to designate the Son of God, one may well wonder why he troubled to alter the famous phrase and to stick to his version despite the "horrendous outcry" against it which he deploras at too great length (for modern readers) in this essay. The answer is, I think, more than merely linguistic. It is rooted in an important attitude of Biblical humanists toward the power of the word, which, when directed toward the Word

<sup>33</sup> See her advertisement description for the 1602 Valera Purificada on her online bookstore at: <https://shop.avpublications.com>

<sup>34</sup> ERASMUS' IN PRINCIPIO ERAT SERMO: A CONTROVERSIAL TRANSLATION By C. A. L. JARROTT

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made Flesh, reveals some cultural presuppositions as well as some theo-logical insights.<sup>35</sup>

So in his defense of his decision of changing ‘verbum’ to ‘sermo’, Erasmus demonstrated that ‘sermo’ and ‘verbum’ were used “interchangeably” by the early Church leaders in their writings, something of which we have already seen in the writings of Tertullian. It only stands to reason that these two words could not have been used “interchangeably” if they weren’t **synonymous**, regardless of whether one is better than the other. Also, Erasmus’s commentator adds:

Of course there is no real contradiction here; obviously the important thing for the weaver singing Scripture at his loom is that he sings of the Son of God, not whether he thinks of Him as "sermo" or "verbum." In all probability, he will be thinking of Him in his own vernacular anyway, if the plea for the propagation of such translations is heeded.

Now again we recognize that Erasmus went through great lengths to explain why he felt the word ‘sermo’ was better than ‘verbum’ for the Latin text, but being both a Latin and Greek scholar, Erasmus recognized that the underlying Greek word *logos* was a **polysemical** word.

‘Polysemy’ is a term familiar to Bible translators. Polysemy is the study of words that have several different meanings and can therefore be designated in several different ways. Such was the case with ‘logos’:

Sarcastically, he informs his critics, who scarcely know that John did not compose the gospel in Latin, that the evangelist in fact wrote *Logos*, not *verbum*. The Greek noun *logos* is polysemous, he explains, signifying in Latin: *sermo*, *verbum*, *oratio*, *ratio*, *sapientia*, and *computus*. Erasmus reports that Jerome himself thought that all of these applied to Christ. As for himself, he wonders why Jerome selected *verbum*.<sup>36</sup>

Erasmus was trying to point out to those who criticized his use of ‘sermo’ rather than ‘verbum’ that the word choice in Latin was indeed debatable. It was a grammatical matter of which reasonable arguments could be presented for either rendering though he felt the arguments in favor of ‘sermo’ were the strongest for the Latin Bible. Because there was such a pool of words to choose from in Latin, Erasmus felt that a little grace was in order for the sake of the Bible translator who must do what is many times what he considered to be the “trifling” job of choosing the best rendering from a pool of possibilities of which anyone of them could be argued as accurate.

Erasmus felt that his critics were being unfair and going overboard in their protests against him. And Riplinger is displaying the same type of unreasonableness as those who criticized Erasmus in his day with her claim that the work of anyone who doesn’t translate *logos* into Spanish the way she insists it should be translated is to be dismissed altogether. And just as Erasmus argued thusly with the critics of his day, we remind Sis. Riplinger, and anyone else who thinks like her, that the gospel of John was written in Greek, not Latin.

At least Erasmus’s critics were Latin scholars. I question how familiar Sis. Riplinger is with the Spanish language. And since this is a *Spanish* Bible we are dealing with and not a Latin one, Spanish Bible translators, especially proven Bible-believing ones like Dr. Gómez and his many Hispanic collaborators who know Spanish at a level that Sis. Riplinger will never

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> A companion to rhetoric and rhetorical criticism, by Walter Jost & Wendy Olmsted, p 59-60

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achieve (if she even speaks it at all), should at least be afforded the benefit of a doubt in regards to their knowledge of words in the language they were born with. Riplinger's audacity to challenge the Spanish abilities of native Hispanic ministers and to question their Spanish word choices is amazing. You definitely cannot accuse her of a lack of boldness.

### Is the "Original Latin" the Final Authority for Spanish?

Riplinger is trying to turn this into a Latin debate; a debate as to which Latin word is more correct to use in a Latin Bible. The main premise of her entire argument against 'Verbo' in Spanish rests upon how she believes this word should be approached in the Latin Bibles. However, the Reina-Valera is a *Spanish Bible*, not a Latin Bible. And what Riplinger fails to understand is that the debate over the Spanish words 'verbo' and 'palabra' is a matter of interpreting **SPANISH**, not Latin.

Riplinger has made a basic error concerning languages. Even though her arguments against 'verbum' and in favor of 'sermo' are debatable, as we have demonstrated, let's for a moment pretend that she is absolutely right. Let's pretend that in the Latin Bible it should indeed read 'Sermo' in John 1:1 as she suggests rather than 'Verbum' and that the evidence for her side of the argument was conclusive. What Riplinger fails to understand is that just because a word is interpreted a certain way in Latin does not necessarily mean that the same will apply in the Spanish language. In other words, just because 'Verbum' may be wrong in Latin does not necessarily mean 'Verbo' is wrong in Spanish.

Though it is true that Spanish is a Latin-based language, at the end of the day Spanish and Latin are still two different languages. In fact, Latin is a "dead" language whereas Spanish is the third most widely spoken language in the world today.<sup>37</sup>

What Missionary cannot tell humorous stories about finding out the hard and embarrassing way of certain things that can be said in English that cannot be said in the new language they were learning when they were first settling into their foreign mission field? It is an elementary mistake to assume that a word that is correct in one language will be just as correct in another language or that a word that is wrong in one language will be just as wrong in another. For example, there are words that are considered profanity in one language that in another language is not profanity at all.

Riplinger is trying to convince the Hispanic world as to which Spanish word they should use in reference to the Lord Jesus Christ based on her very limited knowledge of ancient Latin. That would be like a Mexican national, who is not fluent in English nor French, but has learned a few French words and has a few French dictionaries and lexicons, trying to set himself up as an authority for the English-speaking world since some words in English came from French. Does his very limited knowledge of a few French words make him an authority on the English language? What fluent English-speaker would take him seriously?

This is not to say that the debate over the way to translate Logos into Latin has no bearing upon the Spanish translation at all. Since Spanish is a Latin-based language there is something to be learned in the Latin translations and such should surely be considered in the equation. We certainly do not question the value of the Latin Bibles. They are extremely important as to manuscript evidence. But there are many more factors that must also be considered.

Of course, the crazy thing is that while Riplinger tries to build a case for her position based upon the Latin manuscripts, she manages to totally discredit every Latin manuscript in history. She states that none of the Old Latin manuscripts before the 4<sup>th</sup> century exist anymore since they were all destroyed by the Catholic church and therefore cannot be used to verify

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.photius.com/rankings/languages2.html>

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anything. And then she makes a broad-brush claim that all of the thousands of Latin manuscripts from the 4<sup>th</sup> century and beyond are tainted with Catholic corruption based in Jerome's Catholic text and therefore none of them should be used to verify anything either. That pretty much eliminates the reliability of *every single Latin manuscript that ever existed or that exists today*. So Riplinger wipes out over 20 centuries worth of manuscript evidence yet at the same time suggests that the same evidence she just completely discredited could still somehow be used to support her theories. Again, Riplinger's approach to manuscript evidence and history in this matter is very biased, arbitrary, full of speculation and guesswork, and self-serving.

At any rate, the main point here is that as important as the Latin Bibles are, the way a word is to be translated in Latin, or any other language, cannot be the final determining factor as to how to translate a particular word in Spanish. There are other variables that must be considered. And no one, including Riplinger, is going to understand those variables better than a national, like Dr. Gómez and many of his collaborators, who were born with the language. For the word that works best in Latin, or German, or French, or Portuguese, or even English, may not exactly be the best in Spanish through its supposed equivalent. Those familiar (through daily use) with the nature of languages understand that these crossovers don't always work exactly the same and to insist that they do is not good (or honest) scholasticism.

