

Why Does “I Will Be” Make People Nervous?

...or “I Will Be” vs. “I Am.”

Hopefully, we have established (and the reader is satisfied) the linguistic fact that God’s Name as revealed in Exodus 3:14, **AHYH** אהיה is correctly translated as “I Will Be.” God’s *full* answer to Moses through the Burning Bush is, then, “I Will Be What I Will Be.” And yet, almost universally, the English-speaking world translates this as “I Am What I Am.” Why is this?

Well, despite the linguistic evidence, people are simply uncomfortable with the notion of God “becoming.” First, there is the issue of other Bible passages, such as Malachi 3:6, “I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.” Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” James 1:17, “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.” (All quotes NIV)

In these passages, God is the constant, Unmoved Mover, and we humans find this very comforting because we are fickle and erratic.

Then, there is the strange notion of just what, “I Will Be What I Will Be” *means* coming from God. Unable to deal with this complex mystery, it has been much more convenient to simply use “I Am,” though even here almost all Bible commentators have fallen short. For many, God’s answer, “I Am What I Am” is the equivalent of “My Name is none of your business, Moses. You won’t be able to get a handle on Me.” Yet, this viewpoint is opposed to the whole essence of the passage. YHWH was trying to *inform* Moses about His Name, what to say to the people and how to USE this Name.

“I AM” says volumes about God! That is the subject of “God Is Not God’s Name” from the “I Am” perspective. The “I Am” perspective is a very good place to start. There is so much ignorance around about God’s Name, it is best to start from where we are.

Still, this does not change the fact: God’s Name means “I Will Be.” What can we make of this?

Here are our best answers:

1. “A rose is a rose is a rose.” A rosebush is always and only a rosebush, never a cactus or a mountain lion. In that respect, a rosebush is always

the same. Yet, the sameness of the rosebush is not like the sameness of a rock. The rose grows, blooms, wilts in the sun and sprouts more little rose bushes. The rosebush is ALIVE, and therefore ever growing and changing, yet forever unchanged, because it is *always and only a rose!*

The rosebush analogy applies to God. God is always God, and yet God is ALIVE!

2. The second notion is quite a bit more foreign to most people's normal way of thinking, and we spend quite a bit of time dealing with it at The Calling. It goes like this: the ancient notion that "God is the potter, we are the clay" begs to have one question answered: *Where did God get the clay from?*

The totality of the evidence, from nature, science and the Scriptures, is that God made the clay out of Himself!

Nothing, anywhere, is ever "created" (or destroyed). Things only change form or get rearranged: this is the undeniable witness of science. So, when we speak of God "creating," what we mean is that He *rearranged part of Himself* into the Universe.

A great illustration is the human imagination. As we think of something, say a green horse, we are focusing our imagination (brain cells and dendrites) into the shape of a green horse. We remain the same human, sitting in our room, imagining, and yet, a tiny part of us is now shaped into the image of a green horse.

The Scripture is clear that God *said*...and things came into existence. The Universe is made out of His Will, just as we will our minds to imagine a green horse. In that way, God wills Himself to be whatever He wants, and the result is the stars, the Sun and Moon, the Earth, oceans, rivers, mountains, creatures, you and me.

The Universe is God's rearrangement of God, formed by the use of Will, focused through Word. As "cosmic" or far-out as that might seem, it is also the best explanation as to what the Scripture means when it says, "In God we live, move, and exist" (!)

Since you've come this far with us in understanding the Holy Name, perhaps you are also wondering what many other readers have asked, "If 'I Will Be' is the truth, how can you write something like 'God is Not God's Name' from the 'I Am' perspective?"

It's a good question. The answer is the two perspectives are both true, and they are related. At any given point in time, "I Am" is the truth. "I Am" is the now-point. Yet, for the vast infinity of space and the eternity of time, (the Big Picture), the Divine Story is embodied within "I Will Be."

A simple illustration is a rock falling from the sky. Let's say it falls 1,000 feet. It's easy to graph the fall of the rock, comparing how far it has fallen to any given time. After 1 second it has fallen 16 feet, after 2 seconds it has fallen 48 feet, etc.

Once we have the graph (or a formula describing the rock's fall) we can perform two math functions:

- 1) At any given time, we can tell how *fast* the rock is falling. This is the **derivative** of the formula. The derivative, a snapshot in time, is the equivalent to the "I Am."
- 2) Also, for any given time, we can tell how *far* the rock has fallen, from the beginning to now. This is the **integral** of the formula, equivalent to the "I Will Be," telling the whole story.

In summary, "I Am" is the **Derivative** of God.
"I Will Be" is the **Integral** of God.

"I Will Be" gives a broader perspective and larger picture. Yet, one is not right and the other wrong, because both "I Am" and "I Will Be" have so much to say. What is of greatest importance is what these Names mean to you, and the fruit these Names will produce in you.

I Am, and I Will Be.

Yes.