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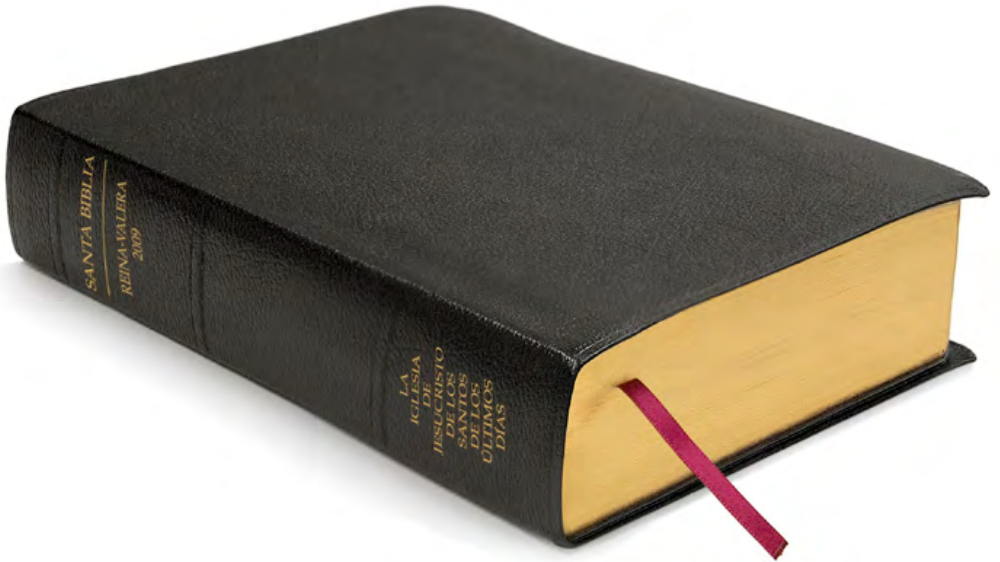


FIGURE 1. *Santa Biblia: Reina-Valera 2009* was the first edition of the Bible prepared by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in a language other than English. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Santa Biblia

The Latter-day Saint Bible in Spanish

Joshua M. Sears

After the release of the first Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible in 1979 and a new edition of the Triple Combination containing the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price in 1981, Elder Boyd K. Packer declared:

With the passing of years, these scriptures will produce successive generations of faithful Christians who know the Lord Jesus Christ and are disposed to obey His will. . . . The revelations will be opened to them as to no other in the history of the world. . . . They will develop a gospel scholarship beyond that which their forebears could achieve. They will have the testimony that Jesus is the Christ and be competent to proclaim Him and to defend Him.

Decades of experience have proven the value of those scripture editions for millions of Latter-day Saints, and yet, as Elder Packer went on to relate, “even all of this is but a beginning, for we have it only in English.”¹ Although the Triple Combination has been translated into forty-four languages, for many years only English-speaking Saints could enjoy the advantages of reading the Old and New Testaments in a Church-sponsored edition. That changed in September 2009 with the publication of the *Santa Biblia: Reina-Valera 2009*, a Spanish edition of the LDS Bible and the first new language edition to be published since the English version thirty years earlier (fig. 1). The *Santa Biblia*² marks a significant

1. Boyd K. Packer, “Scriptures,” *Ensign* 12 (November 1982): 53.

2. *Santa Biblia* means simply “Holy Bible,” but in this article the phrase will refer exclusively to the LDS edition of the Bible in Spanish.

milestone in the history of Latter-day Saint scripture both because of its contents and because of what it indicates about the internationalization of the Church. In this article, I will attempt to capture some of that significance by analyzing the Santa Biblia's translation, textual basis, study aids, and impact.

History

The English LDS Bible published in 1979 featured the traditional King James translation with innovative formatting and study aids including interpretive chapter headings, cross-references to other LDS scripture, citations from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, explanatory notes, a Bible dictionary, a concordance called the Topical Guide, and maps.³ (In 2013 an updated edition appeared that makes several improvements but closely follows the overall form and content of the 1979 edition.) That Bible edition set the formatting standard for a new English Triple Combination in 1981, which in turn became the template for subsequent foreign-language editions of the Triple Combination, including a new Spanish edition in 1993.⁴

In the years following, President Packer initiated the idea of having an LDS edition of the Bible in Spanish similar to what was available in English.⁵ Church leaders weighed the advantages and disadvantages of creating an entirely new translation of the Bible themselves, but after a lengthy review it was decided to use an existing translation. The question then became which version to adopt, and attention naturally

3. See Robert J. Matthews, "The New Publications of the Standard Works—1979, 1981," *BYU Studies* 22, no. 4 (1982): 387–424; Fred E. Woods, "The Latter-day Saint Edition of the King James Bible," in *The King James Bible and the Restoration*, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2011), 260–80; and *That Promised Day: The Coming Forth of the LDS Scriptures*, a documentary broadcast on BYUtv on October 3, 2010, available at <http://www.byutv.org/watch/2039-100>.

4. "Study Aids Enhance Spanish Scriptures," *Church News*, published by *Deseret News*, December 11, 1993, 5.

5. As recounted by Richard G. Scott during an interview with Carlos Amado and Ted Brewerton, in "La edición Santo de los Últimos Días de la Santa Biblia en español," an orientation video about the Spanish Bible available at <https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2009-03-000-latter-day-saint-edition-of-the-holy-bible-in-spanish?category=escrituras&lang=spa>. Statements from Elder Scott, Elder Amado, and Elder Brewerton quoted in this article are taken from the subtitles provided in an English version of the video that was previously available.

turned to the translation Latter-day Saints had already been using, a traditional and acclaimed Bible called the Reina-Valera.

Like the King James Version in English, the Reina-Valera Version is very much a Protestant translation and traces its history to the religious upheavals of the sixteenth century. Casiodoro de Reina, much like his English counterpart William Tyndale, spent much of his life abroad trying to avoid authorities who were none too pleased with him. In 1569, Reina published his greatest work: history's first complete Spanish Bible based on the original biblical languages. Reina spent twelve years at his task, working from Hebrew and Greek texts while consulting previous Spanish translations, such as a 1543 New Testament translated by Francisco de Enzinas. Reina's Bible came to be known as *la Biblia del Oso*, "the Bible of the Bear," due to a distinctive picture on its title page (fig. 2). Many of the first copies were confiscated and burned. Another reformer-in-exile, Cipriano de Valera, later revised Reina's work and republished it in 1602. The Reina-Valera Version, as it would later be called, eventually established itself as the standard Bible for Spanish-speaking Protestants.⁶ This Spanish translation of the Bible has even influenced English speakers. The translators who worked on the King James Version consulted Valera's revision—published only two years before they began their own work—and various examples of common phrasing make it "fairly certain that in the quarry which formed the King James Bible may be heard echoes of the Reina-Valera."⁷



FIGURE 2. The title page of Casiodoro de Reina's Spanish Bible published in 1569.

6. Eduardo Balderas, "How the Scriptures Came to Be Translated into Spanish," *Ensign* 2 (September 1972): 26–29; Jorge A. González, "Las Traducciones de Reina y Valera," in *La Biblia en español: Cómo nos llegó*, ed. Justo L. González (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008), 85–103; and Rafael A. Serrano, "La historia de la Biblia en español," in *El Origen de la Biblia*, ed. Philip Wesley Comfort (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2008), 341–73.

7. Joan F. Adkins, "The Reina-Valera Bible and the King James Version (1569–1611)," *Cithara* 14, no. 1 (1974): 74. See also David Daniell, *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 443–44.

The original Reina-Valera Version has been updated several times in the past four centuries in order to keep pace with changes in the Spanish language and advances in biblical scholarship. For many years the Church used the 1960 edition, which is published by the American Bible Society and remains the most popular version of the Reina-Valera today. Efforts were made to obtain copyright permission to reprint that edition with the unique LDS study aids inserted around the biblical text. Permission was denied. A search was then made through older editions that were in the public domain, and the Church decided to make its own update to the predecessor of the 1960 version.⁸ This edition was published in 1909 and is commonly known as *la Versión Antigua*, “the Old Version”—an allusion to its status as the traditional Bible of choice for conservative Protestants.⁹ Although copyright challenges initiated the search that led to the 1909 Reina-Valera, Elder Richard G. Scott explained that “the Spirit identified the edition that we ought to use and has guided [our] efforts in every detail.”¹⁰

In 2004, Jay E. Jensen and Lynn A. Mickelsen of the First Quorum of the Seventy were called to co-chair the Spanish Bible project. This project involved both modernizing the 1909 text and preparing Spanish translations of the appropriate study aids. The entire project was carried out under the direction of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. In March 2009, the Church formally announced the new Bible and its release in September of that year. The timing coincided with the centennial anniversary of the *Reina-Valera Antigua*, and the new edition’s tie to the traditional text was celebrated in its official title, *Santa Biblia: Reina-Valera 2009*.¹¹

8. Jay E. Jensen, interview on Mormon Channel, available at <http://www.mormonchannel.org/conversations/45-elder-jay-e-jensen?v=1756076529001>.

