

**The False Witness of  
G. A. Riplinger's Death Certificate for  
the New King James Version**  
(Revised 10/6/97)

A recent publication by Mrs. G. A. Riplinger is represented by her as the death certificate for the New King James Version of the Bible (NKJV). Riplinger is an avid defender of the Old King James Version (KJV) which clearly gives God's commandment: "Thou shalt not bear false witness" (Exod. 20:16). Riplinger's publication is a classic example of a false witness. Mrs. Riplinger has no academic credentials in Biblical languages, in Biblical translation, or in textual criticism. She knows neither Hebrew nor Greek.<sup>1</sup> She is unqualified to make the criticisms she does of the NKJV, and her publication demonstrates this lack of qualification to all but the extremely naive.

**Omissions**

The first section of her publication is entitled "NEW KING JAMES OMISSIONS." This gives her unsuspecting readers the impression that she has documented places where the NKJV has failed to translate important Hebrew and Greek words of the Bible--that is, where the NKJV has left out important words. This is a false accusation, without any confirmation or demonstration. The NKJV did not fail to translate any of the Hebrew and Greek words underlying the words and phrases she listed. She has wrongly used the term "omission" in the sense of "translated by a different English word." This was done with the subversive intent of convincing her uninformed readers that the NKJV followed Hebrew and Greek texts different than the Textus Receptus used by the KJV translators.

**Lord**

Riplinger's first accusation is that the "NKJV omits the word 'Lord' 66 times." This statement is false for two reasons: (1) the NKJV did not omit any words in the Hebrew and Greek texts, but translated the underlying Hebrew and Greek words by English words different than the word "lord" in the KJV. (2) Riplinger capitalized the first letter of the word, this was done to convince her unsuspecting readers that the NKJV omitted words referring to God, thus undermining His sovereign lordship. The truth is that the KJV has the word "lord" (without a capital letter) in most of the places where the NKJV uses a different word, and only four refer to God or Jesus Christ. Not a single instance undermines the sovereign lordship of God or Jesus Christ in the slightest way.

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<sup>1</sup> It is likely that she derives her erroneous information from the writings of Peter Ruckman and D. A. Waite, but she generally avoids acknowledging them as her sources.

In seventeen places the NKJV translated the Hebrew word אָדוֹן (*'adon*), meaning *lord* or *master*, as "master" instead of the KJV "lord."<sup>2</sup> In all these places the word refers to a man of superior rank with respect to others in the context, such as a king, a high ranking officer, a slave owner, or the husband of a concubine. Elsewhere the KJV translates this Hebrew word as "master" 101 times in contexts similar to this; otherwise both the KJV and NKJV translate this word as "Lord" when it refers to God.

In two places the NKJV translated the Hebrew word גְּבִיר (*gebir*), meaning *a strong one*, as "master" instead of the KJV "lord."<sup>3</sup> In these places Isaac blessed Jacob with tribal leadership over his brethren. Isaac did not give Jacob *lordship* over his brothers, but *headship* or *leadership*. These are the only occurrences of this Hebrew word in the Bible.

In one place the NKJV translated the Hebrew word שָׂר (*sar*), meaning *prince*, as "prince" instead of the KJV "lord."<sup>4</sup> Here the reference is to high ranking officers under the king of Persia. Elsewhere in similar contexts the KJV translates this Hebrew word as "prince" 208 times. This is the only place where the KJV translated this word as "lord."

In four places the NKJV translated the Hebrew word שָׁלִישׁ (*shalish*), meaning *one over three*, as "officer" or "captain" instead of the KJV "lord."<sup>5</sup> Here the reference is to an aide of a king. Elsewhere in a similar context the KJV translated this Hebrew word as "captain" eleven times.

Once the NKJV translated the Aramaic word רַבְרֵבָן (*rabreban*), meaning *a great one*, as "nobles" instead of the KJV "lords."<sup>6</sup> Here the reference is to noblemen subordinate to King Nebuchadnezzar.

In thirty two places the NKJV translated the Greek word κυριος (*kurios*)--meaning *Lord* when referring to Deity and *master, owner, or sir* when referring to men--as "master" instead of the KJV "lord."<sup>7</sup> Here the references are to the master of servants or the owner of slaves. Elsewhere in similar contexts the KJV translated this Greek word as "master" fourteen times.

Twice the NKJV translated the Greek word κυριος (*kurios*) as "owner" instead of the KJV "lord."<sup>8</sup> Here the reference is to the owner of a vineyard. Elsewhere in a similar context the KJV translated the Greek word κυριος (*kurios*) as "owner."

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<sup>2</sup> Gen 39:16; Judg 3:25; 19:26, 27; 1 Sam 16:16; 1 Kings 18:8, 10, 11, 14; 2 Kings 5:3, 4; 9:11; 18:23; Isa 19:4; 22:18; 26:13; Jer 22:18.

<sup>3</sup> Gen 27:29, 37.

<sup>4</sup> Ezra 8:25.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Kings 7:2, 17, 19; Ezek 23:23.

<sup>6</sup> Dan 4:36.

<sup>7</sup> Matt 10:24, 25; 18:25, 26, 27, 31, 32, 34; 24:45, 46, 48, 50; Luke 12:36, 37, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47; 14:23; 16:3, 5, 5, 8; 19:16, 18, 20, 25; John 13:16; 15:15, 20; Gal 4:1.

<sup>8</sup> Matt 20:8; Mark 12:9.

Once the NKJV translated the Greek word κυριος (*kurios*) as "sir" instead of the KJV "lord."<sup>9</sup> The reference is a servant addressing his master. Elsewhere in similar contexts the KJV translated the Greek word κυριος (*kurios*) as "sir" thirteen times.

Once the NKJV translated the Greek word μεγαστανες (*megistanes*), meaning *a great man*, as "nobles" instead of the KJV "lords."<sup>10</sup> Here the reference is to noblemen subordinate to King Herod. This is the only place where the KJV translated this word as "lords." Elsewhere the KJV translated this word as "great men."

Once the NKJV translated the Greek word ραββονι (*rabboni*), meaning *rabbi*, as "Rabboni" instead of the KJV "Lord."<sup>11</sup> Here the reference is to the Lord Jesus Christ addressed as Rabbi not Lord. The KJV translates this word elsewhere as "Rabboni."

Four times the NKJV transliterated the Hebrew divine name יהוה (*YAH*) as "YAH" instead of the KJV "LORD."<sup>12</sup> The name is the abbreviated form of the sacred tetragram יהוה ( *YHWH*) which is nearly always translated as "LORD." This abbreviated form of the name occurs in many personal names in the Old Testament. In one of these four instances the KJV transliterated this name as "JAH."<sup>13</sup>

The evidence demonstrates that Riplinger bore false witness. No words in the Hebrew and Greek texts were omitted in the NKJV, but rather the NKJV translated the Hebrew and Greek words with English words different and more accurate than those in the KJV. In most instances the NKJV used the same words that the KJV used elsewhere to translate the given Hebrew and Greek words. None but the last four instances refer to deity, and capitalization in the NKJV clearly indicates that they refer to deity. The wording of the NKJV better reflects the diversity of the Hebrew and Greek words; it clarifies the sense of the associated context; and it makes the KJV more consistent with itself<sup>14</sup> and more faithful to the Hebrew and Greek texts.

## God

Riplinger's second accusation is that the "NKJV omits the word 'God' 51 times." This is a subtle but false accusation given to persuade her uninformed readers that the NKJV deliberately undermines the place of God in the Bible. The truth is that the KJV added the word "God" in fifty-one or more places where the Hebrew or Greek text did not contain it--and that without using italics in most cases. This was because the KJV used

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<sup>9</sup> Luke 13:8.

<sup>10</sup> Mark 6:21.

<sup>11</sup> Mark 10:51.

<sup>12</sup> Psa 68:4; Isa 12:2; 26:4; 38:11.

<sup>13</sup> Psa 68:4; the NKJV transliterated the name as *YAH* instead of *JAH* in order to be more consistent with the way the KJV transliterated it in compound names.

<sup>14</sup> The NKJV is a revision of the KJV. As such it was intended to "make" the KJV more accurate with respect to the Hebrew and Greek texts, and more consistent with itself, in addition to correcting the English to Modern Standard English.

dynamic equivalence paraphrases such as "God forbid," "God save the king," or "God speed" instead of a more literal expression in good English. In all these places the NKJV made the KJV more literal and more faithful to the Hebrew and Greek texts without undermining the place of God in the Bible.

Twice the NKJV translated the Hebrew word צוּר (*tsur*), meaning "rock," as "Rock" instead of the KJV "God."<sup>15</sup> The Hebrew text does not contain the word God. The KJV translated this Hebrew word as "rock" sixty two times, a number of which include the word as a figure for God.<sup>16</sup> The NKJV made the KJV more consistent with itself and more faithful to the Hebrew text.

