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Discussion about the Trinity with a Unitarian: Part 1

By Freddy Davis

The doctrine of the Trinity is a bedrock belief of the Christian faith. However, there is a contingent of people who consider themselves Christians but are Unitarians rather than Trinitarians. They believe that only the Father is God, and that Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are created beings of some sort (different Unitarians have different ideas about exactly what that looks like). The early root of Unitarian theology emerged out of the teachings of a man named Arias – who was eventually considered to be a heretic.

Recently, I got into a discussion about the Trinity with a Unitarian person I am connected to on social media. I thought it might be useful to share this conversation, as many of you, no doubt, know people who hold this point of view. Some of the non-Christian groups that adhere to Unitarian theology include Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, and Mormons. There are also some churches that are broadly looked at as Christian that are also Unitarian in their theology. Some of these include certain Pentecostal groups known as Oneness Pentecostals (also known as Apostolic Pentecostals, Jesus' Name Pentecostals, or the Jesus Only movement), the Worldwide Church of God, Church of God 7th Day, Swedenborgian churches, and the United Church of God.

[**Note:** Unitarian Pentecostals should not to be confused with Trinitarian Pentecostals.]

The person in this discussion did not specify the source of his Unitarian theology. He claimed to be independent of any organized group. That may or may not be true, but there are, indeed, people

who adhere to this kind of theology who are not part of any specific church organization.

This discussion began when my social media connection posted about his Unitarian beliefs, and it appeared on my news feed. When I responded, the conversation commenced as follows:

Unitarian (This person's initial post went along with the meme.)

Trinitarians insist that Jesus is "God the Son", but the Bible never says any such thing. When Jesus was brought before the Roman governor Pilate, it would have been an excellent opportunity for his enemies to accuse him of claiming to be God, but they didn't, because Jesus never claimed such a thing. They truthfully stated what Jesus had been saying all along, "I am the Son of God" (Jn 10:36). This itself proves Trinitarian claims false.

Memory Verse

The Jews insisted, "We have a law, and according to the law He must die, because He claimed to be THE SON OF GOD.

John 19:7

Freddy Davis

Actually, the Bible does teach that Jesus Christ is God. <http://www.marketfaith.org/2015/06/why-belief-in-the-trinity-is-essential-in-christianity-part-1-understanding-the-concept-of-the-trinity/>

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<http://www.marketfaith.org/2015/06/why-belief-in-the-trinity-is-essential-in-christianity-part-2-the-importance-of-the-doctrine-of-the-trinity/>

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<http://www.marketfaith.org/2015/06/why-belief-in-the-trinity-is-essential-in-christianity-part-4-the-biblical-basis-for-the-trinity/>

[Note: These are links to four articles that Tal and I wrote to explain the doctrine of the Trinity. To understand the rest of this conversation more fully, it might be useful to read these four articles.]

Unitarian

Freddy Davis There are no scriptures anywhere in the Bible that clearly explain any aspect of the Trinity doctrine. This is very strange because the Gospel is clearly explained: "The gospel I preached to you . . . as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins . . . that he was buried . . . that he was raised on the third day . . . that he appeared" (1 Cor 15:1-5 NAB). In fact, the Scriptures clearly debunk every aspect of the Trinity doctrine. "Yahweh our God is the one, the only Yahweh" (Dt 6:4 NJB). "The Lord our God is Lord alone!" (Mk 12:29 NAB). "He is One and there is no other than he.' And 'to love him with all your heart . . .'" (Mk 12:32,33 NAB). Yahweh is only "one" "he", and only "one" "him", not three he/hims, as Trinitarianism asserts.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian There are a lot of biblical doctrines where no single Scripture passage explains the entirety of a particular doctrine. That is why systematic theology is a thing. There are, passages, however, where all three of the members of the Trinity

