

Colossians 1:16-17
Key facts about Christ

by Dr Trevor R Allin

<https://livingwater-spain.com/>

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Notes

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- NWT = “New World Translation” (the English version of the Jehovah’s Witness Bible)
- JW = “Jehovah’s Witness(es)”, an abbreviation previously considered disrespectful, although subsequently adopted by the Jehovah’s Witness “Organization” for the name of their website.

About the Author

Dr Trevor R Allin graduated from the University of Leeds with a 1st Class Honours degree in Phonetics, French, Spanish and Philosophy and History of Religion. Following studies in linguistics, he undertook original research on a South American indigenous language, for which purpose he lived within the indigenous community and studied the language with native speakers over a period of more than a year. The University of St Andrews subsequently awarded him the degree of Ph.D. for his thesis “A Grammar of Resígaro”.

For many years he taught a range of languages up to “Advanced” level standard in state schools in England and in Germany, and in state-recognised schools in Scotland and Spain. He also worked full time over a period of many years supporting and inspecting qualified Modern Language teachers and giving them professional development training. Teaching and examination materials written by him for French, German and Spanish at a wide range of levels, up to and including “A” Level, have been published by mainstream U.K. educational publishers and examination boards, for whom he has written and marked examination question papers.

He is also the published translator of books from Spanish and German into English and is the author of “Curso de Griego Bíblico: Los elementos del Griego del N.T.”¹, the Spanish edition of the leading textbook on New Testament Greek, Jeremy Duff’s “The Elements of New Testament Greek”.² He has taught New Testament (Koiné) Greek to Spanish-speaking adult students in Spain and has delivered lectures in various places in Spain and England on the principal earliest Greek manuscripts of the Bible.

For more than fifteen years his website <https://livingwater-spain.com/> has provided information and careful textual analysis of key passages of the Greek text of the New Testament and the Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament, with most articles being available in both English and Spanish.

Dr Allin has made audio recordings of the Koiné Greek text of all 260 chapters of the New Testament. These recordings are available free of charge on the internet, with links provided on his website, here: <https://livingwater-spain.com/NTGk00.htm>

¹ CLIE, 2019 See <https://www.clie.es/curso-de-griego-biblico>

² Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005

Introduction

Colossians 1:16-17 gives key facts about Jesus Christ:

“For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” (NIV, 2011)³

This makes four statements about Christ:

1. “In him all things were created.”

This is echoed in John 1:3: Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. (NIV)⁴

2. “All things have been created through him and for him.”

The first part of this statement, “through him”, is also declared in 1 Corinthians 8:6: “there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live (NIV)⁵

The second part of this statement, “for him” is described in Romans 11:36: “For from him and through him and for him are all things.” (NIV)⁶ Significantly, the context of Romans 11:36 shows us that the word “him” refers to “God”, “the Lord”. Yet Colossians 1:16 applies this to Jesus Christ, indicating that the Bible describes him as “God”.

3. “He is before all things.”

The Greek word for “before”, πρὸ [pro] can mean spatially in front of, temporally before, or denoting primary importance. See Friberg, “Analytical Greek Lexicon”⁷ Other Greek lexicons agree with these definitions and translations.

As regards Christ being temporally before, see his own words in his prayer to the Father in John 17:5: “And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.” (NIV)⁸

As regards Christ having primary importance, see verse 17 and passages such as Philippians 2:10-11: “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (NIV)⁹

4. “In him all things hold together.”

Hebrews 1:3a expresses this same concept with the words “The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.” (NIV)¹⁰

A key phrase repeated four times in these two verses is “all things” (Greek τὰ πάντα [ta panta] in the nominative neuter plural, πάντων [pantōn] in the genitive neuter plural). This is unambiguous, absolute and exclusive: it allows for no exceptions. Christ has pre-eminence above everything,

³ ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὰ ὀρατὰ καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα, εἴτε θρόνοι εἴτε κυριότητες εἴτε ἀρχαὶ εἴτε ἐξουσίαι· τὰ πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται· ¹⁷ καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν πρὸ πάντων καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν (Colossians 1:16-17)

⁴ πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν ὃ γέγονεν (John. 1:3)

⁵ εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι’ αὐτοῦ. (1 Corinthians 8:6)

⁶ ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα· (Romans 11:30)

⁷ πρὸ preposition with the genitive before; (1) spatially before, in front of, at (AC 12.6); figuratively before, ahead of someone (MT 11.10); (2) temporally before (MT 24.38; CO 1.17); (3) denoting primary importance π. πάντων above all, especially (JA 5.12) Friberg, “Analytical Greek Lexicon”, reproduced in Bibleworks 10.

