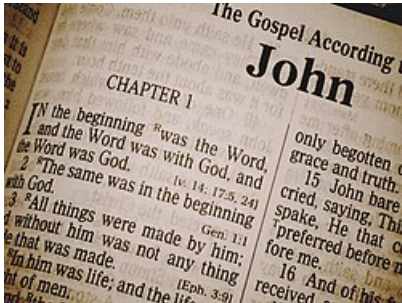




There is some controversy as to how should **John 1:1** be translated. Trinitarians often use the verse to support their contention that Jesus is the eternal Almighty God. **John 1:1** is often translated as, “and the Word was God”, and used to assert the Son of God, Jesus Christ is Almighty God? How about “a god”?

The traditional rendering in English is:

***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”***

There are many other variations of rendering **John 1:1** which are more accurate according to the Greek text, both in translation or paraphrase, **John 1:1c** also exist.

**1808: “and the Word was a god”** – *Thomas Belsham The New Testament, in an Improved Version, Upon the Basis of Archbishop Newcome’s New Translation: With a Corrected Text, London.*

**1822: “and the Word was a god”** – *The New Testament in Greek and English (A. Kneeland, 1822.)*

1829: **“and the Word was a god”** – *The Monotessaron; or, The Gospel History According to the Four Evangelists* (J. S. Thompson, 1829)

1863: **“and the Word was a god”** – *A Literal Translation of the New Testament* (Herman Heinfetter [Pseudonym of Frederick Parker], 1863)

1864: **“and a god was the Word”** – The *Emphatic Diaglott* by Benjamin Wilson, New York and London (left hand column interlinear reading)

1879: **“and the Word was a god”** – *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (J. Becker, 1979)

1885: **“and the Word was a god”** – *Concise Commentary on The Holy Bible* (R. Young, 1885)

1911: **“and [a] God was the word”** – *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect*, by George William Horner.<sup>[17]</sup>

1924: **“the Logos was divine”** – *The Bible: James Moffatt Translation*, by James Moffatt.

1935: **“and the Word was divine”** – *The Bible: An American Translation*, by [John M. P. Smith](#) and [Edgar J. Goodspeed](#), Chicago.<sup>[19]</sup>

1955: **“so the Word was divine”** – *The Authentic New Testament*, by [Hugh J. Schonfield](#), Aberdeen.

1958: **“and the Word was a god”** – *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Anointed* (J. L. Tomanec, 1958)

1970, 1989: “and what God was, the Word was” – The [New English Bible](#) and The [Revised English Bible](#).

1975 **“and a god (or, of a divine kind) was the Word”** – *Das Evangelium nach Johnnes*, by Siegfried Schulz, Göttingen, Germany

1975: **“and the Word was a god”** – *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (S. Schulz, 1975);

1978: **“and godlike sort was the Logos”** – *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, by Johannes Schneider, Berlin

1985: **“So the Word was divine”** – *The Original New Testament*, by [Hugh J. Schonfield](#).

1998: *“and what God was the Word also was”* – This translation follows Professor Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, ed. [Daniel J. Harrington](#).

2017: *“**and the Logos was god**”* – *The New Testament: A Translation*, by [David Bentley Hart](#).

- **“In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and a god was the Word” (John 1:1 Sahidic Coptic).** This 6th century translation from the Greek accurately reflects the Greek text. This most accurate translation agrees with Greek grammar, i. e., an anarthrous predicate nominative before the verb.

Jesus is not unqualifiedly God. He is “a god”, that is godlike, but not Almighty God.

These translations make it very clear that there is a difference between the God that the Word was with, and the Word who is “divine”, and is “god”, but in a different sense, as the lower case **“g”** in **“god”** suggests.

#### GREEK ANALYSIS AND EXAMPLES

*“Jn 1:1 should rigorously be translated ‘the word was with the God [= the Father], and the word was a divine being’” (Dictionary of the Bible, 1965, by scholar John L McKenzie, S J).*

When there is an anarthrous predicate nominative preceding the verb, in languages such as English, which have indefinite articles (a,an) the translators supply the articles, or make clear in the translation what the meaning of the Koine’ Greek is. Other examples of this are:

**Mark 6:49** - “a ghost”

**John 4:9** - “a prophet”

**John 6:70** - “a devil”

**John 8:44** - “a murderer”, “a liar”

**John 9:17** - “a prophet”

**Acts 12:22** - “a god”

**Acts 28:6** - “a god”

**John 1:1** in Greek reads similarly to these New Testament uses of an anarthrous predicate nominative before the verb.

Notice the footnote to **John 1:1** in the New American Bible (NAB):

***“Was God: lack of a definite article with ‘God’ in Greek signifies predication rather than identification.”***

Identification means, “*the action or process of identifying someone or something or the fact of being identified.*” (Dictionary.com). For example, A = A, like “Jesus is that prophet.”

Predication describes something about the subject. Therefore, “**God**” describes “**the Word**” as being godlike, but does not identify him as Almighty God.

CONCLUSION

The common rendering of [John 1:1](#), “and the Word was God”, is not the most accurate rendering of the Greek text.

For more information related to this subject, please see the following articles on this website:

“The Fixed New Testament Text – A Huge Problem For Trinitarianism” –

<https://bibleauthenticity.org/the-fixed-new-testament-text-a-huge-problem-for-trinitarianism/>

“Is the Trinity in John? Is Jesus Christ Almighty God?” –

<https://bibleauthenticity.org/trinity-john-jesus-god-spirit-gospel/>