Eight times the NKJV translated the Hebrew word חַלִּילָהּ (*chalilah*), meaning *far be it*, as "far be it," "certainly not!" or "by no means!" instead of the KJV "God forbid."<sup>17</sup> The Hebrew text does not contain the word "God" or the word "forbid." Elsewhere in similar contexts the KJV translated this word as "far be it" (nine times) or "forbid" (four times). The NKJV made the KJV more literal to the Hebrew text, and avoided using the name of God as a strong interjection.<sup>18</sup>

Eight times the NKJV translated the Hebrew word חַיָּהּ (*chayah*), meaning *let live*, as "long live" [the king] instead of the KJV "God save" [the king].<sup>19</sup> The Hebrew text does not contain the word "God" nor the word "save." In fact the context does not refer to the salvation of the king, but to a wish for his long life. The KJV translated this Hebrew word as "live" 148 times. The NKJV made the KJV more literal to the Hebrew text and avoided the use of the name of God in a strong exclamation.

Four times the NKJV translated the Hebrew word לוֹ (*lu*), meaning *if only*, as "if only" or "O, that" instead the KJV "would to God."<sup>20</sup> The Hebrew text does not contain the word "God." The KJV translated this Hebrew word by other means in all other places. The NKJV made the KJV more literal to the Hebrew text, and avoided the use of the name of God in a strong exclamation.

Five times the NKJV translated the Hebrew expression מִי יִתֵּן (*mi yitten*), an idiom meaning *O that*, as "O that" or "if only" instead of the KJV "would God."<sup>21</sup> The Hebrew text does not contain the word "God." Elsewhere in similar contexts the KJV translated this

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<sup>15</sup> Isa 44:8; Hab 1:12.

<sup>16</sup> 2 Sam 22:2, 32, 47; 23:3; Psa 18:31, 46; 28:1; 62:2, 7; 78:35; 89:26; 92:15; 94:22; 95:1; Isa 17:10.

<sup>17</sup> Gen 44:7, 17; Josh 22:29; 24:16; 1 Sam 12:23; 14:45; 20:2; Job 27:5.

<sup>18</sup> In keeping with the third commandment: "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain" (Exod 20:7).

<sup>19</sup> 1 Sam 10:24; 2 Sam 16:16, 16; 1 Kings 1:25, 34, 39; 2 Kings 11:12; 2 Chr 23:11.

<sup>20</sup> Num 14:2, 2; 20:3; Josh 7:7.

<sup>21</sup> Exod 16:3; Num 11:29; Deut 28:67, 67; Judg 9:29; 2 Sam 18:33.

Hebrew idiom as "O that" fifteen times.<sup>22</sup> The NKJV made the KJV more consistent with itself, more literal to the Hebrew text, and it avoided the use of the name of God in a strong exclamation.

Once the NKJV translated the Hebrew word 'אָחַלַי ('*achalay*), meaning *O that* or *would that*, as "if only" instead of the KJV "would God."<sup>23</sup> The Hebrew text does not contain the word "God." Elsewhere the KJV translates this word as "O that."<sup>24</sup> The NKJV made the KJV more literal to the Hebrew text, and avoided the use of the name of God in a strong exclamation.

Fourteen times the NKJV translated the Greek expression μη γενοιτο (*me genoito*), meaning *let it not be so*, as "certainly not!" instead of the KJV "God forbid."<sup>25</sup> The Greek text does not contain the word "God" nor the word "forbid." The NKJV made the KJV more literal to the Greek text, and avoided using the name of God in a strong interjection.

Four times the NKJV translated the Greek word χρηματιζω (*chrematizo*), meaning *to receive a divine oracle*, as "divinely instructed" or "divinely warned" instead of the KJV "warned of God."<sup>26</sup> The Greek text does not contain the word "God."

Once the NKJV translated the Greek word χρηματισμος (*chrematismos*), meaning *a divine response or oracle*, as "divine response" instead of the KJV "answer of God."<sup>27</sup> The Greek text does not contain the word "God."

Once the NKJV translated the Greek word λατρειας (*lateias*), meaning *a service*, as "services" instead of the KJV "service of God."<sup>28</sup> The Greek text does not contain the word "God."

Twice the NKJV translated the Greek word χαιρω (*chairo*), meaning *to greet*, as "greet" instead of the KJV "bid God speed."<sup>29</sup> The Greek text does not contain the word "God" nor the word "speed." Elsewhere the KJV translates this word as "greeting" three times.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Deut 5:29; Job 6:8; 11:5; 14:13; 19:23, 23; 23:3; 29:2; 31:31, 35; Psa 14:7; 53:6; 55:6; Song 8:1; Jer 9:1.

<sup>23</sup> 2 Kings 5:3.

<sup>24</sup> Psa 119:5.

<sup>25</sup> Luke 20:16; Rom 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11; 1 Cor 6:15; Gal 2:17; 3:21. Note that in Gal 6:14 the NKJV did not correct the KJV.

<sup>26</sup> Matt 2:12, 22; Acts 10:22; Heb 11:7.

<sup>27</sup> Rom 11:4.

<sup>28</sup> Heb 9:6.

<sup>29</sup> 2 John 10, 11.

<sup>30</sup> Acts 15:23; 23:26; James 1:1.

Once the NKJV omits the phrase "the LORD thy God" which was added by the KJV in italics.<sup>31</sup> The phrase occurs two other times in the very same verse, and the KJV addition is redundant, not necessary for understanding the clear sense of the text.

Three times the NKJV corrected the KJV from "God" to "Lord" because the Hebrew or Greek text has "Lord" not "God."<sup>32</sup>

The evidence demonstrates that Riplinger bore false witness. No words in the Hebrew and Greek texts were omitted or overlooked in the NKJV. The NKJV merely did not retain those English words that the KJV added to the text in the first place, usually without putting the added words in italics. The wording of the NKJV is a more literal rendering of the Hebrew and Greek words; it clarifies the sense of the associated context; and it makes the KJV more consistent with itself and more faithful to the Hebrew and Greek texts.

### Heaven

Riplinger's third accusation is that the "NKJV omits the word 'heaven' 50 times." This is a false statement given to convince her unsuspecting readers that the NKJV is undermining the importance of God's celestial abode. Again the truth is that no words in the Hebrew or Greek texts were omitted. Instead the NKJV translated the words with different but more accurate English words--in this case with the words "heavens," "sky," or "air." The Hebrew word שָׁמַיִם (*shamayim*) occurs only in the plural form, and may refer to God's heavenly abode, to the realm of the earthly atmosphere, to the realm of the stratosphere, or to the celestial realm of the stars. In Modern English usage the singular form of the word "heaven" usually refers to God's abode, and the plural form usually refers to the others. The KJV is not consistent in the use of the singular and plural form.<sup>33</sup> The NKJV corrected this in the places where confusion might occur. Thus, instead of undermining the importance of God's celestial abode, the NKJV clarifies places in the Bible where confusion about Heaven might occur.

In forty seven places the NKJV translated the Hebrew word שָׁמַיִם (*shamayim*) as "heavens" instead of the KJV "heaven" for the above reason.<sup>34</sup> The KJV often translated this Hebrew word as "heavens." Once the NKJV translated this word as "sky" instead of the KJV "heaven."<sup>35</sup> Three times the NKJV translated this word as "air" instead of the KJV

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<sup>31</sup> Deut 16:10.

<sup>32</sup> In Gen 6:5 and 2 Sam 12:22 the Hebrew Textus Receptus (both ben Chayyim and ben Asher texts) reads יהוה "LORD" not יהוה "GOD" as the KJV translates. In Acts 19:20 the Greek Textus Receptus reads Kurio "Lord" not Θεο "God."

<sup>33</sup> Compare Gen 1:1, 9, 14, etc. with Gen 2:4, etc.

<sup>34</sup> Gen 1:1, 9, 14, 15, 17, 20; 11:4; 19:24; Exod 9:8; 20:11; 24:10; 31:17; Lev 26:19; Deut 11:17, 21; 28:12, 23; 33:26; Judg 5:20; 1 Kings 8:35; Neh 1:9; Job 20:27; 28:24; Psa 78:26; 79:2; 103:11; 104:12; 107:26; 113:6; 147:8; Prov 25:3; Jer 8:7; 15:3; 32:17; 51:48; Lam 4:19; Ezek 29:5; 31:6, 13; 32:4, 7, 8; 38:20; Dan 4:11, 12, 20; Zeph 1:3; Hag 1:10.

<sup>35</sup> Amos 9:6.

"heaven."<sup>36</sup> Here the reference is to the birds of the air. Elsewhere in similar contexts the KJV translated this word as "air" twenty one times.

Once the NKJV translated the Hebrew word גַּלְגַּל (*galgal*), meaning *whirlwind*, as "whirlwind" instead of the KJV "heaven."<sup>37</sup> Here the context refers to a catastrophic storm.

Once the NKJV translated the Hebrew word שָׁחַק (*shachaq*), meaning *cloud* or *sky*, as "heavens" instead of the KJV "heaven."<sup>38</sup> Once the NKJV translated the same word as "sky" instead the KJV "heaven."<sup>39</sup> Here the reference is to the domain of the moon and stars. These are the only instances where the KJV translated this word as "heaven." Elsewhere the KJV translated the word as "cloud" (eleven times) or "sky" (seven times).

