

“Why Did the Book of Jacob Get Changed to the Book of James?”

By what authority did the translators of the KJV (and other translations) change the name of the book of YAAKOV (Jacob) to JAMES? The original Greek states this author's name as “IAKOBOY”, or Jacob in English. Thank you.

You are correct in your awareness of the Old Testament designation “Yaakov” (Hebrew) and the New Testament designation, “Iakboy” (Greek).

Tracing the etymology of a word is a fascinating endeavor. And as it is translated from language to language, or even its development within a language, spelling and pronunciation often change. Beyond the Greek and the Hebrew, this word went through several stages of the Latin language (i.e., Old Latin, New Latin, Late Latin), and there were further influences of the word through the barbarian tribes that overran Western Europe in the fourth and fifth centuries. In England this involved two distinct blending of languages—the first by the Anglo-Saxons (Angles, Saxons, and Jutes), who overlaid their language on top of the (1) Latin & (2) Celtic (two dialects: Brythonic and Goidelic) amalgamation as they conquered much of England between the fifth and seventh centuries, and second, by the Norman/Vikings, who overlaid their language upon all of that during the eleventh and twelfth centuries!

One of the reasons the English Language is such a rich one is because of the blending of these linguistic strains which created totally different words for identical things: for example: lamb-mutton, brotherly-fraternal, etc.

The words *Jacob* and *James* come out of this matrix. *Jacob* follows the French/Norman tradition (Jacobin, for example),

and James comes out of the Anglo-Saxon tradition.

The use of “James” in the King James Version was not something they had to think about. It was already imbedded into their language as the equivalent of “James” or “Jacob.” Since this translation from Greek and Hebrew involved putting the text into readable and understandable English, they chose the popular word already in circulation.

Actually, three common English names come out of this: James, Jacob, and Jack.

Hope this answers your question.

Thanks for writing.

Jimmy Williams, Founder
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“Why Would God Send the Prophet Dante to Hell?”

I heard about an angel that brought the prophet Dante to hell and showed him all ten levels of hell. What is this? Why would God send a prophet of God to hell? Weren't prophets like saints?

Dante was not a prophet, he was an Italian writer who lived in the middle ages. He only imagined the ten levels of hell. A lot of our ideas about hell actually came from Dante's classic piece of literature *The Divine Comedy*, but it is only the work of a man's imagination and has nothing to do with what God has told us is true.

“You Are Gods”?

I have heard New Agers claim that even the Bible makes the claim that we (people) are gods. They use the words of Jesus in John 10:34. This verse has always puzzled me. What did Jesus mean when he quoted this scripture?

Thank you for your question. Let me see if I can shed a little light on it.

The contexts in both John 10 and the Old Testament Psalm which Jesus quoted (Psalm 82:6) are very important in understanding our Lord's answer to the Jews which were about to stone Him. As they pick up stones, Jesus says, “I've shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning me?” They say, “For a good work we do not stone you, but for blasphemy; and because you, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.” (John 10:32-33).

Then Jesus refers to Psalm 82:6 and says, “Hasn't it been written in your Law, ‘I said, you are gods’? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say to Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming’; because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? If I do not do the works of my Father, do not believe Me...” (John 10:34-37)

Now let us look at Psalm 82 to determine its context and the theme/purpose of the Psalm. The entire psalm is a scathing rebuke aimed at unjust judges in contrast to the just Judge of all the earth. In reality, Asaph, the author of the psalm, is

crying out for God to do something about the corrupt judges of his day; they show partiality, they neglect caring for the downtrodden, the weak, the afflicted, etc. Then in verse 6, God Himself speaks, and says:

*“I said, ‘You are gods (Elohim),
And all of you are the sons of the Most High.”*

Some observations:

1. The words, “Elohim” (God),” and “Yahweh” (Lord), are the two major names of God in the Old Testament. It is Elohim that is used here in verse 6.

2. Its meaning in Psalm 82:6 does not imply that men are gods. It rather refers specifically to the fact that God has appointed judges to act in a dignified, God-like manner in the discharge of their God-appointed responsibilities.

3. Actually, the word “Elohim” is also used in verse 1 of both God and men:

“Elohim (God) takes His stand in His own congregation; He (God) judges in the midst of the Elohim (corrupt judges who are acting like Gods—said in sarcasm).”

Notice in John 10 that Jesus reminds these accusers from the first half of Psalm 82:6 that God is the one who appoints the human judges with their awesome responsibility: “Ye are gods.” He goes on in the second half of the verse to remind them that sons are supposed to resemble their Fathers: “And all of you are the sons of the Most High.” Neither the judges in the psalm nor the Jewish leaders confront Him were reflecting this.

4. In jurisprudence there are two types of authority: *de facto* and *de jure*. The Most High God (Elohim Himself) has *de facto* authority. It is an un-derived authority. He has it because He is God. *De jure* authority, on the other hand, is derived, or

delegated authority. And delegated authority makes one responsible to the one who did the delegating! The second half of verse 6 is a solemn reminder that these judges are called "Sons" of God, because they are to represent faithfully a justice which reflects their "Father," the Judge of all the earth.

5. Now the words of Jesus in John 10 make a lot more sense. If you or I had come to earth as the Messiah, we would probably have been moving about and taking every opportunity possible with people to verbally emphasize who we really were: Elohim. But Jesus didn't do that. He chose rather to imply His identity through the miracles, through the Parables, through His actions. It was as if He was careful that a person came to the conclusion that He was Elohim solely of their own accord, and with no pressure or persuasion on His part, though He was eager for them to come to this very conclusion.

6. Notice that in the dialogue in John 10 with these angry Jews, Jesus could have taken the "bait" and said, "I am Elohim!" But He doesn't. He claims identity with the second half of Psalm 82:6, the one that models a relationship to His Father exactly like what God is desiring from the judges in Psalm 82. Even though Christ is Elohim, He functions during the Incarnation in a *de jure* capacity to the Father and faithfully carries forth His responsibilities to His Father: accomplishing His mission to redeem the human race (John 3:16).

I hope this answers your question.

Jimmy Williams, Founder
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