⁸ καὶ νῦν δόξασόν με σύ, πάτερ, παρὰ σεαυτῷ τῇ δόξῃ ἣ εἶχον πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι παρὰ σοί. (John 17:5)

⁹ ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων 11 καὶ πάντα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσῃται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρός. (Philippians 2:10-11)

¹⁰ ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ (Hebrews 1:3)

everyone, every being, whether on the earth or beyond the earth, whether good or bad. If anyone thinks that this statement is not justified, it is sufficient just to re-read verses 16 and 17.

Christ is described (*twice in this passage alone!*) as having “created **all things**”. By definition, this passage thus describes Christ as **an uncreated being**”.

Writing in the fourth century to refute the heresy of Arianism, which claimed that Christ was created, the Christian leader Athanasius wrote, “But if all the creatures were created in him, he is other than the creatures, and is not a creature, but the Creator of the creatures.”¹¹

Naturally, this passage presents enormous problems for the Jehovah’s Witnesses, who copy the claims of the Arians. Quite simply, Colossians 1:16-17 shows that this belief is incompatible with the clear statements of the Bible.

It is passages such as this that eventually made it necessary for the Jehovah’s Witnesses to produce their own version of the Bible, in which they seek to change all passages that show the falseness of their claims.

In spite of the teaching of the New Testament, the Jehovah’s Witnesses claim that Christ was created first, as “the Archangel Michael”, and that he then created **all other things**. There is of course in the Bible nothing that supports either of these ideas, but in the case of Colossians 1:16-17 the Jehovah’s Witnesses solved that problem *by adding the word “other” four times in the text*. This does of course totally change the meaning of the text to the **opposite** of what it actually says, as we shall see below.

Apologists for the Jehovah’s Witnesses work hard to try to justify the indefensible, and in this article we shall limit ourselves to the writings of two Jehovah’s Witnesses, Jason BeDuhn and someone who uses the name Sean Kasabuske (see more on him below).

Jason BeDuhn

In 2003, Jason David BeDuhn’s book “Truth in Translation” was published.¹² It is a defence of the Jehovah’s Witness version of the Bible, which they call “The New World Translation”¹³ and at the same time it is an attack on eight other translations of the New Testament into English. A review of his book can be found on this website, here: <https://livingwater-spain.com/beduhn.pdf>

Dr BeDuhn dedicates a chapter of his book to a defence of the NWT changes to Colossians 1:16-17, his chapter 7, pages 77-88. In Chapter 14 of my review, pages 53-55, I look at what he says. I reproduce that chapter here:

BEDUHN AND COLOSSIANS CHAPTER 1

BeDuhn’s Defence of the New World Translation

The principal section of BeDuhn’s book consists of a series of chapters in which he sets out to justify some of the NWT’s most notorious mistranslations. Thus, he has a whole chapter that sets out to justify the NWT’s addition of the word “other” four times in two verses in Colossians 1.

He starts by saying (p. 77), “It is a tricky passage”. This is in fact not the case for the translator: the Greek text is simple and translation of it is easy.

¹¹ “Athanasius, “Orations against the Arians”, 2.62, quoted by Lynn H. Cohick in “The Baker Illustrated Bible Commentary, New Testament”, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2012, (p. 1403). Dr Cohick is Associate Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College, Illinois.

¹² BeDuhn, Jason David, “TRUTH IN TRANSLATION Accuracy and Bias in English Translations of the New Testament”, Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America ®, Inc, 2003

¹³ Referred to below as “the NWT”

Of course, it does turn out to be “a tricky passage” *to explain away* for the Jehovah’s Witnesses, for reasons explained below, but these are all to do with doctrine, theology and interpretation, areas that BeDuhn had said that he would not touch on; his book is – he claims – about *translation*, not about *doctrine*.

BeDuhn’s argument is this: when translating from one language to another, it is sometimes necessary to add words. Other translations add words, often without even admitting that they have done so. Therefore, the NWT is justified in adding the word “other” (no less than four times!) in its rendering of Colossians chapter 1.

Before tackling the difficult task of justifying the unjustifiable, BeDuhn subjects the reader to no less than six pages (pp. 78-83) in which he gives long quotations from other translations, showing at the end of each translation the total number of words it contains.

This is a truly pointless exercise that seems to reveal a lack of understanding on his part of the nature of language in general and of Koiné Greek in particular. Let me explain why.

As an example, the Greek perfect tense is rendered by one word, whereas the English perfect tense is rendered by two. Furthermore, Greek (like, Spanish, Russian and some other languages) frequently misses out the subject pronoun (I, you, etc) with verbs, since the verb ending shows clearly which person is meant. Thus, a one-word Greek perfect tense will usually require three words in English. For example, the Greek word *πεπίστευκας* [pepísteukas] (in John 20:29) is equivalent to the English “you have believed”.