9. The 1909 edition of the Reina-Valera was prepared using revisions made in the years prior by Juan B. Cabrera and Cipriano Tornos. See Eric M. North, *The Book of a Thousand Tongues* (New York: American Bible Society, 1938), 305; and Hazael T. Marroquín, *Versiones Castellanas de la Biblia* (Mexico City: Casa de Publicaciones “El Faro,” 1959), 15, 62–63, 100, 200. Their work was in turn based on an 1862 revision by Lorenzo L. Pedrosa. See Jaime Memory, “Lorenzo Lucena Pedrosa (1807–1881): Recuperando una figura señera de la Segunda Reforma española,” *Anales de Historia Contemporánea* 17 (2001): 224–25.

10. “La edición Santo de los Últimos Días de la Santa Biblia en español.”

11. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Spanish Bible to Benefit Millions of Mormons,” *Newsroom*, March 30, 2009, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/spanish-bible-to-benefit-millions-of-mormons>; The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Church Edition of Spanish Bible Now

Language and Translation

The language of the 1909 Reina-Valera presented some challenges. This version of the Bible is a Spanish classic, traditionally worded and beautifully expressed. However, the vocabulary is often incomprehensibly antiquated, the syntax is sometimes awkward, and abandoned verbal forms appear alongside nouns and prepositions whose spelling or accentuation would raise eyebrows in any modern Spanish classroom. One option would have been to preserve the 1909 version as it stood, much like how English-speaking Saints read the similarly archaic language of the King James Version.¹² Instead, explained Jeffrey C. Bateson, then director of the Church's Translation Division, the decision was made to make "very conservative changes" so that the language would be more accurate and understandable.¹³

Church translators began by updating archaic language, spelling, and accentuation until a reviewable manuscript was ready. Next, Elder Jensen and Elder Mickelsen led an intensive review process that involved a repeating cycle of feedback and revision from some two hundred Spanish-speaking priesthood leaders and their wives in nearly a dozen countries.¹⁴ Because the new translation would serve Spanish-speaking Church members from Spain to Texas to Chile, it was important that

Published," *Newsroom*, September 14, 2009, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/church-edition-of-spanish-bible-now-published>; and "Church Publishes LDS Edition of the Holy Bible in Spanish," *Ensign* 39 (September 2009): 77–78.

12. The most recent official Church statement on the King James Version acknowledges that modern translations are "easier to read" but affirms the KJV's superiority "in doctrinal matters." See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church, 2010* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010), 21.1.7. For a brief discussion of other reasons why the Church uses the KJV, see D. Kelly Ogden, "Bible: King James Version," in *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:109–10. For a historical review of the Church's use of the KJV, see Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 162–98.

13. "Spanish Bible to Benefit Millions."

14. Elder Brewerton explained that the translation was "guided by the Spirit through the Melchizedek Priesthood" but also stressed the important contribution of the "many women in the Church who have helped us. They have given their opinions . . . regarding many points, and we have seen that the Lord inspires all men and women." "La edición Santo de los Últimos Días de la Santa Biblia en español."

The Santa Biblia and Localization

Localization is an important new paradigm in translation theory. The term comes from the language industry, and it reflects the idea of a locale: “a set of linguistic, economic, and cultural parameters for the end-use of a product” (Anthony Pym, *Exploring Translation Theories* [New York: Routledge, 2010], 121). Locales may include communities such as Argentine Spanish speakers or Mexican Spanish speakers. Localization is the process of preparing a product for a given locale.

Localization represents a significant change from prior translation paradigms because it abandons the idea of one-to-one correspondence between a completed source text and a target text. An example of such one-to-one correspondence would be a translation of Hamlet into Arabic or French. In that case, a target text results directly from a source. Rather than moving directly from source to target, localization employs an intermediate stage known as internationalization. In the case of an American computer product, an internationalized version would be one in which American cultural elements are removed. This internationalized version—an intermediate, generic version—can be quickly translated for many different locales simultaneously.

Essentially, an internationalized product seeks to be as universal as possible. In some industries, this universal product may even be distributed along with its more culturally detailed localized versions. Indeed, the film industry regularly combines localized and internationalized products. In the DVD version of Disney/Pixar’s animated film *The Incredibles* (*Los Increíbles*, 2005), for example, Spanish-speaking viewers can watch either a localized Mexican or Argentine version while reading subtitles written in “neutral” Spanish. This neutral or internationalized Spanish is a Spanish spoken by no one but supposedly understandable to everyone.

The new LDS Santa Biblia presents an interesting combination of internationalized and localized Spanish. Joshua Sears notes that the Santa Biblia translators sought to create an internationalized language that would appeal to Spanish speakers everywhere, in all countries, by minimizing “regional or dialectal differences”

(Sears, 49). At the same time, translators employ language localized for LDS Spanish speakers in several ways: (1) by conserving familiar archaic scriptural terms such as “aconteció” or “he aquí”; (2) by employing well-known biblical phrases that are “important in LDS discourse or that help link biblical passages to linguistic echoes in modern revelation” (Sears, 52); and (3) by providing explanatory notes, many of which are specifically designed for LDS readers. This combination of internationalized and localized language represents an important step in the Church’s efforts to promote scriptural literacy among its members.

—Daryl Hague

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regional or dialectal differences be minimized. The wording was compared to Hebrew and Greek texts, other Spanish versions, and the King James Version in English. The challenge was to craft a reading that is textually accurate, doctrinally sound, beautiful to the ear, and understandable to modern readers.¹⁵ Achieving these several goals required more than just dictionaries and lexicons. As Elder D. Todd Christofferson explained, “It is not just a technical undertaking to translate the scriptures. It’s important that the Spirit be there, that the meaning be there, that the intent of the Spirit be reflected in the translation.”¹⁶

Some examples help demonstrate the kinds of revisions that were necessary:

15. See the Mormon Channel interview with Elder Jensen; and Scott Taylor, “LDS Spanish Bible Praised for Adding Clarity and Depth,” *Deseret News*, September 14, 2009. The American Bible Society went through a very similar process when it updated the same 1909 text to create the 1960 edition of the Reina-Valera. See Eugene A. Nida, “Reina-Valera Spanish Revision of 1960,” *The Bible Translator* 12, no. 3 (1961): 107–19. Indeed, the wording of several passages in the Santa Biblia indicates that the Church’s translators consulted the 1960 edition during the course of their work.

16. *That Promised Day*.

Spelling and Accentuation

1909 Reina-Valera	Santa Biblia	English meaning
á	a	to
fué	fue	was
Bethlehem	Belén	Bethlehem
Ruth	Rut	Ruth

Archaic or Obscure Terms

1909 Reina-Valera	Santa Biblia	English meaning
criar	crear	to create
parir	dar a luz	to give birth
la haz	la faz	face
la conversación	la conducta	behavior
muy mucho	muchísimo	very much

Simplified Language

1909 Reina-Valera	Santa Biblia
“Señoree en los peces de la mar” (Gen. 1:26) [Lord it over the fish of the sea]	“Tenga dominio sobre los peces del mar” [Exercise dominion over the fish of the sea]
“Confortaron las manos de ellos” (Ezra 1:6) [They comforted their hands]	“Les ayudaron” [They helped them]
“Estaba acostada con calentura; y le hablaron luego de ella” (Mark 1:30) [She lay hot in bed; and they told Jesus afterwards about her]	“Estaba acostada con fiebre; y en seguida le hablaron de ella” [She lay in bed with a fever; and they told Jesus about her right away]
“Mas el que es rico, en su bajeza” (James 1:10) [Yet he that is rich, in his baseness]	“Pero el que es rico, en su condición humilde” [But he that is rich, in his humility]

Certain terms were changed to avoid incorrect or potentially misleading doctrinal interpretations:

Doctrinal Vocabulary

1909 Reina-Valera	Santa Biblia
pontífice [pontiff]	sumo sacerdote [high priest]

la salud [salvation/health (in modern use usually the latter)]	la salvación [salvation (in appropriate contexts)]
“Febe . . . la cual es diaconista” (Rom. 16:1) [Phoebe, who is a (female) deacon]	“Febe . . . quien está al servicio” [Phoebe, who gives service]

Sometimes the 1909 Reina-Valera is a defensible translation from Hebrew or Greek (and similar phrasing will appear in other Bible translations), but does not match the meaning as translated in the King James Version in English.¹⁷ In many cases these differences were allowed to stand, as in the following examples:

*Santa Biblia Passages That Read Differently Than the KJV*¹⁸

King James Version	Santa Biblia (compare other modern translations)
“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth” (Job 19:25)	“Yo sé que mi Redentor vive, y que al final se levantará sobre el polvo” [I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the dust]
“. . . and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God” (Dan. 3:25)	“. . . y el aspecto del cuarto es semejante a un hijo de los dioses” [. . . and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods]
“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine” (John 7:17)	“El que quiera hacer la voluntad de él conocerá . . . la doctrina” [He who desires to do his will shall know . . . the doctrine]

17. For an overview of why different versions of the Bible sometimes read differently, see Ben Spackman, “Why Bible Translations Differ: A Guide for the Perplexed,” *Religious Educator* 15, no. 1 (2014): 30–65.

18. Regarding the second example, the Spanish translation of Daniel 3:25, “a son of the gods,” does not interpret the passage as an allusion to Christ as the KJV does. The chapter heading in the 1979 English LDS Bible interpreted the passage as a reference to Christ (“The Son of God preserves them”), but the 2013 edition deliberately avoids an interpretation (“They are preserved”).

