# What is the Correct Translation of John 1:1?

a short study by

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**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

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## Introduction

The first verse of the gospel of John makes a clear and unambiguous declaration about the nature of Jesus Christ.

Here is the Greek text:

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.

[en arjē ēn ho logos, kai ho logos ēn pros ton theón, kai theós ēn ho logos]

A literal translation is:
"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1, NIB, NRSV)

We note that both the NIV/NIB and the NRSV are identical for this verse. The Greek is simple and so few translation options are available or needed.

Verse 14 of the same chapter explains who this "Word" was and is:
"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14, NIB)

Simply put, John 1:1 is telling us that Christ is God.

## 1. The Jehovah's Witnesses' doctrine about Christ

This verse presents enormous problems for the Jehovah's Witnesses, who say that Christ is not God, but a created being, the archangel Michael. This strange idea has no Biblical support and even goes totally against the clear teachings of the Bible. We will not waste time here demonstrating the falseness of this weird doctrine that even causes embarrassment to the Jehovah's Witnesses themselves to such an extent that they don't even mention it when going from door to door and only begin to speak about it when they have already "trapped" someone, persuading them that their "Organization" is the only one in the world that has knowledge that is "hidden from everyone else".

Here we will limit ourselves to an examination of their claims about John 1:1.

## 2. The first argument presented by the Jehovah's Witnesses

Pointing at this verse in the version of the Bible published by the Jehovah's Witnesses and used only by them, a Jehovah's Witness on my doorstep said, "Look, here it says "the Word was with God, and the Word was a god". It has the word "a". Christ is one of many "gods". And "god" is written with a small "g". The Almighty God is written with a capital "G", "God"."

This conversation took place in Spain and the Jehovah's Witness was reading from a Spanish Jehovah's Witness Bible, which we will look at below. However, for the purpose of this article I have here quoted from an English-language Jehovah's Witness version of the Bible published in 1961.[3] Readers who wish to see the Spanish wording of the Jehovah's Witness Spanish version of the Bible will find it in the Spanish version of this article, on this website, here: https://livingwater-spain.com/Juan_1_1.pdf

The argument used is wrong for two reasons:
1) No Greek text has the word "a" in the last phrase of the verse. It has been added by the Jehovah's Witnesses.
2) The *entire* text of the New Testament was written in CAPITAL LETTERS, because that was how Greek was written at that time. So the decision of the writers of the version of the Bible produced by

[3] "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures" (hereafter abbreviated to "NWT"), New York: WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC, 1961

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the Jehovah's Witnesses, the "NWT", to write the word "theos" [God] in one place with an initial capital letter and in another case with an initial lower case (or "small") letter merely shows their interpretation, based on the doctrines of the sect. This does not correspond in any way to what the Greek text actually says.

## 3. The Versions of the Bible published by the Jehovah's Witnesses

The Spanish version of the Bible published by the Jehovah's Witnesses, which was waved in front of me in the above incident[4], isn't even translated from the original languages, but from their English version, as they themselves admit on the first page of their version:

"New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures
Translated from the English version of 1961"[5]
(emphasis added).

So this Spanish version reproduces all the errors and all the distortions that the Jehovah's Witnesses introduced in their English version of the Bible, which they had produced because *all* other translations presented them with too many problems, revealing that their main doctrines were false.

We must report that the above subtitle continues with the words "but faithfully consulting the ancient Hebrew and Greek texts"[6]. Here we would just like to ask one question:

If the Jehovah's Witnesses who produced the Spanish versions of their Bible had sufficient knowledge of Hebrew and Greek to be able to "faithfully consult the Hebrew and Greek", ***why would they translate the Bible from the English version produced by the Jehovah's Witnesses themselves, and not from the original languages?***

Of course, they don't mention Aramaic, a language in which part of the Old Testament was written. Is it that they didn't know that this was the case?[7] Even in their revised Spanish edition of 1987 they still only referred to "the ancient Hebrew and Greek texts".[8] It is clear that they did not have Spanish-speaking people with knowledge of Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic to translate from those languages – nor even to "consult them faithfully"! *They didn't even appear to realise – not even twenty years later! – that part of the Old Testament text was not written in Hebrew!*

In any case, it wasn't in their interests to try to make such a translation. To enable them to defend the strange doctrines of the sect, it was necessary to take advantage of the efforts of the Organization's North American staff writers who had produced their English version, which changes all the Biblical passages that cause them problems.

