

Jesus and the God of Judaism

Adventist Theological Society
Jon Paulien, Loma Linda University
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San Antonio, Texas

General theory of Jesus' Divinity

Jesus at first seen as prophet, then divine, then fully God
Climaxed in Fourth Century Creedal formulas
Based on a developmental approach (evolutionary)

New Testament reality (Richard Bauckham)

Earliest Christology was the highest Christology
Grounded in Jewish concepts of God
Scriptures more concerned with *who* God is than *what* God is
Exod 34:6-7

Jewish monotheism

Distinguished God from all other realities

Deut 6:4; Isa 44:6-8

How to identify who God is

Sole ruler over everything

Dan 4:34-35; Additions to Esther 13:9-11

Sole creator of everything

Neh 9:6

Bearer of unique name ("Yahweh")

Exod 6:3; Deut 4:35

Only One worthy of worship

Exod 20:4-6; Exod 34:14

Jesus and Jewish monotheism

The NT includes Jesus in the One God of Judaism: Heb 1:3-14

Divine Rule

Eph 1:21-22; Heb 1:7-8

Creation

1 Cor 8:4-6 cf. Deut 6:4; Rom 11:36

Unique Name

Isa 45:22-24 cf. Phil 2:9-11

Worthy of Worship

Rev 19:10; 5:12-14

Summary: NT Includes Jesus in the One God of Judaism

Rev 1:1

The NT puts Jesus above the Jewish line that separates God from everything else

Payoff

Relationship with Jesus = Relationship with God

The Voice of Jesus Is God's Voice

Through Jesus We Know What God Is Like

If You've Seen Jesus, You've Seen the Father

Steps to Christ, 10-12

"God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but imperfectly represent His love. Though all these evidences have been given, ***the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear***; they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,--one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. ***It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men. . . .***"

"Jesus did not suppress one word of truth, but He uttered it always in love. He exercised the greatest tact and thoughtful, kind attention in His intercourse with the people. He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave needless pain to a sensitive soul. He did not censure human weakness. He spoke the truth, but always in love. He denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity; but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes. He wept over Jerusalem, the city He loved, which refused to receive Him, the way, the truth, and the life. They had rejected Him, the Saviour, but He regarded them with pitying tenderness. His life was one of self-denial and thoughtful care for others. Every soul was precious in His eyes. While He ever bore Himself with divine dignity, He bowed with the tenderest regard to every member of the family of God. In all men He saw fallen souls whom it was His mission to save.

"Such is the character of Christ as revealed in His life. ***This is the character of God.*** It is from the Father's heart that the streams of divine compassion, manifest in Christ, flow out to the children of men. Jesus, the tender, pitying Saviour, was God "manifest in the flesh." 1 Timothy 3:16."

Jesus and the God of Judaism

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Critical Consensus

Jesus a Prophet

Church Sees More and More in Him

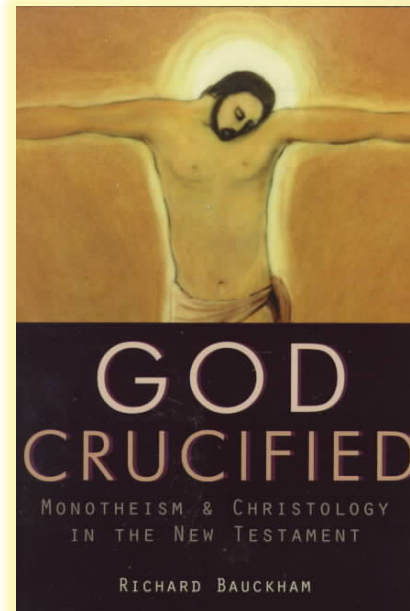
Climax: 4th Century Creeds

Developmental Approach

NT Through Evolutionary Lens

Richard Bauckham

God Crucified



Richard Bauckham

God Crucified

Earliest Christology the Highest

Based on Jewish Concept of God

Chalcedon not a higher Christology

Contextualization of NT

Not Helpful with Jews and Muslims

The Biblical View of God

Greeks: *What* God Is

Nature, Essence, Attributes

Eastern: *Who* God Is

All About Relationships

The Biblical View of God

Exod 34:6-7

The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God ***merciful and gracious***, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast ***love and faithfulness***,⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, ***forgiving iniquity*** and transgression and sin, but who will ***by no means clear the guilty***, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

