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Discussion about the Trinity with a Unitarian: Part 2

By Freddy Davis

Recently, I had a discussion about the Trinity with a person who is a Unitarian – a person who doesn't believe in the Trinity (not to be confused with a Unitarian Universalist). It was too long a discussion to fit into a single post. This is part 2 of that dialog. You can read part one at: <http://www.marketfaith.org/2021/06/discussion-about-the-trinity-with-a-unitarian-part-1>

Unitarian

Freddy Davis Let's take the Trinitarian biggie--Jn 1:1. "Was God: lack of a definite article with 'God' in Greek signifies predication rather than identification" (NAB note on Jn 1:1c). Thus, the accurate translation: "In the beginning the Word already was. The Word was in God's presence, what God was, the Word was" (Jn 1:1 REB). "No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at his Father's side, has revealed him" (Jn 1:18 NAB). Obviously Jesus is not Almighty God, whom "no one has ever seen", but is certainly godlike. "For in him dwells the whole fullness of the deity bodily" (Col 2:9 NAB). Yes, he's "deity", which is to be expected since: "He is the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15). But there's not even a hint of equality with "God the Almighty" (Gen 17:1 NAB), even though he's "Mighty-God" (Isa 9:6 NJB), he's not "Yahweh-Sabaoth" (Isa 9:7 NJB), and "Christ is, sitting at God's right hand" (Col 3:1 NJB).

Unitarian

Freddy Davis You mistakenly wrote [Note: In one of the articles that I posted for him to read.] that "heis" is used at Jn 10:30, and wrongly assert Jn 10:30 means Almighty God and Jesus are equal. It is not. "Hen" (neuter gender) is used, which

means "unity", the same unity the disciples should have with God and Jesus according to Jn 17:11, 21, 22), where "hen" is also used. "Hen" in no way even hints at any kind of equality.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian You are simply mistaken in your interpretation because you ignore the entirety of the context and try to make a theological point based on Unitarian theology rather than on what is in the text. If that verse were a stand alone, then perhaps you would have a point. But the language can carry the meaning that Jesus was claiming equality with the Father, and the context indicates that is exactly what he was doing. If Jesus had only meant that He and the Father had the same goal and purpose, no one would have been upset at what he said. However, the Jews who were listening to Him didn't understand it that way. They recognized that he was claiming equality with the Father. It was for that reason that they, in verse 31, picked up stones in order to stone Him as a blasphemer. They considered him guilty of blasphemy because He made Himself equal with God. Your interpretation is simply in error.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis You, like other Trinitarians, ignore the fact that Jesus did not allow their erroneous assertion to stand (Jn 10:33), he corrected it. "Jesus answered them, 'Is it not written in your own law, 'I said, "You are gods"'? If it calls them gods to whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be set aside, can you say that the one whom the Father has consecrated and sent into the blasphemes because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? (Jn 10:34-36 NAB). He quotes Ps 82:1, 6, thus proving that OT human leaders were called

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'gods', so it is not wrong for him to call himself "the Son of God". He thus flatly refutes any accusation that he had claimed to be God.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian No, you are again misinterpreting the text by not taking into account the entire context of the exchange that was going on. He was not, in that place, correcting them in the way you are saying. They were objecting to His use of the word "god," and He was telling them that their objection was invalid. The use of that word (also meaning a judge) was not improper as they were saying, and He was correcting their misinterpretation. But that was actually an aside. We know that because He immediately returned to the main point, in verse 36, and doubled down on the fact that He was equal to God. He actually contrasted Himself with those in the Old Testament. If He was denying His divinity, the Jews would have then had no reason to continue being angry. That did not happen, however, because they continued to understand what He was really saying – that He was equal to God – as we see in verse 39. You are simply misinterpreting the passage.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis You're reading into the scriptures ideas that simply aren't there. There isn't even the slightest hint of equality with God in Jn 10:36, 39. Jesus made clear at Jn 14:28, "The Father is greater than I", and called his "Father" "my God" at Jn 20:17. When before the Sanhedrin, the issue was "whether you are the Messiah, THE SON OF GOD" (Mt 26:63 NAB) When before Pilate, the issue was "he claimed to be the Son of God" (Jn 19:7 NJB). When on the cross, it was the same: "He has put his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him. For he did say: 'I AM GOD'S

SON'" (Mt 27:43 NJB). This is the opposite of claiming to be God. He made it clear he wasn't God.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian I'm sorry Unitarian, but you continue to do the same thing you have been doing all along. You are misunderstanding the very concept of Trinity. You continue to try to interpret what Jesus said, and the various passages associated with his life and ministry, as if the laws of eternity were subject to the laws of the natural universe. They are not.