What is more, *they didn't even have people with adequate knowledge of the original languages to produce their English version*, and studies of their English text demonstrate that it was produced on the basis of the *English* text of 1611 (the "Authorised Version" or "King James Version"), modernising the style of the language and changing the text so that it agreed with their doctrines. (See here: https://livingwater-spain.com/beduhn.pdf, chapter 16, page 71 in the version consulted on 5th August 2020.)

The Jehovah's Witnesses have always refused to publish the names of the alleged translators of their English version, giving as the reason that they want to "give the glory to God", but in spite of their

[4] Called the "Traducción del Nuevo Mundo de las Santas Escrituras" (hereafter abbreviated to "TNM"), New York: WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC, 1967
[5] "Traducción del Nuevo Mundo de las Santas Escrituras Traducidas del la versión en inglés de 1961"
[6] "pero consultando fielmente los antiguos textos hebreo y griego"
[7] In recent years they have included references to Aramaic in their classes for their members. Could it be the case that those who produced their versions of the Bible didn't have this information? Or had they forgotten it?
[8] WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC, 1987

obfuscation, the list of those who were responsible for their English version was published by one of the leaders of the Organization, Raymond Franz, after he abandoned the Organization on realising the deceptions that they were practising[9] – and *none of them had formal qualifications in any Biblical language!*

## 4. Another reason why their argument about capital letters and lower case letters is not valid

The Jehovah's Witnesses are able to use the argument that they have invented about capital letters and lower case letters for when addressing English and Spanish speakers, but this is not possible in some other languages, such as German, for instance, where the orthography rules require capital letters for every noun.

## 5. The Versions of the Bible published by the Jehovah's Witnesses for speakers of German

On the Jehovah's Witnesses website, their first German version of the Bible (which was also translated from their English version, not from the original languages!) gives the following text for John 1:1 (Johannes 1:1):

Im Anfang+ war das WORT*+, und das WORT war bei GOTT,*+ und das WORT war ein Gott.*+[10]

We suppose that the "*" and the "+" refer to notes where they try to justify their version, although when I clicked on these symbols, they didn't take me anywhere.

On the same page they give a link to their "Redivierte Ausgabe 2018" ("Revision of 2018"). In their revision, the text is as follows:

Am Anfang war das Wort*,+ und das Wort war bei Gott,+ und das Wort war ein Gott*.+[11]

Once more we see a series of symbols whose meaning we have been unable to find.

In any case, we observe that, in accordance with German orthography rules, they have seen themselves obliged to write "Gott" ("God") with a capital letter in all the places where it occurs, although – as was to be expected – before the last reference to God in this verse for both versions they have added the word "ein" ("a"), a word that doesn't correspond to any word in the Greek text, although of course they had added this word in their own *English* text from which they produced their translation into German.

In their first German edition they sought to create support for their doctrines by writing certain entire words in capital letters, among them the word for God *except when it applied to Christ!* This demonstrates clearly that their version changes the text in order to hide what the original Greek says.

The reaction against their falsification of the Biblical text and the intrusion of their dogmas in this Bible verse was so strong that in their "Revised Version" of 2018 *they abandoned this method of changing the text*, limiting themselves to a series of symbols that we imagine refer the reader to notes that will explain that – according to them – the verse "doesn't mean" what it in fact says if we remove their added word "ein" ("a").

So we see that for the Jehovah's Witnesses any ruse will do: if one is rejected, they invent another one. It becomes clear that their arguments change depending on the target audience and the date. The conclusion is unavoidable: it is impossible to have confidence in any version of the Bible produced by the Jehovah's Witnesses, since they change the text as often as suits them.