So the point is that even if Riplinger could prove that 'sermo' is right and 'verbum' is wrong for the Latin Bible, that does not necessarily prove that 'palabra' is right and 'verbo' is wrong for the Spanish Bible.

### **Is Sermo the closest Latin equivalent to Palabra anyways?**

Another of Riplinger's claims is that the Latin word 'Sermo' is the most exact formal equivalent for the Greek word 'Logos' which is translated in the KJB as "the Word". But the Latin dictionaries disagree with Riplinger. Latin dictionaries define 'Sermo' as "the speech". Yes, "the word" is within the other possible ways that 'Sermo' can be translated. But its primary and most literal sense is "speech". For example, 'sermo' is where we get the word "sermon" from. As we all know, a sermon is a speech concerning a particular topic given by a preacher or an orator.

I did a little experiment. I looked up the website source that Sis. Riplinger gives for what she says is "*the most widely accepted Latin dictionary*" which can be found in the link that she gives in her article – <http://archives.nd.edu/words.html>. (By the way, this source that Riplinger herself recommends is offered by Notre Dame University – a popular *Roman Catholic* institution. Check it out for yourself.) I plugged in the English-to-Latin search engine the term 'word' and guess what was the very first Latin word on the list of options for 'word' that it gave me. The very first Latin term it gave was 'Verbum'. In fact, 'Sermo' wasn't mentioned at all in the list of designations that it gives as options for the term 'word'. So Riplinger's own authorities and sources, which she scolded us for not using, support 'Verbum' as the Latin designation most equivalent for 'word'.

Now, I am not trying to dispute that 'Sermo' could also be an accurate Latin designation for "the Word" or the divine Logos. According to Erasmus it can and I have no reason or need to argue against him. But what I wish to point out here is that it can be easily argued that "the Word" is not 'Sermo's' most literal sense and definition. If it was, there would have never been an argument amongst Latin scholars since Erasmus' time over which word to use in Latin to begin with.

The primary definition of 'sermo' in most if not all Latin dictionaries is "speech" not "word". Yet, Riplinger gives the impression that we should reject 'Verbo' as a Spanish designation for "the Word" because the primary definition of 'verbo' is "verb" not "word".

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Of course, we have already pointed out through the Spanish dictionary that this is only true when using the word *outside* of a theological context. When used in a theological and biblical context, ‘Verbo’s’ primary and ONLY meaning is the divine Word.

At any rate, Riplinger is again guilty of a double-standard by insisting that we reject ‘Verbo’ because it more literally means “verb” (when used outside of a theological context), yet the literal equivalent to the Latin word she defends, ‘sermo’, means “speech” rather than “word”.

So Riplinger’s implication that the most literal sense of the Latin word ‘sermo’ is “word” and therefore perfectly corresponds with the Spanish word “palabra” is indeed disputable to say the least. Furthermore her implication that ‘verbum’ cannot be a valid, pure, and literal Latin designation for the incarnate Word is disproven by Tertullian in 200 AD. The fact is that the primary definition of *sermo* is “speech”, not “word”. This is yet another thing that Riplinger did not mention in her article. Like one KJV defender and author said one time, “*you can tell a lot about a person’s argument by what they do not say.*”

### **Verbo was not introduced in the Spanish Bible by Father Scio in 1793**

Riplinger wrote:

Jerome’s corruption was introduced into the Spanish Bible in 1793 by Roman Catholic Padre [‘Father’] Scio, who translated from Jerome’s corrupt Vulgate (*The Bible of Every Land*, p. 266). Just as the 1611 KJB reigned supreme for 270 years, until the 1881 Revised Version, so the word *Palabra* reigned from the Enzinas Spanish edition of 1543, for 250 years, until Father Scio changed it along with scores of other words.

Again, Riplinger errs. The word ‘Verbo’ was used in John 1:1 in 2 ancient Spanish codices – I.i.8 & I.i.6 – that date back to the year 1250.<sup>38</sup> These ancient Spanish codices are currently located in a museum in Madrid, Spain named *la Biblioteca del Monasterio del Escorial*.<sup>39</sup> In other words, the word ‘Verbo’ existed in the Spanish Bible 500 years before Scio produced his version in 1793. Sis. Riplinger is wrong again.

### **Is the 1602 Valera “Purified” the only Spanish Bible today That renders ‘Palabra’ in John 1:1?**

Another one of Sis. Riplinger’s errors is that she claims that only pure Spanish Bibles use the word ‘Palabra’ in John 1:1, while all corrupt Catholic Bibles use ‘Verbo’. Sis. Riplinger wrote:

As the following chart shows, today the text of the Spanish 1602 *Purificada* alone retains the pure reading; modern Spanish versions bring forward Father Scio’s corruption. Therefore the word *Verbo* can be seen in some modern Spanish Bibles, such as the 1960, Trinitarian Bible Society, Gómez, *La Biblia de las Américas*, *La Nueva Biblia de las Hispanos*, and the 1865.

**(Author’s note: word in bold and underline mine.)**

<sup>38</sup> <http://corpus.byu.edu/bibliamedieval/>

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.bibliamedieval.es/indice.html#E6>

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Now here is Riplinger's chart:

Spanish Editions	Word (John 1:1 et al.)
1543 Enzinas	palabra
1556 Pineda	Palabra
1569 Reina (Spanish)	Palabra
1602 Valera	Palabra
1602 Valera Purificada	Palabra
1793 Catholic Padre Scio	Verbo
1823 Catholic Bishop Amat	Verbo
1865	Verbo
Gómez	Verbo
1960	Verbo

Riplinger's chart is very self-serving and deceptive. This chart is supposed to give you the impression that only Catholic Bibles use 'Verbo' and only good, pure Bibles use 'Palabra'. But that is not true. The 1602 Valera "Purificada" is not the only Spanish Bible today that uses 'Palabra' in John 1:1. There are several Alexandrian, Critical Text based, and **pro-Catholic**, modern Spanish bibles in circulation amongst Catholics and liberals today that uses the same rendering that Riplinger defends. Here is a list of some corrupt Spanish bibles that use 'Palabra' in John 1:1 that Riplinger didn't mention in her chart:

1. The Catholic Bible of Martin Nieto published by the International Catholic Bible Society
2. The Spanish version of the New Worlds Translation, the official Bible of the Jehovah's Witnesses, published by the Watchtower Society in New York
3. The PDT – La Biblia Palabra de Dios Para Todos published by the World Bible Translation Center, which distributes Bibles based upon the Critical Text
4. The Spanish version of The Jerusalem Bible, regarded as *"the first complete Catholic Bible to be translated into English from the original languages"*<sup>40</sup>
5. La Biblia Latinoamericana, edition 1995, published by the International Catholic Bible Society
6. La Biblia Lenguaje Sencillo, published by the ecumenical United Bible Society in 2000
7. La Biblia Dios Habla Hoy, published by the ecumenical United Bible Society in 1996

So in essence, every argument Riplinger musters up in defense of 'palabra' for the Spanish Bible she promotes also serves as a defense for bibles produced by the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Roman Catholic church, and the United Bible Society which is a member of the ecumenical World Council of Churches now aligned with the Vatican of Rome.

Now that this information is out, will Riplinger be consistent and denounce the 1602 Valera "Purificada" that she sells since in John 1:1 it reads like corrupt Alexandrian bibles put out by these ungodly institutions? This is the same type of logic she raises against us. And as the old saying goes, *"What's good for the goose is good for the gander."*

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<sup>40</sup> So Many Versions by Sakae Kubo & Walter F. Specht, Zondervan Publishing House, p. 154

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You see, this is why you have to be careful with ‘guilt-by-association’ arguments because sometimes your bias will prohibit you from seeing clearly and realizing that the same arguments can be applied both ways. And when all is said and done, nothing is really proven. Rather, you shoot yourself in your own foot.