Exactly the same happens with the Greek Aorist participle. Thus, for example, the one Greek word *ἐλθοῦσα* [“elthousa”] (in Matthew. 15:25, and elsewhere) refers to an action completed in the past by a female subject. The shortest English translation is likely to be “having come up, she ...” or “when she had come up, she ...”

Thus it is inevitable that all English translations of most Greek passages of any length necessarily contain more words than the original. Of course, the key factor is that they should not introduce any new *ideas* that are not in the original text. However, BeDuhn uses this purely-numerical fact to justify the NWT’s addition of an extra word that is not in the Greek, *even though that additional word totally changes the **meaning** of the passage in question*.

Colossians 1 is writing about Jesus. Here is what it says in verses 16-17, according to the NIV translation, which is very close to the original Greek text:

“by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

The meaning is so clear as scarcely to need commentary: all created things, whether on earth or in heaven, physical or spiritual, were created by Christ.

If all created things were made by Christ, then this can lead to only one conclusion: that Christ himself is not a created being. (After all, he could not, by definition, have “created himself”, which is a meaningless phrase.)

So this simple, unambiguous passage shows that the Jehovah’s Witness doctrine that Christ was a created being (the archangel Michael) must be false.

The Jehovah’s Witnesses have therefore needed to add words, in order to change the crystal-clear meaning of the original Greek text. The New World Translation renders these two verses:

“... by means of him all [other] things were created in the heavens and upon earth, the things visible and the things invisible, no matter whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All [other] things have been created through him and for him. Also, he is before all [other] things, and by means of him all [other] things were made to exist.”

By the simple addition – four times! – of the one word “other”, the meaning is totally changed to the *opposite* of the meaning of the Greek text. This cannot be called a “translation”. On the contrary, the Jehovah’s Witnesses have completely changed the meaning of the Greek original.

The Greek text says that Christ is not a created being. The NWT translation says that he *is* a created being, just that all *other* created beings were created by him (after he had been created by God, according to Jehovah’s Witness doctrine).

The meaning of the Greek text is clear. Translating it does not present any problems. BeDuhn, who said that he would not get involved in doctrine, theology or interpretation, spends 14 pages (pp. 75-88) arguing for the Jehovah’s Witness interpretation of the text, and saying that this “understanding” justifies the addition of the word “other”, so that readers will get the meaning that the Jehovah’s Witnesses claim for it.

What BeDuhn chooses to ignore is that the Greek language does have a word for “other”, but that it appears no-where in this text. In fact, Koiné Greek has two words for other:

- ἕτερος [“heteros”] means “other (different from)”
- ἄλλος [“allos”] means “other (another one the same as)”.

Neither of these words appears in Colossians 1:16-17, but the English word “other” has been added four times by the NWT translators, who object to the clear meaning of the passage, which tells us that Christ is not a created being.

BeDuhn justifies this perversion of the original by the irrational argument that all translations add extra words, so the NWT is no different from any other translation, even describing the addition of the word “other” as “innocuous” (p. 84).

Yet two pages later he writes, “we discover a shocking willingness of translators to freely add words and ideas not supported or in any way implied in the Greek.” So adding words is roundly condemned by him, but this is precisely what the NWT does with this passage. It would be hard to think of a more outrageous example of “double-speak”.¹⁴

A paragraph later, ignoring his condemnation of the “shocking willingness of translators to freely add words”, he writes with reference to the NWT’s addition of words in Colossians 1, “what the NW translators have done is certainly necessary” (p. 86). It is difficult to believe that the same person can have written these two paragraphs.

BeDuhn’s argument may be summarised as follows:

- when other translations add words, it is wrong;
- when the New World Translation adds words, it is right.

Perhaps one would be justified in quoting from BeDuhn and using one of his own terms of criticism for those who disagree with him. The indefensible nature of his logic at this point is indeed “absurd”, although I would prefer to state that it is simply impossible to justify.

We should not be surprised that there is no evidence that his book has been taken seriously by the academic community.

BeDuhn’s claim

BeDuhn’s claim is that except in the case of the New World Translation, all other Bible translators and Bible translations have been guilty of theological bias when translating the Bible and have therefore produced translations all of which have been inaccurate. All the evidence given by BeDuhn himself and by his university indicate that he is in fact not a Bible translator. Until 2012,

¹⁴ George Orwell introduced the concept of “doublethink” in his book *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Orwell, 1949) and in other essays he writes that “unscrupulous politicians, advertisers, religionists, and other doublespeakers of whatever stripe continue to abuse language for manipulative purposes”. cf. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doublespeak> , downloaded on 21.10.12.

the only publication of his concerning Bible translation is this book. It is not backed up by learned articles written by him and published in specialist journals (or anywhere else). In fact, even in this book he only translates isolated words and phrases, not even whole Bible verses.