Once the NKJV translated the Greek word οὐρανός (*ouranos*), meaning heaven or sky, as "sky" instead of the KJV "heaven."<sup>40</sup> Clearly the reference is to the sky and not to the abode of God. Elsewhere in similar contexts the KJV translated this word as "sky" five times.<sup>41</sup>

The evidence demonstrates that Riplinger bore false witness. No words in the Hebrew and Greek texts were omitted or overlooked in the NKJV. The NKJV translated the Hebrew or Greek words by more accurate and consistent English words--usually English words used by the KJV in similar contexts to translate the given words. In most of these instances the NKJV merely changed a singular form to its more accurate plural form. Obviously the words were not omitted. The wording of the NKJV clarifies the sense of the associated context, and it makes the KJV more consistent with itself and more faithful to the Hebrew and Greek texts. None of these instances reflect any bias against God's heavenly abode.

## Repent

Riplinger's fourth accusation is that the "NKJV omits the word 'repent' 44 times." This is a false statement given to persuade her uninformed readers that the NKJV is undermining the important doctrine of repentance. The truth is that no words in the Hebrew or Greek texts were omitted, but that the NKJV translated the given words with different but more accurate English words than those in the KJV. The problem primarily centers around the meaning of the word *repent* and the character of God. In Modern English the word *repent* conveys the idea of changing ones behavior from evil to good. In this sense, God cannot and does not repent. The Scripture says: "God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall not he do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num 23:19). Instead of undermining the

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<sup>36</sup> Hos 2:18; 4:3; 7:12.

<sup>37</sup> Psa 77:18.

<sup>38</sup> Psa 89:6.

<sup>39</sup> Psa 89:37.

<sup>40</sup> Rev 6:14.

<sup>41</sup> Matt 16:2, 3, 3; Luke 12:56; Heb 11:12.

doctrine of repentance, the NKJV strengthens the doctrine by clarifying places in the Bible where the doctrine could be confused.

In twenty six places the NKJV translated the Hebrew word נָחַם (*nacham*),<sup>42</sup> meaning *to be sorry* or *repent* (or *relent*), as "relent" instead of the KJV "repent."<sup>43</sup> Here, in all these instances, the reference is to God changing His mind about some potential action, not to God repenting from some moral evil. The NKJV brings the KJV up to current English usage and makes it more consistent with itself.

In four places the NKJV translated the same Hebrew word as "be sorry" or "regret" instead of the KJV "repent."<sup>44</sup> Here the reference is to God being regretful of some past events, not to God repenting from some moral evil.

In four places the NKJV translated the Hebrew word as "have compassion" or "be moved to pity" instead of the KJV "repent."<sup>45</sup> Here the reference is to God having compassion or pity on His servants, not to God repenting from some moral evil. The objects of the verb are people not deeds.

Once the NKJV translated the Hebrew word as "change the mind" instead of the KJV "repent."<sup>46</sup> Here the reference is to the Israelites possibly changing their minds about leaving Egypt when they encounter war, not to their repenting from sin or disobedience.

Twice the NKJV translated the Hebrew word as "grieved" instead of the KJV "repent." Here the reference is to the Israelites grieving for the tribe of Benjamin because they had killed all the Benjamite women. The object of the verb is the surviving Benjamite men, not some sin or evil. The destruction of the Benjamite cities was done under the instruction of God.

Once the NKJV translated the Greek word μεταμελωμαι (*metamelomai*), meaning *to repent* (or *relent*), as "relent" instead of the KJV "repent."<sup>47</sup> Here the reference is to God not changing His mind in the future about some act in the past, namely His oath by which He appointed Jesus as a priest after the order of Melchizedek. This passage quotes Psalm 110:4 where the NKJV also uses the word "relent." The reference is not to God repenting of some moral evil.

Once the NKJV translated that same Greek word as "relent" instead of the KJV "repent."<sup>48</sup> Here the reference is to the Jews not changing their minds about believing the preaching of John the Baptist.

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<sup>42</sup> Usually in the niphil stem of the verb; in a few instances in the hithpael stem.

<sup>43</sup> Exod 32:12, 14; 1 Sam 15:29, 29; 2 Sam 24:16; 1 Chr 21:15; Psa 106:45; 110:4; Jer 4:28; 15:6; 18:8, 10; 20:16; 26:3, 13, 19; 42:10; Ezek 24:14; Joel 2:13, 14; Amos 7:3, 6; Jonah 3:9, 10; 4:2; Zech 8:14.

<sup>44</sup> Gen 6:6, 7; 1 Sam 15:11, 35.

<sup>45</sup> Deut 32:36; Judg 2:18; Psa 90:13; 135:14.

<sup>46</sup> Exod 13:17.

<sup>47</sup> Heb 7:21.

<sup>48</sup> Matt 21:32.

Four times the NKJV translated the Greek word as "regret" instead of the KJV "repent."<sup>49</sup> Here the references are to persons being regretful of some former action not involving moral evil.

Once the NKJV translated the Greek word as "be remorseful" instead of the KJV "repent."<sup>50</sup> Here the reference is to Judas Iscariot. It is very unlikely that Judas repented in the sense that it led to his salvation, because the Scripture says: "Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place" (Acts 1:25).

The evidence indicates that Riplinger bore false witness. No words in the Hebrew and Greek texts were omitted in the NKJV, instead they were translated by more accurate English words than those in the KJV. The NKJV made the KJV more accurate to the Hebrew and Greek words in their context, and more consistent with itself. None of these instances are related to the doctrine of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

### **Blood**

Riplinger's fifth accusation is that the "NKJV omits the word 'blood' 23 times." This is a false statement given to convince her unsuspecting readers that the NKJV is undermining the important doctrine of blood atonement. The truth is that no words in the Hebrew or Greek texts were omitted, but that the NKJV translated the given words with different but more accurate English words than those in the KJV. In nearly every instance the word used by the NKJV is a compound word containing "blood" as one of its components, such as *bloodshed* or *bloodguiltiness*. In each case, the plural form of the word *blood* or other evidence from the context indicated that something more than mere blood was involved. None of these instances are related to the doctrine of blood atonement.

In sixteen places the NKJV translated the Hebrew word דָּם (*dam*--usually in the plural) as "bloodshed" instead of the KJV "blood."<sup>51</sup> Here the reference is to the crime of shedding blood, not merely to the blood itself.

In five places the NKJV translated this Hebrew word (usually in the plural) as "bloodguilt" or "bloodguiltiness" instead of the KJV "blood."<sup>52</sup> Here the reference is to the guilt acquired by shedding blood, not merely to the blood itself.

Once the NKJV translated this Hebrew word as "life" instead of the KJV "blood."<sup>53</sup> Here the reference is to a person taking a stand against his neighbor's life, not merely his blood. In this case the blood represents one's life as indicated by the Scripture: "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev 17:11).

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<sup>49</sup> Matt 21:29; 2 Cor 7:8, 8, 10.

<sup>50</sup> Matt 27:3.

<sup>51</sup> Exod 22:2, 3; 1 Sam 25:26, 33; 2 Chr 19:10; Prov 28:17; Isa 33:15; Ezek 9:9; 22:9, 13; 38:22; Hos 1:4; 4:2, 2; Mic 3:10; Hab 2:12.

<sup>52</sup> Lev 17:4; Deut 19:10; 22:8; Hos 12:14; Joel 3:21.

<sup>53</sup> Lev 19:16.

Once the NKJV translated this Hebrew word as "bloodline" instead of the KJV "blood."<sup>54</sup> Here the prophet gave a parable lamenting Israel's origin. The reference is to Israel's mother in her bloodline, not merely to blood itself.

Once the NKJV translated the Greek word αἶμα (*haima*) as "bloodshed" instead of the KJV "blood."<sup>55</sup> Here the reference is to Christians resisting hostility from sinners to the point of bloodshed.

The evidence indicates that Riplinger bore false witness. No words in the Hebrew and Greek texts were omitted in the NKJV, instead they were translated by English words that make better sense than those in the KJV. In every case but one the English words are compound words that include *blood* as a component. The NKJV made the KJV more accurate to the Hebrew and Greek words in their context. None of the instances had any bearing on the doctrine of blood atonement.

## Hell

Riplinger's sixth accusation is that the "NKJV omits the word 'hell' 22 times. This is a false statement given to convince her uninformed readers that the NKJV is undermining the importance of hell and eternal punishment. The truth is that no words in the Hebrew or Greek texts were omitted. Instead the NKJV translated the given words with different but more accurate English words than those in the KJV in order to avoid the confusion in the KJV, and to maintain proper distinction between the words used in the Bible to refer to the place of the departed dead.