Proverbs 26:27 “...he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.”

### **RIPLINGER ARGUMENT #3 ‘Verbo’ is an occultic word.**

Riplinger did not go into much detail concerning this third argument and for good reason because it is a RIDICULOUS claim. She offers absolutely no evidence whatsoever to prove that the Latin word ‘verbo’ has its roots in anything occultic. Riplinger tries to connect the Latin word ‘verbum’ to the Jewish Kabbalic cult based upon a book that she possesses that reveals that members of this cult refer to their false deity as “the Verb” and somehow that is supposed to have some type of relation to the Spanish Bible. She explains on page 11 of her article:

It is not the purpose of this short article to go into the dangerous philosophical and theological ramifications of the use of the word ‘Verbo’ for God. However, the perennially competing philosophies about the character of God (i.e. as a personal God VS the impersonal ‘Force’) meet in the debate between ‘Verbum/Verbo’ and ‘Sermo/Palabra. The former view is seen in the wicked occult book entitled, *God is a Verb: Kabbalah and the Practice of Mystical Judaism* by David Cooper. It is typical of the pantheistic New Age view that God is a force, like a verb. Of the ‘god of forces’ we are warned in the book of Daniel.

In response to Riplinger’s outrageous claims, I am not going to waste my time researching the origins and details of the Jewish Kabbalic cult. But I will point out this. In order for Riplinger to prove that Verbo/Verbum is based upon the Jewish Kabbalic cult she is going to have to prove 2 things. First off she is going to have to prove that this New Age cult was in existence before or since 200 AD (Tertullian’s time). And then secondly she has to find evidence of the Kabbalic cult using this word *during that time* because common sense dictates that in order for early Christians like Tertullian and Novation to adopt this supposedly “occultic” word from the Kabbalic cult the word had to have been in usage by the cult during or before their time. And then if these early Christians adopted this word from the Kabbalic cult, assuming that it existed before or during their time, then it would beg the question as to why they did so.

But of course, Riplinger did not even attempt to prove this wildest of theories. She just makes this bold outrageous claim and then assumes that we are just going to accept it with no evidence at all. (And anyone who would accept this ridiculous claim without evidence is definitely *simple-minded* according to Pro. 14:15.)

### **Riplinger continues to disregard Spanish**

Again, Riplinger’s basic error here is that she continually ignores the way words are defined in Spanish. Why is Riplinger defining a Spanish word according to the terminologies of a Jewish New-Age cult rather than consulting the dictionary (like normal people do) and the way it is used and understood by Spanish-speakers who actually speak the language on a *daily* basis?

As we have already explained, the word ‘Verbo’, whenever used in the context of anything theological, is a reference to nothing else but the Lord Jesus Christ as the incarnate

Word. We have already demonstrated that the authoritative Royal Academy of Spain, as well as every other Spanish dictionary in the world, defines ‘Verbo’ as “the Word” in reference to the second person of the trinity when used in a biblical context.

Yes, ‘Verbo’ also means “verb” when used *outside* of a theological context. But it does not mean “verb” when used in a theological or Biblical context. When a Spanish-speaker in any Spanish-speaking country in the world reads ‘Verbo’ in John 1:1, they do not think of a “verb” and they definitely don’t think of *anything* occultic. They think of Jesus as the incarnate Word because in that context that is *exactly* what it means. Plain and simple. In other words, when it comes to the way it reads in a Biblical context, if you translate ‘Verbo’ to mean anything other than the Word you would be in error. If you translate it to say “the verb” in the context of John 1:1, you would have *mistranslated*.

“The verb” is absolutely **not** what Verbo means *in a biblical or theological context*. THAT is a simple Spanish fact that the less than handful of English speakers that protest the word ‘Verbo’ cannot seem to wrap their mind around because they are approaching this issue from an English-speaking mindset rather than that of a native Spanish-speaker.

Thus, in Spanish ‘verbo’ can be used as either a grammatical term or a theological term (as it is in John 1:1), but the fact is that ‘verbo’ is NEVER used in the Spanish language in reference to anything occultic. That notion is an invention of Riplinger’s imagination that no Hispanic individual in the world will ever take seriously because it simply is not true.

### **Occultic ties to Sermo**

While Riplinger was doing her research for her article against ‘Verbo’ she should have spent time to look up the etymological history of the Latin word ‘Sermo’ which she defends. Because the truth is that a stronger and more realistic case can be presented to demonstrate that the word ‘Sermo’ actually has some serious connections to something occultic, mystic, and paganistic!

Dr. William Short, a Latin professor at the University of Texas, wrote a dissertation on the etymological background of the Latin word ‘sermo’ entitled Mercury in the Middle: SERMO between the Discursive and the Divine. In it he establishes a connection between ‘Sermo’ and the ancient Roman god known as Mercury or Hermes.

**The “divinity” of *sermo* includes representations of a mythic order as well: in particular, a privileged association with the god Mercury.** For instance, in Hyginus’ tale of Phoroneus (*Fab.* 143), Mercury’s intervention in human linguistic affairs directly concerns *sermo*: the strife resulting in mankind’s separation from the gods is attributed to the emergence of *sermons* through Mercury’s characteristic act of translation (*interpretari*); previously mortals had lived —without towns and without laws, speaking the same language (*una lingua loquentes*)”.

Pomponius Porphyrio considers *sermo* a part of Mercury’s special dispensation: “It is well known that Mercury is considered the inventor of *sermo*, of the wrestling-place, of the lyre, and of theft”. Macrobius, noting the inclusion of Mercury in rituals dedicated to the earth-goddess Maia, explains this involvement on similar grounds — namely that —whereas a newborn human receives its voice by contact with the earth, Mercury is in control of the voice and especially of *sermo*.<sup>36</sup> A certain view the Penates also numbered Mercury — as

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deus sermonum – alongside Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, the other —great gods deemed responsible for human life.<sup>41</sup>

Professor Short goes on to elaborate:

“As the mythic counterpart of Hermes, Mercury therefore shares this conception, and the conceptual connection to *sermo* this conception entails. Augustine’s comparative mythology (“and he is *Ἑρμῆς* in Greek, because *sermo* is called *ἑρμηνεία*...”) suggests this connection also follows a linguistic route. Through the recognizable variation of initial /h/ and /s/ in Greek and Latin, Hermes’ name (*Ἑρμῆς*) and distinguishing characteristic (*ἑρμηνεία*) imply a relation to *serm-o*. In Hyginus’ mythological précis (*Fab.* 143), Mercury’s connection with *sermo* was also mediated by *Ἑρμῆς/ἑρμηνευστής*: –Mercury divided up (*interpretatus est*) the *sermones* of men, for which reason an interpreter is called *ἑρμηνευστής*: for Mercury is called *Ἑρμῆς* in Greek”. In this sense, through their perceived phonic similarity, Hermes –is” (the god of) *sermo*. Mercury as well can then be connected specifically to *sermo* through a kind of syllogism: **“Hermes is (etymologically) sermo. Mercury is (mythically) Hermes. Therefore, Mercury is (the god of) sermo.”**<sup>42</sup>

So what Professor Short points out is that ‘sermo’ definitely has ties to the pagan Roman god Mercury. This is probably why people so strongly protested Erasmus’s decision to change ‘verbum’ to ‘sermo’ in his Latin text. The names Sermo, Mercury, and Hermes were all a reference to the same pagan deity. Mercury, or Sermo, was the divine messenger or spokesperson of the Roman gods. This is why in the book of Acts chapter 14 the pagans in Lystra thought that Paul the Apostle was actually a Roman god himself. Notice which god they referred to him as and why:

Acts 14:11-12 *“And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.”*

To further establish the paganistic connections to ‘sermo’, consider the commentary of Alexander Hislop in his classic *The Two Babylons*:

“If Ninus was Nimrod, who was the historical Bel? He must have been Cush; for “Cush begat Nimrod” (Gen. x.8); and Cush is generally represented as having been a ringleader in the great apostacy. But again, **Cush, as the son of Ham, was Her-mes or Mercury**; for Hermes is just an Egyptian synonym for the “son of Ham.” Now, Hermes was the great original prophet of idolatry; for he

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<sup>41</sup> Mercury in the Middle: SERMO between the Discursive and the Divine by William Michael Short, Professor of Classics, University of Texas of San Antonio

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

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was recognized by the pagans as the author of their religious rites, and the interpreter of the gods.”<sup>43</sup>

So Professor Short makes a connection of Sermo to Mercury (or Hermes). And here Hislop makes a connection of Mercury to the Satanic Babylonian deity known as **Bel!**

So you see, two can play this game. If we are to dismiss the word *verbo* based on some type of connection to a New Age Jewish cult, a “connection” that Riplinger *claims* exists (without proof), then we must certainly dismiss the word *sermo* due to the connection that Latin scholars have made between it and Roman paganism. Again, Riplinger shoots herself in the foot with her own line of reasoning.