Regarding the third example, the KJV translation of John 7:17 sounds like it focuses on one’s actions because modern readers interpret the first “will” as indicating the future of “do,” but the meaning of the Greek *thelē* is “wishes/wants.” The Santa Biblia, like most modern translations, focuses instead on one’s desires.

In other cases, especially when the KJV contains phrases that are important in LDS discourse or that help link biblical passages to linguistic echoes in modern revelation, the 1909 Reina-Valera was modified to read more like the KJV. The following are a few examples:

Santa Biblia Passages Harmonized with the KJV

1909 Reina-Valera (cf. modern translations)	Santa Biblia (cf. the KJV)
<p>“Por tanto, he aquí que nuevamente excitaré yo la admiración de este pueblo con un prodigio grande y espantoso” (Isa. 29:14) [Therefore, behold, once again I will astonish this people with a great and terrible wonder]</p>	<p>“por tanto, he aquí que nuevamente haré una obra maravillosa entre este pueblo, una obra maravillosa y un prodigio” [Therefore, behold, once again I will do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder] (cf. 2 Ne. 27:26; D&C 4:1)</p>
<p>“Él convertirá el corazón de los padres a los hijos” (Mal. 4:6) [He will direct the heart of the fathers to the children]</p>	<p>“Él hará volver el corazón de los padres hacia los hijos” [He will turn the heart of the fathers toward the children] (cf. 3 Ne. 25:6; D&C 2:2; 110:15; 128:17)</p>
<p>“Por tanto, cuando viereis la abominación del asolamiento, que fué dicha por Daniel profeta, que estará en el lugar santo . . . , entonces los que están en Judea, huyan á los montes” (Matt. 24:15–16) [Therefore, when you see the abomination of devastation, which was spoken of by the prophet Daniel, which will be in the holy place . . . then let those in Judea flee to the mountains!]</p>	<p>“Por tanto, cuando veáis la abominación desoladora de la cual habló el profeta Daniel, quedaos en el lugar santo . . . , entonces los que estén en Judea huyan a los montes” [Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation of which spoke the prophet Daniel, stand in the holy place! . . . then let those in Judea flee to the mountains!] (cf. D&C 87:8; 101:22; JS—M 1:12)</p>
<p>“Y á los ángeles que no guardaron su dignidad” (Jude 1:6) [And the angels who did not keep their office]</p>	<p>“Y a los ángeles que no guardaron su estado original” [And the angels who did not keep their original estate] (cf. Abr. 3:26, 28)</p>

Another important decision Bible translators or editors must make is which Hebrew or Greek words to translate and which to transliterate. *Translation* expresses the word’s meaning in a new language while *transliteration* simply spells out the foreign word. For example, the revelatory device used by the Israelite high priest could be translated into English as “Lights and Perfections” or transliterated as *Urim* and *Thummim*.¹⁹

19. “Lights and Perfections” is a traditional translation, but scholars still debate the exact meaning.

Transliterating a word can be advantageous when it is a technical term that has no exact equivalent in the target language and a translation would mask the foreign nature or specific nuance of the word. For example, the Hebrew term for the place where the dead dwell is *Sheol* (compare D&C 121:4), but because the KJV translates it variously as “grave” (31 times), “hell” (31), “pit” (3), and “depth” (once, Isa. 7:11), English readers miss both the specific cultural meaning and the connection between the various references. The 1909 Reina-Valera similarly uses eight different Spanish terms to represent this one Hebrew word. In contrast, the Santa Biblia changes all but one of these references to the transliterated word *Seol*. The disadvantage of transliterating is that it introduces a foreign word that readers may not be familiar with, but in the case of *Seol*, the editors helped by placing a footnote on some of the references that explains, “HEB[REW] world or dwelling of the dead, grave, hell.”

The King James Version, the 1909 Reina-Valera, and the Santa Biblia take different approaches in transliterating other words as well. The chart below displays several examples of the choices made in each version, with translated words highlighted in gray and transliterated words in white:

Differences in Translation/Transliteration

Hebrew/Greek	KJV	1909 Reina-Valera	Santa Biblia
'ābaddôn	destruction	Abadón	Abadón
apostasia	falling away	apostasía	apostasía
'āšērâ	grove	bosque	Asera
'āza'zēl	scapegoat	Azazel	macho cabrío expiatorio
bēliyya'al	Belial	perverso, Belial	perverso
dēnaron	penny	denario	denario
magoi	wise men	magos	magos
mamōnas	mammon	riquezas, Mammón	riquezas
nētînim	Nethinims	Nethineos	servientes del templo
sabaōth	Sabaoth	ejércitos	ejércitos
šabbāt	sabbath	sábado	día de reposo
šē'ōl	grave, hell, pit	sepulcro, sepultura, infierno	Seol
yahweh	the LORD	Jehová	Jehová

These differences mean that Spanish-speaking Latter-day Saints may become more familiar with certain Hebrew or Greek terms than their English-speaking counterparts (and conversely, certain other terms will

be more familiar to English speakers). Consider the final example in the chart, *yahweh*/Jehovah, the name of God.²⁰ The KJV usually replaces the name with the euphemistic title “the LORD,” while the Reina-Valera line of Bibles preserves it as a proper name. Spanish speakers thus interact with the name Jehovah much more often than English speakers and will more readily recognize Jesus Christ as “the Great Jehovah of the Old Testament.”²¹

Name “Jehovah” in . . .	English	Spanish
Old Testament	4	6,842
Book of Mormon	2	3
Doctrine and Covenants	6	8
Pearl of Great Price	2	2
Total	14	6,855

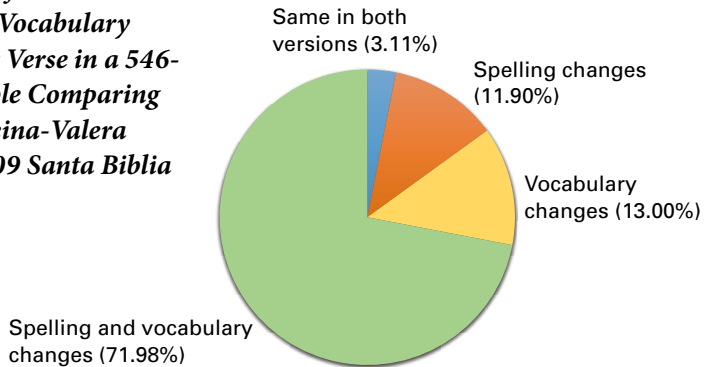
Considering all the reasons why the 1909 Reina-Valera may have been modified in particular cases—outdated spelling, vocabulary, or grammar; doctrinal concerns; linguistic disharmony with other LDS scripture; and transliteration—how extensive *are* the revisions? The chart below displays a sampling of twenty chapters totaling 546 verses for which I compared the 1909 and 2009 versions word for word.²² It turns out that only 17 verses in the sample, or 3.11 percent, remain exactly the same in both versions; the rest feature at least one change in spelling/accenuation (11.90 percent of the verses), at least one change in vocabulary (13.00 percent), or at least one change to both spelling *and* vocabulary (71.98 percent).

20. Modern LDS vernacular typically employs “Jehovah” as the name of the premortal Jesus Christ and “Elohim” as the name of God the Father. In biblical usage, *’elohim* is the generic Hebrew word for “God/god/gods” and *yahweh* (Jehovah) is the proper name of the Israelites’ God. For a review of how Latter-day Saints have used these terms over their history, see Ryan C. Davis and Paul Hoskisson, “Usage of the Title *Elohim*,” *Religious Educator* 14, no. 1 (2013): 109–27.

21. “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” *Ensign* 30 (April 2000): 2.

22. The chapters include Genesis 1; Deuteronomy 1; Ruth 1; 1 Kings 1; Ezra 1; Psalm 1; Isaiah 1; Daniel 1; Micah 1; Malachi 1; Mark 1; Luke 1; Acts 1; Romans 1; 1 Corinthians 1; 1 Thessalonians 1; Hebrews 1; James 1; 1 John 1; and Revelation 1.

Frequency of at Least One Spelling or Vocabulary Change per Verse in a 546-Verse Sample Comparing the 1909 Reina-Valera and the 2009 Santa Biblia



These data suggest that the “very conservative changes” made to the 1909 edition must be understood as conservative in *kind*, but not *number*. While the editors rarely made changes that substantially alter the basic meaning of the 1909 Reina-Valera, the changes are bounteous, and the result is a Bible that is considerably more readable. The Santa Biblia is by no means colloquial and certainly retains the dignity of language that Latter-day Saints expect from their scriptures, but the modernization of its grammar, syntax, spelling, and vocabulary make a profound difference in reading comprehension.²³

Textual Makeup

The wording of any particular verse in the Santa Biblia depends not only on how it was translated from Hebrew or Greek into Spanish but also on which particular Hebrew and Greek manuscripts were utilized as the basis for translation. Because multiple manuscript copies of the scriptures exist and most do not read exactly the same way in every instance, Bible translators and editors must employ *textual criticism*, the process of comparing variant readings and deciding, based on all the evidence, which reading is to be preferred.