In Modern English the word *hell* means the place of punishment for the wicked after death. However, the Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל (*sheol*) means either *grave* or *the place of the souls after death*, whether righteous or wicked. The KJV translated this word as *grave* 31 times, as *hell* 31 times, and as *pit* three times. As a consequence, the KJV indicates that some righteous men went to hell after death.<sup>56</sup> The Scripture makes it clear that the righteous do not go to a place of punishment after death, so it is appropriate for the NKJV to distinguish between *Sheol* (the place of the departed dead in general) and *hell* (that place in Sheol reserved for the punishment of the wicked). The context in which the Hebrew word *sheol* occurs indicates which reference is intended. Where the context refers to the righteous after death or to the place itself, the NKJV transliterated the word as a proper place name--Sheol. Where the context refers to the wicked dead, the NKJV translated the word with the KJV as "hell."

Thirteen times the NKJV transliterated the Hebrew word *sheol* as "Sheol" instead of translating it as the KJV "hell."<sup>57</sup> Here the reference is to the place of the departed dead in general or to the place of the righteous dead.

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<sup>54</sup> Ezek 19:10.

<sup>55</sup> Heb 12:4.

<sup>56</sup> For example: David (Psa 16:10; 86:13), Jonah (Jon 2:2).

<sup>57</sup> 2 Sam 22:6; Job 11:8; 26:6; Psa 16:10; 18:5; 86:13; 116:3; Isa 5:14; 14:15; 28:15, 18; 57:9; Jon 2:2.

Four times the NKJV transliterated this Hebrew word as "Sheol" instead of translating it as the KJV "grave."<sup>58</sup> Here the reference is to the place of the departed dead in general, not to the place where their bodies were buried.

Once the NKJV transliterated this Hebrew word as "Sheol" instead of the KJV "pit."<sup>59</sup> Here the reference is to the place of the departed dead. The place should be referred to by its proper name, as contained in the Hebrew text, not by a synonym.

Once the NKJV translated this Hebrew word as "hell" instead of the KJV "grave."<sup>60</sup> Here the reference is to the place of the wicked dead, not merely to the place where their bodies were buried.

In New Testament Greek the word ᾗδης (*hades*) is the equivalent of the Hebrew word *Sheol*. It is the word consistently used in the Septuagint (an ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament) to translate the Hebrew word *sheol*. Its relationship with Greek mythology is of no consequence, because the translators of the Greek Old Testament and the writers of the Greek New Testament chose this word as the equivalent of *Sheol*. It means the place of the departed dead, whether righteous or wicked. The Greek New Testament uses two other words to specifically refer to the place of punishment of the wicked after death--Gehenna and Tartarus. It is important in a translation of the Bible not to obscure the distinction between these words. Therefore, the NKJV transliterated the Greek word *hades* as the proper place name *Hades*, and translated the other two words as *hell*.

In ten places the NKJV transliterated the Greek word *hades* as the proper place name "Hades" instead of the KJV "hell."<sup>61</sup> This is in keeping with the above discussion.

Once the NKJV transliterated the Greek word *hades* as the proper place name "Hades" instead of the KJV "grave."<sup>62</sup> This too is in keeping with the above discussion. The reference is to the place of the departed dead, not merely to the place where they were buried.

The evidence indicates that Riplinger bore false witness. No words in the Hebrew and Greek texts were omitted in the NKJV, instead they were translated by English words that make better sense than those in the KJV, and made important distinctions between the different Hebrew and Greek words that were somewhat obscured in the KJV. There is no instance that undermines the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the wicked after death.

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<sup>58</sup> Prov 1:12; Isa 14:11; 38:10, 18.

<sup>59</sup> Job 17:16.

<sup>60</sup> Ezek 31:15.

<sup>61</sup> Matt 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; Rev 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14.

<sup>62</sup> 1 Cor 15:55.

## Jehovah

Riplinger's seventh accusation is that the "NKJV omits the word 'JEHOVAH' entirely." This is a false statement given to persuade her unsuspecting readers that the NKJV is undermining the importance of the names of God in the Bible. The truth is that no words in the Hebrew or Greek texts were omitted. Instead the NKJV translated the given words with different but more accurate English words than those in the KJV in order to avoid the confusion in the KJV. In seven places the KJV transliterated the sacred Hebrew tetragram יהוה (*YHWH*) as "JEHOVAH"<sup>63</sup> instead of translating it "LORD" as was done over 6,000 times in the rest of the KJV.

This Hebrew name became so sacred among the ancient Jews that it was unlawful for them to pronounce it. Instead they always substituted the word אֲדֹנָי (*'adonay*), meaning *Lord*, in its place when they read the Scripture in public. This tradition was continued consistently when the Hebrew Bible was translated into other languages both ancient and modern. All translations use the word "Lord" in place of the sacred tetragram. In English translations the sacred name is translated as "LORD" with all capital letters to distinguish it from other words translated "lord" or "Lord."

The name JEHOVAH is a hybrid word consisting of the consonants of the sacred tetragram יהוה (*YHWH* or *JHVH* as borrowed from German tradition) and the vowels *e*, *o*, and *a* taken from the substitute Hebrew word אֲדֹנָי (*'adonay*). The hybrid word became JeHoVaH. This pronunciation was unknown until AD 1520 when it was introduced by Galatinus the confessor of Pope Leo X.<sup>64</sup> This pronunciation was strongly protested by the informed scholars of that day as being ungrammatical and contrary to historical propriety.<sup>65</sup> In spite of the scholarly protests, the hybrid name found its way into the English Bible in seven places.

The translators of the *American Standard Version* of 1901 chose to translate the sacred name as "Jehovah" in each of the over 6,000 instances where it occurs. This decision was reversed in the *New American Standard Version* for obvious scholarly reasons, so the NASV no longer contains the name Jehovah. For the same reason, the NKJV does not contain a name for God that was unknown to any Jew or Christian until the sixteenth century. The use of such a name is an anachronism.

The evidence indicates that Riplinger bore false witness. No words in the Hebrew and Greek texts were omitted in the NKJV, instead they were translated by English words that make the KJV consistent with itself, and that avoid the use of an ungrammatical and unhistorical anachronism.

## New Testament

Riplinger's eighth accusation is that the "NKJV omits the word [sic] 'new testament' entirely." This is a false statement given to convince her uninformed readers that the NKJV is undermining the importance of the New Testament Scriptures. The truth is that no words

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<sup>63</sup> Gen 24:4; Exod 6:3; 17:15; Judg 6:24; Psa 83:18; Isa 12:2; 26:4.

<sup>64</sup> There is some evidence that the name may have been introduced in AD 1270 by Roman Catholic Raymond Martin.

<sup>65</sup> F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1907), p. 218.

in the Greek text were omitted. Instead the NKJV translated the given words with different but more accurate English words than those in the KJV in order to avoid the confusion in the KJV.

The Greek word διαθηκη (*diatheke*) means *a testament (will) or a covenant*. The KJV translated this word as *testament* thirteen times and as *covenant* twenty times, but not consistently. In those places where the reference is to a will or testament, the English word *testament* is appropriate. But in those places where the reference is to a covenant between God and man, or between men, the English word *covenant* is more appropriate. The NKJV followed this convention in order to avoid the confusion of these terms in the KJV.<sup>66</sup>

In six places the NKJV translated the Greek words καινη διαθηκη (*kaine diatheke*), meaning *new covenant or new testament*, as "new covenant" instead of the KJV "new testament."<sup>67</sup> Here the reference is to the new covenant between God and mankind mentioned by Jeremiah<sup>68</sup> and as cited in Hebrews 10:16-17. It is not a reference to the New Testament Scriptures or to a last will and testament. Elsewhere in similar contexts the KJV translated these words as "new covenant" three times.<sup>69</sup>

The evidence indicates that Riplinger bore false witness. No words in the Greek text were omitted in the NKJV, instead they were translated by English words that make the KJV more consistent with itself, and that avoids the confusion caused by inconsistent use of the terms in the appropriate context. No instance was an attempt to undermine the New Testament Scripture.

### **Damnation**

Riplinger's ninth accusation is that the "NKJV omits the word 'damnation' entirely." This is a false statement given to convince her unsuspecting readers that the NKJV is undermining the importance of the eternal punishment of the wicked. The truth is that no words in the Greek text were omitted. Instead the NKJV translated the given words with different but more accurate English words than those in the KJV in order to avoid the confusion in the KJV.

In seven places the NKJV translated the Greek word κριμα (*krima*), meaning *condemnation or judgment*, as "condemnation"<sup>70</sup> or "judgment"<sup>71</sup> instead of the KJV "damnation." The reference is to the judicial condemnation and pronouncement of judgment rather than on ultimate damnation. This does not deny ultimate damnation; because when judgment has been pronounced, damnation is bound to follow. These are the only places where the KJV translated this word so. Elsewhere in similar contexts the KJV translated

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<sup>66</sup> The Greek word *diatheke* was translated as "covenant" in all but three places where it was translated "testament" (2 Cor 3:14; Heb 9:16, 17).

<sup>67</sup> Matt 26:28; Mark 14:14; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 9:15.

<sup>68</sup> Jer 31:31-34.

<sup>69</sup> Heb 8:8, 13; 12:24.