BeDuhn's claim is that he alone – along with the Jehovah's Witnesses – is not affected by bias and that therefore the version of these words produced by the Jehovah's Witnesses is the only one that is accurate.

The blog poster

In 2026 a blog poster who writes in defence of the Jehovah's Witness version of the Bible has posted a series of new claims in order to justify the addition of the word "other" by the NWT in Colossians 1:16-17.

"Sean Kasabuske"

This Jehovah's Witness writer claims that the Organization is justified in adding words to the Bible that do not occur in the original text.

He identifies himself as Sean Kasabuske and I notice that he uses American spellings in his writing. He has a blog here: <https://kazlandblog.wordpress.com/>

In one invitation to his BlogSpot he reportedly states,

"I should point out that I'm not a scholar, but I enjoy a scholarly approach to discourse. My primary reason for starting this blog is because I often engage in theological dialogue online"¹⁵

However, on visiting the home page of his blog¹⁶ a series of things immediately become obvious:

1. His first posting, dated "August 22, 2026, concerns the Greek word θεός [theos, "God"], for which he does not provide a transliteration or translation, giving only the Greek letters multiple times. Unfortunately, the transcription that he uses does not reproduce the Greek letters and accent correctly, when displayed in a range of major browsers, such as Chrome and Brave, so that as displayed on his website it is wrong on every occasion except in the title.
2. This posting by him turns out to be a defence of the Jehovah's Witness rendering of John 1:1, part c, which differs fundamentally from the meaning of the Greek text, as they describe Jesus as "a god", not a possible meaning for monotheistic Judaism and Christianity.
3. In spite of having stated that he is not a scholar, by the end of his second paragraph Kasabuske has condemned four major 20th-century academics, without providing any evidence to support his claim, merely describing their statements as a "blunder". In his next paragraph, he expands his criticism of them by adding further insults, including:
"It was an embarrassing blunder, as any first-year student of logic should have been able to explain to these folks where they had gone wrong, but apparently their theological commitments and zeal for the traditional rendering blinded them to the obvious".
4. He does not give any links or bibliographical references to the work of the academics that he condemns, and only provides quotations from one of them, but without giving the sources.
5. As his article continues, he attacks another Greek expert, again not providing detailed analysis but instead using further insults such as "his article is riddled with problems", "conspicuous mistakes" and "childlike".

¹⁵ Quoted in personal correspondence received in August 2026 from a visitor to my website, <https://livingwater-spain.com/>

¹⁶ <https://kazlandblog.wordpress.com/> Accessed on 30.8.26.

6. As indicated above, Kasabuske does not identify his source, but seems to be referring to an article by Philip Harner published in “The Journal of Biblical Literature”.¹⁷ The website <https://www.bible.ca> states that the Jehovah’s Witnesses mis-quote Harner and make him seem to say the opposite of what he actually says.¹⁸ This would definitely be in line with other “quotations” supposedly made by the Jehovah’s Witnesses. For more on this, see here: <https://livingwater-spain.com/experts.pdf> As our intention on this occasion is to look at Kasabuske’s claims about the Jehovah’s Witness translation of Colossians 1:16-17, we will not here research their version of John 1:1 further. For an analysis of John 1:1, see here: https://livingwater-spain.com/John_1_1.pdf, and for a response to other JW claims about John 1:1, see here: https://livingwater-spain.com/Jn_1_1_Sahidic.pdf
7. The first title on Kasabuske’s blog, “A Brief Introduction to the Emergence of the Qualitative Count Noun Hypothesis in Relation to Θεός at John 1:1c”, reveals a style that is better at intimidating a non-scholarly audience than at communicating anything intelligible.
8. The assertions that he makes in support of Jehovah’s Witness teaching are mere statements without any evidence or analysis to justify them. For instance, he states, “every noun in John that is comparable to Θεός at John 1:1c is properly rendered into English with the indefinite article”, but he nowhere gives a list of the nouns in John that he claims are “comparable to Θεός at John 1:1c”, nor how he defines “comparable to Θεός at John 1:1c”, let alone any analysis of the grammatical context.
9. In this first article on his website¹⁹ he at no point refers to the Jehovah’s Witnesses, but reveals by repeated references to the “NWT”, the Jehovah’s Witness abbreviation for the name of their version of the Bible, that it is their claims that he is defending.

Kasabuske’s defence of the JW version of Colossians 1:16-17

Elsewhere, in correspondence with a visitor to my website, Kasabuske defends the Jehovah’s Witness version of Colossians 1:16-17, justifying their addition of the word “other” four times in those verses. I note that he says, “what matters most are ... not the number of heads you can count in favor your view” and then he goes on to list translations, some of them extremely obscure, from which he claims to find support. This sounds as though in his practice he is contradicting the principle that he has just stated.