### Is Riplinger “Vilifying” the King James Bible?

Riplinger has accused us of “vilifying every Holy Bible he [God] has given throughout history!” But what Riplinger may not realize is that she has developed an argument that “vilifies” the King James Bible.

You see, ‘Verbo’ is not the only word in the Spanish Bible that is derived from the Latin word *verbum*. So is the word ‘proverbio’. In English this is the word ‘proverb’. In the infallible KJB the word ‘proverb’ shows up 19 times, the plural form ‘proverbs’ is mentioned 8 times, which amounts to a total of 27 times the word ‘proverb’ is rendered in the KJB. In fact, an entire book in the Bible is named the ‘Proverbs’.

The word *proverb* comes from 2 Latin words. *Pro* (which means *forth*) and *verbum*. Thus, the Latin word *proverbium* literally means “a word put forth”. It is also defined in Latin as “a common saying”. ‘Proverbium’ is the Latin equivalent of the word *proverb* in the KJB.

Does this make the word *proverb* a Catholic word as well? According to Riplinger’s logic it does since the word is based upon the Latin word ‘verbum’, which she dogmatically deems as Catholic and even occultic. If Riplinger is right that a word based in the Latin ‘verbum’ is a Catholic corruption, as well as occultic, that means that even the KJB is guilty of containing an “occultic and Catholic corruption” at least 27 times!

### Is Riplinger “Vilifying” the 1602 Valera “Purificada”?

This word *proverb* not only exists in the English KJV and the Spanish RVG but it also exists in every edition of the Reina-Valera Bible in history. **That even includes the Spanish Bible that Riplinger recommends and sells – the so-called 1602 Valera “Purificada”**. Just as in the KJV and the RVG, the Spanish equivalent ‘proverbio’ also exists in the Valera “Purificada”. So if Riplinger is right, the Spanish Bible that she sells, promotes, and recommends contains “occultic Catholic corruption”.

If the RVG is to be rejected because it contains a word based in the Latin word ‘verbum’ then so should the KJB and *even the Spanish Bible that Riplinger promotes* according to her own arguments. To deny this would be a double-standard.

Furthermore, the book of Proverbs in both the Spanish and English Bibles needs to be renamed if *verbum* is a corrupt, Catholic, and occultic word! Since Riplinger favors the Spanish word ‘palabra’ over ‘verbo’ in John 1:1 perhaps the book of Proverbs should be renamed *Pro-palabras*. And who knows what we should rename the book of Proverbs in the English Bible?! Pro-words? Pro-sayings? Pro-speeches? Pro-statements?

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<sup>43</sup> The Two Babylons, by Alexander Hislop, p. 25-26

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Surely Riplinger is not in favor of a corrupt, Catholic, occultic word like 'proverbs' in the KJB and in the 1602 Valera "Purificada". And upon learning this information, surely she will quit selling and recommending Bibles, in English *and* Spanish, that contain a Catholic and occultic word.

### The Facts

So here's the conclusion of the matter. Just as in the 1600s a Pastor raised 3 arguments to object to a particular rendering in the KJB when it first came out, Sis. Riplinger has presented three arguments against the way our Spanish Bible – RVG – reads in John 1:1. But just as the King James translator, Richard Kylbie, revealed that upon examination 13 more weightier reasons were found in defense of their rendering, we likewise appeal to a multitude of other reasons why Riplinger is wrong, why our Bible is right, and why we cannot go along with her suggestion to replace our God-given Bible in Spanish with the inferior text that she sells.

Here is what has been established.

1. **Spanish Grammar vs. Riplinger** – On the grounds of Spanish grammar 'Palabra' is an inferior word to 'Verbo' because it forces Jesus to be referred to as a female.
2. **Casiodoro de Reina vs. Riplinger** – The original 1569 translation of Reina refers to Christ as a female (ella) in John 1:3-4. This refutes Riplinger's insistence that grammar allows for a masculine pronoun despite the feminine gender of the proper noun being modified. In regards to Spanish grammar, we consider Reina more authoritative than Riplinger.
3. **Cipriano de Valera vs. Riplinger** – The original 1602 Valera refers to Christ as a female (ella) in John 1:3-4. This refutes Riplinger's insistence that grammar allows for a masculine pronoun despite the feminine gender of the proper noun being modified. In regards to Spanish grammar, we consider Valera, who was fluent in 9 languages and a professor at Oxford, to be more authoritative than Riplinger.
4. **Spanish Dictionaries vs. Riplinger** – Every Spanish dictionary, including the official standard and authority – the Royal Academy of Spain – refutes Riplinger's claims that Verbo is an unacceptable Spanish designation of the incarnate Word in John 1:1 as they all define Verbo as "the Word" as a theological term in reference to the second person of the trinity.
5. **Church History vs. Riplinger** – Conservative church historians refute Riplinger's claims that Novation was a Catholic Pope.
6. **Novatian vs. Riplinger** – Novatian's use of the word Verbum in a tract refutes Riplinger's claims that there is no valid manuscript evidence before the 4<sup>th</sup> century (the time of Jerome's Latin Vulgate) in favor of Verbum.
7. **Tertullian vs. Riplinger** – Tertullian's use of the word Verbum in 200 AD:
  - A. Refutes Riplinger's claim that Verbum is not equivalent to designations of the incarnate Word of John 1:1 in other Reformation era foreign translations.
  - B. Refutes Riplinger's claim that Verbum and Sermo are not synonymous.
  - C. Refutes Riplinger's claim that there are no early witnesses to Verbum.
8. **Latin Scholarship vs. Riplinger** – Latin scholars, as quoted in this article, refute Riplinger's insistence that all evidence empirically points to Verbum as the only possible Latin rendering that could have been used in the early pre-4<sup>th</sup> century Latin Bibles.
9. **Erasmus vs. Riplinger** – Erasmus' own statements refutes Riplinger's claim that Verbum and Sermo are not synonymous.

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10. **Latin Dictionaries vs. Riplinger** – Latin dictionaries refute Riplinger’s insistence that “word” is the most literal sense of the Latin word “sermo” as they all define sermo as “speech”.
11. **Latin Scholarship vs. Riplinger again** – Latin scholars reveal that it is actually the word Sermo that has ties to something occultic and paganistic rather than Verbum as Sermo is the name for the divine messenger of the Roman gods.
12. **The Reina Valera Bible vs. Riplinger** – The presence of the word *proverbio* in all editions of the Reina-Valera, including the one she promotes, creates a problem for Riplinger’s theory that any Bible that uses a word based in the Latin word Verbum contains Catholic, occultic corruption.
13. **The King James Bible vs. Riplinger** – The presence of the word *proverb*, or *proverbs*, in the KJB creates a problem for Riplinger’s theory that any Bible that uses a word based in the Latin word *Verbum* contains Catholic, occultic corruption.

