



**Bauckham, Richard.**

*Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity*

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Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth  
New Jersey

There are three names that immediately come to mind when thinking about the top Anglo-American scholars of early Christology: (1) James D. G. Dunn, (2) Larry Hurtado, and (3) Richard Bauckham, so it is no surprise to see that Bauckham has dedicated this work to his two esteemed colleagues. *Jesus and the God of Israel* is a collection of previously published or soon-to-be published essays from Bauckham on early Christology and as such it is not necessary to read each chapter in order but I would recommend beginning with chapter 1 which is the full text of his groundbreaking monograph *God Crucified*. Everything that follows is largely building off of that work in some way, shape, or form. In this review I shall focus on this chapter alone.

Bauckham's main thesis is that for too long the understanding of early Christology with regard to Second Temple Jewish monotheism has been improperly framed with scholars starting from and working within improper conceptual categories; categories that would have been foreign to early Jewish believers. For example, contra what Bauckham represents as the patristic focus on the *nature* or *being* of God, he argues that early Jewish monotheistic belief wasn't concerned so much with *what* divinity was but rather *who* their God YHWH was. Bauckham prefers to work from within the category of the "unique divine identity" as opposed to "functional" (what God *does*) or "ontic/ontological" (*what* God is) categories.

He contends that to properly understand Second Temple Jewish monotheism we need to focus our attention on those things that marked Israel's God out as unique, specifically in his relationship to all other reality:

1. His being the Creator of all things.
2. His being sovereign Ruler over all things.

These are the two main characteristics that comprise the unique divine identity of YHWH and it is the NT writers' attribution of these characteristics to Jesus that Bauckham contends is what shows that they included Jesus within the unique divine identity of Israel's God. It is also by

these criteria that he sees focus on intermediary figures such as exalted patriarchs or angels in Second Temple Jewish literature to be largely irrelevant. In short, these beings were on the creature side of the Creator/creature divide, no matter how exalted they were. He also focuses on worship (or monolatry) but against those (e.g., Hurtado) who see sole worship of God as a defining factor of his uniqueness, Bauckham contends that it is the *recognition* of YHWH's uniqueness that causes the *response* of worship.

Bauckham spends a good deal of space looking at three significant NT texts and the early Christian reading of Deutero-Isaiah (Is. 40-55). He skillfully shows how Philippians 2:6-11<sup>1</sup>, the Gospel of John, and the book of Revelation all employ various sections of Deutero-Isaiah in order to depict Jesus as being included in the unique identity of God. For Philippians there are verbal connections with Isaiah 52-53; 45 while the Gospel of John employs seven (or nine) absolute "I Am" sayings from Jesus that correspond to the seven (or nine) "I Am" sayings of YHWH in Deutero-Isaiah. He also draws attention to the "lifted up" parallels between the two bodies of writing showing an interesting connection between abasement and exaltation that lends itself to Paul's major point in Philippians 2:6-11. In the book of Revelation it is the depiction of the Lamb slain that corresponds to the Isaianic Suffering Servant.

In the end Bauckham's contention is that the earliest Christology was the highest Christology and against those who argue that *only* the *seeds* of a full blown divine Christology are present in the NT and didn't come to fruition until the fourth century patristic period, he claims that the NT writers were in a "*deliberate and sophisticated way expressing a fully divine Christology.*" (58) So much of his presentation is to be commended but there was one thing that left me less than satisfied.

Bauckham perhaps unfairly critiques patristic conceptions God and Christ by broad brushing them as being concerned mainly (perhaps only?) with ontology. In point of fact the fathers' initial concern was *salvation* which caused them to ask what kind of savior the Son had to be in order to save us. They were also concerned with *who* God was, specifically with who the Son was in relation to the Father and vice versa.

Also, as Jason Vickers convincingly argues in his recent monograph *Invocation and Assent* (Eerdmans, 2008), the origins of confessional or creedal Trinitarianism lie more in the invocation of the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit in baptism, as well as the name of Jesus in prayer, demon exorcism, and declarations of lordship than anything else. In other words, the early patristic testimony and conception of the Father and the Son was more about practical matters than it was ontology even if these categories were to become commonplace in Nicene terminology.

