

Reference Document

“The One Word Paul Never Wrote”

Every Claim, Source, and Verification Status

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Each entry identifies a specific factual claim made in the video, the source it is based on, where to verify it, and any notes on confidence level. Claims are organized in the order they appear in the video.

Verification levels:

- **PRIMARY** — Sourced from official Watchtower publications (magazines, books, Bibles, and internal tools), court records, or firsthand testimony under oath. Primary sources can stand on their own.
 - **SECONDARY** — Sourced from reputable investigative journalism, academic or scholarly research, or established reference works. Secondary sources support claims and are most defensible when paired with a primary or another independent secondary.
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SECTION 1

The Official Story

Claim: Watchtower describes the New World Translation as a translation made directly from Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek into modern-day English by a committee of anointed witnesses of Jehovah.

- **Source:** *Reasoning from the Scriptures* (1989 revised edition), pp. 276–280, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1101989250>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower reference book, published for door-to-door use by Jehovah’s Witnesses.
- **Key quote:**

“A translation of the Holy Scriptures made directly from Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek into modern-day English by a committee of anointed witnesses of Jehovah.”

Claim: Watchtower built a proprietary translation software system called MEPS (Multilanguage Electronic Publishing System), first developed in 1979.

- **Source:** *God’s Kingdom Rules!*, chapter 10: “Tools for Preaching—Producing Literature for the Worldwide Field,” Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1102014247>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower publication describing the MEPS system and the derivative Watchtower Translation System used by translators worldwide.

Claim: Jehovah’s Witnesses publish their content in more than 1,000 languages.

- **Source:** Jehovah’s Witnesses 2025 Service Year Report, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/jw-meetings-and-events/reports/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official annual statistical report published by Watch Tower.

Claim: The complete New World Translation is available in over 130 languages, with parts of it available in 327 languages total.

- **Source:** Jehovah’s Witnesses 2025 Service Year Report, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/jw-meetings-and-events/reports/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official annual statistical report.

SECTION 2

The Contradiction: Translated From English

Claim: Watchtower itself states that non-English editions of the New World Translation are based on the English translation, not on the original Hebrew and Greek.

- **Source:** *Reasoning from the Scriptures* (1989 revised edition), pp. 276–280, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1101989250>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Watchtower’s own reference book, in the same paragraph that contains the “made directly from Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek” claim.
- **Note:** The two statements appear three sentences apart in the same definition block. Watchtower openly acknowledges both that the English NWT was translated from the original languages and that all other language editions are translated from the English.
- **Key quote:**

“Editions in other languages have been based on the English translation.”

Claim: Beginning in 1961, Watchtower translators rendered the English text of the New World Translation into other languages, and 29 editions have been translated from English and released in languages spoken by over two billion people.

- **Source:** *The Watchtower*, November 15, 2001, pp. 7–9, “The New World Translation Appreciated by Millions Worldwide,” Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/2001842>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower magazine article describing the NWT translation process in Watchtower’s own words.
- **Key quote:**

“Already in 1961, translators began rendering the English text of the New World Translation into other languages.”

Claim: A team of translators in Spain receives the original text in English from the headquarters of Jehovah’s Witnesses in the United States.

- **Source:** *Awake!*, No. 3 2016, “Language Translators’ Techniques for Over 750 Languages,” Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/awake-no3-2016-june/language-translation-techniques/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower magazine feature describing the translation pipeline.
- **Key quote:**
“A team of translators in Spain receives the original text in English from the headquarters of Jehovah’s Witnesses in the United States.”

Claim: Watchtower states that the original text for all of its literature is prepared in English at world headquarters and then forwarded to translators.

- **Source:** “How Is Our Literature Written and Translated?” *What Does God Require of Us?* brochure (“God’s Will” series), Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/brochures/jehovahs-will/literature-written-and-translated/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower explainer on jw.org.
- **Key quote:**
“The original text is prepared in English. The Governing Body oversees the activity of the Writing Department at our world headquarters. The text is forwarded to the translators.”

Claim: A spokesperson for Jehovah’s Witnesses in the Philippines, James Morales, described the MEPS system in 2024 as providing translators access to the master text in English.

- **Source:** *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, February 22, 2024, “JW website is world’s most translated”
- **URL:** <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1908467/jw-website-is-worlds-most-translated>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Published interview in a major newspaper of record in the Philippines quoting a named Watchtower spokesperson on the record.
- **Key quote:**
“The MEPS is a computer software that is used by translators to access the master text in English.”

SECTION 3

Greek as the Testing Ground

Claim: The New Testament was originally written in Koine Greek, the common trade language of the eastern Roman Empire in the first century.

