

EXODUS 3:14

ANALYSIS OF A HEBREW WORD

“I AM”

ASHLEIGH WEAVER

OLD TESTAMENT 503: HEBREW BIBLE & EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

PROFESSOR RUDELLE MACK, PH. D

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EXODUS 3:14 CHOSEN WORD

English: "I Am" - Hebrew: "Ehyeh" אֶהְיֶה

EXODUS 3:13-15 VERSE TRANSLATIONS & COMPARASIONS

New International Version - 14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'" 15 God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.' "This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation."

English Standard Version - 14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I am has sent me to you.'" 15 God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

The Message - 14 God said to Moses, "I-AM-WHO-I-AM. Tell the People of Israel, 'I-AM sent me to you.'" 15 God continued with Moses: "This is what you're to say to the Israelites: 'God, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob sent me to you.' This has always been my name, and this is how I always will be known.

Complete Jewish Bible - 14 God said to Moshe, "Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh [I am/will be what I am/will be]," and added, "Here is what to say to the people of Isra'el: 'Ehyeh [I Am or I Will Be] has sent me to you.'" 15 God said further to Moshe, "Say this to the people of Isra'el: 'Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh [Adonai], the God of your fathers, the God of Avraham, the God of Yitz'chak and the God of Ya'akov, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever; this is how I am to be remembered generation after generation.

When comparing the four English translations of the “I Am” statements from the book of Exodus, chapter 3 verse 14 all of the English translations use the words “I am” with the Complete Jewish Bible adding in the Hebrew word “Ehyeh” to the “I Am” word. The word sounds the same in all of the translations and gives the same authoritative feel in each of the translations.

HEBREW DEFINITION ROOTS

אֶהְיֶה (Ehyeh) is the original Hebrew word for “I Am”. The Hebrew root word for Ehyeh is Hayah, Hayah is a verb meaning to fall out, come to pass, become, or be. Strong’s Hebrew defines Ehyeh in the following ways;

1) to be, become, come to pass, exist, happen, fall out 1a) to happen, fall out, occur, take place, come about, come to pass 1a1b) to come about, come to pass 1a2) to come into being, become 1a2a) to arise, appear, come 1a2b) to become 1a2b1) to become 1a2b2) to become like 1a2b3) to be instituted, be established 1a3) to be 1a3a) to exist, be in existence 1a3b) to abide, remain, continue (with word of place or time) 1a3c) to stand, lie, be in, be at, be situated (with word of locality) 1a3d) to accompany, be with 1b) (Niphal) 1b1) to occur, come to pass, be done, be brought about 1b2) to be done, be finished, be gone. <https://biblehub.com/strongs/exodus/3-14.htm>

According to Strong's Englishman's Concordance Ehyeh has 43 occurrences throughout scripture. Other scriptures where Ehyeh is used are as follows including their genre and context.

- Exodus 3:12, 4:12, 4:15 - Exodus is a law narrative genre written to tell the story of deliverance. The word Ehyeh is used here as “become”.
- Exodus 3:14 - Exodus is a law narrative genre written to tell the story of deliverance. The word Ehyeh is used here as “I Am”.

- Deuteronomy 31:23 - Deuteronomy is the final book of the law. The word Ehyeh is used here as “become”.
- Joshua 1:5, Joshua 3:7 - Joshua is a book of history. The word Ehyeh is used here as “have been”.
- Judges 6:16, Judges 11:9 - Judges is a book of history. The word Ehyeh is used here as “become”.
- Ruth 2:13 - Ruth is a book of history. The word Ehyeh is used here as “I Am”.
- 1 Samuel 18:18, 1 Samuel 23:17, 2 Samuel 7:14, 2 Samuel 16:18, 2 Samuel 16:19 - 1st & 2nd Samuel are books of narrative history. The word Ehyeh is used here as “Become”.
- 2 Samuel 15:34 - 2nd Samuel is a book of narrative history. The word Ehyeh is used here as “have been”.
- 1 Chronicles 17:13, 1 Chronicles 28:6 - 1st & 2nd Chronicles are books of history. The word Ehyeh is used here as “become”.
- Job 3:16 - Job is a book of wisdom. The word Ehyeh is used here as “not be as”.
- Job 10:19 - Job is a book of wisdom. The word Ehyeh is used here as “been”.
- Job 12:4, Job 17:6 - Job is a book of wisdom. The word Ehyeh is used here as “I Am”.
- Psalm 50:21 - Psalm is a book of poetry. The word Ehyeh is used here as “was just”.
- Songs 1:7 - Songs is a book of poetry. The word Ehyeh is used here as “become”.
- Isaiah 3:7 - Isaiah is a book of prophecy. The word Ehyeh is used here as “become”.
- Isaiah 47:7 - Isaiah is a book of prophecy. The word Ehyeh is used here as “will be”.
- Jeremiah 11:4, Jeremiah 24:7, Jeremiah 30:22, Jeremiah 31:1, Jeremiah 32:38 -

- Ezekiel 11:20, Ezekiel 14:11, Ezekiel 34:24, Ezekiel 36:28, Ezekiel 37:23 - Ezekiel is a book of prophecy. The word Ehyeh is used here as “become”.
- Zechariah 2:5, Zechariah 8:8 - Zechariah is a book of futuristic prophecy. The word Ehyeh is used here as “become”.
- Hosea 1:9 - Hosea is a book of prophecy. The word Ehyeh is used here as “become”.
- Hosea 14:5 - Hosea is a book of prophecy. The word Ehyeh is used here as “will be like”.

In my research I was able to reveal that in Biblical Hebrew the root verb word Hayah doesn't just mean existence but manifestation (a manifesting existence). When God replied to Moses and said to tell the Israelites “I Am” or “ehyeh” he was saying he was always there, he would be there with him in that moment, and he would be there in the future. There are several applications of this passage to the contemporary audience of the book of Exodus. One practical application is remembering it is impossible to adequately describe who God is in one single name, in one single word. God's power, character, and being are simply indescribable. Those who believe in God the I Am should keep his many names, wonderous acts, and faithful promises in the forefront of their minds to constantly discover the depths of who he is and worship him in spirit and truth. Without God's word and worship in spirit and truth, the flesh causes doubt, worldly influences, and confusion can blind and deafen a person to God's wonder, power, and word. Without understanding of the Hebrew meaning of “I Am” readers of Exodus may miss the have the full understanding of who God is, that he abides with us, and that he accompanies us. There is no way to know these things from the “I Am” statement without studying the Biblical Hebrew I Am scripture.