### **Meanwhile, the RVG marches on!**

While the critics from all angles rage on, the pure words of God in Spanish – RVG, continue to grow and multiply. KJB defenders have always recognized that one of the surest signs of divine validation of any Traditional Text-based Bible in any language was not only the accuracy of the text but also its acceptance amongst the universal priesthood of believers. Now the purity of the text is what is most important. But Bible-believers have always noticed that throughout Church history God always seemed to put His official stamp of approval on a particular text through its **multiplication**; that is multiplication as the result of the evangelistic efforts of true Bible-believers.

*“And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” Acts 6:7*

*“So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.” Acts 19:20*

This is what we see happening with the RVG. Though still in its infancy stages of history, the RVG is already off to a rapid start. Bible printers continue to complain that they simply cannot supply the demand for the RVG around the world. Just during the course of this writing Victory Baptist Press of Milton, FL printed and shipped over 20,000 complete RVG Bibles to Guatemala for distribution in Central America. At this time, they are in the process of producing another 25,000 whole RVG Bibles to be shipped to Peru for distribution in South America where a distribution center has already been set up. Chick Publications just recently printed a whole new batch of RVG Bibles in both hardback and leather (edition with cross references, maps, concordance, glossary, etc). Also, in May of this year (2011) over 150 brave Pastors, Missionaries, and laymen gathered together in the Mexican drug cartels’ battle zone, Juarez, Mexico, and distributed over 25,000 whole Bibles, plus over 100,000 Chick tracts in Spanish (all with verses from the RVG) in the streets of what is considered to be “the murder capitol of the world”. Veteran Missionary Tim Urling reports that over 100 souls, including members of drug cartels, have been saved as a result!

You see, while RVG critics are continually concocting new ways to try and discredit Dr. Gómez, his collaborators, and the RVG Bible, the RVG is going forth throughout the ends of the earth bringing life and hope to all that come in contact with it. This is how the battle will be ultimately won; by its acceptance and daily use amongst true Bible-believing Spanish-speaking Christians around the world.

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The battle over the Spanish Bible is not going to be won in a musty study or a dusty office in front of a computer screen. It is not going to be won by the arguing skills or fancy guesswork of best-selling authors. In fact, it is not going to be determined by the textual “expertise” of any US American at all.

This is a Spanish Bible! God gave it to *and through* the Spanish-speaking people. Therefore, the battle is going to be won by the national Bible-believing, Spirit-filled, Hispanic MEN on the ranches, in the mountains, in the pueblos and barrios, in the plazas, on the street corners, of their countries, with their Bible – RVG – in their hands, their sins forgiven, and the constraining love of God in their hearts, who will fearlessly take God’s unadulterated words – in their language – to win their own people to Christ! This is exactly what we see being done with the RVG all around the world. This is exactly what is NOT being done with the 1602 Valera “Purified”. And it will never be done with that Bible because it is not the answer and therefore the Bible-believing Hispanic world rejects it.

Now the 1960 crowd will read this and claim that we are dismissing the fruit they have enjoyed in their ministries with the use of the 1960 edition. But that is not so. We recognize that for half a century the 1960 was the most available edition of the Reina-Valera, as the more fundamentally sound 1909 Antigua edition began to slowly fade away in the 1960’s shadow. These were the Spanish Bibles of many of our last generations’ best soul winners in Spanish. We do not mean to demean the good brethren who for years did the best they could with what they had available. And we acknowledge that God blessed their efforts despite the circumstances.

However, the Alexandrian Critical Text-based corruptions of the 1960 and 1909 editions have been flushed out in the open. They can no longer be ignored nor denied.<sup>44</sup>

For sake of patience and grace, we will continually remind ourselves that with the RVG we have an opportunity today that our veteran brethren did not have when they first started their ministries many years ago.

Nevertheless, as the older veterans begin to retire from the scene, a new generation of Bible-believing Spanish-speaking soldiers of the cross are stepping up and going forward for the cause of Christ with a truly *purified* edition of the traditional Reina-Valera text. And by “purified” we speak of the Reina-Valera Gómez Bible. A true work of purification. And not only of purification, but of *power!* For God is bearing witness to it by souls saved, churches planted, and the next generation of Latin American Gospel preachers being trained for the ministry. This movement will continue to grow because God is behind it. Acts 5:39 *“But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.”*

As far as we are concerned, this issue is already resolved in our hearts. In many ways, the battle has already been won. God has given us the RVG. We love it! We preach it! We live by it! We publish and propagate it! We’ll fight for it! And as our forefathers in the past, we are ready to die for it if necessary! Our prayers for a purified Spanish Bible have been answered through the RVG. Now you can either get with the program, or get left behind in the dust.

(scroll down to read Appendixes A-E)

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<sup>44</sup> See the book *God’s Bible in Spanish* by Emanuel Rodriguez, available through Chick Publications (go to <http://www.chick.com/catalog/books/1275.asp> or for the Spanish version <http://www.chick.com/es/catalog/books/1283.asp>). Also documentation of Critical Text errors in the 1960 can be found in articles at [www.reinavaleraGómez.com](http://www.reinavaleraGómez.com) and [www.4thesaviour.com](http://www.4thesaviour.com).

## APPENDIX A

### Riplinger's Private Interpretation

Is Jesus the Bible? Riplinger tries her hand at interpreting Scripture and fails. Riplinger wrote:

Assertions by liberals that Jesus is the spoken word, but *not* the written word (and therefore these 'words' should be translated as different words) ignore the myriad of verses which parallel the written word (scriptures) and Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "It is written...", elevating the written word, even above himself. The written word is even magnified above his name (Word), according to Psalms 138:2 which says, "for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." The idea that Jesus is only the spoken word is rift in liberal textbooks and lexicons, which all seek to deny the parallel perfection of the written word and Christ, the Word. The Bible's built-in dictionary parallels Jesus, the Word, with the "written" word. It says, "the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ...he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein...I am Alpha and Omega...write in a book..." (Rev. 1:1-11). The use of two dissimilar words looses the connection between the Word becoming flesh (tangible, like the written word). They also miss the connection between the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and the resurrection and preservation of the tangible written words of God. Separating the two words and translating them differently smacks of Barth and Brunner's neo-orthodox ideas about the Word and the word, wherein the written word is somehow less than the actual spirit of his mouth, which is, in a sense, a part of him (2 Thes. 2:8, Eph. 6:17, Rev. 1:16, 2:16, 19:15, 21). The "engrafted" word, like Jesus the Word, is "able to save your souls."

Is there a connection between Jesus and the scriptures? Of course there is. Since Jesus is God and God is the Author of the scriptures, obviously there is a connection. It's called *the word of God* for a reason. The Bible is a written revelation of the mind of God. Certainly God is connected to His words. But Jesus is not physically or literally the Bible. When I hold the Bible in my hand, I am not literally holding Jesus just like the Catholic priest is not literally holding Jesus when he presents the little wafer he calls the Eucharist at the Mass. Both claims are absurd! This is a private interpretation. This sensational twisting of scripture demonstrates an inability to properly interpret God's words.

Riplinger said:

The use of two dissimilar words looses the connection between the Word becoming flesh (tangible, like the written word).

No it doesn't. Hispanic Bible-believers know how to compare scripture with scripture. Furthermore, we know how to *read*. We don't need Riplinger's help (1 Tim. 2:12-14). By reading just a few verses down in the very same chapter we find the following verse, John 1:14, that plainly tells us that El Verbo is the incarnate Word that became flesh.

Juan 1:14 "Y el Verbo fue hecho carne, y habitó entre nosotros (y vimos su gloria, gloria como del unigénito del Padre), lleno de gracia y de verdad." RVG

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John 1:14 “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” KJV

Riplinger said:

“They also miss the connection between the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and the resurrection and preservation of the tangible written words of God.”