Both the King James and Reina-Valera Old Testaments are based on a medieval manuscript family called the Masoretic Text, and thus their textual base is very similar. The English and Spanish LDS Bibles occasionally

23. I should stress that the language is not *completely* modernized. For example, the Santa Biblia retains the second person plural pronoun *vosotros* (which has mostly disappeared from spoken Spanish outside of Spain) as well as traditional scriptural terms like *he aquí* (“behold”) and *y aconteció* (“and it came to pass”).

contain footnotes suggesting alternate readings based on the Greek Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, and other non-Masoretic sources.²⁴

Both the King James and Reina-Valera New Testaments are based on a printed Greek text from the sixteenth century known as the *Textus Receptus* (TR), which itself is based on a few late Greek manuscripts.²⁵ While the King James Version follows the TR very closely, the Reina-Valera New Testament has always included some passages that incorporate other textual traditions. Reina himself included some variant readings from other sources such as the Latin Vulgate. During the nineteenth century, scholars began publishing new editions of the Greek New Testament that incorporated evidence from Greek manuscripts that are much older than those used for the TR. These “critical editions” of the Greek New Testament are based not on any single manuscript but review all available data and decide on a case-by-case basis which variant reading is the best for any given passage.²⁶ Different editions of the Reina-Valera have varied in how much they follow these newer editions and deviate from the TR.

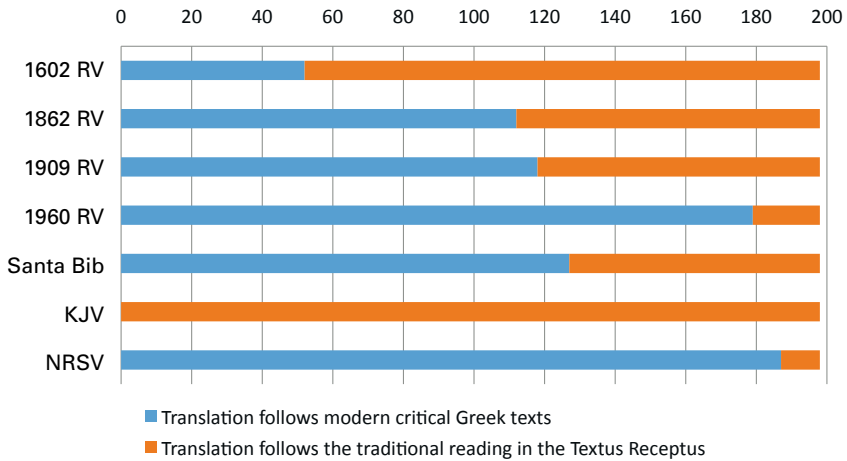
Where does the Santa Biblia fit into this picture? The chart below displays a sampling of about two hundred verses I examined that I knew ahead of time read differently in the TR and modern critical editions. I looked up each of these passages in the Santa Biblia and in the editions of

24. There are twenty-eight text-critical notes in the LDS English Old Testament and twenty in Spanish, a very small number in comparison with most modern Bibles (the New Revised Standard Version surpasses that count in the book of Genesis alone). The most significant advancements in Old Testament text criticism in the past century have resulted from the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, but unfortunately no LDS edition of the Bible has yet incorporated any insights from those texts. For a brief introduction to what the scrolls contribute to our understanding of the text of the Bible, see Donald W. Parry, “The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible,” *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 2 (2010): 1–27.

25. For more background on the *Textus Receptus* and the various New Testament manuscript families, see Carol F. Ellertson, “New Testament Manuscripts, Textual Families, and Variants,” in *How the New Testament Came to Be*, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Frank F. Judd Jr. (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center and Deseret Book, 2006), 93–108; and Lincoln H. Blumell, “The Text of the New Testament,” in Jackson, *King James Bible and the Restoration*, 61–74.

26. For discussions on New Testament textual criticism from a Latter-day Saint perspective, see Carl W. Griffin and Frank F. Judd Jr., “Principles of New Testament Textual Criticism,” in Jackson and Judd, *How the New Testament Came to Be*, 78–92; and Lincoln H. Blumell, “A Text-Critical Comparison of the King James New Testament with Certain Modern Translations,” *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 3 (2011): 67–126.

the Reina-Valera that preceded it to see which reading they follow in each case. For comparison, two English versions are also listed, the King James Version (1611) and the New Revised Standard Version (1989):



As shown above, the original 1602 Reina-Valera follows the *Textus Receptus* in nearly three-quarters of the sample. With the advancement of textual criticism in the nineteenth century, the editors of the 1862 Reina-Valera modified the text to follow additional critical text readings. The 1909 Reina-Valera preserves most of these modifications and adds a few more, and the 1960 update by the American Bible Society seems to have followed a strategy of adopting critical readings on most occasions when the opportunity presented itself. Next, the Santa Biblia appears. For the verses in this sample, the Santa Biblia's editors switched a few critically worded passages back to the TR wording but also amended twenty-two existing TR readings to follow the critical wording instead. This means the Santa Biblia features a net gain of critical readings over its 1909 parent text (although still not as many as its 1960 sister text).

One example of a textual emendation is found in Matthew 5:22. The KJV (following the *Textus Receptus*) reads, "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." The phrase "without a cause" is a late intrusion into the Greek text.²⁷ It also appears in the 1909 Reina-Valera ("locamente"), but the phrase was dropped from the Santa Biblia, bringing it into line with both critical Greek texts and,

27. See Daniel K Judd and Allen W. Stoddard, "Adding and Taking Away 'Without a Cause' in Matthew 5:22," in Jackson and Judd, *How the New Testament Came to Be*, 157–74.

significantly, the reading in the Book of Mormon (compare 3 Ne. 12:22). Other examples of passages in which the Santa Biblia New Testament follows a different textual reading than the KJV include the following:²⁸

Textual Differences between the KJV and Santa Biblia

King James Version (based on the <i>Textus Receptus</i>)	1909 Reina-Valera, Santa Biblia, and modern translations (based on critical Greek texts)
"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Matt. 5:27)	Omit "by them of old time"
"As it is written in the prophets, Behold . . ." (Mark 1:2)	"The prophets" replaced by "Isaiah the prophet"
"The day of Christ is at hand" (2 Thes. 2:2)	"Christ" replaced by "the Lord"
"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2)	Add a missing phrase: "grow thereby unto salvation"

In other cases in which the KJV and the 1909 Reina-Valera are textually distinct, the latter was altered to read like the KJV. These emendations do more than simply translate Greek into Spanish a little differently; they reflect a change in which Greek texts underlie the translation in the first place. For example:

Santa Biblia Passages Textually Harmonized with the KJV

King James Version and the Santa Biblia (based on the <i>Textus Receptus</i>)	1909 Reina-Valera and other modern translations (based on critical Greek texts)
"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17)	Omit "to repentance"
"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 1:16)	Omit "of Christ"
"God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:9)	Omit "by Jesus Christ"
"Hereby perceive we the love of God" (1 John 3:16)	Omit "of God"

Many of these kinds of textual changes reflect a desire to follow the reading that maintains the most emphasis on Jesus Christ, or to preserve

28. For more examples, compare the KJV and Santa Biblia in Matthew 15:8; 24:2; 28:2; Mark 9:24; 11:10; Luke 4:41; 11:29; 23:42; Acts 7:30; 1 Corinthians 9:1; and 2 Corinthians 4:10.

other important doctrinal ideas that may be reflected in one variant reading but not another.

To those unfamiliar with Bible translating, it may seem strangely eclectic to pick and choose readings from disparate textual witnesses. This is a standard practice, however. All translator-editors, be they tied to a university or a church, come to their work with certain goals and viewpoints. These determine how they prioritize evidence while engaging in textual criticism, and how they then balance that evidence with other concerns. An interesting example is how translations treat Mark 16:9–20, the final dozen verses of Mark. These verses do not appear in the earliest manuscripts, and the vocabulary varies somewhat from the rest of the book. The 1952 Revised Standard Version of the Bible does not include this passage because its editors decided that if Mark were not the original author then these verses should be treated differently. In 2001, a group of evangelical Christians published the English Standard Version, an update of the Revised Standard Version that modifies what they considered to be its more liberal editorial choices. They restored the longer ending of Mark. Both groups of editors had access to the same information, but their goals and viewpoints meant they approached this textual decision differently. For its part, an LDS Church manual acknowledges that Mark 16:9–20 “might not have been written by Mark” but concludes that “whatever the reasons for the manuscript variations, the Church accepts all of Mark 16 as inspired scripture. Its value is based not on which human being wrote it, but on its inspired testimony of truth.”²⁹ The “original” reading, then, is an important but not the only issue when determining how variant readings should be treated.

The textual editing of the Santa Biblia reflects these priorities. The Santa Biblia’s editors, as does any group that engages in biblical translation, used the results of textual criticism but did so in light of their own perspectives and priorities. For Latter-day Saints, it is only natural that textual decisions be made in light of the doctrinal and textual insights available through the restored gospel.

Formatting, Chapter Headings, and Appendices

The basic page layout in the Santa Biblia looks very familiar to those who have used other LDS scriptures (fig. 3). The text is arranged in double columns above a three-column space for footnotes. Headings run along the top of the page, and each chapter begins with a summarizing

29. See the commentary under “Mark 16:9–20. The Conclusion of the Gospel of Mark,” in *New Testament Student Manual: Religion 211–212* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2014), 135.