In any case, ultimately, what translations say is irrelevant when we have an undisputed Greek text and the meaning of that text is extremely clear.

He states the main basis of his argument: “The only question that really matters here is whether “other” is implied.” However, what does the word “implied” mean? It means that *in his opinion* the passage *meant to say* “other”, but missed the word out.

His opinion is of no interest. The important thing is what the text actually says.

Secondly, dictionaries define the word “implies” as “infers”, “suggests” or “hints at”. The Bible doesn’t “infer”, “suggest” or “hint at” its fundamental teachings; it makes them abundantly clear, and this is also the case in Colossians 1:16-17, the verses that the Jehovah’s Witnesses know that they must change – *no less than four times!* – as the text proves that their doctrine about Christ goes against what the Bible actually says.

The problem is not with the Greek but with his attitude. He is determined to prevent the text from saying that which it unambiguously does say. Quoting from a verse in Philippians 2 that the

¹⁷ Harner, Philip, “Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns: Mark 15:39 and John 1:1.” in “The Journal of Biblical Literature”, issue 92, March 1993, pp 75-87

¹⁸ See here: <https://www.bible.ca/trinity/trinity-Harner.htm> Accessed on 31.8.26.

¹⁹ When visited on 30 and 31 August 2026

Jehovah's Witnesses also change does not undermine the clear meaning of the passage in Colossians 1; it merely undermines the Jehovah's Witnesses, by showing that yet again they distort the meaning of any passage that proves their dogmas false.

We need to approach the Bible with an open mind, asking God to reveal His truth to us, but the Jehovah's Witnesses approach the Bible with a rigid set of doctrines that they refuse to change. They then twist the text to try to prevent their readers from seeing that the Bible actually proves their teachings to be false.

As regards adding the word "other" to change the meaning of the passage, Proverbs 30:6 states, "Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar." (NIV), but that is precisely what the Jehovah's Witnesses do in Colossians 1 and Philippians 2.

Revelation 22:18-19 says something similar:

¹⁸ I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹ And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book." (NIV)

Seeing that the Jehovah's Witnesses claim to accept the authority of the Bible as being the word of God, they should take these warnings in the Bible very seriously.

Other passages elsewhere in the Bible say very similar things. For instance, Deuteronomy 4:2 states: "Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you." (NIV)

Similarly, Deuteronomy 12:32 says, "See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it." (NIV)

How many commands the Jehovah's Witnesses have added to the commands that the Lord has given us! For instance, "Do not accept blood transfusions", "Do not celebrate birthdays", "Men must not have beards" and "Women must not wear slacks" (or "pants", as the American leaders of this American sect call them) – until they changed the last two of those commands just under three years ago.

And this is precisely one of the major problems with the Jehovah's Witness dogma: they are adamant about them and prepared to let members die by prohibiting blood transfusions that could save their lives, to split up families and to destroy lives – until the "Organization's" leaders change their minds. Who can say which doctrines and commands that they today claim are "Jehovah's instructions" will be abandoned by them in a few months' time? Their abusive use of the term "new light" enables them to change any teaching or command to the absolute opposite at any time.

In John 5:23 we read Jesus' words, "that all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father. Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father, who sent him." (NIV) But the Jehovah's Witnesses dishonour the Son by taking away from Him the authority and power that the Bible tells us that He has, as shown in Philippians 2:9, Colossians 1:16-17, John 1:1 and many other places, all of which they change to avoid honouring the Son as the Father is honoured.

In 2 Peter 2:1-2 we read, "But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them — bringing swift destruction on themselves. ² Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute." (NIV) The Jehovah's Witnesses say that only their sect has "the Truth". That is clearly not the case, as predicted in these verses from 2 Peter.

The Jehovah's Witnesses – and Kasabuske – would be well advised to take these warnings and instructions seriously and to stop fighting against what the Bible clearly says about Christ.

Kasabuske says, “Scholars bring presuppositions to the texts just as others do”, and this clearly applies to the Watchtower Organization and its “Governing Body”. In fact, most translators do try to render in the target language the meaning of the original text, without adding anything to the text or taking anything from it, and they leave questions of doctrine to others, such as theologians and religious leaders.

As I say in my review of the book by the JW apologist Jason BeDuhn (see here: <https://livingwater-spain.com/beduhn.pdf> and above) about the Jehovah’s Witness addition of the word “other”:

“In fact, Koiné Greek has two words for other:

- ἕτερος [“heteros”] means “other (different from)”
- ἄλλος [“allos”] means “other (another one the same as)”.

Neither of these words appears in Colossians 1:16-17” (page 54 on the edition consulted today).