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[9] See here: https://livingwater-spain.com/beduhn.pdf , the Introduction, page 6 in the version consulted on 5.8.20.
[10] Jehovas Zeugen: https://www.jw.org/de/bibliothek/bibel/bi12/bibelbuecher/johannes/1/ Consulted on 29.7.20.
[11] https://www.jw.org/de/bibliothek/bibel/nwt/bibelbuecher/johannes/1/ Consulted on 29.7.20.

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## 6. Many "gods"? Or Monotheism?

The Jehovah's Witnesses say that there are many "gods" and that Christ is one of them. To achieve this, they have to re-define the Jewish and Christian meaning of the word "God". In the ancient world each nation had its own "god" or "gods" and from the first book of the Bible it is declared that there is only one true God and that all other "gods" are false. Thus the Sacred Scriptures of Judaism, known by Christians as "The Old Testament", state that all other supposed "gods" are false, dead and non-existent (see for example Psalm 115:2-7). To quote only one verse of many, in Isaiah 44:6 we read, "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:

"I am the first and I am the last;
besides me there is no god. " " (NRSV)

This teaching is called "monotheism", which means "only one God", and the Israelites were "monotheists" – at least, those of them who were faithful to God.

The Apostle John, the author of the Gospel of John, was a Jew who was faithful to God. It is inconceivable that he could have thought that there might be more than only one God. Not only does the Greek not say "a god", it is not possible that he, as a faithful Jew, would have been able to think that there might be more than only one God. Thus, the Jehovah's Witness version doesn't correspond to what he could have believed, thought, or wished to express.

In contrast with the monotheism of the Old (and New!) Testament, faced with the clear declaration of John 1:1 that Jesus Christ is God, the only way out that the Jehovah's Witnesses have found has been to create a polytheism in which Jesus Christ is no more than one of many gods, of the same status as Satan. This is a belief that the Jehovah's Witnesses have copied from some religions of antiquity. It goes against everything that the Bible teaches, both in the Old Testament and in the New.

## 7. John 20:28

What is more, in John 1:1 the Jehovah's Witness version goes against everything that the evangelist writes in the totality of his gospel. See, for instance, John 20:28, where again, this time quoting the words of Thomas on seeing the resurrected Christ, he calls Christ "God": "Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"" (John 20:28 NRSV)

Even the Jehovah's Witness can't avoid this in their version. They explain it by saying that the phrase means "Oh My God!" as an expression of surprise. This is also not possible, as such a phrase, so common in our days, was not used by any Jew at that time and nor is it used in our days by pious Jews, because it is "taking the Lord's name in vain", which was forbidden in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:7, the third commandment, according to the Jewish and Biblical numbering).

So John's gospel starts with a declaration that Jesus Christ is God, and very near to its end the same gospel repeats the same message, forming what the specialists in Biblical texts call an "inclusio", a Latin word that designates a Biblical literary technique employed to indicate that everything that occurs between the two declarations illustrates and demonstrates the message that they announce.

## 8. Intellectual Intimidation

When the Jehovah's Witnesses find that their other arguments fail to convince, they turn to an argument about the Greek. They hope that, as almost none of their listeners know Greek, they will be persuaded by this argument. The fact of the matter is that even the Jehovah's Witnesses who employ these arguments and quote words in Greek do not themselves know Greek, and they can only quote isolated words chosen by the Organization, on condition that they were written phonetically for speakers of English/Spanish/German, etc. I have been able to verify this in long conversations over many months with local leaders of the Organization who said that they knew Greek.

We must bear in mind that the purpose of using isolated Greek words and abstruse linguistic terminology that is complicated and difficult to understand is not to explain but to convince. The hearer or reader doesn't understand what he or she hears or reads, and "throws in the towel". They admit defeat, even though they are not convinced, and give up resistance. In the worst cases, they enter the Organization and keep quiet about their questions and doubts, and even try to forget them.

The use of these arguments is no more nor less than intellectual intimidation, which we have explained in other articles on this website. (See, for instance, https://livingwater-spain.com/John8_58.pdf page 7 in the version consulted on 5th August 2020, or https://livingwater-spain.com/beduhn.pdf page 57 in the version consulted on 5th August 2020.)

