

Divine and Human Community in the Gospel of John

A lecture by Richard Bauckham

Outline of lecture

The word 'one'

Early Jewish background

The re-uniting of God's people

The unity of God

The social Trinity

From divine community to the world

'Oneness' language

8:41: we have one father, God.

10:16b: So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

10:30: The Father and I are one.

11:50 (= 18:14): ... to have one man die for the people ...

11:52b: to gather into one (*eis hen*) the dispersed children of God.

17:11: so that they may be one, as we are one.

17:21a: that they may all be one.

17:22b-23b: so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one (*teteleiōmenoi eis hen*).

'Oneness' + 'In-one-another-ness'

10:30: The Father and I are one.

Parallel with 10:38: The Father is in me and I am in the Father.

17:20-23, 26: I ask not only behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹that they may all be *one*. As you, Father, are in me and I in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be *one*, as we are *one*, ²³I in them and you in me, that they may become *completely one*, so that the world may know that you have sent me... ²⁶I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that *the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them*.

Sources of ‘oneness’ language in the Hebrew Bible

Deut 6:4: YHWH our God, YHWH is one.

Ezekiel 34:23: I will set up over them *one shepherd*, my servant David....

Ezekiel 37:16-22, 24: Mortal, take a stick and write on it, “For Judah, and the Israelites associated with it”; then take another stick and write on it, “For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with it”;¹⁷ and join them *together* (*el eḥād*) into *one stick*, so that they may become *one* (*la^aḥādîm*) in your hand.¹⁸ And when your people say to you, “Will you not show us what you mean by these?”¹⁹ say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am about to take the stick of Joseph (which is in the hand of Ephraim) and the tribes of Israel associated with it; and I will put the stick of Judah upon it, and make them *one stick*, in order that they may be *one* in my hand.²⁰ When the sticks on which you write are in your hand before their eyes,²¹ then say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from every quarter, and bring them to their own land.²² I will make them *one nation* in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and *one king* shall be king over them all. Never again shall they be two nations, and never again shall they be divided into two kingdoms....²⁴ My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have *one shepherd*.

Micah 2:12: I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob,
I will gather the survivors of Israel *together* (*yaḥad*)
[or ‘as a community’].
I will set them like sheep in a fold,
like a flock in its pasture...

Hosea 1:11(Hebrew 2:2): The people of Judah and the people of Israel shall be gathered *together* (*yaḥdāv*), and they shall appoint for themselves *one head*...

Isaiah 45:20a: Assemble yourselves and come together (*yaḥdāv*),
draw near, you survivors of the nations.

Amidah, Blessing 10 (the gathering of the exiles)

Sound the great *shofar* for our freedom
and raise a banner to gather our exiles.
Blessed are you, LORD, who gathers the dispersed of his people Israel
(Genizah Palestinian version)

Sound the great *shofar* for our freedom
and raise a banner to gather our exiles
and gather us together (*yaḥad*) from the four corners of the earth.
Blessed are you, LORD, who gathers the dispersed of his people Israel
(current Ashkenazi version, Babylonian origin)

‘One God, one people’ in first-century sources

(cf. 2 Sam 7:22-23 = 1 Chr 17:20-21)

Josephus, *Ant.* 4.201: [Israel was to have only one temple] for God is one and the stock of the Hebrews one.

2 *Baruch* 48:23-24: For we are all a people of the Name, we, who have received one Law from the One.

Philo, *Spec.* 4.159: ... the highest kinship, the kinship of having one citizenship and the same law and one God who has taken all members of the nation for his portion.

Philo, *Spec.* 1.52: For the most effectual love-charm, the chain which binds indissolubly the goodwill which makes us one (*eunoias henōtikēs*) is to honour the one God.

Philo, *Virt.* 35: ...the highest and greatest source of this unanimity [of the Hebrews] is their creed (*doxa*) of a single God (*tou henos theou*), through which, as from a fountain, they feel a love (*philia*) for each other, uniting them in an indissoluble bond (*henōtikēi kai adialutōi*).

Ephesians 4:4-6: There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all...

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