Jewish Monotheism

Line of Distinction

Definition of Idolatry

Distinctive Teaching of Judaism

Jewish Monotheism

Deut 6:4

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, *the LORD is one.*

Isa 44:6

"I am the first and I am the last; *besides me there is no god.*"

Jewish Monotheism

Four Key Characteristics:

- 1) Sole Ruler
- 2) Sole Creator
- 3) Unique Name
- 4) Worthy of Worship

1) God Is the Sole Ruler

Dan 4:34-35

His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; . . . ³⁵ he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and ***none can stay his hand*** or say to him, "What have you done?"

1) God Is the Sole Ruler

Additions to Esther 13:9-11

The universe is in thy power and *there is no one who can oppose thee*. . . .

Thou art Lord of all, and there is no one who can resist thee.”

2) God Is the Sole Creator

Neh 9:6

“You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.”

3) God Bears a Unique Name

Exod 6:3

I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but ***by my name the LORD (Yahweh)*** I did not make myself known to them.

Deut 4:35

To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD (Yahweh) is God; ***there is no other besides him.***

4) God Alone Is Worthy of Worship

Exod 34:14

For you shall worship no other god, for the LORD (Yahweh), whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God (Second Commandment).

Intermediary Figures

Angels Who Help God Rule

Always Servants

Refuse Worship

Wisdom as Creator

Attribute of God

So What Does a Jew Do With Jesus?

Apostles Were All Jews (Including Paul)

Came to Include Jesus in the One God of
Judaism

The Key Text

Heb 1:3-14

³ *He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature*, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as *the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs*.

The Key Text

Heb 1:3-14

⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"? ⁶ And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "*Let all God's angels worship him.*"

The Key Text

Heb 1:3-14

⁷ Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire." ⁸ But of the Son he says, "***Your throne, O God, is forever and ever***, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.

Jesus Is "Above the Line"

The Key Text

Heb 1:3-14

¹⁰ And, "***You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands***"; ¹¹ they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, ¹² like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end."

1) Jesus Is the Sole Ruler

Eph 1:21

(Christ is) *far above all rule and authority and power and dominion*, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

2) Jesus Is the Sole Creator

1 Cor 8:4-6

We know that "an idol has no real existence," and that "there is no God but one." (Deut 6:4) ⁵ For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth--as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"-- ⁶ yet for us there is *one God, the Father*, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and *one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things* and through whom we exist.

Jesus Is "Above the Line" (John 1:1-3)

3) Jesus Bears a Unique Name

Phil 2:9

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him ***the name that is above every name***. . .

3) Jesus Bears a Unique Name

Isa 45:22-24

I am God, and ***there is no other***.²³ By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: '***To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance***.'²⁴ "Only in the ***LORD (Yahweh)***, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength. . .

3) Jesus Bears a Unique Name

Phil 2:9-11

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him ***the name that is above every name***,¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus ***every knee should bow***, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and ***every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord***, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus = *kurios* (LXX) = *Yahweh*
(Heb of Isa 45:22-24)

4) Jesus Is Worthy of Worship

Rev 19:10

Then I fell down at (the angel's) feet ***to worship him***, but he said to me, "***You must not do that!*** I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. ***Worship God.***"

Angels Are "Below the Line"

4) Jesus Is Worthy of Worship

Rev 5:12-14

"**Worthy is the Lamb** who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" ¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "**To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb** be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" ¹⁴ And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and **the elders fell down and worshiped.**

Jesus Included in the One God

- 1) Sole Ruler
- 2) Sole Creator
- 3) Unique Name
- 4) Worthy of Worship

Jesus Included in the One God

Rev 1:1

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by *sending his angel* to his servant John,

Line Falls Between Jesus and Angel

Abundant Further Evidence:

John 1:1-5; 20:28; 12:37-43

Rev 1:8, 17; 21:6; 22:13

Payoff

Rela w Jesus = Rela w God

The Voice of Jesus Is God's Voice

Through Jesus We Know What God Is Like

If We've Seen Jesus. . . (John 14:9)

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The End