In chapter 2 "Biblical Theology and the Problems of Monotheism" Bauckham presents a slightly altered version of his essay of the same title from *Out of Egypt: Biblical Theology and Biblical*

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<sup>1</sup> Against a good majority of NT scholars Bauckham believes that this 'hymn' is original to Paul rather than simply being appropriated by him. I'm quite sympathetic to this position and was pleased to see Bauckham espouse it. Also refreshing was Bauckham's outright denial that an Adam Christology is anywhere present in this passage (contra Dunn who is quite frustrating to read on this point); he declares: "*In my view, Adam has proved a red herring in the study of this passage.*" (41) Amen!

*Interpretation* (Zondervan, 2004). Immediately apparent was the decision to transliterate Hebrew terms whereas the original essay contained actual Hebrew characters. This is a slight annoyance for the fact that such transliterations do not help the non-specialist because even if they can decipher the transliteration they still can't read Hebrew, and it doesn't help the novice Hebrew reader such as myself because I can actually sound out Hebrew when looking at Hebrew characters but struggle with the scholarly transliteration scheme. This gripe aside, Bauckham actually has some good things to say in this chapter.

In the first half of it he mainly interacts with Nathan MacDonald's *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of 'Monotheism'* (Mohr Siebeck, 2003). MacDonald's main contention is that Deuteronomy does not present a doctrine of God that can be described as monotheism when understood in terms of the Enlightenment's view of monotheism. Bauckham finds much of MacDonald's presentation to be compelling but he takes issue with the claim that Deuteronomy doesn't deny the existence of other gods. The claim in and of itself is not so controversial but Bauckham doesn't feel that it is properly nuanced and criticizes MacDonald for failing to give a proper account of "*YHWH's uniqueness vis-à-vis the other gods.*" (65)

Bauckham agrees with MacDonald that the categories of Enlightenment monotheism are inappropriate for reading the Biblical text but he points out the rather obvious fact that not everyone understands monotheism according to these categories. That's why in his work he has tried to use terms such as "exclusive Yahwism" (= monolatry) and "(late Second Temple period) Jewish monotheism" (82). This brand of monotheism understands God according to the categories that best define his uniqueness, i.e., the main thesis of Bauckham's work as a whole (YHWH as Creator of all things and Ruler of all things). According to this conceptual framework YHWH stands in a class far above the other gods whose existence Deuteronomy takes for granted.

The final section of the chapter is spent examining the Shema in the New Testament. Bauckham focuses mainly on Romans 3:28-30; 1Corinthians 8:1-6; and John 10:30 offering a brief exegesis of each passage and showing how Paul and John included Jesus in the unique divine identity. Regarding John's portrayal of the Father/Son relationship Bauckham concludes:

So to say that Jesus and the Father are one is to say that the unique divine identity comprises the relationship in which the Father is who he is only in relation to the Son and vice versa. It is in the portrayal of this intra-divine relationship that John's Christology steps outside the categories of Jewish monotheistic definition of the unique identity of the one God. It does not at all deny or contradict any of these (especially since the Shema' asserts the uniqueness of God, not his lack of internal self-differentiation) but, from Jesus' relationship of sonship to God, it redefines the divine identity as one in which Father and Son are inseparably united in differentiation from each other. (106)

There's not much (if anything) to disagree with here and I'd mention that this is bedrock of later Trinitarian thought.

