

# God Crucified: Early Jewish Monotheism and New Testament Christology

A lecture by Richard Bauckham

See Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (1998)

Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Essays on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster/ Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008)  
(*God Crucified* is reprinted in this book as chapter 1)

## **DOMINANT MODEL OF NT CHRISTOLOGY IN 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY GRADUALISM**

Christology evolved from low to high  
from functional to ontic  
from Palestinian Jewish to Hellenistic.

Assumption: Only a functional Christology compatible with Jewish monotheism

## **SOME LATE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY DEVELOPMENTS TOWARDS CHRISTOLOGICAL MONOTHEISM**

NT Christology developed wholly within a Jewish context

Issues about the relationship of early Christology to Jewish monotheism:

How strictly monotheistic was late Second Temple Judaism?

Jewish precedents for Christology

(hypostatized divine aspects, principal angels, exalted patriarchs)

Were they semi-divine?

Worship of Jesus – fact and significance

A 'binitarian mutation' in Jewish monotheism (Hurtado)?

## JEWISH MONOTHEISTIC CONTEXT OF NT CHRISTOLOGY

### Jewish monotheism defined

Unique Divine Identity of YHWH  
(who the one God is,  
not what divine being is)

The sole Creator of all things  
The sovereign Ruler of all things  
The God of Israel (NAME)

Thus only this God may be worshipped,  
and this God must be worshipped.

**Absolute distinction between  
the one God and all other  
reality**

God  
(+ God's Word)  
(+ God's Wisdom)

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all things created and ruled by  
God, including  
angels as servants of God's rule  
carrying out God's commands

## JESUS INCLUDED IN THE UNIQUE DIVINE IDENTITY

### (1) Introduction: A Christology of Divine identity

Inclusion of Jesus in the unique divine identity, as understood in early Jewish monotheism, preceded the New Testament writings and is common to them all. This step could not have been approached gradually via the model of semi-divine "intermediary" figures, but was made directly, by including Jesus in the well-known defining characteristics of the one God's unique relationship to all things.

### (2) The exalted Jesus participates in God's unique sovereignty over all things

#### (a) Psalm 110:1

Quotations and allusions: Matt 22:44; 26:64; Mark 12:36; 14:62; 16:19; Luke 20:42-43; 22:69; Acts 2:33-35; 5:31; 7:55-56; Rom 8:34; 1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:20; 2:6; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:2; 1 Pet 3:22; Rev 3:21.

#### (b) Jesus' sovereignty over "all things"

Matt 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 3:35; 13:3; 16:15; Acts 10:36; 1 Cor 15:27-28; Eph 1:22; Phil 3:21; Heb 1:2; 2:8; cf. Eph 1:10, 23; 4:10; Col 1:20.

#### (c) Jesus shares God's exaltation above all the angelic powers

e.g. Eph 1:21-22; Hebrews 1

#### (d) Jesus given the divine name

e.g. Heb 1:4; Phil 2:9; 'calling on the name of the Lord'

#### (e) worship of Jesus

as recognition of his exercise of the unique divine sovereignty  
(Phil 2:9-11; Rev 5; Matt 28:17; Heb 1:6; John 5:21-23)

### (3) The pre-existent Christ participates in God's unique activity of creation

(John 1:1-5; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15-16; Heb 1:2-3, 10-12; Rev 3:14)

### (4) Conclusion: New Testament Christology as Christology of Divine Identity - beyond 'functional' and 'ontic' Christology

Jesus belongs to the unique divine *identity*, Jesus is intrinsic to *who God is*.