

**Oh, To See The Dawn
(The Power of the Cross)**
By Keith Getty & Stuart Towend (2005)

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Old Orchard Church
Fifth Sunday in Lent
March 25, 2012 – 10:15 to 11:50 a.m.

**God said to Moses,
“I AM WHO I AM ...
Say this to the people of Israel,
‘I AM has sent me to you.’”**

- Exodus 3:14 -

Descent To the Cross: Before Abraham Was, I AM

In the burning bush God revealed himself to us as
I AM WHO I AM.

Almighty, incomprehensible, supreme in majesty,
He who had no beginning is himself the Ground of all being.

But in the fullness of time He reveals himself again;
he comes with a face, with a laugh, with a heart that cries,

“Do not be afraid.
Yes, before Abraham was, I AM.
I am the inscrutable God.
But I am humble in heart, and I am gentle.”

We thought we could make him who Is, to be nothing:
We crucified him, the Lord of glory.
Yet God turned it to our good.
Bless him in the congregation of the forgiven,
the company of those who, through faith, he’s made alive!



Today’s Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson: Exodus 3:1-15

Gospel Reading: John 8:46-59

Today’s Sermon

“Glory and Joy”

II Thessalonians 2:17-20

James Schaefer, seminary intern, preaching

Reality Check

All reality hangs on one thing: whatever is self-existent. What exists by its own power is the final backdrop of the Universe; what doesn’t, lives a borrowed and dependent life. And the Bible’s claim is that God is the final backdrop of everything. As C. S. Lewis put it in one of the Lenten readings last week, “He (God) makes, we are made: He is the original, we derivative.” And if modern people believe the universe just “happened,” well, then they believe in magic after all.

When the Lord commissioned Moses to go tell the Israelites that their God was about to rescue them, Moses asked, more or less,

And who shall I tell them sent me?

God answered Moses,

“I AM WHO I AM. Tell them, “I AM” sent me to you.”

That’s it—just, “I AM.” The Self-Existent One. And when, in his duel of words with the religious leaders who were resting on the laurels of their Jewish pedigree, Jesus said,

“I tell you the truth, before Abraham was, I AM,”

everyone got the point: a man, unmistakably human, was claiming to be no less than the God who revealed himself to Moses centuries before as the great I AM. That’s when they tried to stone Jesus for blasphemy.

No one and nothing in the cosmos exists by its own will power, though there be billions of galaxies, as some scientists now theorize. Only God has life and being in himself. And the deepest mystery of love is that this uncreated, personal God became one of us at a definite place in history, to reconcile us to himself so that our fragile and borrowed lives might actually be taken up into the eternal divine life without losing their splendid individuality. Christ, the Self-Existent One, came into the world so that we might live forever, happily deriving everything from his inexhaustible life.

When we feel “reality” slipping away from us as we sometimes do, our great consolation is that God has it firmly in his grip: there is nothing above, behind, or more basic than God. To know him, through the God-man, Christ, is to be at the Bedrock of what is, and is wonderfully good.

—Ron Lutjens