Chapter 3 “The ‘Most High’ God and the Nature of Early Jewish Monotheism” examines the use of *עליון/ὁ ὑψιστος*, LXX (or *עליון לא/ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὑψιστος*, LXX) in Second Temple Jewish literature concluding the chapter with a table of every usage that Bauckham has been able to track. Bauckham begins by commenting on the designations of “inclusive” and “exclusive” monotheism by interacting with a definition given by William Horbury in which he defines exclusive monotheism as denying the existence of beings whereas inclusive monotheism sees a supreme deity associated with but located above other spirits and powers. Bauckham notes that the problem with Horbury’s definition is in his equation of “other divine beings” with “spirits and powers” and that if this is what constitutes exclusive monotheism then such a monotheism didn’t exist until the modern age. But Bauckham rightly points out that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have always allowed for the existence of other divine/supernatural beings (e.g., angels, demons, jin) but that these other supernatural beings were creatures in distinction from the one true God who is Creator of all. He says this is “*no more a qualification of monotheism than the existence of earthly creatures is.*” (108)

He goes on to examine Deuteronomy 32:8-9 and argues against the interpretation that this passage shows some sort of ditheism. He turns to early Jewish interpretations of the passage in Sirach, the book of Jubilees, and the writings of Philo in which they all understand the Most High and YHWH to be one and the same, not two beings. Likewise, Bauckham shows how even in “*Psalm 82:8, the most ‘polytheistic’ of passages in the Hebrew Bible, the idea of a real kinship of nature between ‘the Most High’ and his ‘sons’, the gods, is already contradicted by the former’s judgment that the latter ‘will die like humans’ (Ps. 82:7).*” (119) One interesting feature of Bauckham’s examination is that *ὕψιστος* didn’t find use in Philo or Josephus because:

Unlike *עליון*, *ὕψιστος* is morphologically a superlative, which might be used in an elative sense (‘very high’), but can also be taken as a true superlative, meaning ‘the highest’ in a series. The latter was its meaning in ordinary Hellenistic religious usage. The god so called was the highest of the gods. This must be why Diaspora Jewish literature, for the most part, avoided it as a properly Jewish usage. (121)

While this was informative and *somewhat* interesting, when compared to other chapters this one fell a bit flat. Bauckham’s argument is well-reasoned but I question its overall impact on his work as a whole. Perhaps it’s too early to tell how important this particular study is given that even Bauckham admits that more work needs to be done in this area. Time will tell.

In chapters 3 & 4 Bauckham sets his sights on the worship of Jesus in early Christianity. Chapter 4 is an expanded and revised version of his Anchor Bible Dictionary article on the worship of Jesus and in it he takes note of the origins of the practice, paying special attention to the Aramaic cry *Maranatha* as well as prayer directed to Jesus, which Bauckham admits is not properly *worship*. He says that “*two phrases drawn from the language of the Old Testament cult are highly suggestive of the centrality of Jesus as object of religious devotion.*” (129) He points to Acts 13:2 and notes that the verb in the phrase “*worshipping [λειτουργούντων] the Lord [Jesus]... referred to the cultic service of God*” in Jewish usage (129). The other phrase is a bit more obvious and well known to the average NT reader, i.e., “to call on the name of the Lord.”

Bauckham following Hurtado says that “[i]ts early Christian usage indicates a cultic practice of confessing Jesus as Lord that was regarded as the defining characteristic of Christians.” (129)

Bauckham’s examination of early Christian doxologies and hymns draws from both the NT and sources outside the NT such as the Apostolic Fathers (e.g., 1 Clement; Martyrdom of Polycarp); the Ante-Nicene Fathers (e.g., Tertullian; Hippolytus); and of course the famed secular historians such as Pliny the Younger. Strangely absent was any discussion on Romans 9:5. In fact, Romans 9:5 is not even listed in the scripture index although a reference to it does occur in a footnote where all Bauckham says is that “*There is one New Testament benediction that may have Christ as its object: Rom. 9:5.*” (133, n. 22, cf. 214 n. 101) Perhaps the most interesting feature of this chapter was Bauckham’s discussion on the Pagan perceptions of Christianity. Having not examined a substantial amount of these writings myself it was quite interesting to see how much these writers identified the early Christian movement with the worship of Jesus.

