

Jasper



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Word of the day:

FATHER

Suppose you could board a time machine and dial it up to the year 3000. You come back to your home town and meet your own great-great-great-great-twenty times great grandson.

You say to him, "Son, I'd like to shake your hand. I'm your great-great-great-great-twenty times great grandfather."

You don't look like it, because you have been in a time machine, and you have only aged a few minutes. You look as if you could be his kid brother, except that so many generations have come between you, you hardly resemble him at all.

But he knits his brow and tilts his head. He thinks to himself, "Oy bliv tha-thiz maneer z'peekn Inlish, bu'um na sher uv't." And he says, "Mister, do I know you?" But it sounds like, "Ster, doy noya?"

And now it's your turn to knit your brow and tilt your head. You think to yourself, "I believe that this here man is speaking English, but I'm not sure of it." It's pretty disappointing to you, and your twenty-odd-great grandson, at least twenty and plenty odd, is just getting ready to enter into his gravity-free exercise room, when you decide to get back into your time machine and go back home, where you can at least have a decent conversation.

But you overshoot your mark, because you forgot to tune up the brakes on your machine, and instead of coming back to 2021, you end up in England in 1021, and who should show up but your own great-great-great-great-twenty times great grandfather?

And you say to him, "Excuse me, sir, but can you direct me to the nearest auto shop? I need to tune up the brakes on my time machine."



But he knits his brow, tilts his head, and reaches for the sword at his side. "Theos monn her mot sum feow beon, for tham he ne spreceth Aenglysc," which means, roughly, "What is this foreigner doing here on my land? Must be a dirty rotten Frenchman," and of course you had better get out of there, quick. You see, he wouldn't recognize the words *excuse, sir, direct, auto, tune, brakes, time, and machine*, partly because some of those things hadn't been invented yet, and partly because the Norman French hadn't invaded England yet, and brought in with them their funny way of talking and their ships full of strange

words. That would happen in 1066.

The way we say even the same words changes over time, because people get into habits without noticing them, and one habit leads to another, and eventually you can end up pretty far away from where you started. That happened many thousands of years ago to our ancestors, who lived out in no-man's land, in the central part of what we now call

Russia. Their word for FATHER began with a P sound, just as it is in Latin, PATER, and in Greek, PETER (PEH-ter). But a big branch of the family, who would come to be called the Germans, got tired of living there, just as you would do, and they migrated west and north, and settled in places that are now called Germany, France, England, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and others. And at some time or other they all started to pronounce certain sounds in a little bit of a different way. That included the P. They started to pronounce it as an F. (They started to pronounce F as B, and B as P, but if I started talking about that, your head would spin worse than if your time machine had gotten caught up in a temporal whirlpool, and you ended up getting stuck in 1968, and then think how sorry you would be.)

To see how this could happen, I want you to feel, on your fingers, how we say certain sounds. Put your thumb to the side of your nose, your little finger on your Adam's apple, and the other fingers in front of your lips. Now pronounce an N: NNNNNN. Do you feel the vibration in your nose? That's a nasal sound. Pronounce Z: ZZZZZZZ. Do you feel the vibration in your Adam's apple? That sound is voiced: it makes your vocal cords vibrate. But it doesn't come out of your nose. It comes out of your mouth. Now pronounce P: P. You can't hold it. It's like a little explosion. There's no vibration in your Adam's apple, so it is called unvoiced. Breath comes out of your mouth in a burst. Now pronounce F: FFFFFFF. You CAN hold

it. It isn't like an explosion. The breath is regular and even, but otherwise it is just like P. It's near your lips, and it has no voice. F and P are like cousins that way, and sometimes cousins can resemble each other.

So when the Romans were saying PATER, our Germanic ancestors in England were saying FAEDER (FADD-er), but it was originally the very same word.

“Words change, but the reality doesn't change. If you go anywhere in the world, you will find FATHERS and GRANDFATHERS, and they will be the heads of their families.”

Words change, but the reality doesn't change. If you go anywhere in the world, you will find FATHERS and GRANDFATHERS, and they will be the heads of their families. That is just the way God made the human race. If you got in your time machine and went back ten thousand years, you would find the same thing. The FATHER is

meant to be the spokesman for the household. He protects his wife and his children, and provides for them, and if he is a good man, he will spend far more on them than he ever spends on himself. This isn't just a custom. We are made in the image of God Himself, and Jesus commands us to call God Father, not because it is a warm and comfortable name, and not because God is somehow like a human father. It is the other way around. Our Father in heaven IS our Father, always was, and always will be, and from His fatherhood all human fatherhood comes. God does not resemble your father. Your father, in his fatherhood, resembles God.



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