As long as you use your improper hermeneutical approach, it is hard to accept what you are saying. You have simply not given me any indication that you actually understand the concept of Trinity since you continue to ignore so much of what the Bible teaches about the person of God. Perhaps you don't realize that there is no place in the Bible where the doctrine of God is taught as a systematic teaching. What we have are many different examples and explanations of God's work in the world. The very purpose of the Bible is, after all, to share with us how we can know Him in a personal relationship, not to give us a doctrinal textbook. So, in order to get the big picture, we have to do a systematic study of those examples and explanations. You are just leaving a lot of stuff out.

I really do not find your explanations convincing because of all of the things I have said. However, if you really want to have any possibility of being convincing, rather than trying to convince me by simply asserting your Unitarian philosophy, why don't you tell me why a Trinitarian belief can't be true. I don't think you can do it because I don't believe you understand the Trinitarian viewpoint well enough to pull it off, but I am willing to listen.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis Just for starters---The Trinity doctrine is complete nonsense.

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Even those who accept it as being true admit that it's such nonsense that it's impossible to understand. Even more importantly, it's never mentioned nor explained anywhere in the Bible. There is never any mention of any "three persons in one God". As Jesus so aptly said, "You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand" (Jn 4:22 NAB). "We are well aware also that the Son of God has come and HAS GIVEN US UNDERSTANDING so that we may know the One who is true. We are in the One who is true as we are in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and this is eternal life" (1 Jn 5:20 NJB). "The true God" has a "Son, Jesus Christ", which means Jesus Christ, nor the Triune God, can be the true God!!!! In Trinitarianism "the only true God" is the Triune God, but in the the Bible, it's Jesus' Father (Jn 17:3). In Trinitarianism, Jesus has a dual nature, the Bible never mentions any such thing, in fact, it says "the Word [Jesus, not God] became flesh" (Jn 1:14). Who is the God Jesus was with in Jn 1:1? Trinitarianism can't answer. Jesus has "my God" over him (Rev 3:12). In Trinitarianism he doesn't. Biblically "there is only one God, the Father" (1 Cor 8:6 NJB), whereas in Trinitarianism, there are three persons in one God. Biblically there is one "God THE Almighty" (Gen 17:1 NAB), in Trinitarianism, there are three who are Almighty.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian

1. It is simply not true that the Trinity doctrine is nonsense. It is nonsense if you do not accept the logic behind it, but if you do it is perfectly logical. Actually, that is true for any position in existence, including yours. If you can't explain "why" it is nonsense, then this argument is meaningless.
2. There is also no mention of Unitarianism in the Bible. I explained this in my last post. There simply is no sys-

tematic study of God there. We have to do a systematic study of the entire Bible to get at all of the elements of God's revelation of Himself to man. Your Unitarian position is a derived belief based on Unitarian philosophy, not on a systematic study of God from the Bible.

3. Simply quoting Scripture out of context will not give you an overall picture of the person of God. You keep doing that, and I keep telling you that is not a valid approach. It still is not.

4. Your idea of "the only true God" is another derived concept that is based on Unitarian philosophy. You have once again attempted to make that explanation based on your belief that somehow God in eternity must be subject to the order of the natural universe. That is simply not true. The fact that you cannot understand how God can be three persons in one being does not mean he is not. What is impossible in our finite universe is not impossible in eternity. Your assertion that Trinitarianism doesn't have an explanation for John 1:1 is simply false. You are just not willing to accept that explanation.

5. You are simply mistaken that biblically there is a Unitarian God. All you have demonstrated is that you still don't understand the concept of the Trinity.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis

1. "Three persons in one God" is complete and total nonsense! "God is only one" (Gal 3:20 NASB), not three in one.

2. "There is only one God, the Father" (1 Cor 8:6 NJB). Unitarianism is all over the Bible, from beginning to end.

3. I quote each scripture in harmony with its immediate and remote contexts.

4. "Since there is only one God" (Rom 3:30 NJB), not 3-in-1, it is the Bible, not "Unitarian philosophy", that says this. Calling me 'intrinsically of

Trinitarian ideas' doesn't strengthen your case. I've got the guts to openly state, in effect, "the king has no clothes".