He rounds the chapter out with some reflection on the relationship of the worship of Jesus to patristic Christological development, asserting that worship was a major trend that carried things in the direction they went. The other trend he mentions is “*intellectual theology*” which he describes as “*relatively more independent of the worship and witness of ordinary Christianity.*” (148) I don’t believe that this is entirely accurate because patristic Christology and later Trinitarian theology was first and foremost concerned with action & practice i.e., the *action* of God in the world (what later theologians would come to call salvation history) which warranted the reaction of the Church in its devotional *practice*. I believe that Bauckham sees a relative independence where there is none to be seen because this so-called intellectual theology developed *out of* ordinary Christianity. I’m also less than convinced of how much weight Bauckham places on Platonism with regard to patristic theology. I’ve noted elsewhere that there was some influence (how much is debatable and depends entirely on which writer we’re discussing) but more than anything else the fathers appropriated the Platonic vocabulary (more so than the concepts themselves) and used it in a specifically Christian way.

In chapter 5 Bauckham focuses primarily on the throne of God and its importance in early Jewish monotheism. It is YHWH alone who is worthy to sit on the throne and who is situated far above all other thrones or rulers by virtue of his unique identity. In light of this Bauckham examines some intermediary figures that certain scholars suggest “*blur the distinction between God and other heavenly beings.*” (158) Specifically he looks at Wisdom, Moses, and the Son of Man. Bauckham’s assessment of Wisdom on the divine throne is that it in no way threatens Jewish monotheism because Wisdom is intrinsic to the unique divine identity (166). Regarding Ezekiel the Tragedian’s account of Moses on the throne Bauckham notes that this was a dream and while the “*dream depicts Moses quite literally as God, the meaning of the dream is not its literal meaning.*” (168) He concludes:

Ezekiel is well aware of the cosmic throne of God symbolizes the unique sovereignty that is intrinsic to the unique identity of God. He can place Moses on it only for the sake of similitude: as God is in relation to the cosmos, so Moses will be in relation to Israel. (169)

The Son of Man in the *Parables of Enoch* is “*unique among exalted human or angelic figures depicted in Second Temple Jewish literature in two respects: he sits on the divine throne and he receives worship.*” (171) So while Ezekiel the Tragedian attributes this to Moses only figuratively, the *Parables of Enoch* attribute it to the Son of Man literally. Bauckham’s conclusion is that the Son of Man is the exception that proves the rule.

Finally, Bauckham turns to Jesus on the heavenly throne of God, noting such things as his sovereignty, his reception of worship alongside God which is the result of recognizing the unique divine identity, and most interestingly the spatial imagery used in the NT of Jesus, i.e., the imagery of height (imagery that is found all throughout the Hebrew Scriptures in reference to YHWH):

He ascended ‘**far above** all the heavens’ (Eph. 4:10), ‘**far above** every principality and authority and power and dominion and every name which is named’ (Eph. 1:21). He ‘sat down at the right hand of the Majesty **on high**, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs’ (Heb. 1:3-4). God ‘**highly** exalted him and gave him the name that is **above** every name’ (Phil. 2:9). (177, bold mine)

This was another well-done chapter and I think that Bauckham’s overall case is persuasive. I do however have some reservations about the Son of Man in the *Parables of Enoch* being the exception that proves the rule. Could not one argue that the Son of Man is simply another example of what Bauckham argues is specific to Jesus (i.e., inclusion in the unique divine identity)? If not, then why not? If so, then how much doubt does that cast on Bauckham’s overall thesis? I don’t have these answers at present but I think that these are important questions to ask.

In chapter 6 “Paul’s Christology of Divine Identity” Bauckham repeats the same claims made in chapter 1 with regard to framing the study of NT Christology wrongly by focusing on ontic and functional categories. The majority of this chapter is spent looking at Paul’s use of “YHWH texts,” i.e., passages from the Hebrew Bible that refer to YHWH which Paul appropriates in his speech about Christ. These are interpreted in light of creational and eschatological monotheism. He spends the latter part of the chapter refuting alleged Jewish precedents for Paul’s Christology of divine identity by examining the two major contenders: Melchizedek and Yahoel.