PRIMER LIBRO DE MOISÉS

LLAMADO

GÉNESIS

CAPÍTULO 1

Dios crea esta tierra y su cielo y todas las formas de vida en seis días — Se describen los hechos de cada día de la Creación — Dios crea al hombre, varón y hembra, a Su propia imagen — Se da dominio al hombre sobre todas las cosas, y se le manda multiplicarse y henchir la tierra.

EN el ^aprincipio ^bcreó ^cDios los ^dcielos y la ^etierra.

2 Y la tierra estaba ^adesordenada y vacía, y las tinieblas estaban sobre la faz del abismo, y el Espíritu de Dios se movía sobre la faz de las aguas.

3 Y dijo Dios: Haya ^aluz, y hubo luz.

4 Y vio Dios que la luz era ^abuena, y separó Dios la luz de las tinieblas.

5 Y llamó Dios a la luz Día, y a las tinieblas llamó Noche. Y fue la tarde y la mañana el ^adía primero.

6 Y dijo Dios: Haya un ^afirmamento en medio de las aguas,

y separe aquél las aguas de las aguas.

7 E hizo Dios el firmamento, y separó las aguas que estaban debajo del firmamento de las aguas que estaban sobre el firmamento. Y fue así.

8 Y llamó Dios al firmamento ^aCielos. Y fue la tarde y la mañana el día segundo.

9 Y dijo Dios: ^aJúntense las aguas que están debajo de los cielos en un lugar, y descúbrase lo seco. Y fue así.

10 Y llamó Dios a lo seco Tierra, y a la reunión de las aguas llamó Mares. Y vio Dios que era bueno.

11 Y dijo Dios: Produzca la tierra ^ahierba verde, hierba que dé semilla; árbol de fruto que dé fruto según su especie, que su semilla esté en él, sobre la tierra. Y fue así.

12 Y produjo la tierra hierba verde, hierba que da semilla según su naturaleza, y árbol que da fruto, cuya semilla está en él, según su especie. Y vio Dios que era bueno.

[GÉNESIS]

1 1 ^a GEE Principio.
^b HEB dio forma, creó, siempre una actividad u obra divina; organizó, formó; véase Abr. 4:1.
 GEE Creación, crear.
^c Mos. 4:2;
 Morm. 9:11;

DyC 76:20–24;
 Moisés 2:1.
 GEE Trinidad.
^d GEE Cielo.
^e 1 Ne. 17:36.
 GEE Tierra.
 2 ^a Abr. 4:2.
 3 ^a GEE Luz, luz de Cristo.
 4 ^a Alma 32:35; Abr. 4:4.

5 ^a Abr. 4:5.
 6 ^a HEB expansión o espacio.
 Abr. 4:6–8;
 Facsímile 2, Fig. 4.
 8 ^a GEE Cielo.
 9 ^a GEE Tierra—La división de la tierra.
 11 ^a Abr. 4:11–12.

FIGURE 3. Genesis chapter 1 in the Santa Biblia. The design is based on the English LDS Bible with a few differences, such as larger type. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Decláranos, te rogamos, por qué nos ha venido este mal. ¿Qué oficio tienes y de dónde vienes? ¿Cuál es tu tierra, y de qué pueblo eres?

9 Y él les respondió: Soy hebreo y temo a “Jehová, Dios de los cielos, que hizo el mar y la tierra.

10 Y aquellos hombres temieron sobremanera y le dijeron: ¿Por qué has hecho esto? Porque ellos sabían que huía de la presencia de Jehová, porque él se lo había declarado.

11 Y le dijeron: ¿Qué haremos contigo para que el mar se nos aquiete? Porque el mar se iba embraveciendo más y más.

12 Y él les respondió: Tomadme y echadme al mar, y el mar se os aquietará, porque yo sé que por mi causa ha venido esta gran tempestad sobre vosotros.

13 Y aquellos hombres remaron con todas sus fuerzas para hacer volver la nave a tierra, pero no pudieron, porque el mar se iba embraveciendo más y más contra ellos.

14 Entonces clamaron a Jehová y dijeron: Te rogamos, oh Jehová, te suplicamos que no perezcamos nosotros por la vida de este hombre, ni pongas sobre nosotros sangre inocente, porque tú, Jehová, has hecho como has querido.

15 Y tomaron a Jonás y lo echaron al mar, y el furor del mar se aquietó.

16 Y temieron aquellos hombres a Jehová con gran temor, y

ofrecieron sacrificio a Jehová e hicieron votos.

17 Pero Jehová tenía preparado un gran pez para que se tragase a Jonás; y estuvo Jonás en el vientre del pez “tres días y tres noches.

CAPÍTULO 2

Jonás ora a Jehová y el pez lo vomita en tierra.

ENTONCES oró Jonás desde el vientre del pez a Jehová, su Dios,

2 y dijo:

Clamé en mi “angustia a Jehová,
y él me oyó;
desde el seno del ^bSeol clamé,
y mi voz oíste.

3 Me echaste a lo profundo,
en medio de los mares,
y me rodeó la corriente;
todas tus ondas y tus olas pasaron sobre mí.

4 Entonces dije: Desechado soy
de delante de tus ojos;
mas aún veré tu santo “tem-
plo.

5 Las aguas me rodearon
“hasta el alma;
me rodeó el abismo;
las algas se enredaron en mi
cabeza.

6 Descendí a los cimientos de
los montes;

9 a GEE Jehová.

17 a Mateo 16:4.

GEE Jesucristo—Sim-
bolismos o símbolos

de Jesucristo.

2 2 a GEE Adversidad.

b Alma 36:15–18.

4 a Sal. 5:7.

GEE Templo, Casa
del Señor.

5 a *Es decir*, hasta que es-
tuve a punto de morir.

FIGURE 4. Jonah 1:8–2:6 in the Santa Biblia. In contrast to the prose text of chapter 1, the psalm in chapter 2 is arranged in poetic stanzas. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

heading in italics. A few cosmetic details, which are standard in other foreign-language scripture editions, differentiate it from the English Bible, such as a horizontal line separating the text from the header space. The Spanish Bible also uses a larger font than the English edition, requiring over four hundred more pages to cover Genesis through Revelation. On rare occasions, the Reina-Valera versification differs from the KJV.³⁰ One of the most striking visual differences between the two Bibles are the poetic stanzas that appear in the Psalms and many other sections with poetry, a feature the Santa Biblia preserves from the existing Reina-Valera translation (see fig. 4 for one example).

The chapter headings in the Santa Biblia are for the most part close translations of the headings found in the LDS Bible in English. In several instances the headings differ from the original 1979 headings and more closely resemble those found in the 2013 English edition, following changes that had been incorporated into the online English scriptures years before they appeared in print. And yet even in comparison with the 2013 edition, the Spanish chapter headings sometimes feature their own unique wording that improves the description. Consider a few examples:

Improvements in Spanish Chapter Headings

1979/2013 English headings	Santa Biblia headings
"Abraham marries" (Gen. 25)	"Abraham se casa de nuevo" [Abraham remarries]
"Joseph meets Jacob" (Gen. 46)	"José se reúne con Jacob" [Joseph reunites with Jacob]
"The nearest relative declines, and Boaz takes Ruth to wife—Ruth bears Obed, through whom came David the king" (Ruth 4)	"El pariente más cercano se niega a cumplir con su deber, y Booz toma a Rut por esposa—Rut da a luz a Obed; éste fue padre de Isai, quien engendró al rey David" [The nearest relative refuses to fulfill his duty, and Boaz takes Ruth to wife—Ruth bears Obed; he was the father of Jesse, who begat King David]
"He opens the ears and loosens the tongue of a person with an impediment" (Mark 7)	"Jesús le abre los oídos y le suelta la lengua a un hombre sordo y tartamudo" [Jesus opens the ears and loosens the tongue of a deaf and stuttering man]

30. Sometimes versification in the Reina-Valera that conflicts with the KJV was allowed to stand in the Santa Biblia (for example, 1 Kgs. 18:33–34; 3 John 1:14–15), and in other places the verses were reordered to match the KJV (for example, Job 38–40). All versification systems were created long after the biblical books were written.

In addition to the footnotes and chapter headings, other Santa Biblia study aids appear in an appendix with three sections: Bible Reference Guide, Selections from the Joseph Smith Translation, and Bible Maps and Photographs. The fourteen-page Reference Guide (“Guía de Referencias”) is a new feature not found in the English LDS Bible. It consists of lists of chapter-and-verse references under the headings of the Godhead, Gospel Topics, People, Places, and Events. It serves as a very basic concordance to substitute for the much more detailed Guide to the Scriptures, which was not included under the covers of the Santa Biblia because most readers would already have it in their copies of the Triple Combination.³¹ The Bible Maps and Photographs section updates a similar appendix that previously appeared in the Spanish Triple Combination.