5. No, it is the Scriptures which state that "He is One and there is no other than he" (Mk 12:32 NAB). God is only "One" "he", not three "he's", as Trinitarianism falsely asserts.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian

1. Of course there is only one God. I never said any different. It is not a matter of whether or not there is one God, but of the nature of the existence of his personhood. The fact that there are three persons within the one being of God, as I said before, is not something that can even be understood if you insist that eternity is subject to the laws of the natural universe. In temporal reality, that is impossible. But God is not confined to the laws of temporal reality. He made the natural universe. If you continue to insist that God cannot exist outside of the laws of temporal reality, then, of course, you are going to think the idea of the Trinity is nonsense. But that is not the way the Bible reveals Him.

2. Yes, there is only one God, but he is not a Unitarian being. Trinitarianism is all over the Bible, and the articles I shared with you demonstrate that.

3. No, your hermeneutics are based on proof texting and using metaphorical interpretations improperly. You do not quote each Scripture in harmony with its immediate and remote contexts.

4. I already explained how your arguments are primarily based on Unitarian philosophy. That is the lens through which you interpret Scripture. Using that lens, you simply do not acknowledge any beliefs that don't fit your underlying Unitarianism. You obviously think you are basing your theology on Scripture alone, but you are not, and you don't even seem to realize it. Once again, our dispute is not about whether or not there is one God. We both believe that. The dispute is the nature of the one God.

5. Once again, you have only demonstrated that you do not understand the very concept of the Trinity. You are arguing against a position using arguments that do not address what the Trinity is all about. I suggest that perhaps your argumentation would be more effective if you actually understood what you are arguing against.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis "They will exploit you with fabrications" (2 Pt 2:3 NAB). This is exactly what Trinitarianism does!!! Nonsense, even when expressed in fancy, flowery words is still nonsense. "In him, in bodily form, lives divinity in all its fullness" (Col 2:9 NJB). So, yes, Jesus has divine nature. But that doesn't make him God. "Through these, the greatest and priceless promises have been lavished on us, that through them you should share the divine nature and escape the corruption rife in the world through disordered passion" (2 Pt 1:4 NJB). Christians also are said to "SHARE THE DIVINE NATURE", but that certainly doesn't make Christians God.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian Using Scripture quotations that do not apply to me as a means of attempting to tell me that God condemns what I believe is pretty despicable. You don't have an actual argument, so you begin doing what the Pharisees did to Jesus – basically quoting Scripture to accuse me of blasphemy because I don't believe what you believe. You say what I believe is nonsense, but you continue to make your arguments based on Unitarian philosophy without ever justifying the truth of the philosophy itself. And you condemn Trinitarian theology without even understanding what it is. Your arguments are against your thoughts about Trinitarianism, not Trinitarianism itself. Again, you really should actually understand the Trinitarian position before you go off saying things about it that are simply not true. It is a really bad way to approach a debate like this.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis Without resorting to evasion or denial, please answer the following question with a simple "Yes", or "No". -

Are both of the following statements true?

A. For Christians, there is one God, the Triune God.

B. For Christians, there is one God, the Father.

1. If "Yes", then please explain how the one God of Christians is both a three person being, and a one person being.
2. If "No", then please identify which of the above two statements is true.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian Honestly, I think I have been pretty clear as to my point of view. All you have done is make a distinction between Trinitarianism and Unitarianism. It is impossible for human beings living in this temporal world to be both, as the beliefs contradict one another. I don't know why you asked that question the way you did, but I really do think you are smart enough to know the answer.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis You're dodging the question. Please answer!

Freddy Davis

Unitarian This has all the smell of a "gotcha" situation. I'm sorry, but I simply don't like your game.

But to the more important point, I have answered the question numerous times. I have never dodged anything. If you honestly don't recognize that I have answered numerous times (including in the articles), all you have done is firmly confirm that you have absolutely no understanding of the Trinitarian point of view. I suggest that you start there and at least get that right so that when you get into a discussion like this again you can actually know what you are talking about.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis Obviously, you cannot answer the question, because it would expose the deception of Trinitarianism. But you know what? Your non-answer also does the same thing!!!!

Freddy Davis

Unitarian That is simply a lie. I have answered the question numerous times. If you don't understand that answer, that says more about your ability to understand.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis I've looked at every one of your posts to me, and not one of them answers the question. YOU ARE IN DENIAL. If you dispute this, then simply ANSWER THE QUESTION!!!!!!!