With reference to Melchizedek Bauckham notes how the Qumran writings refer to him as אלהים but not יהוה. This is the opposite of what can be discerned from Paul’s writings in which he applies YHWH texts to Jesus but not אל, אלהים, or (ὁ θεός, LXX) texts, therefore Bauckham concludes that there is no precedent with Melchizedek. While Yahoel is understood in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* to be the angel from Exodus 23:21 (the reference is wrongly cited as Ex. 23:31 on p. 224) that bears the divine name, Bauckham also argues that he is not a forbearer to Paul’s understanding of Christ. His main arguments are that:

- The name Yahoel (a form of the divine name) is no more significant than the name Elijah (the same name reversed).

- Yahoel is a principal angel that “*exercises a delegated authority on God’s behalf as the angelic high priest, the heavenly and cosmic equivalent to the Aaronide high priest in the Jerusalem temple.*” (227)
- He is always distinguished from God and never confused with God throughout the *Apocalypse of Abraham*.
- He worships God (*Apoc. Abr. 17:3*).
- All of the “*usual characteristics of the unique divine identity*” (227) are attributed to God himself in the work.
- Yahoel is absent from the account of how God will exercise his sovereignty over creation and history.

I think that Bauckham does a much better job of refuting these claims than he did those with regard to the Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch a chapter earlier. Time will tell what kind of response his arguments on these points draw, but I can’t imagine a scenario in which his exegesis will be overturned wholesale. I do however have one reservation about his argument for Yahoel bearing the divine name. Sure, the name Yahoel in and of itself might not be any more significant than the name Elijah, but if Yahoel is seen as the angel from Exodus 23:21 then the divine name was *given* to him by God himself. He bears it in a unique manner which can be seen as somehow parallel to Philippians 2:9 (cf. Heb. 1:4). I think there might be more correspondence on this point than Bauckham wants to allow.

In chapter 7 Bauckham turns his attention to the book of Hebrews which he sees as being largely focused on exegeting certain psalms (esp. 2, 8, & 110) in order to include Christ in the divine identity. He notes that some scholars have gone so far as to call Hebrews a commentary on Psalm 110 (e.g., G. W. Buchanan; Timo Eskola). The chapter is spent looking at the “*three main categories of identity — Son, Lord, High Priest*” in Hebrews. Bauckham goes on to say (in blatant Chalcedonian language) that “[i]n each category, Hebrews portrays Jesus as both truly God and truly human, like his Father in every respect and like humans in every respect.” (236)

Early on he notes the significance of angels in Hebrews 1-2 by pointing out that they function as a spatial marker of sorts, where in his incarnate state of humiliation Christ stands below them but in his exalted state he sits above them on the divine throne. These two positions show Christ as sharing the identity of humanity with all humans as well as the unique identity of God with his Father. However, his main concern in this chapter is the full divinity Christ although he does touch on the full humanity of Christ in Hebrews 2:5-18 when examining this high priest passage on p. 244. When discussing the full divinity of the Lord in Hebrews 1:5-14 he identifies this passage as a “*catena of seven scriptural texts*” (241), those being: Psalm 2:7; 2Samuel 7:14; Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 104:4; Psalm 45:6-7; Psalm 102:25-27; and Psalm 110:1. From these texts he draws our attention to three things:

1. “[A]ll the texts are related to the messianic rule of Jesus, understood as an exercise of the properly divine sovereignty...” (243)
2. “[T]he Lord’s superiority to angels is not only grounded in his sonship, by which he participates in God’s own transcendence of all creatures, but is also supported by the claims that he himself created the angels, that they are his servants and that they worship him.” (243)

3. The author has changed the order of the first three words to the LXX text of Psalm 102:25-27 “*thus placing the person addressed (Jesus Christ) at the same beginning with which Genesis begins, the primordial eternity before the creation of the heavens and the earth, for which the pre-existent Christ is also here made responsible.*” (243)