- **Source:** Encyclopædia Britannica, “Koine”
- **URL:** <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Koine>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Established reference encyclopedia on classical linguistics.
- **Note:** This is a well-established fact in New Testament scholarship and classical linguistics; any major reference work or introductory Greek grammar textbook confirms it.

Claim: Watchtower released a Greek-language edition of the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures in 1997, revising it in 2017.

- **Source:** Greek New World Translation, published by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/el/%CE%B2%CE%B9%CE%B2%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%BF%CE%B8%CE%AE%CE%BA%CE%B7/%CE%B1%CE%B3%CE%AF%CE%B1-%CE%B3%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%86%CE%AE-nwt/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower publication.
- **Note:** The 2017 revision is the version currently used by Greek-speaking Jehovah’s Witnesses and available on JW Library.

SECTION 4

Romans 13:9 — “The Law Code”

Claim: The original Koine Greek of Romans 13:9 begins with the words “τὸ γάρ” (to gar), rendered word-for-word in Watchtower’s own Kingdom Interlinear Translation as “The for.”

- **Source:** *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*, 1985 edition, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/bible/kingdom-interlinear-greek-translation/books/romans/13/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Watchtower’s own word-for-word reference Bible.
- **Note:** The Kingdom Interlinear was first published in 1969 and revised in 1985. It is available online in its entirety on [jw.org](http://www.jw.org) and remains the standard word-for-word reference produced by Watchtower for the Greek Scriptures.

Claim: The English New World Translation (2013 revision) renders Romans 13:9 as “For the law code, ‘You must not commit adultery, you must not murder, you must not steal, you must not covet.’”

- **Source:** *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (2013 revision), Romans 13:9, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/bible/study-bible/books/romans/13/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Current English edition of the NWT used by English-speaking Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Claim: The 2017 Greek edition of the New World Translation renders Romans 13:9 using the modern Greek phrase “ο νομικός κώδικας” (the legal code).

- **Source:** Greek New World Translation (2017 revision), Romans 13:9, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/el/%CE%B2%CE%B9%CE%B2%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%BF%CE%B8%CE%AE%CE%BA%CE%B7/%CE%B1%CE%B3%CE%AF%CE%B1-%CE%B3%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%86%CE%AE-nwt/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Current Greek edition of the NWT used by Greek-speaking Jehovah’s Witnesses.
- **Note:** The modern Greek phrase is a direct translation of the English “law code,” not of the original Koine “τὸ γάρ.”

SECTION 5

Colossians 1:16-17 — “Other”

Claim: The original Koine Greek of Colossians 1:16 uses the phrase “τὰ πάντα” (*ta panta*, “all things”), with no word meaning “other.”

- **Source:** *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*, 1985 edition, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/bible/kingdom-interlinear-greek-translation/books/colossians/1/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Watchtower’s own word-for-word reference Bible. The word-for-word rendering shows “all things” with no qualifier.

Claim: The 1984 Reference edition of the New World Translation rendered the word “other” in Colossians 1:16-17 in square brackets, indicating it was an editorial insertion not found in the original Greek.

- **Source:** *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, 1984 edition, Colossians 1:16-17, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/b/r1/lp-e/Rbi8/C/1984/51/1>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Watchtower’s own Reference Bible, which explicitly acknowledged the insertion using brackets per its own translation conventions.
- **Note:** Square brackets in the 1984 edition denoted words added by the translators that were not in the original-language text.

Claim: The 2013 revision of the English New World Translation removed the brackets around “other” in Colossians 1:16-17, rendering the insertion as plain text.

- **Source:** *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (2013 revision), Colossians 1:16-17, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/bible/study-bible/books/colossians/1/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Current English edition of the NWT; the text reads “all other things” without bracketing.

Claim: The 2017 Greek edition of the New World Translation renders Colossians 1:16-17 with the phrase “ὅλα τα ἄλλα πράγματα” (*all other things*), with no indication that the word “other” is an insertion.

- **Source:** Greek New World Translation (2017 revision), Colossians 1:16-17, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/el/%CE%B2%CE%B9%CE%B2%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%BF%CE%B8%CE%AE%CE%BA%CE%B7/%CE%B1%CE%B3%CE%AF%CE%B1-%CE%B3%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%86%CE%AE-nwt/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Current Greek edition of the NWT.
- **Note:** The word “ἄλλα” (“other”) is printed as plain text without brackets or footnote, exactly as it appears in the 2013 English edition.