I am indebted to "In Search of Christian Freedom"[12] by Raymond Franz for drawing my attention to this technique that is to be found in the publications of the Jehovah's Witnesses. As a former member of the Governing Body of the Jehovah's Witnesses and as a former writer in their books and magazines, he was well positioned to be aware of the use of this technique.

## 9. Another argument used by the Jehovah's Witnesses

Here we will look briefly at this second argument by the Jehovah's Witnesses. In order to do this, we can't avoid mentioning a minimum of grammatical terminology. Let us start with English. In English grammar, the word "the" is described as the "definite article". In English grammar, the words "a, an" are described as "indefinite articles".

Greek has only one article (with various forms for masculine, feminine, singular, plural, etc). As there are not two types of article, it is not correct to call it "definite" or "indefinite".

The use of the article in Greek is very different from its use in English (or Spanish). Thus, for example, we see phrases such as ὁ Ἰησοῦς [ho iēsus] (Matthew 3:13 ) or ὁ Πέτρος [ho Petros] (Matthew 14:28). As the word ὁ [ho] is the Greek article, someone might translate these phrases literally as "the Jesus" or "the Peter", but we realise immediately that this would not be a correct translation. The correct translation is "Jesus" and "Peter". Thus we see clearly that the use of the article in Greek does not correspond to the use of the definite and indefinite articles in English or Spanish. I am even aware of a whole doctoral thesis written on the use of the article in Greek, so different is it from the use of articles in English, Spanish and many other languages. However, we do not need to read that thesis. We see immediately that Greek grammar is not the same as English grammar.

But here the Jehovah's Witnesses create another of their famous "rules" that are not accepted by anyone other than themselves. Here is their rule:

| Greek | = | Supposed meaning in English, according to the Jehovah's Witnesses |
|---|---|---|
| ὁ θεός[13] [ho theos] (with the Greek article) | = | God (without the English definite article, and with a capital "G") |
| θεός [theos] (without the Greek article) | = | a god (with the indefinite article added in English where there is no word in the Greek, and with a lower case "g") |

According to this "rule" invented by them, they say that it is necessary to translate the last phrase of John 1:1 with the words "the Word was a god".

This demonstrates their lack of adequate knowledge of the Greek language, and their lack of knowledge of the Greek text of the New Testament. If they were right,

[12] 2007, Atlanta: Commentary Press, especially pages 453-454.
[13] The direction of the accent can change, depending on the context.

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- no more than five verses later the translation would have to be "There was a man who was sent from a god" (John 1:6);
- in verse 12 the translation would have to be "he gave them power to become children of a god" (John 1:12);
- in verse 13 the translation would have to be "born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of a god (John 1:13).

It would be possible to give hundreds of such cases in the New Testament, and some writers have given them[14], but it immediately becomes clear that the "rule" invented by the Jehovah's Witnesses to justify their mistranslation of John 1:1 is false. They don't even apply it themselves. In all the cases quoted here, the "NWT" puts "God" *without the word "a"*. Note the initial capital letter and the absence of the word "a". *Only when it applies to Christ in verse one do they put "a god"!*

## 10. What the real experts in Biblical Greek say

Lest it should be claimed that this is merely *my word against theirs*, let me give a typical explanation of the Greek by one of the leading experts in Biblical Greek and the text of the New Testament, Dr Hugh Houghton, FHEA, who is Professor of New Testament Textual Scholarship and the Director of the Institute for Textual Scholarship and Electronic Editing at the University of Birmingham, England. He was also one of the editors of the latest revision of the Greek text of the New Testament, known as Nestle-Aland 29 or UBS6. Each revision incorporates the study of more and more ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. This revision was published in 2025.[15]

Professor Houghton was invited to produce a textual commentary on this edition of the Greek New Testament.[16] This commentary indicates the manuscripts that were consulted and explains the decisions of the committee when faced with variants in the text.