The Joseph Smith Translation

The section in the appendix titled “Selections from the Joseph Smith Translation” deserves special consideration. As with the English edition, excerpts from Joseph Smith’s revision of the Bible are found in the footnotes or, if the citation is too lengthy, in the appendix. At the time the Santa Biblia was published, the 1993 edition of the Spanish Triple Combination already contained a similar section in its own appendix. The Santa Biblia’s version, however, was rewritten so that the JST changes work around the Santa Biblia’s own text, whereas the Triple Combination’s version was based on the 1960 Reina-Valera.

The text of the JST required some adjusting to account for the syntax and vocabulary differences between English and Spanish.³² As in the English LDS Bible, italicized words indicate changes made by Joseph

31. The Guide to the Scriptures is a simplified combination of both the Bible Dictionary and the Topical Guide, and is included in foreign-language versions of the Book of Mormon and Triple Combination.

32. In most cases these adjustments read smoothly, but in some cases the differences prove difficult to reconcile. For example, KJV Exodus 34:14 reads, “the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God,” and the JST changes the first “Jealous” to “Jehovah.” Since the name *Jehovah* is the Hebrew term behind KJV “the LORD,” and since the Reina-Valera simply uses the proper name, a Spanish translation incorporating the JST would read, “Jehovah, whose name is Jehovah, is a jealous God.” To avoid this awkward construction, the Santa Biblia’s JST footnote reads instead, “the Lord, whose name is Jehovah, is a jealous God,” a fix that inadvertently signals to Spanish readers that the biblical word “Jehovah” was changed by Joseph Smith to “the Lord.”

Smith,³³ but the Santa Biblia innovates with the occasional addition of square brackets that “were added to the Spanish translation to help convey the meaning,” according to the Abbreviations page. These brackets appear thirty-seven times in the footnotes and JST Appendix, and their most common function is to mark phrases that are identical in the KJV and JST but that read differently in the Santa Biblia and the Spanish JST. This helps indicate to Spanish readers that the bracketed phrase in the Spanish JST, while different from the wording in the Santa Biblia, does not represent a change made by Joseph Smith.³⁴

In addition to differences in language, sometimes rendering the Joseph Smith Translation into Spanish is a challenge because the JST was created using a specific English translation, the King James Version, as a base text. JST revisions often respond to issues that are not inherent in the Bible but are rather tied to the unique phrasing of the KJV.³⁵

33. Italicizing unique JST phrasing was an innovation of the 1979 English edition, but unfortunately the explanation for the italicized words found on the Abbreviations page of the 1979 edition disappeared when that page was redesigned for the 2013 edition.

34. The square brackets in the Spanish JST perform a total of four functions: First, to indicate phrases that are common to the KJV and JST but read differently in the Santa Biblia (Gen. 14:18; 24:9; 1 Chr. 21:15; Ps. 11:5; 138:8, first set of brackets; Isa. 42:21, 23; Matt. 21:49; Mark 11:10; Luke 4:2; 8:1; 8:23, both sets of brackets; 9:31, the phrase “las cuales habían”; 11:41; Acts 23:27; Rom. 1:18; 4:5; 1 Cor. 7:9, first set of brackets; 10:11; 14:35; Gal. 2:4; 3:20, both sets of brackets; Heb. 4:3; 6:7; 7:20; and 2 Pet. 3:5, 10; all references follow JST versification). Second, to mark words added for the benefit of Spanish syntax (Ex. 14:7; Luke 12:42; John 11:17; and Heb. 6:10; 10:10). Third, to insert editorial clarifications (Ex. 4:25; Luke 9:31, the phrase “de Jesús”; and 1 Cor. 7:9, second set of brackets). Fourth, to provide an alternate word for the preceding word (Ps. 138:8, second set of brackets). The brackets in the JST footnote to Mark 11:10 mark words missing in the Santa Biblia not because of translational variation between it and the KJV, but because of textual differences in Greek manuscripts (the Santa Biblia, like most modern translations, does not include the KJV line “in the name of the Lord”).

35. Many Latter-day Saints assume that the Joseph Smith Translation represents a restoration of original biblical text, and while parts of it certainly can be, much of the JST seems to represent other kinds of changes. According to Kent Jackson, one of the foremost scholars of the Prophet’s work, most JST revisions appear to be efforts on the part of Joseph Smith to make the Bible more understandable to modern readers, including modernizing archaic King James language. See Kent P. Jackson, “New Discoveries in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible,” *Religious Educator* 6, no. 3 (2005): 152–53; and Kent P.

A common example is the way the JST updates archaic English words to modern English words (such as *wot* to *know* or *which* to *who*). Because of this, the JST sometimes solves difficulties that are nonexistent in other translations of the Bible, including the Reina-Valera in Spanish. In cases where a JST revision contributes little or nothing to the Spanish text, the editors of the Santa Biblia sometimes left out the JST reference and sometimes included it anyway.³⁶

When the Santa Biblia was released in 2009, it contained twenty-four JST citations that were not included in the 1979 English Bible, and thus Spanish-speaking Latter-day Saints actually had access to more of the JST than English speakers. The 2013 English edition caught up with the Spanish edition and includes some new JST citations the Spanish edition does not have. The chart below compares the number of verses from the JST cited in whole or in part in the 1979 English Bible, the 1993 Spanish Triple Combination appendix, the 2009 Spanish Bible, and the 2013 English Bible.³⁷

Jackson and Peter M. Jasinski, “The Process of Inspired Translation: Two Passages Translated Twice in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible,” *BYU Studies* 42, no. 2 (2003): 58–62. See also Robert J. Matthews, “A Plainer Translation”: *Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible: A History and Commentary* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 253.

36. For an example of the latter, in KJV Acts 23:27 the Roman chief captain writes that Paul “should have been killed” by the Jews. The JST amends “should” to “would,” which more clearly expresses in modern English that the chief captain is describing a hypothetical situation and not something that he *desires* to happen. In the Santa Biblia, this English distinction is not an issue (it simply says *iban ellos a matar*, “they were going to kill” him), but a JST footnote rewrites the sentence to include the conditional tense (*ellos habrían [matado]*, “they would have [killed]” him; brackets in original). In cases like this, the Spanish JST does represent what Joseph Smith said, but it is unclear how the Spanish reader benefits from the alternate reading.

37. These counts include JST citations found in only the footnotes or appendix of the Bible and not verses in the Book of Moses or Joseph Smith—Matthew, which also come from the JST but are printed in the Pearl of Great Price. The half-verses (“:5”) displayed under the 1979 English Bible represent JST Luke 21:24, which in that edition appears in part in the footnotes and in part in the appendix (the 2013 edition moves the entire verse to the appendix). Three footnotes (1 Cor. 14:2a; Heb. 9:15c; Rev. 2:1a) explain that a JST change also applies to other verses in the same chapter, and I have counted those additional verses as having been cited.

JST verses cited in . . .	1979 English	1993 Spanish Triple	2009 Spanish	2013 English
Footnotes only	460.5	—	453	478
Appendix only	425.5	368	430	428
Both	1	—	12	12
Total	887	368	895	918

When comparing these numbers, it is important to keep in mind that some JST references were deliberately left out of the Santa Biblia either because the JST change is not relevant in Spanish or because the Santa Biblia already reads like the JST anyway. This exclusion explains why the Spanish edition cites only a few more total verses than the 1979 English edition (895 compared to 887) even though it introduced twenty-four new JST citations. Similarly, even though the 2013 English edition quotes many more JST verses than the Spanish edition (918 compared to 895), all but a handful of the additional verses would not be relevant in Spanish anyway.

The Santa Biblia's JST appendix includes a few other modifications. The chart below compares various features in the "Selections from the Joseph Smith Translation" section in the appendices of the 1979 English Bible, the 1993 Spanish Triple Combination, the 2009 Spanish Bible, and the 2013 English Bible:

JST Appendix Feature	1979 English	1993 Spanish Triple	2009 Spanish	2013 English
Italics to indicate changes	x		x	x
Introductory paragraph		x	x	x
Parallel JST/biblical verse references		x	x	x
Explanatory headings		x	x	
Larger font			x	x

The Santa Biblia's JST footnotes and appendix mark a historic development in how Latter-day Saints use the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. Although selections from the JST had previously been included in the appendices of foreign-language editions of the Triple Combination, a complete foreign-language translation of all the verses available in the English LDS Bible "is something we [previously] had never had in the Church."³⁸

38. As phrased by Elder Carlos Amado in "La edición Santo de los Últimos Días de la Santa Biblia en español." It is important to note, however, that even in English the LDS edition of the Bible only includes a selection of all the changes

Explanatory Footnotes

The footnotes in the Santa Biblia are, like the chapter headings, based on those found in the English LDS Bible. They include cross-references to the Bible and other LDS scripture, alternate translations of Hebrew and Greek words, explanations of difficult idioms, alternate meanings of archaic expressions, citations from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, and other miscellaneous notes. The Santa Biblia's explanatory notes, however, are not all exact copies of the English originals. They occasionally innovate by adding more detail to existing English notes and by correcting mistakes in them, including mistakes that remain in the English version up through the 2013 edition.³⁹

Individuals who look through the Santa Biblia often notice, sometimes with some surprise, how few footnotes there appear to be in comparison with the English edition.⁴⁰ This observation may lead to the assumption that because the Spanish notes are fewer, they must represent an abbreviated or “lite” version of the English notes—and thus are inferior. It is a fact that the explanatory footnotes⁴¹ number

made by Joseph Smith. The definitive edition of the complete JST is Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004). A more reader-friendly edition of the complete JST may be found in Thomas Wayment, ed., *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the Old Testament: A Side-by-Side Comparison with the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2012) and *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament: A Side-by-Side Comparison with the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005).

