

Did You Know?

***'I am' and Yahweh Mean the
Same Thing?***

Did You Know?

When Moses asked God what his name was, he didn't say it was Jehovah or Yahweh. Instead he told Moses to tell the Israelites that "I AM WHO I AM" sent you. Why this contradiction?

Exodus 3:14

Did You Know?

This contradiction comes from our English translations.

Here's what was actually transferred to Moses.

Did You Know?

- In Hebrew God said “ehyeh asher ehyeh”
- In this sentence which God spoke, ehyeh is a first-person, singular form of the Hebrew verb ‘to be’ (hayah)
- It was a statement of self-existence, meaning he wasn’t created by any higher power or force
- The Hebrew didn’t use consonants in their writing which causes us confusion

Did You Know?

- The consonants in *ehyeh* are h-y-h which are different to the tetragrammaton (y-h-w-h) used for God's name in the OT
- **BTW:** When eventually writing vowels, Hebrews preferred to write *adonay* ('Lord') instead of y-h-w-h out of reverence for his name
- So where does *yhwh* come from?
- Both *yhwh* and *ehyeh* come from the same verb *hayah* – meaning 'to be'

Did You Know?

- Ehyeh is the first-person form of the verb and is translated 'I am'
- Hayah is also written as hawah in documents older than the earliest OT manuscripts that we have
- Yhwh is the third person form of hawah
- All this suggests that yhw should be pronounced yihweh (meaning 'he is') because it is in the third person

Did You Know?

- The problem is that elsewhere in the OT the name is shortened to yh (See Exodus 3:14)
- Hebrew scribes added the ‘a’ vowel making it yah
- So if the first part of the name is yah, then yahweh , not yihweh is the way it became to be spelt and pronounced
- It is not wrong to use yahweh as it means ‘he causes to be’ or ‘he brings into existence’

Did You Know?

- So God saying he was 'I am' is the same as him saying *yihweh* or *yahweh*

So the English translations have caused us to think that God spoke in riddles when he reportedly said "I am who I am", but he wasn't.

Now here's the important point:

Did You Know?

- 1) When Jesus answered the High Priest's question, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" saying "I am", did he speak in the Jewish language (Hebrew) and say something like $E_{h_y}e_h$? This would have definitely caused the religious leaders to say, "What further need do we have of witnesses?" Mark 14:61-63
- 2) When Jesus warned the disciples about the coming sacking of Jerusalem, did he say $E_{h_y}e_h$ when he used the words "I am"? Mark 13:6

What about Jehovah?

Did You Know?

During the Middle Ages scholars began to read the consonants of “YHWH” with the vowels of “adonay”, which resulted in the word “Jehovah”, an artificial word bearing no relation to the name of the God of Israel in biblical times. Because the Germans were the first to make this transfer it was written Jehovah instead of Yehowah since j’s and w’s are pronounced as y’s and v’s.

Did You Know?

“It is quite certain, however, that the ancient Israelites never used this term for their God; formally it is like a genetic hybrid, as artificial as the words ‘eledile’ and ‘crocophant.’”

(Tryggve N. D. Mettinger (2005) "In Search of God: The Meaning and Message of the Everlasting Names" p:16)

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