

## THE PROLOGUE OF JOHN - TYNDALE'S TRANSLATION AND THE TRUE MEANING

The first English version of the Scriptures made by direct translation from the original Hebrew and Greek, and the first to be printed, was the work of William Tyndale. Meeting bitter opposition, he was accused of perverting the meaning of the Scriptures. In October 1536 he was publicly executed and burned at the stake. Yet Tyndale's work became the foundation of subsequent English versions.

William Tyndale translated the prologue of John's Gospel much differently than popular modern translations. Below is a modern spelling of John 1:1-5 and verse 14 according his 1534 translation of the New Testament:

*In the beginning was the word, and the word was with god: and the word was god. The same was in the beginning with god. All things were made by it, and without it, was made nothing, that was made. In it was life, and the life was the light of men, and the light shineth in the darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not...*

*And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw the glory of it, as the glory of the only begotten son of the father, which word was full of grace and verity.'*

Indeed, the image above is the first page of the Gospel of John of a surviving copy of Tyndale's 1526 New Testament. The word order, "and god was that word" follows that of the Greek text.



An interpretation of John 1:1-5 and verse 14 which we believe most accurately reflects the meaning of the Greek text, is as follows:

‘In the beginning was reason, and reason was according to God: and divine was reason. This was in the beginning according to God. All things were made through it, and apart from it nothing was made. That which was made through it was life, and the life is the light of men; and the light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not apprehend it...

... And flesh through reason was made, and dwelt among us, and we beheld its glory, glory as of the only begotten son from the father, full of grace and truth.’

Of the misleading use of personal pronouns and personification of abstract nouns, the most widespread mistranslation of popular translations of the New Testament occurs in the prologue to the Gospel of John, wherein the logos, God's word (including the reasoning) by which he created all things, is construed to be a pre-incarnate person of a triune God, being "with" God and also being "God".