are mentioned separately in a single verse. Beyond that, many of the verses that are used by those with a Unitarian point of view do not actually justify Unitarianism. I think we did a pretty good job of explaining not only the doctrine, but the reasons why a Trinitarian understanding is correct. I hope you took the opportunity to read all four of the articles.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis I'm very familiar with the all assertions of Trinitarianism. However, neither your writings, nor anyone else's, can overturn the irrefutable testimony of Jesus Christ, and the entire Word of God, the Bible. Jesus said that "the only true God" is his "Father" (Jn 17:1,3), not three, as Trinitarianism asserts. "There is only one God, the Father" (1 Cor 8:6 NJB), not 3-in-1. "God is only one" (Gal 3:20 NASB), not three. "The true God" is not the Trinity, but is "God the Father", who has a "Son, Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 5:20; 2 Jn 3). Jesus refers to "my God" (Jn 20:17; Rev 3:12), which excludes any possibility that he could be Almighty God.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian I am also familiar with the assertions of Unitarianism, and your assertion that Unitarianism is irrefutable is simply not true. You have to ignore much of what is taught in the Bible to make a claim like that. Your supposed proof texts do not exclude the possibility of the deity of Christ. You have to come to that conclusion based on a theological construct, not on a systematic study of all of the relevant passages of Scripture that relate to this topic.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis If Jesus was God Almighty, the following would make no sense: "In him dwells the whole fullness of the deity bodily" (Col 2:9). I accept the deity of Christ. "Your throne, O God, stands forever" (Ps 45:7 NAB). The NAB note on this verse reads: "The king, in courtly language, is called 'god,'

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i.e., more than human, representing God to the people. Heb 1:8,9 applies Ps 45:7,8 to Christ". "No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed him" (Jn 1:18 NAB). Since lots of people saw Jesus, he cannot be Almighty God. Jesus 'represents [or reveals] God to the people'.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian You have misinterpreted the verses you quoted. The fact that Christ had within him the fulness of deity (in the verse from Colossians) does not in any sense affirm what you are saying. If God is, indeed, a Trinitarian person, then He is perfectly capable of revealing Himself as Father and Son (and Holy Spirit) in different expressions all at the same time. And that is actually what Paul was affirming there.

The problem we get into with this, (the Colossians verse as well as the others you have mentioned) is that your interpretation is only valid if God is indeed Unitarian. You must have that point of view BEFORE your interpretation makes sense. Your interpretation begins with a Unitarian assumption and reads the verses in light of that point of view. The verses themselves do not prove your point. You have simply ignored the parts of Scripture that point to the fact that God is Trinitarian.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis No, my friend, it is Trinitarians who preconceive, and assume a Trinitarian God, and read all scriptures through those tinted glasses. You yourself even admit that there are no scriptures whosoever that explicitly state any Trinitarian ideas. The Bible starts with "God created the heavens and the earth". An honest reading of this would never imagine a Trinitarian concept into Gen 1:1. "I am God THE Almighty" (Gen 17:1 NAB). No one in their right mind would ever imagine this meant anything other

than THE one and only Almighty God!!!! "There is but one God, the Father" (1 Cor 8:6 NAB), is the same way. One means one, not three in one. THE one God is THE Father. "THE ONLY TRUE GOD" is the "FATHER" (JN 17:1,3) ONLY.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian I did not say that. In fact, I alluded to Scriptures that mention all three members of the Trinity in the same verse. You don't seem to understand the concept of "three in one." You are dealing with God as if he were subject to the laws of the natural universe. He is not. There is only one God, but within that one being there are three persons. While that very concept would be nonsense if God were subject to the laws of nature, He is not. He is eternal, not temporal. Your "honest reading" is not based on exegetical study, but on Unitarian philosophy. We dealt with that concept quite extensively in the articles I posted for you. I understand that you wish to maintain your Unitarian point of view, but in the process of disputing the doctrine of the Trinity, please don't misstate Trinitarian beliefs. It makes me wonder whether or not you really understand what you are disputing.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis Typical Trinitarianism! "This crowd which does not know the law, is accursed" (Jn 7:49 NAB). Anyone who disagrees with the Trinity doctrine "just doesn't understand it", "they're ignorant". Yet, Trinitarians themselves admit they don't understand it, claiming the dogma is true, but "it's a great divine mystery that no one understands". My beliefs are based on "All scripture is inspired by God . . . so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16,17 NAB). The Bible needs no supplementation. But that is exactly what the Trinity doctrine needs, since there is no support for it within the

Biblical text itself. The Bible warns: "you shall not add to what I command you nor subtract from it" (Dt 4:2 NAB). "Every word of God is tested . . . Add nothing to his words" (Pr 30:5,6 NAB). "I warn everyone who hears the prophetic words in this book; if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of this prophetic book, God will take away his share in the tree of life . . ." (Rev 22:18,19 NAB). These warnings apply in principle to all Biblical matters, and teachings.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian Once again, what you are saying is simply false. The reason I proposed that you don't understand it is because of your wrong description of it (indicating you don't understand). And I am not sure what you are talking about saying "Trinitarians themselves admit they don't understand it." We do understand the concept. The fact that eternity has elements that we can't understand based on natural laws does not mean that we don't understand the overall concept. There are plenty of concepts in the Bible that fit into that category – many of which I'm sure you probably believe as well (name almost any miracle). I firmly believe all Scripture is inspired by God, that the Bible needs no supplementation, and that we are not to add to the Bible. Nothing I have said violates any of that. And I also understand that you are using the Bible to support your position. What I am saying is that your interpretation of the passages you are asserting are not correct, and thus, none of the accusations you have made about me are accurate.