Kasabuske claims that omitting “other” in the Greek even when it was “implied” “was such a common feature of Greek that one of our premiere Greek grammars mentioned that phenomenon explicitly”. (spelling of “premiere” by Kasabuske)

There are four problems with this claim:

1. Greek does not omit “other” when it is “implied”. It uses it whenever it is needed.
2. Omitting the word “other” when it was needed was not “a common feature of Greek” and not even “an uncommon feature of Greek”; it did not happen. Fact. The Greek New Testament uses one or other of the above two Greek words over 170 times. If we look at the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, we find that a Greek word for “other” occurs over 500 times.²⁰

This clearly shows the error of Kasabuske’s claim that omitting the word “other” “was such a common feature of Greek”. It goes against the evidence of the Greek text itself.

3. His reference to “one of our premiere Greek grammars” is an example of the typical J.W. intellectual intimidation strategy.
4. He does not even give the name of the so-called “premiere Greek grammar”, let alone full bibliographical details, with the name of the author, the name of the publisher, the place and year of publication and the page number. In academic circles this would be considered an abuse of sources. His aim is clearly not to help his reader to check his claims, but to shut down the voices of those that he says are wrong.

Anyone who uses such strategies discredits their own cause and will not be taken seriously by any truly independent academic or expert in the Greek text. By doing this, the Jehovah’s Witnesses show the weakness of their own claims and indeed the absence of evidence to support what they claim.

In his defence, Kasabuske is merely behaving in the way that he has learnt from the Jehovah’s Witness “organization”, which has been deliberately mis-quoting sources for decades. See, for instance, my article “The Experts quoted by the Jehovah’s Witnesses”, here:

<https://livingwater-spain.com/experts.pdf>

Other researchers make the same point as I do, and in fact, my article quotes from a few of them, and of course I do give full bibliographic information, to enable readers to carry out their own research.

²⁰ Searched on this occasion for speed on the NIV translation, for which reason precise numbers are not given here, but the Greek text reveals similar numbers. Obviously, because of Greek grammar, each of these two words has at least six forms (masculine, feminine and neuter in the single and the plural), which can also have changes to the endings of the words, depending on the grammatical context (at least nominative, accusative, genitive and dative) so twelve or more separate searches could be required to reveal all occurrences in the Greek.

“Premiere Greek Grammar”

When challenged by a visitor to my website as to which “premiere Greek Grammar” he was referring to, Kasabuske replied with the following information:

“The omission of the notion 'other, whatever'...is specifically Greek" (A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, revised by Robert W. Funk, found in section 14 that deal (*sic*) with Ellipsis, Brachylogy, Pleonasm), p. 254.”

First, I observe Kasabuske says that according to his source Greek omits “the notion 'other, whatever'...” (emphasis added), not the word “other”, so the book does not seem to provide the support that he originally claimed. He had claimed that the “notion” or idea was “implied”, but only the word was missing. The book to which he appeals for support seems to say that it is the notion itself that is missing in the Greek.

I note that the information that he gives does not include the year of publication. Research reveals that this book was published in 1896 in German, revised over the years and then translated by Robert Funk in 1960.²¹ It appears to have been out of print for decades and is definitely not a “Premiere Greek Grammar”, as claimed by Kasabuske.

Robert W Funk

Secondly, as regards the translator of the book, Robert W Funk, he was a theologian who became most renowned for establishing the “Jesus Seminar”, which conducted votes to determine which of the teachings of Jesus to accept and which to reject. As such, he would not be regarded as any sort of valid authority by those who consider the Bible to be authoritative or the word of God. It is not surprising that this JW apologist preferred not to give Funk’s name nor the name of his book, which is definitely not considered by academics to be “one of our premiere Greek grammars”, the claim made by this JW writer.

According to Theissen and Merz²², Funk’s approach was strongly sceptical of orthodox Christian belief, particularly concerning the historical Jesus.²³

In its obituary for Funk, who died in 2005, the Los Angeles Times states that he was the “founder of the controversial Jesus Seminar, which called into question New Testament miracle stories and the authenticity of many of the statements attributed to Jesus”²⁴. The obituary continues with the statement, “Among the Jesus Seminar’s assertions was that many of the miracles attributed to Jesus never occurred, at least in a literal sense. Nor, the Jesus Seminar concluded in 1995, did Jesus rise bodily from the dead. The scholars also agreed that there probably was no tomb and that Jesus’ body probably was disposed of by his executioners, not his followers. ... In all, 80% of the passages attributed to Jesus were rejected by the seminar. ... Jesus, Funk said, was “one of the great sages of history,” but he was not the man portrayed in a surface reading of the New Testament.”²⁵

²¹ “Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature” by Friedrich Blass (Author), Albert Debrunner (Author), Robert W. Funk (Translator) See <https://www.amazon.com.au/Greek-Grammar-Testament-Christian-Literature/dp/0226271102> Accessed on 1 September 2026

²² Theissen, Gerd and Annette Merz. "The historical Jesus: a comprehensive guide". Fortress Press. 1998. translated from German (1996 edition). p. 321