SECTION 6

The 1970 Watchtower Admission

Claim: In 1970, Watchtower admitted in print that the word “other” was inserted into Colossians 1:16 for theological reasons, acknowledging that without the prevalence of trinitarian teaching, it would not have been necessary to add the word.

- **Source:** *The Watchtower*, April 15, 1970, p. 255, “Questions From Readers,” Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower magazine. This specific issue is not currently available on wol.jw.org; however, the passage is reproduced in numerous independent sources, including JW-supportive apologetic sites, academic critiques, and third-party theological reference works.
- **Note:** The quote is widely cited in both pro-JW and critical literature and can be verified by searching for “Watchtower April 15 1970 page 255 trinitarian.” Print copies of the issue are held in the Jehovah’s Witnesses publication archives and in university research libraries.
- **Key quote:**

“In considering this matter it is well to note that Bible writers often took for granted that certain things would be understood, just as writers in our day do. For example, the apostle Paul states, as we read at Colossians 1:16, that by means of Jesus Christ all things were created in the heavens and on earth. But since we know from Revelation 3:14 that Jesus himself was also created, the New World Translation adds the word ‘other,’ which clearly is what the apostle had in mind. But even here, it might be added, that, were it not for the prevalence of the trinitarian teaching that Jesus was not created, it would not have been necessary for us to add the word ‘other.’”

SECTION 7

The Translation Mechanism: MEPS

Claim: The MEPS (Multilanguage Electronic Publishing System) is the central computer system through which Watchtower translations pass; the Watchtower Translation System, which grew out of MEPS, is used worldwide by thousands of Watchtower translators.

- **Source:** *God’s Kingdom Rules!*, chapter 10: “Tools for Preaching—Producing Literature for the Worldwide Field,” Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1102014247>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower publication describing the internal translation tooling.
- **Key quote:**

“The MEPS Programming department developed a computer program called the Bible Translation System. [...] The Bible Translation System is now part of a program called Watchtower Translation System, which is used worldwide by thousands of translators.”

Claim: Watchtower translators receive a database-style list of English words and expressions used in the English New World Translation and are asked to produce vernacular equivalents.

- **Source:** *Awake!*, No. 3 2016, “Language Translators’ Techniques for Over 750 Languages,” Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/awake-no3-2016-june/language-translation-techniques/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Watchtower’s own published description of its translation workflow.

SECTION 8

The Walsh Trial (1954)

Claim: In November 1954, the Scottish Court of Sessions heard the case *Douglas Walsh v. The Right Honorable James Latham Clyde*, case number Cs 258/2788, in which the Watch Tower Society sent Vice-President Frederick W. Franz to testify on their behalf.

- **Source:** *Douglas Walsh v. The Right Honorable James Latham Clyde, M.P., P.C., representing the Ministry of Labour and National Service*, Scottish Court of Sessions, Cs 258/2788, November 1954
- **URL:** <https://archive.org/details/WalshTrial>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official court transcript held by the Scottish Record Office, H.M. General Register House, Edinburgh. A complete 762-page scanned transcript is archived at the Internet Archive.

Claim: On direct examination, Franz testified under oath that he was able to read and follow the Bible in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and French.

- **Source:** *Douglas Walsh v. The Right Honorable James Latham Clyde*, Scottish Court of Sessions, Cs 258/2788, Pursuer’s Proof, testimony of Frederick W. Franz, November 23, 1954
- **URL:** <https://archive.org/details/WalshTrial>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Sworn testimony in the official court transcript.

Claim: On cross-examination the following day, Franz stated that he did not speak Hebrew and declined to translate Genesis 2:4 into Hebrew when asked to do so from the witness stand.

- **Source:** *Douglas Walsh v. The Right Honorable James Latham Clyde*, Scottish Court of Sessions, Cs 258/2788, Pursuer’s Proof, testimony of Frederick W. Franz, November 24, 1954
- **URL:** <https://archive.org/details/WalshTrial>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Sworn testimony in the official court transcript.
- **Key quote:**
“Q: You, yourself, read and speak Hebrew, do you? — A: I do not speak Hebrew. Q: You do not? — A: No. Q: Can you, yourself, translate that into Hebrew? That fourth verse of the second chapter of Genesis? — A: No, I won’t attempt to do that.”

Claim: Franz also testified that he had personally been authorized to examine the New World Translation, determine its accuracy, and recommend its acceptance for publication.

- **Source:** *Douglas Walsh v. The Right Honorable James Latham Clyde*, Scottish Court of Sessions, Cs 258/2788, Pursuer's Proof, testimony of Frederick W. Franz
- **URL:** <https://archive.org/details/WalshTrial>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Sworn testimony in the official court transcript.
- **Key quote:**
"I have been authorized to examine a translation and determine its accuracy and recommend its acceptance in the form in which it is submitted."

