

0. WYCLIFFE VERSION - ENGLISH TRANSLATION - Story
Preface

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This image, depicting a surviving copy of Wycliffe's translation, begins with a prologue and then gets into the first verse of the Gospel of John. Curators at the University of Glasgow [tell us more](#): "The famous beginning of St. John's Gospel is shown here: 'In þe bigynnyng was | þe word & þe word | was at god, & god was | þe word.' It is preceded by a prologue to the Gospel."

U of Glasgow's curators also tell us something about Wycliffe and his work: "John Wycliffe's fourteenth-century translation of the Bible into English was a groundbreaking publication. A notorious theologian whose teachings were condemned by the Pope, he systematically attacked the abuses and practices of the medieval church, insisting that it should give up its worldly wealth."

How large was this Bible? Pocket-sized ... so it could be easily carried: "This plain, pocket sized volume contains only an incomplete copy of the New Testament. Many Wycliffite Bibles were made deliberately small like this one to enhance their portability for use by itinerant preachers. Although we do not know who originally owned this copy, there are numerous sixteenth and seventeenth-century ownership inscriptions on the flyleaves, including a note that it belonged to John Lewis (1675-1747), an early biographer of Wycliffe."

Image online via Special Collections at the University of Glasgow. Click on it for a better view.

When [John Wycliffe](#) was a scholar at Oxford, in 1360, the Vulgate was still the only "legal" Bible. Wycliffe thought the average person, who could not read Latin, should have a way to study the Bible and to think about its meaning. Wycliffe disagreed that the church possessed the only accurate interpretation.

Between 1360 and 1382, Wycliffe and some of his Oxford associates [translated](#) the Vulgate New Testament into English. Wycliffe did not use any Hebrew or Greek manuscripts for his translation.

At first English officials supported Wycliffe. They especially agreed England should not have to pay huge amounts of money to the Catholic church. As [Wycliffe's thinking](#) became more radical, however, secular authorities distanced themselves even as support from [common people](#) grew. Wycliffe had given the people what they never previously had: a way to understand the Bible in their own language.

As the [Church's authority](#) began to [tighten](#) around Wycliffe, he was expelled from Oxford in 1382. He suffered a series of strokes, preventing authorities from taking further action against him at the time. He died on December 31, 1384.

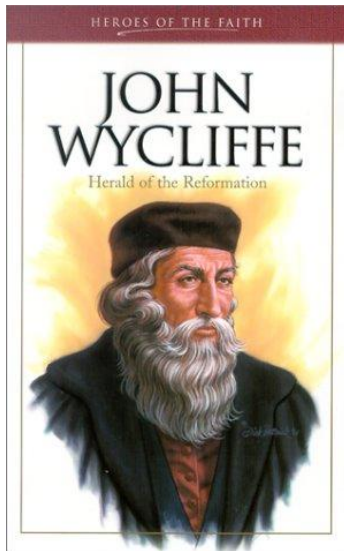
The Church wasn't finished with John Wycliffe, however. His books were banned—then [burned](#)—and, 44 years later, his [body was disinterred](#) and burned. His ashes were thrown into the [River Swift](#).

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at](#):

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/WYCLIFFE-VERSION-ENGLISH-TRANSLATION-Protestant-Bible-A-Journey-Through-Centuries>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at](#):

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John Wycliffe

Image online, courtesy the [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/John-Wycliffe>



Wycliffe Translating the Vulgate into English

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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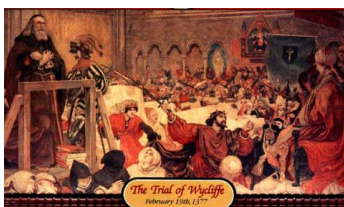


Wycliffe Memorial at St. Marys Church in Lutterworth

Image online, courtesy leicestershirechurches.co.uk website.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Wycliffe-Memorial-at-St.-Marys-Church-in-Lutterworth>



Trial of Wycliffe

Image online, courtesy the [wikipaintings.org](http://www.wikipaintings.org) website.

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Burning Wycliffe's Books

Image online, courtesy the [Virtual Bible Museum](http://www.virtualbiblemuseum.com) website.

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Digging Up Wycliffe's Body

Image online, courtesy logosresourcepages.org website.

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River Swift - Wycliffe's Ashes

Image online, courtesy the lutterworthrotary.org website.

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