²³ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_W._Funk Accessed on 1st September 2026

²⁴ <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2005-sep-07-me-funk7-story.html> Accessed on 1st September 2026

²⁵ The same obituary was published in the Boston Globe on 9th September 2005 and can at the time of writing be seen here:

https://archive.boston.com/news/globe/obituaries/articles/2005/09/09/robert_funk_founder_of_jesus_seminar/

Accessed on 1 September 2026

In its article on the Jesus Seminar, the Wikipedia entry²⁶ states, “The Jesus Seminar has come under intense criticism regarding its method, assumptions and conclusions from a wide array of scholars and laymen.” At this point, the entry refers to books by Wilkins, Moreland and Allison.²⁷

So Funk clearly would not be accepted even by the Jehovah’s Witnesses as an expert whom they would wish to quote as regards what the Bible says. The strange appeal to him by Kasabuske for support shows how hard it has been for the Jehovah’s Witnesses to find anyone who would support their addition of the word “other” in various places in the New Testament in order to change the meaning of the text.

Thus we see in action again the usual Jehovah’s Witness technique of trawling through publications, no matter how old, how unorthodox or how controversial, to find any statement that they can claim represents the conclusions of a leading expert. Once again, nothing could be further from the truth.

In addition, Kasabuske does not even quote the evidence that he claims is key, so with the difficulties in obtaining the original book, which was published more than 60 years ago and is currently unavailable to purchase, readers are unlikely to be able to evaluate his claims.

JW Writing Department?

This bears all the standard hallmarks of Jehovah’s Witness “research” and appeal to “experts” and one must ask whether Kasabuske is in fact located at the JW headquarters in New York state, or even if “Kasabuske” is a pseudonym used by the JW writing department. Such tactics by the “Organization” have been observed before. See, for instance, “The Great Deception”, here: https://livingwater-spain.com/Jn20_28_Blunt.pdf and “An internet plot”, here: https://livingwater-spain.com/internet_plot.pdf²⁸

The Watchtower “Kingdom Interlinear Translation”

In any case, the JW’s own “Kingdom Interlinear Translation” demonstrates that the NWT is wrong here. See page 896 of the 1969 edition²⁹ and page 880 of the 1985 edition³⁰.

[See image on next page.]

²⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_Seminar Accessed on 1st September 2026

²⁷ Michael J. Wilkins & J.P. Moreland, General Editors, *Jesus Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents the Historical Jesus*, Zondervan, 1995

Allison, Dale C. (1998). *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet*. Fortress Press.

²⁸ Accessed on 1st September 2026

²⁹ New World Bible Translation Committee, “The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures”, Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc, 1969, p. 896.

³⁰ New World Bible Translation Committee, “The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures”, 1985 edition, Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc, 1985, p. 880.

COLOSSIANS 1: 16—21	896	
εικὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος image of the God the invisible, firstborn πάσης κτίσεως, 16 ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ of all creation, because in him ἐκτίσθη *τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς it was created the all (things) in the heavens καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὰ ὁρατὰ καὶ and upon the earth, the (things) visible and τὰ ἀόρατα, εἴτε θρόνοι εἴτε the (things) invisible, whether thrones or κυριότητες εἴτε ἀρχαὶ εἴτε ἐξουσίαι lordships or governments or authorities; *τὰ πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν the all (things) through him and into him ἐκτίσται. 17 καὶ αὐτὸς ἔστιν πρὸ it has been created; and he is before *πάντων καὶ *τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ all (things) and the all (things) in him συνέστηκεν, 18 καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ it has stood together, and he is the κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος, τῆς ἐκκλησίας head of the body, of the ecclesia; ὃς ἔστιν ἡ ἀρχή, πρωτότοκος ἐκ who is the beginning, firstborn out of τῶν νεκρῶν, ἵνα γένηται ἐν the dead (ones), in order that might become in *πᾶσιν αὐτὸς πρῶτεύων, all (things) he holding the first place, 19 ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ because in him he thought well all the	the image of the in- visible God, the first- born of all creation; 16 because by means of him all [other] things were created in the heavens and upon the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, no matter whether they are thrones or lord- ships or governments or authorities. All [other] things have been created through him and for him. 17 Also, he is before all [other] things and by means of him all [other] things were made to exist, 18 and he is the head of the body, the congrega- tion. He is the begin- ning, the first-born from the dead, that he might become the one who is first in <u>all</u> things; 19 because	I have here marked the Greek for “all things” with a red asterisk in the interlinear text. The NWT version is reproduced by the publishers in the right-hand column and I have underlined in red the four places where they have added the word “other” in brackets. It is interesting to note that the same Greek word for “all things” (πᾶσιν [pasin] in the dative neuter plural) also occurs in verse 18 and <u>this time the JWs have not added the word “other” in the NWT text</u> (see the underlining in the last two lines of the text in the right-hand column.)