When turning to Hebrews 7 Bauckham’s contention is that “[n]ot Melchizedek himself, but Melchizedekian priesthood is the point. So what is said about Melchizedek in Hebrews 7 need not be taken too seriously as a statement about the historical figure in Genesis. Its point is its application to Jesus.” (146) In agreement with Jerome Neyrey’s article “‘Without Beginning of Days or End of Life’ (Heb. 7:3): Topos for a True Deity,” *CBQ* (1991): 439-55, Bauckham sees Hebrews 7:3 is employing “Hellenistic true-god-language.” This is “*the kind of language philosophically inclined writers used to define what it is to be a true deity, as distinct from, for example, a deified hero.*” (246) Bauckham wants to stress that the author of Hebrews’ use of this true-god-language is particularly Jewish by pointing out that:

1. “[I]t is used in close conjunction with typically Jewish exegesis of the text of Genesis.” (247)
2. “[T]he author of Hebrews is by no means the only Jewish writer to use such language to characterize true deity.” (247)
3. “[W]hen adopted into the context of the Jewish understanding of God, such Hellenistic god-language undergoes an important re-functioning. It becomes monotheistic language.” (248)

He rounds the chapter out by looking to the Son’s being begotten by the Father with reference to Psalm 2:7 as it is interpreted in Hebrews 1:5; 5:5. Viewed in light of the Hellenistic god-language Bauckham thinks that these passages point to a “*binitarian variation on the idea of eternal deity as self-generating.*” (252) He notes how true deity was viewed as unoriginated (αγέννητος) and ungenerated (unbegotten) (αγέννητος) but could also be seen as self-originated or self-begotten. He pushes aside the charge of apparent contradiction by saying that these are merely different ways of saying *eternal*. He closes the section by saying that the “‘*today*’ of ‘*Today I have begotten you*’ would be the eternal today of the divine eternity.” (252) The final segment of the chapter is a brief look at Hebrews 13:8 which Bauckham asserts is a “*much more emphatic assertion of the full divine eternity of Jesus Christ than has usually been supposed.*” (252) As sympathetic as I am to his arguments on both points I have my doubts that he’s going to gain a lot of converts to his interpretation of the passages. This isn’t to say that they lack merit, but they’re not the most obvious readings (if ever there were such a thing as ‘obvious’ with regard to Biblical interpretation!).

While it’s customary to save the best for last it seems that Bauckham reserved his worst for the end of this book. In chapter 7 “God’s Self-Identification with the Godforsaken” Bauckham managed to once again confirm why I much prefer when he sticks to matters of Christology and/or Biblical studies and leaves the theology alone, i.e., he’s just not very good at it. It’s like Michael Jordan’s stint in minor league baseball – something to watch even if painful. He opens by describing the chapter as “*an exegetical and theological study of Jesus’ cry from the cross, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ (Mark 15:39; Matt. 27:46).*” (254) Such a description leads the reader to believe that his theology will flow from his exegesis but in point

of fact when Bauckham discusses his theology of godforsakenness he abandons the rigorous attention to what the text actually *does* say that marks his method throughout the rest of this book. His argument in a nutshell is that Jesus really was abandoned and forsaken by God on the cross (and the three hours of darkness before his death). He rejects any interpretation that would see Jesus as merely expressing a feeling of abandonment while not actually being abandoned. Likewise, he rejects that Jesus' cry was merely a reference to his being Israel's Messiah by appeal to Psalm 22.

Bauckham gets so much right in this chapter that it's almost unfathomable how he can proffer the interpretation that he does. For example, he rightly notes that in quoting the first verse of the 22nd psalm Jesus intends his hearers to hearken back to the entire psalm. He also correctly notes that the psalm is one of both lament *and* deliverance. One would think that the conclusion drawn from these two facts would be that Jesus knows that he is not actually being forsaken by God, although it may appear and even feel this way, but rather that in this appearance of godforsakenness Jesus is confident that his Father will deliver him. This is certainly the picture we get when turning to other Gospels (see e.g., Lk. 23:43, 46; Jo. 16:28, 32). But when discussing the fact of deliverance in Psalm 22 Bauckham says:

This does not mean that the psalmist was mistaken in thinking himself forsaken by God, but that God heard and answered his cry out of his forsakenness. Beyond the forsakenness, God intervened to deliver. (260)