<sup>70</sup> Matt 23:14; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47; Rom 3:8; 1 Tim 5:12.

<sup>71</sup> Rom 13:2; 1 Cor 11:29.

this word as "condemnation" five times, and as "judgment" thirteen times. The NKJV made the KJV more accurate and more consistent with itself.

In three places the NKJV translated the Greek word κρίσις (*krisis*), meaning condemnation or judgment, as "condemnation" instead of the KJV "damnation."<sup>72</sup> The reference is to the judicial condemnation and pronouncement of judgment rather than on ultimate damnation. Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines κρίσις as "judgment; i. e. opinion or decision given concerning anything, esp. concerning justice and injustice, right and wrong."<sup>73</sup> None of the six Greek Lexicons consulted uses the word "damnation" to define the word κρίσις.<sup>74</sup> Regarding Matthew 23:33, John A. Broadus, a great Baptist scholar of an earlier generation, stated: "This last word [damnation] now denotes in English the eternal penalty resulting from judgment or condemnation, and while often necessarily suggested, this is not what the Greek terms themselves express. Accordingly, the words 'damn' and 'damnation' must now give way to 'judge,' 'condemn,' etc., leaving the punishment to be suggested, as it is in the Greek."<sup>75</sup> A more contemporary conservative scholar, William Hendriksen, wrote concerning this verse: "How are you going to escape being sentenced to hell. . . . Literally ' . . . how shall you escape the condemning judgment of Gehenna?'"<sup>76</sup> These three passages are the only places where the KJV translated κρίσις as "damnation." Elsewhere in similar contexts the KJV translated this word as "condemnation" three times, and as "judgment" forty-one times.

Once the NKJV translated the Greek word ἀπωλεία (*apoleia*), meaning *destruction*, as "destruction" instead of the KJV "damnation."<sup>77</sup> This is the only place where the KJV translated this word so. Elsewhere in similar contexts the KJV translated this word as "destruction" five times, and as "perdition" eight times.

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<sup>72</sup> Matt 23:33; Mark 3:29; John 5:29.

<sup>73</sup>J. H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 4th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901) p. 361.

<sup>74</sup> Besides Thayer, these include W. F. Arndt & F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957); H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1968); G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961); J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: The United Bible Society, 1988); G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965). Louw and Nida state concerning this word: "to judge a person to be guilty and liable for punishment--to judge as guilty, to condemn, condemnation" (p. 556). However, they do indicate that the word can mean "punishment with the implication of having been judged guilty"; but they go on to affirm that "It is also possible, of course, to interpret κρίσις" in Mt 23.33 as meaning 'condemnation' . . . but, as such, punishment is certainly implied" (p. 489).

<sup>75</sup> John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1886), p. 475.

<sup>76</sup> William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), pp. 835-36.

<sup>77</sup> 2 Pet 2:3.

The evidence indicates that Riplinger bore false witness. No words in the Greek text were omitted in the NKJV, instead they were translated by English words that make the KJV more consistent with itself, and that avoids the confusion caused by inconsistent use of the terms in the appropriate context. No instance undermines the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the wicked dead.

### **Devils**

Riplinger's tenth accusation is that the "NKJV omits the word 'devils' entirely." This is a false statement given to persuade her uninformed readers that the NKJV is undermining the importance of Satan and demons. The truth is that no words in the Greek text were omitted. Instead the NKJV translated the given words with different but more accurate English words than those in the KJV in order to avoid the confusion in the KJV. According to Scripture there is only one devil--Satan. In Modern English the other evil spirits are referred to as *demons*. The Greek New Testament uses the word διαβολος (*diabolos*) to refer to the devil (Satan), and the words δαιμονιον (*daimonion*) or δαιμων (*daimon*) to refer to demons. It is appropriate to distinguish these words in English as they are distinguished in Greek.

In forty three places the NKJV translated the plural form of Greek words *daimonion* or *daimon* as "demons" instead of the KJV "devils."<sup>78</sup> In twenty places the NKJV translated the singular form of the words as "demon" instead of the KJV "devil."<sup>79</sup> Likewise in twelve places the NKJV translated the Greek words meaning *possessed or vexed by demons* as "demon-possessed" instead of the KJV use of "devil" or "devils."<sup>80</sup> In four places in the Old Testament the NKJV translated Hebrew words that refer to demons as "demons" instead of the KJV "devils."<sup>81</sup> All of this was done to clear up the inconsistency and confusion in the KJV.

The evidence indicates that Riplinger bore false witness. No words in the Greek text were omitted in the NKJV, instead they were translated by English words that make the KJV more consistent with itself, and that avoids the confusion caused by inconsistent use of the terms in the appropriate context. No instance undermines the Biblical doctrine of Satan and demons.

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<sup>78</sup> Matt 7:22; 8:31; 9:34, 34; 10:8; 12:24, 24, 27, 28; Mark 1:34, 34, 39; 3:15, 22; 5:12; 6:13; 9:38; 16:9, 17; Luke 4:41; 8:2, 27, 30, 33, 35, 38; 9:1, 49; 10:17; 11:15, 15, 18, 19, 20; 13:32; 1 Cor 10:20, 20, 21; 1 Tim 4:1; Jas 2:19; Rev 9:20; 16:14; 18:2.

<sup>79</sup> Matt 9:33; 11:18; 17:18; Mark 7:26, 29, 30; Luke 4:33, 35; 7:33; 8:29; 9:42; 11:14, 14; John 7:20; 8:49, 49, 52; 10:20, 21, 21.

<sup>80</sup> Matt 4:24; 8:16, 28, 33; 9:32; 12:22; 15:22; Mark 1:32; 5:15, 16, 18; Luke 8:36.

<sup>81</sup> Lev 17:7; Deut 32:17; 2 Chr 11:15; Psa 106:37.

### Greek Textus Receptus

Riplinger's eleventh accusation in the section on omissions states that the "NKJV ignored the KJV Greek *Textus Receptus* over 2000 times." This is a false statement given to convince her unsuspecting readers that the NKJV is translated from a different Greek text than the one used by the KJV translators. The truth is that the NKJV translators followed exactly the same traditional Greek text that was used by the KJV translators. The following is an excerpt from the initial guidelines drawn up for the NKJV project:

The traditional texts of the Greek and Hebrew will be used rather than modern critical texts based on the Westcott and Hort theory. Because of the continued popularity of the traditional text (*Textus Receptus*) and the increasing number of scholars who prefer this text because of its support by the majority of manuscripts, it is important that a version of the Bible based on this text be available in current literary English.<sup>82</sup>

The Greek New Testaments used by the translators of the King James Bible of 1611 were Erasmus' texts of 1527 and 1535, Stevens' texts of 1550 and 1551, Beza's text of 1589 and 1598, and the Complutensian Polyglot of 1514. F. H. A. Scrivener, an outstanding scholar and defender of the traditional text, stated: "The editions of Beza, particularly that of 1598, and the two last editions of Stevens, were the chief sources used for the English Authorized Version of 1611."<sup>83</sup> Scrivener noted that the translators followed the Beza text against the Stevens text 81 times; they followed Stevens against Beza 21 times; and they followed the Complutensian text, the Erasmus text, or the Latin Vulgate against both Stevens and Beza 29 times.<sup>84</sup>

The Elzevirs published seven editions of the Greek New Testament with essentially the same text as that of Erasmus, Beza, and Stevens. In the Latin introduction to the 1633 edition, Elzivar stated that this text was the *Textus Receptus* (Received Text). In England, this name subsequently was applied to Stevens' text of 1550. However, the exact Greek words followed by the KJV translators did not exist in a single printed edition until the middle of the 19th century when it was published by Oxford Press. Scrivener republished this text in 1894 and again in 1902.<sup>85</sup> His text is currently published by the Trinitarian Bible Society,<sup>86</sup> and this is the text upon which the NKJV was based. The Publisher's forward to the NKJV states: "the Scrivener Greek Text was the basis of the New Testament." Riplinger

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<sup>82</sup> Cited from a brochure published by Thomas Nelson Publishers and distributed widely to the general public at the time of the initial publication of the NKJV.

<sup>83</sup> *The New Testament: The Greek Text Underlying the English Authorized Version of 1611* (London: The Trinitarian Bible Society, [n.d.]), preface.

<sup>84</sup> F. H. A. Scrivener, ed., *The Cambridge Paragraph Bible of the Authorized English Version* (rev. ed.; London: Cambridge University Press, 1873), p. xxxii.

<sup>85</sup> F. H. A. Scrivener, ed., *The New Testament in the Original Greek According to the Text Followed in the Authorized Version* (Cambridge University Press, 1894/1902).

<sup>86</sup> Η ΚΑΙΝΗ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ, *The New Testament: The Greek Text Underlying the English Authorized Version of 1611* (London: The Trinitarian Bible Society, [n.d.]).

and the sources upon whom she relies know this publicized information--they have been informed. Yet they continue to publish misleading statements like the one at hand.