There is no connection between the preservation of God’s words and the resurrection of Jesus Christ here. God’s words were never resurrected. They never needed to be. To be resurrected you have to die first. God’s words were never dead. They have always been alive (John 6:63, Heb. 4:12, Phil. 2:16) and they have always existed just as God promised in Ps. 12:6-7 and scores of other verses.

This sensational attempt of connecting Christ’s resurrection to Bible preservation is Riplinger’s attempt to match the “restoration” philosophy behind the 1602 Valera Purificada revision effort, which was first being called the 1602 Valera Restaurada (Spanish for “restored”) before they adopted the name Purificada.

Furthermore, resurrection of the scriptures is actually the mentality of the Alexandrian Critical Text crowd who believe that men like Tischendorf, Westcott, and Hort resurrected the true scriptures through the discovery of Sinaiticus and the resurgence of Vaticanus and the formation of the Critical Text in the late 1800s. On the other hand, Bible-believers understand that God’s true words have always been around and always will be through the preservation of the Traditional texts which formed our infallible KJB.

Finally, Riplinger said:

Separating the two words and translating them differently smacks of Barth and Brunner’s neo-orthodox ideas about the Word and the word, wherein the written word is somehow less than the actual spirit of his mouth, which is, in a sense, a part of him (2 Thes. 2:8, Eph. 6:17, Rev. 1:16, 2:16, 19:15, 21).

Hispanic Bible-believers would never conclude that the written words of God are something less in perfection and power or in any other way in comparison with the Author, the Lord Jesus Christ. There is absolutely nothing within the word Verbo in John 1:1 that would suggest such a thing. This crazy idea is a figment of Riplinger’s imagination.

### **APPENDIX B** **Is the RVG a “Patch Job”?**

Riplinger wrote:

Using older versions, such as the 1865, is far better than patching current modern Spanish editions (e.g. 1960) with readings from the Textus Receptus (i.e. Gómez), while keeping some of their modern vocabulary, to which some readers have become accustomed. Such can only be seen as a good stop-gap measure.

There are a couple things wrong with this statement. First, the RVG was not a “patching” of the modern 1960 edition of the Reina-Valera Bible as she implies here. The RVG was a revision of the **1909 Antigua** (Spanish for ‘ancient’ or ‘old’) edition of the Reina-Valera. The 1909 Antigua, though not perfect, was a more accurate and pure edition of the Reina-Valera than the 1960. It was

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this edition (1909), not the 1960, that served as the basis for the RVG revision. Again Riplinger gives false implications and misinformation.

Secondly, the RVG was not a “patch” work at all. It was indeed a thorough revision. When a man devotes 10 years of his life in examining every word of the Spanish text on a daily basis, it is disrespectful and a slap in the face to imply that his hard work was nothing but a “patch job”. Also, it is a false accusation.

I am a personal eyewitness to the work ethic of Dr. Gómez and I can testify that he has been a tireless worker in this revision. Since my in-laws live close to Dr. Gómez I have had the opportunity to visit Dr. Gómez in his home in Mexico many times over the years whenever visiting family. I remember one time when Dr. Gómez’s wife, Sis. Imelda, begged me to convince Dr. Gómez to get out of the house and for me to take him anywhere just to get him away from his cluttered desk and computer for a while because he had been working nearly non-stop on the revision over 20 hours a day and the local doctors were saying that his work was greatly affecting his health. Recently, Dr. Gómez suffered a slight stroke and doctors attribute his health problems to being “over-worked” through the 10 years that he invested working on the RVG revision, combined with his other ministry responsibilities and travels as a conference speaker during those years.

Everyone who knows Dr. Gómez on a personal level knows of his work ethic and of the amount of toil and sacrifice he has put into the RVG. Riplinger simply does not know what she is talking about. In regards to this “patch work” claim, she is simply repeating what other critics like Robert Breaker have falsely accused. This is wrong, ignorant, and Sis. Riplinger should know better than that. For Riplinger to call Dr. Gómez’s work in the RVG revision a mere “patch job” after all he has gone through for the sake of getting God’s pure words to his people is an unfair and false assessment indeed.

The truth is that the RVG has been meticulously examined with a fine-tooth comb by not only Dr. Gómez but by his many collaborators and also by hundreds upon hundreds of Spanish-speaking Bible-believing Christians who over the course of a decade went through every word of the RVG in their own independent studies and then submitted their observations to Dr. Gómez either via email, letter, over the phone, or in person for close examination and comparison with the KJV, the Textus Receptus, and the original 1602 Valera. I happen to know some of these men personally and have had the privilege to preach with them and in some of their churches. I am a personal eyewitness of these things.

In fact, I prove that the RVG was a more thorough work of revision than the 1602P in my article entitled [Response to a Concerned Pastor regarding the 1602 Valera “Purificada” in Comparison to the RVG.](#)

Now, perhaps Riplinger disagrees with his style or method of revision work, but that does not give her the right to falsely charge the hard work of Dr. Gómez and his collaborators of being a mere “patch work”. This is both an unfair insult and a lie.

### **APPENDIX C** **Riplinger’s Misleading Chart**

In Appendix B, p.32, of Riplinger’s article she includes a chart in which she claims to compare the RVG alongside the 1602P, the 1865, and the KJB. She compares several verses in John chapters 3 & 4. However, take a look at her chart (on the next page) and tell me if you see the RVG anywhere in there.

## A GLIMPS IN JOHN: 1602 *Purificada* vs. Gómez vs. 1865

Verse	King James Bible	Valera 1602 Purificada	Source for Valera 1602 Purificada	Mora and Pratt 1865
John 3:30	He must increase	menester (must)	not available to me	conviene (should)
John 3:30	decrease	disminuya (decrease)	All (Reina, Valera, etc. matches Purificada)	descrecer (literally - to cease to grow) (No other Spanish Bible matches the 1865 here)
John 3:32	seen	visto (seen)	Pineda 1556	vido (saw)
John 3:33	hath set to his seal	ha puesto su sello a esto (Had placed his seal [to it])	not available to me	este sello (this seal)
John 3:35	hath given	le ha dado (hath given) Present tense is important	Pineda 1556	dio (gave)
John 3:36	not believe	no cree (not believe)	not available to me	es incredulo (is skeptical)
John 4:9	askest	pides (ask)	1909	demandas (demand)
John 4:21	ye	vostros (ye)	Pineda 1556	omit
John 4:27	seekest	buscas (seek)	Enzinas 1543	preguntas (questions)
John 4:35	the fields	los campos (the fields)	Enzinas 1543	las regions (the regions)
John 4:35	cometh	viene (cometh)	Pineda 1556 (venga)	hasta (to)
John 4:36	together	juntamente (together)	Pineda 1556 Enzinas 1543	tambien (also)
John 4:44	own	propia (own)	not available to me	omits
John 4:45	when	cuando (when)	Enzinas 1543 (quado)	como (as)
John 4:45	having?	habiendo (having)	not available to me	omit
John 4:45	he did	el hizo (he did)	not available to me	habia hecho (had made)
John 4:47	for he was at the point of death	porque estaba para morir (because he was about to die)	Pineda 1556 Enzinas 1543	porque se comenzaba a morir (as he began to die)

Notice that the RVG is actually NOT included in this chart although she indicated in the title that the RVG would be part of it. However, even if the RVG was included in this chart it would not

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have served Sis. Riplinger's purpose very well because it would have been demonstrated that the RVG is correct in each one of the 17 verses she references.

Interestingly, in 11 of the 17 verses the RVG reads almost exactly (sometimes exactly) like the 1602P that she favors. So considering this fact it is easy to see that including the RVG in the chart would have not have helped her in trying to prove that the 1602P is better than the RVG.

