

YAIY Quick Study Sheet

I AM WHO I AM

The following **unedited** quotes below address what the “I AM WHO I AM” means in Exodus 3:14. In context, verse 15 should be read also. Yahweh reveals what His Name actually means (i.e., translation or explanation of His Name) in verse 14. He then clarifies what His Name actually is (i.e., transliteration of His Name, as a Proper Noun) in verse 15.

■ In Moses’ second objection he felt the Israelites would challenge his assertion that God had sent him to deliver them. God told Moses to tell them, I am who I am (’ehyeh ’āšer ’ehyeh, 3:14; cf. “I will be,” ’ehyeh, v. 12) and I AM (’ehyeh) has sent me to you (v. 14). This One said He would be with His people in their time of trouble and need. ’Ehyeh is probably a wordplay on Yahweh (LORD) in verse 15. Thus, the name Yahweh, related to the verb “to be,” probably speaks of God’s self-existence, but it means more than that. It usually speaks of His relationship to His people. For example, as Lord, He redeemed them (6:6), was faithful to them (34:5-7), and made a covenant with them (Gen. 15:18). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* An exposition of the scriptures. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

■ When asked his name, God replies, ‘I Am Who I Am.’ The Hebrew YHWH (pronounced ‘Yahweh’) means ‘I Will Be What I Will Be’. *The Bible Guide* (1st Augsburg books ed.) (46). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg.

■ God assured Moses of his identity: “I AM THE ONE WHO ALWAYS IS.” (3:14; see also John 8:58); and of his ability to bring Israel out of Egypt. *Willmington's Bible Handbook* (46). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

■ The Hebrew words translated “I AM” and “the LORD” are two forms derived from the same Hebrew verb. Though “I AM” is not reused as a name for God in the OT, “the LORD” is used more than 5,000 times. The phrase “the LORD” is a rendering of the Hebrew word YHWH (“Yahweh”) that seems to mean “He [Who] Is” or “He [Who] Causes to Be.” –Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible* Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (90). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

■ “אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה I AM that I AM,” replies God. The verbs are first person common qal imperfects of the verb “היה to be,” connoting continuing, unfinished action: “I am being that I am being,” or “I am the Is-ing One,” that is, “the One Who Always Is.” Not conceptual being, being in the abstract, but active being, is the intent of this reply. It is a reply that suggests that it is inappropriate to refer to God as “was” or as “will be,” for the reality of this active existence can be suggested only by the present: “is” or “is-ing,” “Always Is,” or “Am.” ...Upon the foundation laid by this declaration, “אֶהְיֶה I AM,” repeated four times in succession (v 12, once; v 13, three times), the special name of God, “יהוה Yahweh,” is revealed. This multiplication of the verb from which the name is drawn adds impact to the redactor’s confessional point. As McCarthy (CBQ 40[1978] 316) has suggested, “the spell of the repetition” itself establishes the connection between יהוה and היה. Far more than a simple connection is in view here, however. The repetition of these “I AM” verbs, as awkward as it may appear, is entirely intentional. *Word Biblical Commentary* Durham, J. I. (2002). ...Vol. 3: Exodus. *Word Biblical Commentary* (39). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.