With reference to a particular New Testament verse (1 Thessalonians 1:4) where the Greek article is present before the word "God" in some manuscripts but not others, Houghton states:

> [τοῦ] θεοῦ (God)
> It makes no difference to the meaning or translation whether or not the definite article is present before 'God'.[17]

In fact, it is *precisely because* adding or omitting the article before the Greek word for God **makes no difference to the meaning**, that in some manuscripts it is present in a few cases where for the same occurrences of the phrase the article is missing in other manuscripts. (In John 1:1 there are no variants in manuscripts examined up to the present time.)

Faced with a reply giving this information, the Jehovah's Witness who has presented this argument will do one of two things:
1) Change the subject. This is the solution that is preferred by Jehovah's Witnesses when they find themselves opposite someone who knows more about the Biblical text than they do.
2) If they see that the person with whom they are speaking has only limited knowledge of Greek (and if they themselves have memorised well the arguments presented in their weekly training meetings!), they will go on to more incomprehensible grammatical terminology. (How about the difference between "arthrous" and "anarthrous"?!) This is nothing more than a continuation of the intimidation

[14] See, for example, Countess, Robert H. "The Jehovah's Witnesses' New Testament", Phillipsburg, New Jersey, USA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1982. Second edition 1987.
[15] "The Greek New Testament, Sixth Revised Edition", Edited by Hugh Houghton, Christos Karakolis, David Parker, et. al., Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft and United Bible Societies, 2025.
[16] Houghton, H.A.G., "A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament A Companion to the Sixth Edition of the United Bible Societies' Greek new Testament", Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2025.
[17] p. 495

that they so much like to use, and it is very probable that not even the Jehovah's Witness will himself or herself understand well what he or she is saying.

There are of course Jehovah's Witnesses writing on the internet who use such arguments. Generally, they do not give their real name, to prevent their lack of academic qualifications in Biblical languages from being discovered – precisely the same trick that is used by the Organization when it refuses to give the names of the people who produced their false version of the Bible.

## 11. More arguments used by the Jehovah's Witnesses

For decades the Jehovah's Witnesses have had a team of members of the Organization in New York state who are employed to find any quotation from any person over the course of the past two thousand years that they can use to allege support for the bizarre teachings of the sect, and as so many writers have written so many things, some of them completely erroneous, the Organization is not lacking in quotations, especially when they can take them out of context to make them appear to mean what they didn't mean in the original context. See my article "The Experts quoted by the Jehovah's Witnesses", here: https://livingwater-spain.com/experts.pdf.

It goes without saying that the Jehovah's Witnesses seek to exaggerate the importance of the writers from whom they quote, while they denigrate those who contradict them, and refuse to present their arguments.

And it doesn't matter how many times it is demonstrated conclusively that the arguments of these Jehovah's Witnesses are false. In such cases, if they don't see any other solution, they will abandon that argument and invent a different one[18], or they will abandon the writer whom they were quoting from as a "definitive authority" and will seek out someone else, in whatever language, in whatever century, in order to continue fighting for their doctrines and for their version of the Bible.

So in this short article on John 1:1 I will not waste my time or that of my readers refuting these quotations; what counts is not what some other person has said or written, but what the Bible says.

In the same way, the Jehovah's Witnesses condemn ***all*** other translations as "erroneous" or even "false" when these translations demonstrate the mistranslations of the "NWT". But whenever they find in any one of these translations some phrase, no matter how short, or even some isolated word, that they wish to quote, alleging that it demonstrates that the "NWT" is right – suddenly that translation that is condemned by them in other places becomes "a renowned" or even "prestigious" English Bible"[19].

It doesn't matter what is said by some isolated translation that goes against what the immense majority the translations say, nor even what ***any*** translation says; what matters is what the Greek text of John 1:1 says. The text is not disputed by anyone. There are no variants in the manuscripts. This text is clear, unambiguous and easy to translate.

## 12. Freedom of belief and expression

It is important to accept the principle of freedom of belief (and of non-belief) and of freedom of expression. This includes the freedom to believe and express what one doesn't oneself believe.

