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Book Review: Jesus and the God of Israel

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the price for making such texts conveniently available for use in both personal study and the classroom. The book features indexes of author, subject, and ancient sources, and its editing and layout are well done.

The Context Group is to be congratulated on this anniversary volume, which records the admirable progress in applying social-science methodologies to NT studies. Clearly, much work remains to be done. One could only wish that topics such as city politics, voluntary associations, the military, meals, social memory, group identity, and leadership models could also be addressed. I gladly commend this volume for enhancing our understanding of the socio-cultural setting of early Christianity. Yet be warned: the book offers ready-made interpretations for only a handful of Bible passages. We are invited to extend social-science methods to the biblical passages that are next on our own agenda in an interpretive exercise that is sure to challenge our exegetical skills.

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Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity. By Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, xii + 285 pp., \$34.00 paper.

When I first heard that Richard Bauckham had completed a new volume discussing his Christology of divine identity, I assumed that it was the expansion of Bauckham's argument promised in the preface to *God Crucified* ([Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], ix). However, to my disappointment, *Jesus and the God of Israel* is not Bauckham's definitive study, but rather it contains *God Crucified* in its entirety along with several essays that treat similar themes. After reading the book, however, my disappointment was greatly relieved, for, while the actual content of *God Crucified* itself is little changed in *Jesus and the God of Israel*, the new chapters advance Bauckham's earlier arguments on several fronts. In this review, therefore, after summarizing the content of the book, I will focus my attention on these expansions of Bauckham's earlier work.

In addition to a repackaged version of *God Crucified* appearing as the first chapter of *Jesus and the God of Israel*, chapters 2–3 are also available elsewhere. Moreover, although versions of chapters 4–5 are also found in other places, they are considerably expanded in this volume. Finally, while some of their content will be included in forthcoming books, chapters 6–8 are seeing their first publication in this volume. Therefore, since all of the chapters save one (chap. 6) are or will soon be available elsewhere, one might be tempted to ask, "What is the value in releasing this volume?" In short, this collection provides the reader with a consolidation of Bauckham's arguments concerning monotheism and the divine identity to this point.

While each chapter in *Jesus and the God of Israel* has its own internal logic, the chapters are also part of a single larger argument. Therefore, while it is not possible to examine every essay in detail in a review, it is important to summarize the central argument of the book and two important corollaries of this argument.

The argument in both *God Crucified* and *Jesus and the God of Israel* is built around Bauckham's understanding of Jewish monotheism in the Second Temple era. Bauckham argues that the key feature of early Jewish monotheism is the "divine identity." In choosing this term, he distinguishes himself from those who argue for "functional" or "ontological" monotheism. While he explains it in many places in *Jesus and the God of Israel*, perhaps the best summary of what Bauckham means by "divine identity" is found on pp. 233–34, in the introduction to his chapter on Jesus' divinity in Hebrews.

Bauckham begins, "For Jewish monotheistic faith what was most important was who God is, rather than what divinity is" (p. 233). He next lists some commonly agreed upon features of who God is (i.e. the divine identity): God is the creator and the ruler, is known through his revelation to Israel, will one day be acknowledged by all creatures as the one true God (in the eschaton), is known by his name Yhwh, is the only entity that may be worshiped, and is the only eternal being (pp. 233–34). Therefore, when one or more of these features is ascribed to someone or something, it may be assumed that this being shares in the unique divine identity. Yet the features of the divine identity listed above are not an exhaustive list. Elsewhere in the book, Bauckham, expanding on a concept introduced in *God Crucified*, summarizes his understanding of monotheism from three angles: creational monotheism, eschatological monotheism, and cultic monotheism (pp. 184–85). In another place, Bauckham expands the idea of worship to include prayers, doxologies, and hymns as phenomena that may be directed only to the unique God of Israel. Additionally, he argues that the heavenly throne is reserved for the only God. Any being that shares in these phenomena is assumed to share in the unique divine identity.

The most obvious application of these observations to Christian theology is that Jesus shares the divine identity of Israel's God. This is the first and most important implication of Bauckham's understanding of Second Temple monotheism: "Early Christology was framed within the familiar Jewish framework of creational, eschatological and cultic monotheism. The first Christians developed a *christological* monotheism with all three of these aspects. From this perspective, I call the Christology of all the New Testament writers, rooted as it was in the earliest Christology of all, a Christology of divine identity, proposing this as a way beyond the standard distinction between 'functional' and 'ontic' Christology" (p. 185).