More importantly, in all 17 verses the RVG reads in perfect harmony with the KJB, though not always word for word (the 1602P does not read word for word the same as the KJB in each of these verses either). In fact the RVG reads closer to the KJB than the 1602P. For example, in John 4:47 the KJB says, "for he was at the point of death". The RVG reads word for word identical in this instance – "porque estaba a punto de morir". Riplinger did not mention in her chart that many times where the RVG reads differently than the 1602P are places where the RVG reads closer to the KJB than the 1602P such as here in John 4:47. In this verse, the 1602P reads "because he was about to die". How can she fault the RVG for reading closer, yea word for word identical, with the KJB?

In this chart Riplinger indicates that the 1865 is guilty of omitting the word "ye" (vosotros) in John 4:21. The RVG reads the same as the 1865 in this verse. However, her charge of "omission" here is embarrassingly false because in Spanish the word "ye" is included within the word "adoraréis". In Spanish the "eis" in "adoraréis" means 'you' or 'ye'. Riplinger is venturing into territory she has no business in. In so doing, she is hurting her own credibility by manifesting her lack of understanding of the Spanish language while trying to make a judgment upon words in the Spanish Bible. Not to mention, her "authorities" are not helping her any.

Also, Riplinger claims that the RVG says "is skeptical" (es incredulo) where the KJV reads "believeth not" in John 3:36. But again she is wrong. The official standard Spanish dictionary, of the Real Academia Española, defines "incredulo" as:

**incrédulo, la.**

**(Del lat. incredūlus).**

**1. adj. Que no cree con facilidad y a la ligera. U. t. c. s.**

**2. adj. Que no tiene fe religiosa.**

The Real Academy of Spain defines 'incredulo' as "He that doesn't believe with simplicity and without proof" and "He that has no religious faith". In other words, "es incredulo" says exactly what the KJB says in John 3:36 – "believeth not".

Finally, towards the end of this appendix Riplinger wrote:

"The Gómez missed or modernized almost half of the verses checked in the chart."

The truth is that Bro. Gómez didn't miss anything. The RVG is not in error in any of the verses on Riplinger's chart. They ALL read in agreement with the KJB and the TR. Regardless of whether the RVG uses the same exact wording as one of the ancient Spanish Bibles, so long as the word in the RVG is in agreement with the KJV and TR, the reading is good enough. Conformity to the Received Texts and harmony with the KJB was the primary goal of the RVG revision. Besides, the 1602P does not always go along with the same wording in ancient Spanish Bibles either.

Also notice that Riplinger again makes her charge of "modernizing" words without providing any evidence at all of anything being modernized. This claim by RVG critics is tiresome. When will they prove that any of the word choices in the RVG are "modernizations"? To this date, none have provided any kind of information to demonstrate that any particular word choice in the

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RVG is a “modernization”, whatever that is. Overall, Riplinger’s chart is simply misleading and petty.

### **APPENDIX D** **Concerning so-called “Modernizations”**

Another argument that Sis. Riplinger has picked up from Robert Breaker is this claim of “modernizations” in the RVG. This is an attempt to apply the same type of argument that we King James Bible-believers use against those who claim the KJB should be updated today. However the following is an excerpt from one of my recent articles, entitled [My Response to a Concerned Pastor in regards to the 1602 Valera “Purificada”](#), explaining why this line of reasoning doesn’t work in regards to the Spanish Bible:

Another reason why I believe the 1602P will never surpass the RVG in terms of acceptance amongst HISPANIC Bible-believers, especially those who are natives living on foreign soil, is because the full development of the Castilian language is not represented in the 1602 Purificada. Those who support the 1602P make much of the antiquity of the Castilian vernacular found in the original 1602 Valera Bible that the 1602P revisers say they endeavored to preserve in their revision. They appeal to the older style of English that is preserved in the King James Bible for their line of reasoning. But there are a couple of reasons why this line of reasoning won’t work and will not have any positive effect upon national Hispanic brethren.

First off, to compare the antiquity of the original 1602 Valera to the Elizabethan English of the KJB is comparing apples to oranges. They are not the same thing. English was a fully developed language during the time that the 1611 KJB was released. Scholars consider the English language to have reached a peak of excellence in those days. Since that time English has devolved rather than improved. On the other hand, Spanish back then was not as fully developed.

In fact what many Bible-believers don’t realize is that the type of English used in the KJB was not a type of English ever used at all by the common English-speaking man in any time period in English history.<sup>45</sup> English-speakers were not saying “thee” and “thou” in the early 1600s. They said “you” just like we say “you” today. The type of English used in the KJB was strictly a literary style of English much like that which was used in Shakespearean plays.

The same cannot be said for the type of Castilian Spanish used in the original 1569 translation of Casiodoro de Reina nor the 1602 revision of Cipriano de Valera. They did not seek to employ a version of Spanish different from that of the common Spanish-speaker. What the KJV translators did in regards to the type of language they used was unique and greatly set it apart from the other TR-based English translations that were already in existence (such as the Geneva, the Bishops, Coverdale, Tyndale, etc) some of which were in circulation at the time.

Secondly, understanding that the type of Spanish used in the original Reina and Valera Bibles was not as far removed from that of the common Spanish-speaker as was the English of the KJB will help to explain why the vast majority of today’s common Spanish-speakers in foreign countries are not accepting the 1602P and will not accept it in the future. As mentioned earlier, the Spanish language was still not fully developed at the time Valera finished his work in 1602. This fact helps to explain why there are some peculiar usages of words in the original Valera Bible such as the use of the word “salud” (which today is exclusively used for “health”) to translate the word “salvation” rather than the universally common word “salvación”.

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<sup>45</sup> See the book [Biblical English](#) by Dr. Phil Stringer for proof of these facts as well as G.A.Riplinger’s book [The Language of the King James Version](#).

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Speaking of which, it is interesting to note that the 1602P revisers have totally changed the use of the word “salud” for “salvation” by replacing it with the word “salvación”. I believe this is a good change and the RVG has the same change. But it is interesting that the 1602P revisers did this for 3 reasons:

1. 1602P supporters criticize the RVG revisers for “updating” or “modernizing” words in the RVG. They claim that this is wrong. Yet in the instance of salud/salvación (and others) they also have “updated” or “modernized” the 1602 Valera text.
2. 1602P supporters criticize the RVG revisers for having readings that sometimes matches the wording of the 1960 revision yet in this instance they are guilty of the same thing. For it was the 1960 revision committee, under the leadership of the late Eugene Nida, that introduced the idea of exclusively replacing the word “salud” for “salvation” with the use of today’s more common word “salvación”.
3. 1602P supporters claim that the RVG and other revisions of the Reina-Valera have no right to bear the names of Reina and Valera since changes were made that was different from the word choices of those 2 men. Yet as we have already mentioned the 1602P has the word “salud”, which was the word Reina and Valera chose to translate “salvation”, changed to “salvación”. This is not the only change. There are many others in the 1602P. Another example can be found in all the places the 1602P has the word “Jehová” exclusively changed to “Senor”. (Note: The RVG retains the word choice – Jehová – of Reina and Valera in all the instances where the 1602P had it changed.) If it is wrong, as 1602P supporters assert, for the RVG to bear the names of Reina and Valera due to changes of the text they initiated, what gives the 1602P the right to retain the Spanish translators’ names considering all the drastic changes made in that text?

However, despite all the inconsistencies of 1602P supporters and promoters, they boast of their preservation of the original Castilian wording as found in the original 1602 Valera. Yet this presentation of the Spanish scriptures “won’t cut it” with the vast majority of today’s native Spanish-speaker because again with all due respect to the original 1602 Valera the form of Castilian presented in that initial text was a form of Spanish that was not fully developed in Valera’s day. Especially in regards to names and places there are a lot of words in the original 1602 Valera that did not yet have a developed Castilian designation.