When Jehovah's Witnesses present these arguments to us, we must demonstrate respect to them. Generally, they will be sincere. They are repeating something that they have been told by an Organization that claims to be "the only channel for God's truth on the earth". We can point out to

[18] We have seen precisely the same thing with their arguments about their version of John 8:58, where they abandoned one argument and invented another one to replace it. See here: https://livingwater-spain.com/John8_58.pdf, especially chapter 2 in the version consulted on 5th August 2020 (pages 7-9).
[19] Quotation from correspondence received recently via the internet from a Jehovah's Witness.

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them some of the most obvious errors in what they say, but the encounter can easily become a discussion or even an argument that can last for more than an hour and a half, without making any progress at all. The Organization has told these Jehovah's Witnesses (as they tell all their members) that the whole world – including all the churches! – are under the control of Satan.

What is more, the Organization tells all its members that *they are not to think!* I do not exaggerate. It tells them that the members cannot be guided by God, as God only speaks through the Organization. It says that the members cannot have the "unction" from God, as this was only given to the members of the Organization who were converted up to the year 1935, when (according to them) the number of the 144,000 who would go to heaven was completed, and that those who were converted to the Organization after that date form part of a second, inferior, group that will remain on the earth and that the members of this group are not able to discern the meaning of the Biblical text.

We must not become angry with these people at our door. They are not to blame for the errors that they have been taught. The best reaction is usually to end the encounter as soon as possible with politeness and a smile. If we are believers, our next step will be to pray for them.

## 13. Talking with those who genuinely want to understand the message of the Bible

Following the example of Christ, the Apostle Paul sought out those who were likely to be open to hearing the message of the gospel. For that reason, wherever there was a synagogue, he went there first to announce the good news about Jesus Christ. Where there was no synagogue, he looked out the place where there would be most probability of finding people open to God. For example, in Acts 16:13-14 we read:

"13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. 14 One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message." (NIB)

Christ himself had warned his followers, saying, "do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces." (Matthew 7:6, NIB)

Applying this advice – indeed, this command – from the Lord, Paul wrote to Timothy in Ephesus, where there was a big problem because of people who were teaching false doctrines:

"As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer 4 or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work, which is by faith. 5 The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 6 Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. 7 They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm." (1 Timothy 1:3-7, NIB)

From experience we know that conversations with Jehovah's Witnesses can become endless, and no matter how clear a Biblical passage may be, they refuse to be convinced. Timothy found himself facing a similar situation, and Paul said to him, "Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge." (1 Timothy 6:20, NIB) The Greek word for knowledge, γνῶσις [gnōsis], refers to any type of knowledge, and the Jehovah's Witnesses declare that they alone have knowledge about the Bible that God has hidden from everyone else, even from every Christian group.

In his second letter to Timothy the Apostle Paul told him to instruct the believers in Ephesus the following: "Warn them before God against quarrelling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen." (2 Timothy 2:14, NIB)[20]

Therefore, we will not follow every misleading piece of information that the Jehovah's Witnesses present to us nor will we refute every false argument that they invent, because:

1. The majority of these misleading statements are irrelevant to the Biblical passage in question.
2. Generally these false arguments have nothing to do with the Biblical passage under discussion.
3. We know that when any Bible passage demonstrates the fallaciousness of their doctrines, they don't want to know the true meaning of the passage.

So after explaining with courtesy the true meaning of the Biblical passage disputed by the members of the Jehovah's Witnesses Organization, if they don't want to hear and only wish to argue, the moment has arrived to end the conversation and direct our attention, like Christ and like the Apostle Paul, to those who do have their minds open to the clear meaning of the text, and their hearts open to the Holy Spirit.

## Conclusion

What John 1:1 says is clear:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

(John 1:1 NIB, NRSV)

If this verse contradicts the doctrines of some group, they can reject it, and in a free society they should have the freedom to do so. But what is not acceptable is that they change what the Bible says.

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For a response to the Jehovah's Witness claim that their version of this verse is supported by a seventh-century translation into the Sahidic dialect of Coptic, see here:
https://livingwater-spain.com/Jn_1_1_Sahidic.pdf

[20] The Apostle Paul repeated the same advice later, in 2 Timothy 2:23-24.

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