I am curious, though, what point of view are you coming from? Are you Oneness Pentecostal, some Arian group, Worldwide Church of God, Church of God (7th Day), Swedenborgian, United Church of God, or some other Unitarian group (I am guessing not Jehovah's Witness, Mormon, or Christian Science)?

Unitarian

Freddy Davis I am a non-denominational Christian, who takes his beliefs directly and entirely from the 66 book Bible canon of Scripture. I am not affiliated with any of the groups you name above. Yes, Jesus is deity because "in him dwells the whole fullness of the deity bodily" (Col 2:9 NAB). If Jesus was "God the Almighty" (Gen 17:1 NAB), there would be no need to say this, in fact, it wouldn't even make sense. "Once I was dead" Jesus said (Rev 1:18 NAB). However, Yahweh has always been "immortal" (Hab 1:12 NAB), so Jesus cannot be Yahweh, because he died.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian Your comment only makes sense in light of Unitarian theology. As I said before, your particular interpretation of the verses you quote ignore the overall context of Scripture. Trinitarian beliefs absolutely do make sense when you actually understand the doctrine of the Trinity. You still don't seem to grasp the distinction between what has to be interpreted based on the fact that during the incarnation Jesus lived in a place (and had to communicate to people) based on the limitations of the natural universe, and what must be interpreted in light of the eternal realm. I continue to wonder if you really understand it. You can go a long way toward that from the articles I posted.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis "You nullify the word of God in favor of your tradition that you have have handed on" (Mk 7:13 NAB), which is "an empty seductive philosophy according to human tradition" (Col 2:8 NAB). You've posted words in abundance, but not one single Scripture, which Trinitarianism to a T!

Freddy Davis

Unitarian At the very least you could be honest with your criticisms. Your accusation is simply false. I provided for you four articles (a series) that specifically deals with the biblical case for the Trinity. There is a VERY detailed and systematic biblical account (including abundant Scripture passages) in them. Perhaps instead of just brushing me off in throwing out insults, you would be better served by actually attempting to understand a point of view that you obviously have dismissed without understanding.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis You provided a link to your article: "Part 1--Understanding the Trinity". Please forgive my ignorance, I tried, but was unable, to find your other articles on the Trinity. Neither in your Part 1 article, nor

in any of your posts to me, have I seen one single scripture mentioned. None. Zero. Nada!!! If you wish for me to look at your other Trinity articles, give me a link, or a way a dummy like me can find them.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian The link to all four articles are in that post. Perhaps click on "See More" in the post. The first two articles give a big picture explanation of the doctrine. The last two articles explain the biblical basis.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis I'm sorry I do not see any "'see more' in the post". Perhaps its best anyway for you to simply list one or two scriptures that you think support the Trinity, and why you think so, and I'll scripturally show you why that is not the case.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian Or, maybe you are not looking in the right place. When replies are beyond a certain length, FB cuts them off, and at the cut-off place they put "See More" in bold print. If you click on that, the rest of the post opens up. The other links are right there - all listed one after the other. Your suggestion to just list one or two Scripture passages is a horrible idea. Proof texting is not a valid hermeneutical principle for legitimate biblical interpretation.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis I know how to click the "see more" on FB, and have done that. I've been on your blog site several times, and cannot find any scriptural proof for the Trinity. "Proof texting" is a very valid "scriptural principle" "for legitimate Biblical interpretation" according to Acts 17:11; 1 Thess 5:21; 2 Tim 3:16,17. I really don't care if you disagree with this, but I will stick to the Scriptures, regardless. In fact, the only way the Trinity doctrine can be supported, is not with the scriptures, but "teaching as doctrines human precepts . . . human tradition" (Mk 7:7,8 NAB).