What she really refers to is related to Modern Standard English, not to the underlying Greek text, nor to the NKJV translators ignoring that text. Elizabethan English, like Greek, used second person pronouns that distinguish the singular from the plural, and the nominative case from the objective case, as the following table illustrates:

	Nominative	Objective
Singular	thou	thee
Plural	ye	you

Modern Standard English no longer uses these archaic pronouns but uses only the word *you* in all instances of number and case. One cannot translate the Bible into Modern Standard English and retain the archaic pronouns of Elizabethan English, otherwise the language is not Modern English. The general population of the English-speaking world does not understand these archaic terms. They must be taught such Elizabethan expressions, and, even so, they become confused by them. However, the reason for translating the Bible into Modern English is to avoid the necessity of pastors having to teach their congregations another language--an archaic, obsolete dialect of English.

Another problem is that Elizabethan English, like Greek, used a subjunctive form for verb phrases. Modern Standard English no longer uses the subjunctive forms of verbs. Such expressions sound unnatural to the general public, and may not be understood by them. This is confirmed by George S. Wykoff and Harry Shaw, recognized authorities on Modern English, who stated:

Distinctive subjunctive verb forms in current English have disappeared or are disappearing in favor of more commonly used indicative verb forms.<sup>87</sup>

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Only rarely, however, can you find such main-verb subjunctive forms, third person singular, present tense, in current writing. Instead, both subjunctive and other nonindicative mood and nonimperative mood ideas are expressed by the use of auxiliary verbs.<sup>88</sup>

So by 1969 the use of the subjunctive verb forms was almost extinct in Modern English. This is not to say that the subjunctive mood itself is no longer expressed in Modern Standard English, but that the mood is expressed by other means than by the older subjunctive verb forms.

Other differences of this kind exist between Modern English and Elizabethan English. It is these minor areas, where English grammar in its modern form no longer corresponds with Greek grammar, that Riplinger accuses the NKJV translators of ignoring the Greek text. However, the fault does not lie with the translators but with Modern English. Modern English no longer uses those grammatical features.

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<sup>87</sup> George S. Wykoff and Harry Shaw, *The Harper Handbook of College Composition*, 4th ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 520.

<sup>88</sup> Wykoff and Shaw, p. 521.

Enemies of modern versions of the Bible, such as Riplinger, over exaggerate the significance of these differences. In most instances the context identifies the antecedent of a pronoun and the reader has no difficulty knowing whether it is singular or plural. Likewise, sentence position indicates whether a pronoun is nominative or objective. The disadvantage of those relatively few cases, where the Modern English pronouns are ambiguous, is greatly offset by the tremendous advantage of having the English Bible free of archaic words and grammar. After all, the general English speaking population manages to get along perfectly well in everyday life today without those archaic pronouns and without misunderstanding.

The evidence indicates that Riplinger bore false witness. The NKJV translators did not ignore the Greek Textus Receptus text of the Bible. Instead, they followed the same Greek text that the KJV translators used, paying attention to each word as carefully as Modern English enables, and improving on the KJV in many ways, particularly in the area of verb tenses. The enemies of the NKJV have repeated this false charge seemingly without end, but they have failed to produce any legitimate examples of where the NKJV did not accurately follow the reading of the Textus Receptus. If such discrepancies are found, the NKJV would be corrected in the very next edition.

### **Hebrew Textus Receptus**

Riplinger's twelfth accusation states that the "NKJV replaced the KJV (ben Chayyim) with the corrupt Stuttgart edition (ben Asher) Old Testament." This is a false statement given to convince her uninformed readers that the NKJV is translated from a different Hebrew text than the one used by the KJV translators. The truth is that the NKJV translators followed exactly the same traditional Hebrew text that was used by the KJV translators. The excerpt from the original guidelines cited above specifies that Hebrew text as a requirement. The preface of the NKJV states:

For the New King James Version the text used was the 1967/77 Stuttgart edition of the Biblia Hebraica, based on the ben Asher text, while frequent comparisons were made with the Bomberg edition of 1524-25.

This statement could be misunderstood to agree with Riplinger's accusation except for the reference to frequent comparisons with the Bomberg edition of 1524-25. Actually the Bomberg edition was edited by ben Chayyim and is the text used by the KJV translators. What the preface did not make clear is that the NKJV translators followed the Bomberg edition whenever it differed from the Stuttgart edition, and they included a marginal reference noting the textual difference. Riplinger and the sources upon whom she relies know this information--they have been informed. Yet they continue to publish misleading statements like the one at hand.<sup>89</sup>

Actually the NKJV improved on the KJV by making it conform to the Bomberg (ben Chayyim) text more exactly than before. For example: twice the NKJV corrected the KJV from "God" to "LORD" because the Hebrew Bomberg text reads "LORD" not

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<sup>89</sup> The statement is also misleading in that it labels the Stuttgart text as corrupt. The Stuttgart text differs from the Bomberg (ben Chayyim) text only in minor details of accentuation and vowel points. Only in rare instances do the differences affect translation.

"God."<sup>90</sup> In Isaiah 13:15 the Bomberg text reads "captured," whereas the KJV reads "joined." In Isaiah 37:18--the Bomberg text reads "lands" or "countries," whereas the KJV reads "nations." In Ezekiel 46:18--the Bomberg text reads "take," whereas the KJV reads "take by oppression." The KJV added extra words, translating one Hebrew word twice in an attempt to harmonize with thoughts in both the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate. In Amos 5:8--the Bomberg text reads "the Pleiades," the name of the celestial constellation; whereas the KJV paraphrases as "the seven stars." Here the KJV inconsistently paraphrases the name of the constellation which it properly translated everywhere else (Job 9:9; 38:31). Many more examples could be provided, but this is sufficient to demonstrate the point.

The evidence indicates that Riplinger bore false witness. The NKJV did not replace the Hebrew text with a different one, but followed exactly the same Hebrew text used by the KJV translators. The enemies of the NKJV have repeated this false charge seemingly without end, but they have failed to produce any legitimate examples of where the NKJV did not follow the reading of the Bomberg text in places where the KJV did.<sup>91</sup> If such discrepancies are found, the NKJV would be corrected in the very next edition.

### The Triquetra



The NKJV carries a triquetra as part of its cover design. The publishers explain this symbol on the copyright page of each edition as follows:

**Cover Design:** The triquetra (from a Latin word meaning "three cornered") is an ancient symbol of the Trinity. It comprises three interwoven arcs, distinct yet equal and inseparable, symbolizing that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three distinct yet equal Persons and indivisibly One God.

Concerning the triquetra, the logo used on the NKJV, Riplinger asserted:

The NKJV logo is the ancient symbol for the pagan trinity, not the Christian Trinity. Use of number symbols (like this 666) can be traced back to Pythagoras (582 B.C.), initiate into the Egyptian mysteries. The symbol was popularized again by satanist Aleister Crowley (circa 1900) for the Royal Arch (Lucifer) of the 3rd Degree of the York Order of Masonry. The symbol's shape is duplicated as three initiates join arms and feet, while repeating the names of [the] ancient pagan trinity. The NKJV's symbol can

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<sup>90</sup> In Gen 6:5 and 2 Sam 12:22 the Hebrew Textus Receptus (ben Chayyim) reads יהוה "LORD" not יהוה "GOD" as the KJV translates.

<sup>91</sup> There are over 200 places where the KJV failed to follow the Bomberg text for some reason.

be seen on satanic rock group albums like Led Zeppelin, as well as on New Age bestsellers like The Aquarian Conspiracy.

This statement is false in several respects. It is false because it is in direct contradiction with authorities on Christian symbolism. Thomas Albert Stafford declared that the triquetra is

one of the most beautiful and most satisfying of the symbols of the Holy Trinity. The three equal arcs of the circle denote equality of the three Persons of the Godhead. The lines run continuously and therefore express their eternal existence. They are interwoven, which expresses their unity. The center forms an equilateral triangle, itself a symbol of the Trinity. Each pair of arcs combines to form a "vesica," previously explained as an aureole, indicative of glory. So, here we have a complex expression of equality, eternity, unity and glory in what is essentially a simple form.<sup>92</sup>

Heather Child and Dorothy Colles affirm the same details, indicating that the symbol is early:

*The Triquetra* is an early symbol of the Trinity; the continuous interweaving of indivisible but equal arcs may be taken to express Eternity; in the centre is the triangle of the Trinity.<sup>93</sup>

Robert P. Wetzler and Helen Huntington also identify the triquetra as a symbol of the Holy Trinity.<sup>94</sup>

Riplinger's statement is false because the symbol that appears on some albums of the rock group Led Zeppelin has been modified with a superimposed circle. Furthermore, Riplinger falsely identifies the triquetra with the symbol on the cover of Marilyn Ferguson's book *The Aquarian Conspiracy*. However, that symbol is not a triquetra, as Riplinger rightly knows--she has been informed.<sup>95</sup> The symbols are similar but distinctly different as the following illustration indicates. The triquetra has three distinct corners, as its name indicates; the symbol on Ferguson's book has three rounded lobes which cannot be confused with corners.

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<sup>92</sup> Thomas Albert Stafford, *Christian Symbols in the Evangelical Churches* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1994), pp. 50-52.

