

The Real Name of the One True God

Galen Currah, 2022

Exodus 3:13-15 NIV

¹³ Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”

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.

Exodus 3:13-15 Reverse interlinear with Hebrew transliterated in Roman characters¹

‘What is his name?’ then what shall I say to them?” ¹⁴ And God
mā(h) hú(ʾ) šēm₁ mā(h) ʾmr₁ ʾēl hēm w ʾēlō-hīm
said to Moses, “I am that I am.” And he said, “ So you must say to
ʾmr₁ ʾēl mō-šē(h) hyh ʾāššēr hyh w ʾmr₁ kō(h) ʾmr₁ l₁
the Israelites, ⁿ ‘I am sent me to you .’”
bēn₁ yis-rā-ʾēl ʾēh-yē(h) šlh ʾānī ʾēl ʾāt-tēm
¹⁵ And God said again to Moses, “ So you must say to the Israelites, ⁿ
w ʾēlō-hīm ʾmr₁ ʾōd ʾēl mō-šē(h) kō(h) ʾmr₁ ʾēl bēn₁ yis-rā-ʾēl
‘Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, ^o the God of Abraham, the God
yhwh ʾēlō-hīm ʾāt-tēm ʾāb ʾēlō-hīm ʾāb-rā-hām ʾēlō-hīm
of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name
yiš-ḥāq w ʾēlō-hīm yā-ʾāqōb šlh ʾānī ʾēl ʾāt-tēm zē(h) ʾānī šēm₁
forever, and this is my remembrance from generation to generation.’ ¹⁶ Go
l₁ ʾō-lām w zē(h) ʾānī zē-ḵēr l₁ dōr₂ dōr₂ hlk

YHWH (Yahweh, the LORD)

Translated

ʾEHYEH = “I AM” from the Hebrew verb **hyh**, “to be”.

YHWH = “HE IS” from the Hebrew verb **hwh**, “to be”.

¹ Lexham English Bible, reverse interlinear, Logos Bible Software, www.logos.com

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The verbs **hyh** and **hwh** were interchangeable in ancient Semitic languages, including Hebrew.

The form **hyh** was more usual in western Semitic, and the form **hwh** more usual in southern Semitic.

Some scholars suggest that **yhwh** has a causal force, meaning “He who causes to be.”

Transliterated

6th century BCE, paleo-hebrew

YHWH: 𐤅𐤄𐤅𐤄 h-w-h-y (◀ read Hebrew from right to left)

5th century BCE, Aramaic characters, without vowels

YHWH: יהוה h-w-h-y

12th century CE Latin: **Yehowah** (Latin has no v sound)

16th century CE Latin: **lehouah** (Latin u and w sound alike)

16th century CE English: **Jehovah** (j sounded like i)

20th century CE Scholars: **Yahweh** (w or v sound)

Elohim (God) and Yahweh (the LORD)

10th century BCE, paleo-hebrew

Elohim: 𐤀𐤋𐤅𐤍 myhl' ; Yahweh: 𐤅𐤄𐤅𐤄 hwhy (◀ read Hebrew from right to left)

5th century BCE, Aramaic characters, without vowels

Elohim; אלהים ; Yahweh: יהוה

10th century CE, Masoretic Hebrew with vowels

Elohim: אֱלֹהִים, mîhōlē' ; Yahweh: יְהוָה*

Masoretic vowels and cantillation (for chanting)

Elohim: אֱלֹהִים ; Yahweh: יְהוָה

*vowels borrowed from Adonai.