Freddy Davis

Unitarian That is simply not true. Scriptures can be misinterpreted when you use a hermeneutical approach that does not help you get at the WHOLE counsel of Scripture. Proof texting is valid IF you already have done your due diligence and IF the particular Scriptures you pick actually do specifically back up the doctrine as rendered after doing your due diligence. That cannot be said when trying to promote Unitarian doctrine as it ignores much of what is taught in Scripture.

So, did you read all 4 articles? I explained how they were set up - the first two explaining the concept with the last two being the biblical basis (with lots of Scripture). BTW, the MarketFaith Ministries website is not a "blog site." We do post some blog articles, but most of the site is articles and other resources about worldview.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis I HAVE DONE my due diligence and the Scriptures do back up the truth that "there is only one God, the Father" (1 Cor 8:6 NJB), the "Father" is "the only true God" (Jn 17:3), whom "no one has ever seen" (1 Jn 4:12 NAB), and He "Yahweh . . . never dies" (Hab 1:12 NJB), and He has a "Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 5:20), who had an "origin" (Mic 5:1 NAB), and who "died for our sins" (1 Cor 15:3). This takes into consideration ALL that is in all of scripture, no exceptions. I've been trying to tell you in each of my last several posts to you that I have only looked at your Part 1 article, and have not been able to find Parts 2,3, & 4.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian And I have told you twice where the links are. I can go back up and see them easily, so I don't know why you are unable to. But, to (hopefully) make it easier for you, here is where you will find them on the MarketFaith Ministries website:

1. Go to www.marketfaith.org
 2. Click on the "Worldview Resources" link at the top of the site.
 3. Click on the "Christian Worldview" link in the drop-down menu.
 4. Click on the "Doctrine of God" link.
 5. Find the articles: "Why Belief in the Trinity is Essential in Christianity" parts 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- Hope this helps.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis I finally found your article 4 where scriptures are shown. The problem is that your Trinitarian explanations "go beyond what is written" in the Scriptures" (1 Cor 4:6 NAB).

Unitarian

Freddy Davis You assert that Jesus is given equal status with Yahweh in Ps 2 and Acts 13. While Ps 2 does mention "Yahweh and his anointed" (v 2 NJB), the theme of the Psalm is "in fear be submissive to Yahweh" (v 11 NJB). There is not even a hint of anyone's equality with Yahweh. In Acts 13, there is also not even a hint of any equality. "God raised him from the dead" (v 30 NAB). "God . . . has brought to fulfillment . . . by raising up Jesus" (vv 32,,33 NAB). "He raised him from the dead . . . declared . . . 'I shall give you the benefits assured to David'" (v 34 NAB). "The one whom God raised up did not see corruption" (v 37 NAB). Not only is any hint of equality absent, God the Father is everywhere at all times shown to be supreme. Thus, not only is no support given to the Trinity doctrine whatsoever, The dogma is soundly refuted by these very scriptures!

Unitarian

Freddy Davis Your use of Mt 1:23 to support the Trinity is also problematic. Trinitarians want to force a spatial interpretation onto Mt 1:23 "Immanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'" (NJB), as if Jesus was literally God Almighty. Since "He . . . will be called Son of the Most High" (Lk 1:32 NAB), "the Son of God" (Lk 1:35 NAB), the attempt to make Jesus God Almighty is problematic. When we consider the real meaning of the angel's words in the light such statements as: "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters" (Mt 12:30 NAB), it's obvious that "God-is-with-us" is not in a spatial sense, but in a metaphorical sense. The virgin born baby Jesus was a sign that "God has shown his care for his people" (Lk 7:16 REB).

Freddy Davis

Unitarian, I understand your desire to support your point of view, but your attempt to distinguish between what you are calling spatial and metaphorical is just as much a problem with your point of view as it is mine (if you want to try to make that kind of argument). Your assertion in that regard has no biblical backing. You must draw that conclusion based on Unitarian philosophy, not on what is actually taught in the text. It is not so much my support of Trinitarian theology that is problematic, but your entire hermeneutical framework. The attempt to dismiss a biblical point of view by asserting that passages which are clearly historical in nature are actually metaphor has a long history in various cults – probably most notably in Christian Science, but others, as well. Add to that your blatant proof texting by taking verses out of their context, and you create a framework that allows you to make the Bible say anything you want it to say. Your interpretation of these various verses is simply in error.

This ends part one of this social media dialog. The dialog will continue in the upcoming parts two and three.

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