Freddy Davis

Unitarian If you mean did I answer yes or no to your specific question, then no I did not. If you mean do the articles and answers I have given explain my position (which I assumed is was what you were after), then yes, I have given WAY more detail than you asked for, and that detail completely answers your question. This is getting a little silly. You are coming across like a lawyer that asks a yes and no question that does not allow the witness to answer truthfully no matter how they answer. I am not going to play that game. If there is some specific point you are trying to get at, then quit being devious and simply come out with it.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis Answer the question either YES or NO. If YES, then explain how the true God is both a three person being and a one person being. If NO, identify which of the two statements is true.

Freddy Davis

Until you understand the difference between dealing with eternal reality and temporal reality, explaining the nature of the Trinity to you will be useless. I have been over that numerous times and you keep asking me to explain the eternal God based on temporal principles. It can't be done! The answer to your question is not either of your two choices – it is a third alternative that I have explained, and which is even more fully explained in the articles. Your question is faulty and cannot be answered correctly the way you have framed it. Perhaps if you would spend as much effort trying to at least understand the Trinitarian point of view as you

have trying to play your "gotcha" game, you might begin to understand something that seems, at this point, to be over your head.

Unitarian

Freddy Davis Is the true God a three person being, or a one person being?

Freddy Davis

Unitarian The true God is a single being who contains three persons. That is a VERY traditional Trinitarian view – a view that I have affirmed over and over again. I really am having a hard time understanding why you keep asking me what I have repeatedly told you.

On the other hand, you have still not justified Unitarian philosophy as a foundational basis for justifying your Unitarian hermeneutic. You keep pressing me, yet you have not even justified your own use of proof texting and declaring certain passages to be metaphor that are not actually metaphor. What gives?

Unitarian

Freddy Davis Ok, thank you. You have stated your "very traditional Trinitarian view", which is: "The true God is a single being who contains three persons". I want to assure you that I do understand what Trinitarianism is asserting. The Bible tells us to: "Test everything" (1 Thess 5:21 NAB). Against which standard? "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction . . . so that the one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16,17 NAB). In sharp contrast to Trinitarianism, the Bible says: "For us there is only one God, the Father" (1 Cor 8:6 NJB), not three persons. Jesus said "the only true God" is his "Father" (Jn 17:1,3), not three persons, and "'The Lord our God is Lord alone' . . . 'He is One and there is no other than He'" (Mk 12:29,32 NAB). The One God is only one "He", not three "He's". "The true God" has a "Son, Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 5:20), which makes your 'single being containing three persons' impossible, therefore a 'false doctrine' (1 Tim 1:3), by God's unchangeable standard, the Bible, not my opinion.

Freddy Davis

Unitarian Almost nothing you have said in your last post is true. You perhaps understand the words "a single being who contains three persons," but you obviously do not understand the actual concept. If you did, you would not continue misrepresenting what that means. Additionally, it is absolutely true that the Bible is the absolute standard by which we are to "test everything." However, if you use an interpretive framework that causes you to misinterpret the meaning of the text, your interpretation is bound to be wrong. Your Unitarian philosophical framework is one such system that uses proof texting and mistaken metaphorical assertions to guide your interpreting. Your use of 1 Cor. 8:6 is a perfect example of that as you have completely taken it out of context. You don't seem to know how to make a distinction about when the word "Father" is spoken of specifically as the first person of the Trinity, and when He is spoken of generically as "God." That latter usage is actually present in this text, and is found in many other places, such as: Luke 10:22; 22:42; John 1:18; 3:35; 5:19-23, 26, 30, 36; Heb. 1:5; 2 Peter 1:17, and others. You have completely ignored the context to make your interpretation concerning this verse. And, concerning the Jn. 17 verse, you have completely ignored the fact that Jesus, in His incarnation, was fully a human being and interacted with the Father based on the fact that He had emptied Himself of His heavenly prerogatives (Phil. 2:5-11) and was fully dependent on the Father to accomplish His work on earth (a concept that Unitarian theology does not acknowledge).

You have stated that the Trinitarian doctrine is impossible, but that is only true if the Unitarian doctrine is true, which you have not demonstrated in any respect. In fact, If God is really God, that is NOT something that is impossible for Him.

I understand that you truly believe that your doctrine comes from the Bible, but ultimately your interpretation of the Bible is based on a hermeneutical philosophy that does not meet muster. Beyond that, I get that you don't plan to change your point of view, and I guess you know by now that I believe you are wrong. If you can legitimately refute Trinitarianism, I am still open to listening to you. However, you have not even tried. All you have done is assert Unitarianism. Until you can make that further step, your arguments ARE just your opinion.

As noted before, this conversation was too long to be contained in a single, or even two, posts. The final part of this dialog, part 3, will be forthcoming.

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