39. Some examples where the Santa Biblia adds more detail to or corrects English notes include Isaiah 11:8a; 15:5 (footnote *b* in English and *a* in Spanish); 60:8a; Ezekiel 27:16a; Amos 5:8a; Hosea 2:15a; Mark 13:1 (the incorrect statement in English footnote *a* was dropped in Spanish); and John 4:20a (the cross-reference in English points to the wrong historical reference, but the Spanish note replaces it with an accurate description).

40. For example, Barlow notes that the “explanatory footnotes are somewhat sparser than in the English version” (*Mormons and the Bible*, xl), and Kent Larson writes that he was “surprised when [he] saw noticeably fewer footnotes than in the English edition.” Kent Larson, “Some Notes on the New Spanish LDS Bible,” *Times and Seasons* [blog], September 18, 2009, <http://timesandseasons.org/index.php/2009/09/some-notes-on-the-new-spanish-lds-bible/>. My own anecdotal experience suggests that this is not an uncommon reaction.

41. My analysis here purposefully focuses on what I call “explanatory notes”—those that provide cultural, textual, or linguistic information. In contrast, my figures ignore cross-references and Topical Guide entries. Comparing these kinds of notes in English and Spanish is often an apples-to-oranges

about 40 percent fewer in the Spanish Bible. That figure does not tell the whole story, however. While there are indeed helpful English notes that did not make it into the Santa Biblia, often an English note did not *need* to be included in the Spanish edition because the Spanish translation already read clearly without it. In other cases, as shown in the examples below, the 1909 Reina-Valera originally read like the KJV but the editors of the Santa Biblia, instead of simply translating the English footnote, took the footnote's wording and inserted it directly into the biblical text (strikeouts below show the original wording, bolding compares the English footnote and the Spanish textual revision):

English Footnotes Incorporated Directly into the Spanish Text




KJV text and LDS footnote	Changes from the 1909 Reina-Valera to the Santa Biblia
"in the ^a oracle" (2 Chron. 3:16) <i>a</i> OR inner sanctuary	"en el oratorio santuario interior "
"the snares of death ^a prevented me" (Ps. 18:5) <i>a</i> HEB confronted	" previniéronme los lazos de la muerte me confrontaron "
"thy ^b profiting may appear to all" (1 Tim. 4:15) <i>b</i> GR progress, advancement	"para que tu aprovechamiento progreso sea manifiesto a todos"
" ^a Accounting that God was able" (Heb. 11:19) <i>a</i> GR Considering	" Pensando Considerando que Dios es poderoso"

Because some explanatory notes would be helpful in both the English and Spanish editions, while some notes would be helpful in only one or the other, the number of notes in each edition must be compared with those differences in mind. The charts on page 70 compare the number of explanatory notes of various kinds that appear in the 2013 English edition and the Santa Biblia.⁴² (Numbers for the 1979 English edition differ

endeavor because the entries in the English Topical Guide and Spanish Guide to the Scriptures are organized differently.

42. The numbers I present here are a little different than what one would find by simply performing an electronic word search to determine how frequently a certain footnote label appears (such as HEB, the label for Hebrew notes, or IE, the label for idioms and difficult wording). There are several reasons for this. (1) For simplicity, the few Aramaic notes are counted as Hebrew notes. (2) Sometimes the English edition assigns one label to a certain note and the Spanish edition assigns another; in such cases, I chose the label I think best

significantly from the 2013 edition only in the case of JST references, so those are displayed separately.) Whether or not a footnote is language-specific or more universally applicable is distinguished according to the key below:

	= Unique footnotes that would not be helpful in the other edition
	= Unique footnotes that would also be helpful in the other edition
	= Footnotes that appear in both language editions

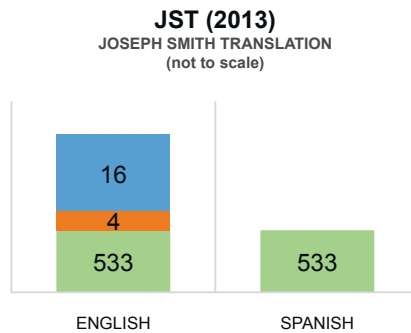
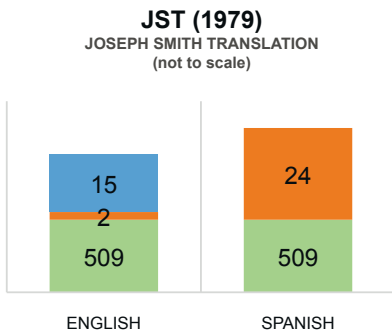
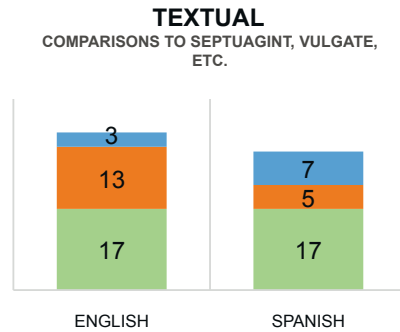
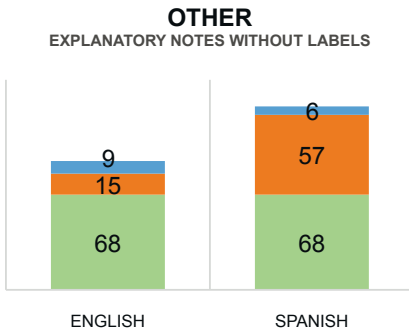
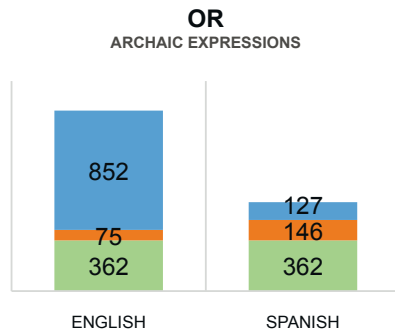
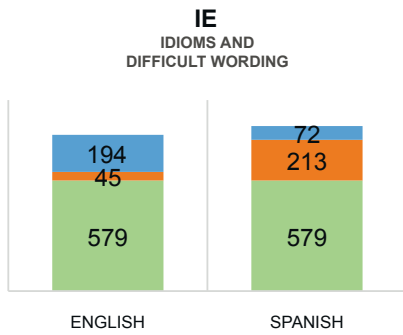
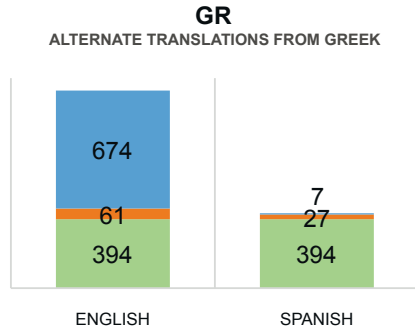
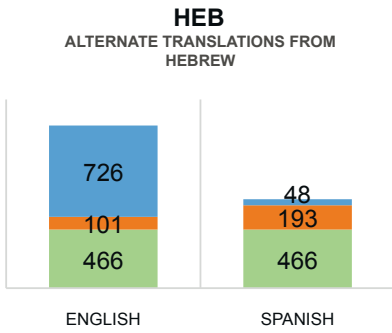
When the numbers in each category are added up, we find that the English edition contains a total of 5,207 explanatory notes. The Spanish edition borrows 2,419 of these, or 46.46 percent. The Spanish edition then adds 908 new explanatory notes, creating a total of 3,327. The Spanish total is 36.12 percent smaller than the English total.

Moving past the raw totals, distinguishing between notes that are edition-specific or that would be helpful in both editions leads to two important observations. First, the data provided in these charts show that although thousands of explanatory notes from the English Bible do not appear in the Santa Biblia, the vast majority—2,474 out of 2,788 missing notes—did not carry over simply because they are *not needed* in Spanish. The fact that the Santa Biblia borrowed fewer than half of the English explanatory notes does not signify that its notes are inferior to the English version's as much as it suggests how much more lucid the Spanish translation is in comparison with the KJV.

The second important observation is that 641 of the 908 new explanatory notes added to the Spanish edition (more than two-thirds) are not uniquely tied to the Spanish text but provide information that would be useful in English as well. Consider, for example, how helpful it might be for the English notes to elaborate on terms like *covenant*, *Sela*, *Leviathan*, or the technical terms that appear at the beginning of many Psalms—all of which the English notes routinely ignore and the Spanish notes routinely comment on. Furthermore, in contrast to these 641 notes

represents the note and count them both that way. (3) Some notes that are text critical in nature, meaning they provide an alternate reading from different manuscripts, hide under other labels like OR. In cases where I spotted them, I ignore the printed label and count it as a “Textual” note. (4) Sometimes a footnote will contain what are really two notes together and I split them for the purpose of counting. (5) The Spanish Bible occasionally uses the label *También* (“Also”), but it is so rare and always fits so well with other labels I simply reassign the note to another category.