<sup>93</sup> Heather Child and Dorothy Colles, *Christian Symbols, Ancient and Modern: A Handbook for Students* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 44.

<sup>94</sup> Robert P. Wetzler and Helen Huntington, *Seasons and Symbols: A Handbook on the Church Year* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962), pp. 70, 71.

<sup>95</sup> See her book *New Age Bible Versions*, p. 101. There she erroneously equated the triquetra with the symbol on the cover of *The Aquarian Conspiracy* which she identified as a mobius symbol.



Triquetra



Ferguson's Symbol

From this false equating of the symbols, Riplinger imagines that the triquetra forms three sixes which she then identifies with the number 666 of the antichrist. One could visualize sixes on a Ferguson's symbol, but never on a triquetra. No one writes or prints a six with a pointed bottom! The following illustration demonstrates how ridiculous the suggestion is:



Triquetra 6 (?)



Mobius 6

The evidence indicates that Riplinger bore false witness. The triquetra is an ancient symbol of the Holy Trinity and it remains so today. The fact that recent unbelievers have abused, misused, and even desecrated this symbol does not deprive it of its ancient sacred significance.

### **Demotes Jesus**

Riplinger included a section that she entitled "NKJV Demotes Jesus Christ." This is a false statement given to persuade her unsuspecting readers that the NKJV deliberately undermines the doctrine of the deity of Christ. The truth is that the NKJV is stronger on the deity of Christ than the KJV. Besides improving the translation of several passages related to Christ's deity, the NKJV capitalized every pronoun referring to Christ, along with other key words such as Lord, Master, Teacher, One, Savior, etc. that refer to Him. Riplinger listed twelve references that are supposed to demonstrate demotion.

In Luke 13:9 the NKJV reads "Sir" instead of the KJV "Lord." According to Riplinger this is supposed to convince the reader that the NKJV demoted Jesus from Lord to Sir. However, the word in this text was not addressed to Jesus, but was contained in Jesus' parable of the barren fig tree. In this verse the caretaker of the vineyard addressed the owner of the vineyard as "Sir." The use of such an example is evidence of extremely careless scholarship or deliberate deception.

In Matthew 18:26 the NKJV reads "Master" instead of the KJV "Lord." Like the above example, this is supposed to convince the reader that the NKJV demoted Jesus from Lord to Master. However, the word in this text was not addressed to Jesus, but was contained in Jesus' parable of the unforgiving servant. In this verse the servant addressed his king as Master. More carelessness or deception.

In Matthew 20:20 the NKJV reads "kneeling down" instead of the KJV "worshipping." According to Riplinger this is supposed to persuade the reader that the NKJV demotes Jesus by denying Him worship. The Greek word used here means either *to kneel down* or *to worship*. Context determines which meaning is appropriate. In this passage the mother of Zebedee's sons came to ask Jesus for a selfish favor which He denied her. The woman was not worshipping, but attempting to manipulate Jesus. One cannot attempt to manipulate God and worship Him at the same time.

In Matthew 26:64 the NKJV reads "right hand of the Power" instead of the KJV "right hand of power." According to Riplinger, this is supposed to convince the reader that the NKJV demotes Jesus. But how the NKJV demotes Jesus with these words is not self evident. The Greek Textus Receptus has the definite article with the word for power, whereas the KJV omitted the article. The NKJV word "Power" is capitalized indicating that it is a name of God. This is in keeping with the policy of the KJV to capitalize words when they function as a name of God. For example: "the Majesty" (Heb. 1:3; 8:1); "the Highest" (Luke 1:35); "most High" (Num. 24:16); and "the Rock" (Deut. 32:4). On the other hand, these words are not capitalized in the KJV when they do not function as a name of God. Now the word "Power" in Matthew 26:64 clearly is a name of God. This is witnessed by the modern versions nearly all of which capitalize the word in this verse, including even the RSV and NRSV. Yet in other passages the term "the power" refers to secular authorities (Rom. 13:2-3) or human power (1 Cor. 4:19). It is a mystery how saying that Jesus will sit at the right hand of God is demoting Him.

In Genesis 22:8 the NKJV reads "God will provide for Himself<sup>96</sup> the lamb" instead of the KJV "God will provide himself a lamb." According to Riplinger this is supposed to persuade the reader that the NKJV demotes Jesus by denying that the lamb (Jesus) is God Himself. Riplinger, like other careless Bible readers, has read this KJV text as though it reads "God will provide himself *as* a lamb." However, this adds a word to the text that is not in the KJV nor in the Hebrew Textus Receptus. A straightforward reading of the KJV does not, and cannot mean that, even though the thought is theologically correct. Furthermore, in the Hebrew Textus Receptus, the pronoun *Himself* is governed by the preposition *for* which the KJV omitted, and it contains the definite article with the word *lamb* which the KJV omitted. The KJV does not promote Jesus in this verse, and the NKJV does not demote Him. Rather, the NKJV made the KJV more accurate and more faithful to the Hebrew text. More of Riplinger's carelessness.

In John 8:35 the NKJV reads "a son" instead of the KJV "the Son." According to Riplinger this is supposed to convince an uninformed reader that the NKJV has demoted Jesus from deity to humanity. However, like the first two examples, the word son in this verse does not refer to Jesus. The verse sets forth the general cultural principle of the difference between the status of a slave and that of a son. A slave remains in the household only as long as his owner wishes, but a son is a permanent member of the household--his sonship and heritage are secure. So when the Son of God sets us free from slavery to sin, and we are born into God's family as sons, we are free indeed (8:36).

One may argue that the Greek text has a definite article with the words *servant* and *son* here. However, this is a Greek construction that often must be translated with an indefinite article in English, as is frequently done in the KJV. For example: "a bishop" (1

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<sup>96</sup> Riplinger misquoted the NKJV here. The NKJV has the pronoun *Himself* capitalized, indicating that it refers to God. Riplinger did not capitalize the word. More carelessness.

Tim 3:2); "a bishop" (Titus 1:7); "an elder" (1 Pet 5:1); "a servant (Mark 14:47)--in these and other passages the Greek Textus Receptus has a definite article, whereas the KJV translated with an indefinite article.

In Colossians 2:2 the NKJV reads "the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ" instead of the KJV "the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ" which Riplinger associates with the "Trinity." According to Riplinger this is supposed to persuade the reader that the NKJV is undermining the doctrine of the Trinity. But the truth is that the KJV does not mention the Holy Spirit in this text. Where else in the Bible is the Holy Spirit referred to as God in the same context with the Father and the Son (Christ)? Riplinger is wrong in assuming that this verse refers to the Trinity. In fact, here the KJV distinguishes God from the Father and from Christ. So the NKJV is stronger on the deity of Christ here than is the KJV. The NKJV places Christ on the same par with the Father, and identifies both the Father and Christ as God. It refers to the mystery of God, namely the mystery of both the Father and Christ. In this verse the NKJV promotes the Lord Jesus above what is stated in the KJV.

In Matthew 8:19, 19:16, 22:16, 23:8, and 23:10 (and others) the NKJV reads "Teacher" instead of the KJV "Master." According to Riplinger these are supposed to convince the reader that the NKJV demotes Jesus from Master to Teacher, thus questioning His deity. The truth is that the Greek word used in these passages is διδασκαλος (*didaskalos*), meaning *teacher*,<sup>97</sup> being derived from the verb διδασκω (*didasko*), meaning *to teach*.<sup>98</sup> Three times the word is καθηγητης (*kathegetes*), meaning *teacher* or *guide*.<sup>99</sup> None of these examples contains the word κυριος (*kurios*), the usual word for referring to a lord or master. This is a classic example of a twentieth century reader misunderstanding an old English word. In earlier generations the word *master* meant *teacher*. So even today, a person who earns a master's degree in a college or university is qualified to teach. While the word still means *teacher* today, it is rarely used with that sense. So it is appropriate for the NKJV to distinguish the usage of the various Greek words, and to update the word usage so that the text means today what it meant in 1611. The KJV states that Jesus was a Teacher (= Master in 1611) and the NKJV states that Jesus was a Teacher. No demotion took place. More of Riplinger's carelessness and evident ignorance.

In Acts 3:13, 3:26, 4:27, and 4:30, the NKJV reads "Servant" instead of the KJV "Son" or "child." According to Riplinger this is supposed to persuade her readers that the NKJV demotes Jesus from a Son to a slave or servant. The truth is that the Greek word used in these places is not υἱός (*huios*), the usual word for son, but the word παις (*pais*), meaning *child* or *servant*.<sup>100</sup> Context determines the proper sense. Obviously Jesus was not a child at the time of Peter's sermon and prayer. By using this word, Peter was alluding to the Old Testament passage in Isaiah 52:13, which identifies the Messiah as the Servant of

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<sup>97</sup> The KJV translates this word as "teacher" ten times: John 3:2; Acts 13:1; Rom 2:20; 1 Cor 12:28, 29; Eph 4:11; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11; 4:3; Heb 5:12.