But the fact that God did hear the psalmist's prayer and the fact that God did deliver the psalmist does mean that the psalmist was in fact mistaken in thinking himself forsaken! The way he *felt* didn't correspond to the way things actually were! That God answers our cries for help according to his time, and not ours, does not mean that we're forsaken by God until he answers; such a thought is ridiculous on its face. Also ridiculous is the reasoning employed by Bauckham when he says:

Though Mark does not allude to the second part of the psalm, the several allusions to the first part of the psalm certainly invite competent readers to recall the whole psalm. In Jesus' case, his cry of abandonment is answered by God beyond his death — in resurrection. But this does not make his abandonment unreal or *merely* how Jesus felt. God did leave him to die. His dying cry expresses the abandonment by God that death is. (260)

If we follow Bauckham's reasoning here then God forsakes *all people* since all people die (Heb. 9:27). To argue for an actual abandonment, one has to go well *beyond* what the text says, and when looking at the broader canonical witness, *against* what other texts say (e.g., 2Cor. 5:19). At best we have Jesus quoting a psalm which probably was meant to draw his hearers' attention to the entire psalm (something Bauckham admits) and also probably expressed how he felt while dying in one of the most excruciating ways possible. What we have is a question, not a statement. I'd be lying if I said that I didn't find Bauckham's treatment in this chapter woefully lacking. It read more like a paraphrase of Moltmann's theology of the cross than an exegetical interpretation of Mark's Gospel.

My concluding thoughts on *Jesus and the God of Israel* are that it is an outstanding resource, this last chapter withstanding. Bauckham's exegesis is generally solid and compelling and there's little question that he's well versed in ancient literature. His arguments are for the most part clearly presented and well-argued although I would have liked to have seen him a bit more conversant with other scholars in the field, but I have to remember that this is a collection of previously written essays, each of which has a narrow focus.

There are however some shortcomings in this volume (aside from my assessment of the final chapter). For example:

- Certain things such as entire passages (e.g., x, cf. 185; 130-31, cf. 179 n. 64; 184-85, cf. 234-35) and footnotes (23 n. 44, cf. 154 n. 6; 214 n. 76; 238 n. 6) are repeated almost verbatim.
- There's no real flow to the reading because each chapter can stand alone and be read on its own.
- There's an inconsistency in formatting with some essays employing transliterations while others use Hebrew and Greek characters.
- There is no list of abbreviations in either the beginning or end of the book which makes placing certain citations more difficult than it should be.
- There is no bibliography.

One sticking point is the constant mention throughout the book of ontic/functional categories as being the wrong categories. As I mentioned earlier in this review:

Bauckham perhaps unfairly critiques patristic conceptions God and Christ by broad brushing them as being concerned mainly (perhaps only?) with ontology. In point of fact the fathers' initial concern was salvation which caused them to ask what kind of savior the Son had to be in order to save us. (p. 2 above)

Bauckham says: "*Early Christian interest was primarily in soteriology and eschatology, the concerns of the gospel, and so, in the New Testament, it is primarily as sharing or implementing God's eschatological lordship that Jesus is understood to belong to the identity of God.*" (235, cf. 184) Not much changed from the concerns of those in the NT to the patristic writers of the 3rd to 5th centuries. It's also more than a bit ironic that immediately after claiming that functional/ontic categories are the wrong categories Bauckham goes on to describe his "Christology of divine identity" in a way that can only be understood according to those categories and sometimes slips into blatant use of the categories themselves (see e.g., p. 240 n. 10)! While Bauckham's language is fresh and unique, the concepts behind the language are not. This isn't a reason to abandon the language, but it is a reason to question his reluctance to accept these allegedly un-Jewish categories or describe them as messing up the entire enterprise of interpreting the Bible.

These criticisms aside I think this is a fine volume and one that every student of early Christology needs to have on their shelf. While it's not the promised 'big book' on Jesus that Bauckham fans have been hoping for for the last decade, it will certainly hold us over until that one arrives.