

# BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM

Ex. 3:14; Isaiah 6:1-6; Jn 8:52-58; Acts 17:22-28

## I. INTIMATIONS of TRANSCENDENCE ELICITING AWE

- A. Athletes
- B. Scholars
  - 1. Plato & Aristotle, Augustine & Aquinas
  - 2. G.K. Chesterton & C.S. Lewis
  - 3. David Bentley Hart & Thomas Ward
- C. Artists
  - 1. Musicians—Vivaldi
  - 2. Sculptors—Michelangelo
  - 3. Writers—T.S. Eliot
- D. Nature's grandeur
  - 1. Thunderstorms in the Rockies
  - 2. Mountain tops' vistas
  - 3. Antelope Canyon, Grand Canyon
- E. AWE elicited
  - 1. Attention—stop and listen, re-spect
  - 2. Wonder—ponder what's there, why it is,
  - 3. Ecstasy—epiphany, losing track of time, forgetting myself
- F. References substantiating intimations
  - 1. Rob Dreher: *Living in Wonder*
  - 2. Peter Kreeft: *Doors in the Walls of the World*
  - 3. Peter Berger: *A Rumor of Angels* and *The Cosmic Canopy*

## II. MOST AWESOME OF ALL: THERE'S AN IS-NESS TO THINGS

- A. Despite man's spiritual blindness (altar to "unknown god")
- B. Simple observations point to things coming into being because of Supreme Being
  - 1. Morning doves in AZ
  - 2. TV series *Heartland*
  - 3. Jim's Tesla
  - 4. Personal self-awareness—Augustine: "For we are, and we know that we are, and delight in our being, and in our knowledge of it."
- C. Right words really matter—thus AM (and being verbs) ultimately insightful
  - 1. Copulative links subject with predicate
  - 2. Substantive acknowledges subject's existence

## III. GOD REVEALED AS the GREAT "I AM" CONSTANTLY PRESENT

- A. Moses at burning bush: He Who Is, I Am—JHWH; St John of Damascus: "Now, it seems to me, that of all the names given to God the more proper is He Who Is . . . For, like some limitless and boundless sea of essence, He contains all being in Himself."
- B. Jesus: Before Abraham, I AM
- C. Jesus: Immanuel! God With Us! Face-to-face Presence
  - 1. Janelle McGukin's *The With Us God*.
  - 2. Pascal's *Memorial*
  - 3. Paul Claudel: "In an instant, my heart was touched, and I believed."
  - 4. Oswald Chambers sees daughter's ear
  - 5. Sally Read's testimony: *Night's Bright Darkness*
  - 6. Rod Dreher's awakening in Chartres Cathedral