<sup>98</sup> The KJV translated this verb as "teach" every time it occurs in the New Testament (97 times).

<sup>99</sup> Matt 23:8, 10, 10. These are the only instances of this word.

<sup>100</sup> The KJV translated this word "child" 7 times, "servant" 10 times, "manservant" once, and "son" only three times.

the LORD. In this passage the Aramaic Targum renders the text as "My Servant Messiah." The native language of Jesus and the common people in Israel was Aramaic. Peter's audience would have clearly understood this allusion. Furthermore, the NKJV capitalized the word Servant, thus indicating the deity of Christ, and, in this case, also His messiahship. The NKJV did not demote Jesus, but made the KJV more literal to the Greek Textus Receptus and thus associated Him with the title God Himself gave Him--Servant.

In Mark 2:15 the NKJV reads "He" instead of the KJV "Jesus." Riplinger would have her readers believe that the NKJV demotes Jesus by omitting His name. The truth is that the Greek Textus Receptus does not have the word *Jesus* in the text; the KJV added the word (not in italics), giving the false impression that the mentioned feast took place in Jesus' house, whereas the parallel passage in Luke 5:27-32 clearly indicates that the feast took place in Levi's house. The NKJV did not demote Jesus, but made the KJV more faithful to the Greek Textus Receptus and cleared up an apparent contradiction in the KJV.

In Hebrews 4:8 and Acts 7:45 the NKJV reads "Joshua" instead of the KJV "Jesus." Riplinger would have her readers believe that the NKJV demotes Jesus by attributing His deeds to Joshua. The truth is that the KJV 1611 edition has a marginal note at Hebrews 4:8 that reads "that is, Joshua." The same is true for contemporary Oxford and Cambridge editions of the KJV and others that contain the original marginal notes. The Greek name for Joshua is Ἰησοῦς (*Iesous*), the same as that for Jesus. Unfortunately, the KJV did not distinguish between Joshua and Jesus in the New Testament. So the context must decide. In Acts 7:45 the context clearly indicates that the Old Testament Joshua is the one to whom the text refers. In Hebrews 4:8 the KJV marginal note makes it clear that the referent is Joshua. Throughout the NKJV the spelling of the Old Testament characters was made consistent in both the Old and New Testaments. Thus the name of Isaiah is spelled as *Isaiah* in the NKJV New Testament instead of the KJV *Esaias*, it is *Jeremiah* not the KJV *Jeremy*, *Judah* not the KJV *Judas*, *Boaz* not the KJV *Booz*, *Joshua* not the KJV *Jesus*, etc. Thus the NKJV did not demote Jesus, but made the KJV self consistent, thus clearing up a source of confusion. This is another classic example of the need for the NKJV. Here a self-proclaimed authority on the Bible misunderstood the KJV, supposing that the texts were referring to Jesus instead of Joshua. She apparently does not know the simple principle of checking the context. How sad!

The evidence indicates that Riplinger bore false witness. The NKJV does not demote Jesus, nor undermine His deity. Riplinger's examples do not demonstrate her accusation, but rather they demonstrate her careless scholarship or perhaps her deliberate deception. Riplinger is an example of the real need for the NKJV. She does not understand the Elizabethan English of the KJV; so she misunderstands, misinterprets, and misrepresents the very Bible she so ferociously defends.

### A Few More False Accusations

Riplinger listed many more criticisms of the NKJV that involve false witness in some form. Space does not permit responding to all of her trivial accusations. However, a few more are included in this section.

In Genesis 2:18 the NKJV reads "helper comparable to him" instead of the KJV "help meet for him." Riplinger would convince her readers that the NKJV wording supports androgyny<sup>101</sup> and gender equality by this revision. The truth is that the KJV words are not in current usage. The word *help*, when referring to a person, now usually refers to an employee such as a farm worker or a domestic servant; the current equivalent is the NKJV *helper*. The KJV word *meet*, meaning *fitting* or *proper*, is an archaic word no longer in contemporary usage. These words have been misread as the compound word *helpmeet*, meaning *a helpmate*, *a helpful companion*, or a *spouse*. According to the English dictionary the word *helpmeet* developed from a misreading of this passage. The word translated by the KJV as "meet" is from the Hebrew word כְּנֵגְדוֹ (*kenegdo*) which means *comparable* or *suitable*. In the context God had brought all the animals to Adam for him to name. Adam saw that none of them were comparable or suitable to be his companion and mate, and that he was alone. The NKJV word *comparable* does not refer to gender, but to kind, as the context clearly indicates. Riplinger has read into the NKJV her own psychological hang-ups.

In 2 Corinthians 11:5 the NKJV reads "eminent" instead of the KJV "chiefest." Riplinger would have her readers to believe that the NKJV used a hard word in place of an easy word. The truth is that the word *chiefest* is a double superlative not in good English usage and missing in ordinary dictionaries. For the NKJV to be in Modern Standard English this word had to be changed to its modern equivalent. The KJV uses this non-grammatical, unconventional word eight times in the Bible;<sup>102</sup> in these places the NKJV revised the word to *chief*, *upper*, *best*, *first*, *honor*, or *eminent*, depending on the associated Hebrew or Greek word and the immediate context. The word *chiefest* may be easy but it is not proper English.

In Psalm 109:6 the NKJV reads "accuser" instead of the KJV "Satan." Riplinger would have her readers believe that the NKJV omitted a reference to Satan in order to support New Age ideas. The truth is that the NKJV did not omit a word but translated the underlying Hebrew word by a different and more accurate English word. The Hebrew word שָׂטָן (*satan*) means *accuser*, *adversary*, or *Satan*, depending on the context. When the word refers to a human then the translation *accuser* or *adversary* is appropriate; when the referent is Satan, then the word should be translated as a proper name. The KJV translated this word as "adversary" seven times and as "Satan" nineteen times. In this passage the referent is a human accuser not Satan, as the KJV marginal note and the poetic parallelism indicate: the human accuser is in parallel with a wicked man. Contrary to the context the KJV has Satan and a wicked man standing together in a human court against David's false accusers. Satan stands as an accuser in the heavenly court, but not in an earthly court. The NKJV did not omit a word, but made the KJV more consistent with the context and with itself.

In 1 Samuel 13:21 the NKJV reads "the charge . . . was a pim" instead of the KJV "they had a file . . . for the coulters." Riplinger would have her readers believe that the

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<sup>101</sup> Riplinger misspelled the word as "androgeny," a word not in the dictionary, but meaning "the production of male offspring."

<sup>102</sup> 1 Sam 2:9; 9:22; 21:7; 2 Chr 32:33; Song 5:10; Mark 10:44; 2 Cor 11:5; 12:11.

word *pim* is an acronym for "positive identification microchip" and that the NKJV has introduced the mark of the beast into the Bible. This sounds very much like Peter Ruckman's "advanced revelation" only in the NKJV! Such a suggestion would be ridiculous if it were not so pathetic. Riplinger assumed without a shred of Biblical evidence that the mark of the beast is a positive identification microchip (PIM); this is just one of a multitude of modern speculations about the identity of that mark. If the Lord tarries His coming, new technology will make this speculation look primitive. Furthermore, to imagine this in a non-prophetic Old Testament passage is to introduce the most glaring of anachronisms. The truth is that the wording of Riplinger's example demonstrates that she knows no Hebrew.<sup>103</sup> The word *pim* is a transliteration of the Hebrew word פִּימ (pim) which the KJV conveniently omitted because they did not know what it means. The KJV translated the Hebrew word פִּצְיָרָה (*petsirah*), a word of unclear meaning, as "file"; but in so doing the KJV introduces a self contradiction. Verse 20 states that all the Israelites had to go down to the Philistines to sharpen their farm tools, but verse 21 states that they had a *file* for sharpening them. Why would they go to their enemies for a service they could do for themselves? The NKJV translated the word פִּצְיָרָה (*petsirah*) as a service "charge" and the word פִּימ (*pim*) as a unit of Philistine currency;<sup>104</sup> it also revised the old word *coulters* to its modern equivalent *plowshares*. This makes good sense in the context and avoids the contradiction in the KJV. Far from introducing an anachronistic mark of the beast in an Old Testament agrarian passage, the NKJV makes the KJV more literal to the Hebrew Textus Receptus and clears up its confusion.

### Conclusion

It is time for the enemies of modern versions of the Bible to stop bearing false witness, to stop using misrepresentations, to stop using subtle deceptions, and to begin to deal honestly with the truth. If their position cannot be defended with honesty and truth, then it is not worthy of defense. Unfortunately, their current tactics are bringing reproach to themselves, to the Bible version they defend, and to the name of Christ whom they claim to honor.

James D. Price  
July 12, 1996.

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<sup>103</sup> The word *pim* is not a revision of the KJV word *coulters* as Riplinger's example implies.

<sup>104</sup> For those interested in seeing what a Philistine "pim" looks like, and what its monetary value is, see *Biblical Archaeology Review*, (Sept-Oct, 1996) p. 34. There the archaeological evidence demonstrates that the NKJV is correct.