Claim: When asked to disclose the identities of the other members of the New World Bible Translation Committee, Franz refused, citing the committee's request to remain anonymous "now or after death."

- **Source:** *Douglas Walsh v. The Right Honorable James Latham Clyde*, Scottish Court of Sessions, Cs 258/2788, Pursuer's Proof, testimony of Frederick W. Franz
- **URL:** <https://archive.org/details/WalshTrial>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Sworn testimony in the official court transcript.

SECTION 9

The Anonymous Committee

Claim: Former Governing Body member Raymond Franz, nephew of Frederick W. Franz, identified the members of the New World Bible Translation Committee as Nathan Knorr, Albert Schroeder, George Gangas, and Frederick Franz.

- **Source:** Raymond V. Franz, *Crisis of Conscience*, Commentary Press (Atlanta), first edition 1983, p. 50 (footnote)
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Published firsthand testimony from a former member of Watchtower's Governing Body (1971-1980). *Crisis of Conscience* is widely available in university libraries and in subsequent print editions.
- **Note:** Raymond Franz was the direct nephew of Frederick W. Franz (a committee member), served on the Governing Body from 1971 to 1980, and worked on Watchtower's own *Aid to Bible Understanding* reference project. He had direct knowledge of the committee's composition.
- **Key quote:**
"Other members of that Committee were Nathan Knorr, Albert Schroeder and George Gangas; Fred Franz, however, was the only one with sufficient knowledge of the Bible languages to attempt translation of this kind. He had studied Greek for two years in the University of Cincinnati but was only self-taught in Hebrew."

Claim: Frederick W. Franz’s formal training in biblical languages consisted of two years of Greek at the University of Cincinnati; his Hebrew was self-taught. The other three committee members had no formal training in the biblical source languages.

- **Source:** Raymond V. Franz, *Crisis of Conscience*, Commentary Press (Atlanta), p. 50 (footnote)
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Published firsthand testimony from a former member of Watchtower’s Governing Body.

Claim: To the present day, Watchtower has never officially disclosed the identities of the original New World Translation committee, nor those of the 2013 revision or 2017 Greek edition translation teams.

- **Source:** Public record; Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania publications
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — The absence of any official disclosure is verifiable by searching all official Watchtower publications and jw.org materials.
- **Note:** Watchtower’s own *Reasoning from the Scriptures* (cited above in Section 1) explicitly states that the committee “requested that its members remain anonymous” and that “The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania has honored their request.”

SECTION 10

Additional Supporting Sources

Scholarly review of the Spanish New World Translation

- **Source:** Xabier Pikaza, *Diccionario de la Biblia. Historia y Palabra*, Editorial Verbo Divino, 2007 (with earlier 2004 publications on the same topic)
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Biblical scholar specifically analyzing the Spanish NWT and confirming that it is not translated directly from the original Hebrew and Greek but from the English text. Independent confirmation that the English-first pipeline applies to the NWT, not only to general Watchtower literature.
- **Contains:** Pikaza writes of the Spanish NWT: ‘It is not a direct translation from the original languages, but is made from the English text (published in 1960), although the editors claim to have faithfully consulted the original Hebrew and Greek texts.’

Watchtower’s own description of the English edition as the “master text”

- **Source:** Cited interview with James Morales, Watchtower spokesperson for the Philippines branch
- **URL:** <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1908467/jw-website-is-worlds-most-translated>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Published interview in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, a major newspaper of record. Morales is a named Watchtower spokesperson on the record.
- **Contains:** Morales uses the phrase ‘master text in English’ to describe the source document accessed by translators through MEPS.

Watchtower archive reference for older issues

- **Source:** Watchtower Online Library
- **URL:** <https://wol.jw.org/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — The official digital archive of Watchtower publications. Most issues from 1950 onward are searchable; some older issues, including certain pre-1975 *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines, are not currently digitized there and may require access to print archives.
- **Contains:** Official digital catalog of Watchtower publications maintained by Watch Tower.

Scanned transcript of the 1954 Walsh Trial

- **Source:** Internet Archive preservation of the *Douglas Walsh v. James Latham Clyde Pursuer's* Proof
- **URL:** <https://archive.org/details/WalshTrial>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Scanned image of the original 762-page court transcript from the Scottish Court of Sessions, preserved in the Internet Archive's public collection.
- **Contains:** Complete testimony of Frederick W. Franz, Grant Suiter, Hayden C. Covington, A. Pryce Hughes, and Ewart C. Chitty, along with the full legal decision.

End of Reference Document