I Am

"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."'" Exodus 3:14

Moses asked a remarkably direct question. When he went to the Israelites and told them that the God of their fathers had sent him, what was he supposed to say when they asked, "What is his name?"

God answered for himself.

"I AM WHO I AM."

Then he made the answer even more direct: "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

The Hebrew word is *Ehyeh*. Our English Bible translates it, "I AM."

What does that name tell us about God? Perhaps it can be reduced to one very simple statement: **I am not you, and you are not me.**

God simply is. We are always becoming.

We are creatures who are always becoming. There was a time when none of us existed. God gave us life, and from the moment that life began, we started changing. The infant becomes a child. The child becomes an adult. The young become old. Our bodies change, our thoughts change, our knowledge changes, and our circumstances change. We learn today what we did not know yesterday, and tomorrow we will be different from what we are tonight.

Even when we say, "I am," we describe only our present condition. I am young becomes I am old. I am strong may become I am weak. I am healthy may become I am sick. Everything about created existence bears the marks of change.

Not God.

"For I the LORD do not change." Malachi 3:6

God does not develop. He does not mature. He does not discover. He does not improve or diminish. He never learns something he did not previously know. Nothing occurs to him. Nothing surprises him. Nothing can make him more God tomorrow than he is today.

He is.

Before there was a universe, he is. Before there were angels, he is. Before there was time by which we measure yesterday, today, and tomorrow, he is. Everything outside of God exists because he gave it existence. Nothing gave existence to him.

This is the Creator-creature distinction. God is not simply a greater version of us. He is not merely stronger, wiser, older, and more knowledgeable. He is altogether God, and we are altogether creatures. He is eternal; we had a beginning. He is immutable; we continually change. He exists in himself; every breath we take depends upon him.

Then Jesus came.

Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus repeatedly declared, "I am"—the bread of life, the light of the world, the door, the good shepherd, the resurrection and the life, the way, the truth, and the life, and the true vine. But one declaration stands apart.

"Before Abraham was, I am." John 8:58

Jesus did not say, "Before Abraham was, I was." He said, "I am." Those who heard him understood the enormity of the claim. They picked up stones.

The child born in Bethlehem was not merely another creature becoming. The eternal Son is the great I AM.

Moses asked for a name. God answered, "I AM."

And perhaps that name reminds every creature of the most fundamental truth we can ever know about God:

He is not us.

And we are not him.

Just a Thought: Everything changes except the great I AM.

John L. Wheeler

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