A second, and closely related, application of Bauckham's argument is that it denies that Jewish intermediary figures set a precedent, allowing for early Christian acceptance of Jesus' full divinity. Bauckham responds to such arguments with a single key question: "Is this figure included within the unique divine identity or not?" (p. 158). In both *God Crucified* and in the additional chapter "The Throne of God and the Worship of Jesus," Bauckham answers that these figures must either be included in the divine identity or they must serve the one God yet not be part of the divine identity and "in no way qualify or threaten its uniqueness" (p. 159). Thus, Bauckham considers the intermediary figures an illegitimate category. From this, he argues that, since the focus in the first century was uniqueness and not the "unitariness of God," the possibility for "real distinctions within the unique identity of God" was present. This, and not intermediary figures, is a better way to explain the high Christology of the early Christians.

I cannot leave this summary without mentioning the final chapter, for in it Bauckham presents several brief but powerful theological reflections on the cross. Since Jesus, who shares the identity of the one true God, went to the cross, it is there that God's love and sacrifice and his identification with the plight of humanity are on full display. Bauckham sounds a fitting call for his readers to consider seriously the implications of God crucified.

By way of evaluation, apart from recourse to critiquing the exegesis of some of the texts cited in this volume, I have little to criticize. One lingering question in my mind is the precise relationship between creational, cultic, and eschatological monotheism and the divine identity. While all of the features of the divine identity that Bauckham lists could fit under one or more of these headings, are these headings exclusive to his divine identity monotheism, or could an understanding of monotheism that uses the categories "functional" or "ontological" also employ these three headings? It seems that the latter could be the case; however, it is not clear how that would affect Bauckham's larger proposal, if at all.

It is also possible to raise other, less significant, questions. For example, one particularly important group of texts to which he could have devoted more attention is the collection of Son of Man passages in *1 Enoch*, since he cites them as the only possible exception to his claim that intermediary figures are never included in the divine identity. Given the possible background in Daniel 7, where such a figure seems to be included in the divine identity, it may be that this figure is not the exception that Bauckham claims. However, *1 Enoch* is not determinative one way or another for Bauckham's argument. Another claim that warrants further attention is that "real distinctions within the unique identity of God" were possible (p. 159). Bauckham mentions this only in passing and comments that different texts may have different perspectives on whether these distinctions are literary or actual hypostatizations. Which texts do which? Can those that do the latter be compared with early Christian binitarian or trinitarian texts?

Both of the questions cited above and others like them, it seems, lead to an inevitable conclusion. While this book is a helpful expansion of Bauckham's argument in *God Crucified* and fleshes out some of his claims, his fuller argument remains incomplete. By this, I am not saying that his work is unpersuasive, since the evidence that he cites is largely compelling to me. However, while *Jesus and the God of Israel* is a helpful expansion of Bauckham's arguments, I continue to await his much anticipated fuller study, where I hope that some of my lingering questions will be addressed.

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Jesus and the Feminists: Who Do They Say That He Is? By Margaret Elizabeth Köstenberger. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008, 253 pp., \$19.99 paper.

In parts 2–4 of the book, Köstenberger surveys different feminist views of Jesus grouped under three main categories: (1) radical feminists who reject Christianity wholesale due to its perceived "patriarchy"; (2) reformist feminists who opt to stay within the Christian tradition to reform it; and (3) evangelical feminists who emphasize the full equality of men and women while professing commitment to scriptural inspiration and authority. Before launching into this survey and critique, Köstenberger first lays the foundation (in part 1) by chronicling the history of feminism in general and outlining the hermeneutical issues underlying the feminist debates. After the survey of the various feminist views of Jesus, she then provides (in part 5) an evangelical non-feminist reading of Jesus and the Gospels, concluding that, while Jesus "broke with male chauvinism and a derogatory, discriminatory treatment of women," he did not obliterate gender-related distinctions in the church altogether, especially with regard to leadership roles. To Köstenberger, "[t]his is the critical balance Jesus found, and believers would do well to strike the same balance in the church today" (p. 214).

Clearly Köstenberger's own views on women and ministry fall within the complementarian position championed by members of the Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood and others. In addition, she repeatedly (pp. 16, 217–18) states that her chronicle of the feminist quest of the historical Jesus shows the large variety and even contradictory nature of the portraits. She also asserts that "[t]hese divergent understandings of Jesus found among feminists, in turn, raise concerns regarding the viability of feminism at large. Since feminists are not able to come to an essential consensus on Jesus' true identity, the validity of feminist biblical interpretation itself comes into question. The evidence shows that the feminist quest for self-fulfillment and self-realization leads to a distortion of the message of the Bible" (p. 16).