Part of page 896 reproduced from “The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures”, Brooklyn, New York, USA: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 1969.

We note that the Greek Word “all” occurs (in various forms, depending on the grammatical context) four times in verses 16 and 17, and also once (this time in the dative form) in verse 18, and that in spite of having added the word “other” four times in verses 16 and 17, in verse 18, where they considered that this change was not necessary in order to protect Jehovah’s Witness doctrine, they did not add the word “other”. What inconsistency with the same word, in the same context, in the same paragraph! It really does make clear that the changes that they introduced were doctrinally motivated.

In their 1985 edition of the “Kingdom Interlinear Text”, but not in their original 1969 edition, at Colossians chapter 1 they refer in a footnote to Luke 11:41 and 42, but this merely gives two further examples of them adding the word “other” to their English version of the Greek text.

In fact, their addition of the word “other” in the two verses in Luke 11 are merely cases of them fabricating examples to quote as justification for their mistranslations in Philippians 2 and Colossians 1. The fact that they seek to manufacture “support” in this way shows that they know that they are on weak ground in their mistranslation of Colossians 1:16-17.

On their chopping and changing with their addition and omission of the word “other” in Luke 11, see below.

In the NWT translation of the verses in Luke they place the word “other” in square brackets, to show that it is not in the Greek text, and they do this also in Colossians 1:16-17.

In the NWT of Philippians 2:9 they also add the word “other” to reduce the force of the statement about Christ – that his name is “above every name” – which uses the same word “all” in a different form, as it is here in the singular, accusative neuter form: πᾶν [pan]. Their 1969 edition does not put the added word “other” in square brackets, showing a lack of consistency by them, but in their 1985 edition they have corrected their error by adding the missing square brackets, thus showing that they have added the word here, too.

In the 1969 “Kingdom Interlinear” they do not state the edition of the New World Translation text that they are using, although they reproduce the Foreword from the February 9, 1950 edition, so we assume that it is the 1950 edition that they are using. In the 1985 “Kingdom Interlinear” they state that the NWT text is from the 1984 revision.

In both editions they state that “brackets ... denote that the word or words enclosed have been inserted by the translators” (both on page 6) – quite some admission! As justification, they state that this is “to make some application ... or to show something that is understood” (same page). By “understood” they presumably mean “something that was in the mind of the writer [how could they know that?!], but was not expressed.”

All brackets removed

However, in their 2013 revision of the NWT, *all these square brackets have been removed*, hiding the evidence that the word “other” has been added by them and that it is not in the Greek text.

“Other” removed by the Watchtower Organization

Interestingly, in their 2013 revision *they have also removed the added word “other” in Luke 11:41*, but have retained it (naturally without brackets) in Luke 11:42. So in the 1950 and 1984 editions of the NWT, the addition of the word “other” in Luke 11:41 was needed “to make some application ... or to show something that is understood”, but in 2013 it was no longer needed. The rationale behind this change is not evident.

It seems that arguments are made, and words added to the text, when the leaders of the “Organization” consider them useful, and then they are quietly dropped when they are no longer needed. We have seen this invention of rules, followed by abandoning the rules invented, elsewhere in the publications of the Jehovah’s Witnesses. See for instance the article “John 8:58 “Before Abraham was, I am” – Jesus”, which can be found here: https://livingwater-spain.com/John8_58.pdf, page 8 of the edition consulted on 29th August 2026, the section entitled “The Jehovah’s Witnesses abandon this “rule” ”.

Given this flip-flopping of translations and supposed Greek “rules”, no trust can be placed in any of the arguments presented by the Jehovah’s Witnesses. What they state so vehemently today may be abandoned by the “Organization” tomorrow. At that point, their followers will have to fall in line and pretend that the previous “rules” and “commands” had never existed.

The impact of adding the word “other”

To give an example of the impact of adding the word “other”: I recently had two Jehovah’s Witnesses in my house. I said to them,

“If I say ‘I have built all the houses in this street’, the meaning is clear: I have built all of them, *including this one*. If I say ‘I have built all the *other* houses in this street’, the meaning is also clear: *I have not built this house*, but I have built the rest of them. So adding the word “other” gives the sentence *the opposite meaning* to what it had before. *It is not a clarification but a total reversal of the meaning.*”

(I might add that a number of years ago I did indeed build the house in which I was living, but not the other houses in the street!)

Conclusion

For those who know Koiné Greek there is no case to answer: the JW claim with regard to any of these Bible passages does not have any justification in the light of the meaning of the Greek words, phrases and sentences; appealing to spurious “rules” and “implications” and dubious “scholars” cannot change that.