For example, instead of the common Spanish name for “Bethlehem”, which is “Belen”, the original 1602 reads “Bethlehem” which is 100% identical in English (Gen. 35:19). Instead of the common Spanish name for “Joseph” which is “Jose”, the 1602 Valera says “Joseph”, totally identical to its English equivalent (Mat. 1:16). And these are just 2 of many other examples.

The 1602P fails to include the updated and common form of these undeveloped renderings of the Spanish language in regards to proper names of people and places in the Bible. In other words, in trying to preserve the old Castilian vernacular of the original 1602 Valera text, the 1602 “Purificada” revisers managed to also *preserve* many undeveloped renderings that in Valera’s day still lacked an official Castilian Spanish designation, especially in regards to names of people and places.

So what you have in the 1602 Valera Purificada is a Spanish Bible that has been improved in some textual and doctrinal issues but is behind linguistically. No native Hispanic person is going to accept a step backwards in language. Any exception to this would only prove the rule. The 1602P crowd adopted an “older is better” philosophy in translation (remember Westcott & Hort?) and in so doing they wound up going a little *too* far backwards.

Again, the 1602P supporter will cry “hypocrisy” on our part for defending the “archaic” form of English in the KJB. But again, this argument is invalid. As explained earlier, those who argue *against* the supposed “archaic” words of the KJB are ignorant to the fact that these so-called “archaic” words in the KJB are actually not “archaic” at all. Rather they are words that represent a strictly literary style of

English that was never used as conversational speech by any English-speaker in any time period. Ironically, many (especially 1602P supporters) who rightfully defend the form of English in the KJB are just as ignorant of these facts as those who criticize the KJB for such.

This linguistic aspect is one of the reasons why the 1602P continues to fail in gaining any momentum of acceptance amongst native Spanish-speaking Bible-believing Christians on foreign soil.

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Acknowledgments**

#### **1 Corinthians 4:7 “...what hast thou that thou didst not receive?”**

Over the past several years I’ve chewed over this debate concerning which word is more correct for the Spanish Bible in John 1:1 – ‘Verbo’ or ‘Palabra’. After much research, prayer, and careful consideration of both sides of the argument, I finally reached a conclusion as demonstrated in this article. However, I did not come to this conclusion on my own. I am indebted to several men of God, who love God’s words immensely, and therefore have a true conviction for a totally pure and accurate Spanish Bible for their lives and ministry. I wish to take a moment to acknowledge these men.

The first is Dr. Humberto Gómez himself, the chief coordinator of the Reina-Valera Gómez revision, and lifetime missionary in Mexico for over 40 years. Over the past several years that I have had the privilege of knowing this champion of the faith, he and I have gone back and forth about this issue as well as many, many other debatable readings in the Spanish Bible over the phone, via email and Instant Messenger, and many times in person. Bro. Gómez is a dear man of God to me. I have many times considered him my spiritual uncle (mi tío) in the Lord. I have had the privilege to fellowship with him both in my former home in the US and even more so in his home in Matamoros, Mexico. I have had the privilege of preaching with him in the US, in several parts of the interior of Mexico, and in Paraguay, South America, and have seen many precious souls come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. During these times together we always spend many hours discussing issues such as the ones dealt with in this article.

I only wish that those who harshly criticize his sincere and painstaking efforts to provide the Spanish-speaking world a Spanish Bible free of the corrupt Critical Text would do the same as I have done by taking the time to sit down with the man and talk as Christians should to hear him out as to his reasons for why he did what he did and how he did it. I am convinced that even if you disagree with him, of which even I have not always agreed with him on everything, you will at least not be able to deny his sincerity and genuine love for the pure words of God and for his people of which he wishes to provide God’s unadulterated words for.

Another man who has assisted me greatly is Carlos Donate, veteran Hispanic missionary to Guatemala for over 20 years. I personally consider Bro. Donate to be the greatest textual expert today concerning the Spanish Bible issue. He is the man I go to whenever I’m trying to figure out some of the most technical aspects of the issue. He has been involved in 2 different Spanish Bible revision projects and has plans to pioneer a new Bible translation in the Indian dialect of a group of natives he ministers to in Guatemala. He is also responsible for planting several Bible-believing churches in Guatemala as well as a Bible Institute where he trains Guatemalan men for the ministry. Bro. Donate aided me greatly in research of the information that is found in this article. His profound research in this particular debate over ‘Verbo’ and ‘Palabra’ has more than confirmed and convinced me that our Spanish Bible – the RVG – is absolutely correct in John 1:1.

Another man is Nelson Giménez, an ordained Pastor and native of Paraguay, South America (mentioned earlier in this article). Bro. Giménez is another man that I’ve spent many hours with in person analyzing many words and passages and comparing the Spanish Bibles when I lived in

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Paraguay for 7 months. With his fluency in 3 languages and his expertise as an employed interpreter and translator of legal documents in Paraguay, he has greatly assisted me in having a better understanding of Spanish grammar especially in regards to the current debate at hand.

Another individual I must acknowledge is my good friend Ulises Velázquez, a native of Durango, Mexico. Bro. Velázquez is a bilingual Pastor of 2 Spanish-speaking mission works: one in Yuma, AZ and one in Alcodones, Mexico. Bro. Velázquez is a preacher that I admire for his boldness and courage as a travelling street preacher. He has preached in the open air in every single state throughout Mexico. Bro. Ulises has been ridiculed, taunted, spit upon, threatened, and even stoned on one occasion by Catholics for preaching the Gospel on the streets of Mexico. For many years, I have sought his council as to the Spanish language and the Spanish Bible issue. We've discussed the matters in this article many times over the phone.

It is also interesting to note that each of these men – Donate, Giménez, and Velázquez – were collaborators with Dr. Gómez in the RVG revision. They assisted him through their own independent studies of the RVG text, collating it with other Spanish Bible texts, comparing it to the KJV, and then sharing their observations with Dr. Gómez for close consideration. The information presented in this article is an accumulation of what I have learned from these men over the years along with my own independent studies.

You see, whenever I seek assistance in researching the most technical issues of the Spanish Bible, such as the one at hand, I go to native Spanish-speaking, Bible-believing, Hispanic preachers. I go to Hispanic nationals who live in predominately Spanish-speaking countries and who use the Spanish Bible on a daily basis in their lives and ministry. I consider their perspectives on Spanish grammar and issues of linguistics to be more authoritative than that of a Riplinger, Robert Breaker, or any other Caucasian American with a limited knowledge of Spanish.

You see most of our critics who challenge our Bible are primarily English-speakers, who speak Spanish only as a secondary language, who do not speak it on a daily basis, who do not live in Spanish-speaking countries, who have no experience in Bible translation and revision work, who have very little (if any) ministry accomplishments amongst Hispanic people, and who have no necessity of reading, studying, meditating, ministering, and using the Spanish Bible on a daily basis. Each of the men mentioned above have Spanish as their native tongue and have given their lives to minister God's words in Spanish to other native Spanish-speakers.

Finally, I want to also recognize my Pastor in the United States, Bro. Karl Baker. Bro. Baker has served as the Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church (my home & sending church) in Beaufort, SC for over 35 years. Though Bro. Baker does not speak Spanish, as the President and Founder of the Beaufort Bible Institute, a local church ministry where I was trained for the ministry and received a Bachelor of Divinity degree, Bro. Baker has over 30 years of experience in teaching manuscript evidence, church history, Greek and Hebrew, and other related subjects which have equipped me and aided me greatly in my studies. It is Pastor Baker who taught me to love and defend the King James Bible as the inspired, infallible, inerrant, and perfect word of God in English. Not only do I continue to do so with the KJB, I now apply that same enthusiasm for the Reina-Valera Gómez Bible.

Many thanks to Pastor Baker for encouraging me over the phone to write this article, for giving me council on how to put it together, and instructing me to never hesitate to speak the truth boldly and to let the chips lie where they fall.

All in all, to God be the glory and may His blessed name be praised for giving us the Reina-Valera Gómez Bible. A Spanish Bible worth fighting for!