“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.

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