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that the English edition is missing out on, there are only 314 notes in the English edition that the Spanish edition does not have but would benefit from. In other words, it turns out that between the two versions, it is the English edition that is missing out on most of the information that is found in one edition but not the other.

The footnotes, then, follow the pattern of the other features of the Santa Biblia: they take what is already good in the English edition and find ways to improve it when possible.

Impact

Just as the English LDS Bible did in 1979, the Santa Biblia marks a milestone in the history of Latter-day Saint scripture. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints now has over fifteen million members around the world, more than half of whom live outside of the United States. Church materials have been published in more than 170 languages, and Church members who do not speak English outnumber those who do. The publication of its first foreign-language edition of the Old and New Testaments, then, marks an important if natural development in the international growth of the Church.

At the same time, the Santa Biblia reflects more than changes in Mormon demographics. It is important to remember that the Santa Biblia is not only the Church's first Spanish Bible, it was the first Bible translation the Church had published in *any* language. The English edition inherited the King James translation whole, which, even considering the enormous effort that went into the study aids, limited the kinds of questions that needed to be asked of the text. In contrast, although the 1909 Reina-Valera provided the Church with a base text (saving it the difficult task of starting a translation from scratch), the decision to revise the biblical text itself required interacting with the Bible to an extent and level of detail perhaps unmatched since Joseph Smith completed his own revision in 1833. In addition to hundreds of new footnotes, this interaction is reflected in how the translators and editors approached the respected yet archaic language of the 1909 Reina-Valera. They set out to achieve the challenging goal of updating and modernizing in a way that still preserved the sacred flavor of the original, and in my opinion they succeeded. This translational approach represents a different strategy than what has been done with the English Bible, where the perceived benefits of exactly preserving a historically significant translation have, thus far, outweighed any benefits of linguistic modernization, even if this means people must struggle more to understand Hosea or

Paul. The Santa Biblia is also relatively progressive in its attitude toward New Testament textual criticism. By allowing several passages inherited from the Reina-Valera to remain textually distinct from the KJV (and ultimately the Greek of the *Textus Receptus*) and especially by freshly altering existing TR readings to follow other textual readings, the Santa Biblia's editors implicitly acknowledged that multiple textual witnesses exist and that no single one of them is the best in every case.⁴³

The Santa Biblia is also notable for the ways in which it was allowed to appropriately diverge from the English edition. While the Spanish edition is formatted to look like its English predecessor and its study aids follow the English version as much as possible, its editors did not see the English edition as completely sacrosanct. In appropriate situations, the English chapter headings were modified and the footnotes were deleted, refined, or supplemented. Even though the King James translation was consulted and some passages in the Santa Biblia were modified to read like the KJV, there was no overriding concern that every verse sound the same or even mean the same thing. Even chapters with parallel translations in the Book of Mormon were not harmonized to strictly match that rendition. This independence means that the Spanish biblical text is in many instances more readable and more accurate than the King James translation.

The Santa Biblia also transcends its identity as a “Spanish Bible” by making at least two important contributions that benefit even Latter-day Saints who are not native Spanish speakers. First, in the Church at large the Santa Biblia is leading to an increased recognition of heroes from history whose dedication and faith helped further God's purposes, but whose stories are often overlooked. General conference

43. To appreciate the significance of this editorial decision, one must remember how passionately President J. Reuben Clark argued for the *Textus Receptus* against modern critical editions of the New Testament. His fullest treatment of this subject, *Why the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1956), relied on the work of several conservative Protestant scholars of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and some of his arguments are now sorely out of date. For two recent appraisals by LDS scholars, see Grant Hardy, “The King James Bible and the Future of Missionary Work,” *Dialogue* 45, no. 2 (2012): 1–44; and Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 173–90. One important effect of President Clark's legacy in this matter is perhaps reflected in the almost complete lack of any footnotes providing alternate textual readings in the LDS edition of the English New Testament—four notes in all. Most modern translations include dozens if not hundreds of such notes.

addresses and Church manuals have frequently highlighted the sacrifices of reformer-translators like John Wycliffe and William Tyndale of England and Martin Luther of Germany.⁴⁴ Where are the heroes Spanish-speaking Saints can claim? The release of the Spanish LDS Bible began to draw more attention to Spanish history through a special half-hour orientation video about the new Bible that aired, in Spanish and English, in between general conference sessions in October 2009.⁴⁵ More recently, the 2014 edition of the Institute manual for the New Testament took a significant step forward in an introductory section that covers the history of the Bible as a book. The new manual presents a broader view of that history by describing not only the stories of Luther, Wycliffe, and Tyndale, but also the Spanish reformers Francisco de Enzinas, Casiodoro de Reina, and Cipriano de Valera. The manual's description of Enzinas's imprisonment, Reina's persecution and exile, and Valera's twenty-year translation effort provides the first English retelling of their stories in a Church print publication in more than forty years.⁴⁶ As proportionally fewer and fewer Latter-day Saints speak English, it will become increasingly important that our Church narratives include the contributions of inspired and inspiring individuals in the histories of other cultures, and the Santa Biblia has positively drawn attention to some of those stories.

The Santa Biblia also benefits those beyond its target audience when it is studied by those who can read Spanish but are not native speakers (this might include the tens of thousands of missionaries who have served in Spain and Latin America). Although the King James Version is wonderful in many ways, one disadvantage of reading it (or any version)

44. Numerous general conference addresses and *Ensign* articles discuss these individuals, especially Tyndale. *Preach My Gospel* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 45, provides basic information about these reformers for the benefit of missionaries, but the Spanish translation provides no additional information on individuals who were actually involved in the history of the Spanish Bible.

45. The Spanish version of this video is available at <https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2009-03-000-latter-day-saint-edition-of-the-holy-bible-in-spanish?category=escrituras&lang=spa>.

46. See *New Testament Student Manual*, 7–8. The histories of Casiodoro de Reina and Cipriano de Valera are described in a 1972 *Ensign* article (Balderas, “How the Scriptures Came to Be Translated into Spanish,” 27–28), but searches at LDS.org show no other references to them until the appearance of the Santa Biblia in 2009.

exclusively is that readers may come to see its particular translational interpretations, its unique expressions, and even its specific typesetting format as being synonymous with “the Bible” itself. Interaction with other versions of the Bible improves our understanding of scripture by helping us see which features are idiosyncratic to our particular version and which are truly “biblical.” For example, while teaching Spanish at the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, I saw the surprise several new missionaries experienced when they opened up their Reina-Valera Bible and wondered why the name *Jehová*—for them a relatively rare word—appeared on almost every page. The Spanish Bible taught them that the small-capitals “LORD” they grew up with was code for Jehovah all along. On one occasion, an English speaker asked me why the new Santa Biblia text was spaced so “weirdly” in several places, with sentences chopped up into twos and threes and placed in different lines. It turned out that because the KJV typesets poetry and prose the same way, he had never in his life known that the Bible even *has* poetry! Comparing how various translations express ideas differently can also help us understand gospel concepts in new ways. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland once taught an implicit lesson on the value of multiple translations when he described the greater appreciation he had for Jesus’s invitation, “Abide in me” (John 15:4), after reading the Spanish rendering, *permaneced en mí*. “‘Abide’ is not a word we use much anymore,” he explained, “but [in Spanish] even gringos like me can hear the root cognate there of ‘permanence.’ The sense of this then is ‘stay—but stay forever.’”⁴⁷ Bilingual readers who study *both* editions of the LDS Bible will inevitably find insights that they could not have gained from one alone.

Of course, the greatest benefits of the Santa Biblia have come to the millions of Spanish-speaking Saints it was designed to bless. President Thomas S. Monson declared, “This new Latter-day Saint edition is the finest Spanish Bible in all the world. . . . My heart is filled with gratitude as I ponder the blessing this new edition of the Bible will be in your lives.”⁴⁸ One Church member described how after obtaining her copy of the Santa Biblia, “I could hardly wait to get home and start studying—I stayed up until two in the morning. . . . I had tears in my eyes because

47. Jeffrey R. Holland, “‘Abide in Me,’” *Ensign* 34 (May 2004): 32; emphasis in original.

48. “La edición Santo de los Últimos Días de la Santa Biblia en español.”

I had been waiting for it for so long.”⁴⁹ Another said, “Sunday when we received word that it came . . . I was very happy! . . . One can really see the promises of the Lord being accomplished.”⁵⁰

One final feature to note about the Spanish Bible is a unique introduction that explains the history, content, and features of the new edition. The final paragraph promises, “El lector que con oración sincera estudie esta edición de la Santa Biblia llegará a adquirir, mediante la inspiración del Espíritu Santo, una mayor comprensión y un testimonio más firme de Dios, el Eterno Padre, y de Su Hijo Jesucristo, nuestro Señor y Redentor, así como de la plenitud del Evangelio de Jesucristo.” [The reader who prayerfully studies this edition of the Holy Bible will gain, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, a greater understanding and a stronger testimony of God the Eternal Father and His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, as well as the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.] Many Spanish-speaking Latter-day Saints testify that this has been their experience.

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49. Taylor, “LDS Spanish Bible Praised.”

50. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Reaction to the New Latter-day Saint Spanish Bible,” *Newsroom*, September 22, 2009, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/blog/reaction-to-the-new-latter-day-saint-spanish-bible>.