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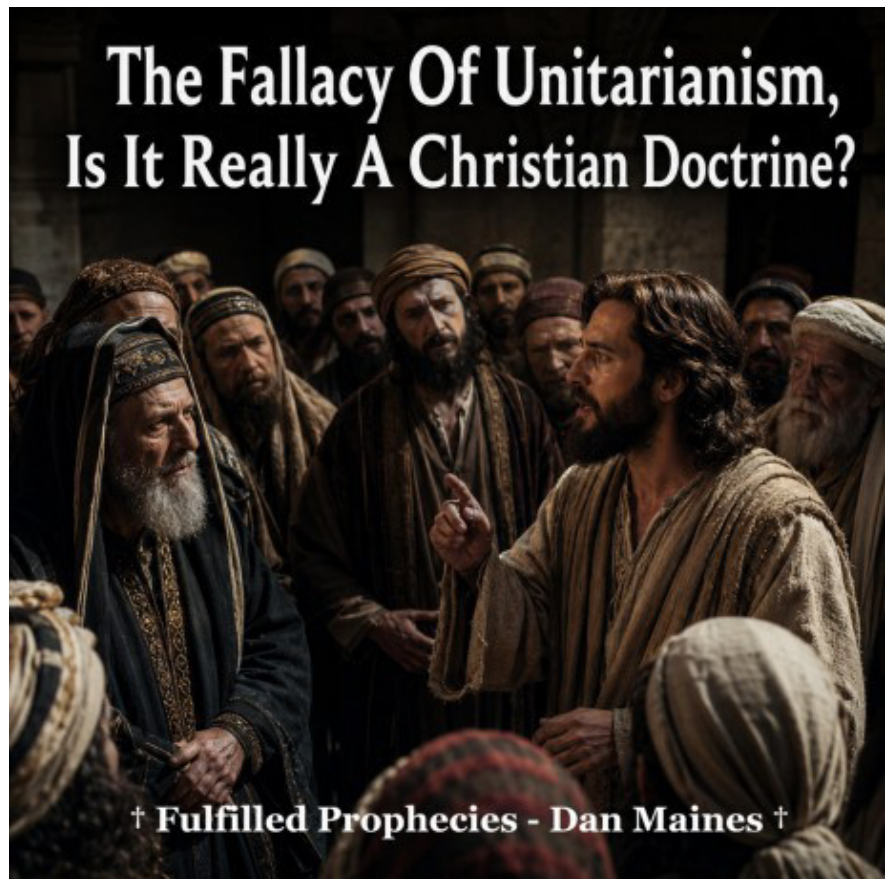
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The Fallacy Of Unitarianism, Is It Really A Christian Doctrine?



By Dan MainesThe Fallacy Of Unitarianism, Is It Really A Christian Doctrine?

Introduction

† Christianity has always confessed that there is one God. The question isn't whether there is one God, Scripture is clear that there is. The question is whether the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each possess the full nature of the one true God while remaining one God. Unitarianism rejects the full deity of Jesus Christ and usually rejects the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit. This study examines whether that belief can stand when compared with the whole testimony of Scripture.

John 1:1-3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, ~~and~~
the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things ~~came~~
came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one
thing came into being that has come into being.

† John begins before creation itself and identifies the Word as existing eternally. The Word was distinct from the Father because He was with God, yet He also shared the very nature of God because the Word was God. (John 17:5; Philippians 2:6)

† Scripture never presents Jesus as merely the first created being. Instead, everything that came into existence was created through Him. If everything created came through Him, He Himself cannot belong to the created order. (Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:2)

† This passage establishes both distinction of persons and unity of deity without contradiction. Scripture teaches both truths together. (John 10:30)

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

† The eternal Word did not begin to exist at Bethlehem. He became flesh. That means the One who already existed entered humanity without surrendering His divine nature. (Philippians 2:6-8)

† Jesus wasn't simply a prophet chosen by God. He is God manifested in the flesh. (1 Timothy 3:16)

† The incarnation reveals God's plan of redemption through His own Son, not through a created representative. (Hebrews 2:14-17)

Micah 5:2

But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Too little to be among the clans of Judah,
From you One will come forth for Me to be ruler in Israel.
His times of coming forth are from long ago,
From the days of eternity.

† Micah prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, yet His existence did not begin there. His goings forth are described as being from of old, from everlasting, revealing that the Son existed long before His human birth. This agrees with John's declaration that the Word was already in the beginning with God.

(John 1:1-3; John 17:5)

† Scripture consistently presents Christ as eternal. He entered the world through the incarnation, but He wasn't created at Bethlehem. He shared the Father's glory before the world existed and participated in creation itself. (John 17:5; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:2)

† This prophecy leaves no room for the belief that Jesus was merely a man who began His existence at His birth. The promised Messiah possesses an eternal nature that belongs to God alone. (Isaiah 9:6; Revelation 22:13)

Isaiah 9:6

For a Child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

† Isaiah identifies the coming Messiah with titles that belong only to God. The child who would be born is called Mighty God, demonstrating that the Messiah is far more than a human ruler. (John 1:1; Colossians 2:9)

† The title Everlasting Father speaks of His eternal nature and His relationship to His people as the Author of eternal life. It doesn't teach that the Son is the Father, but that He possesses the eternal attributes of God. (John 10:28; Hebrews 1:3)

† The New Testament repeatedly confirms Isaiah's prophecy by declaring that all the fullness of deity dwells in Christ and that He is worshiped as God by both men and angels. (John 20:28; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:6)

John 5:22-23

For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, so that all will honor the Son just as they honor the Father. The one who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

† The Father has entrusted all judgment to the Son so that every person will honor the Son in the very same way they honor the Father. Scripture never commands anyone to give equal honor to a created being. Such honor belongs to God alone. (Isaiah 42:8; Revelation 5:11-14)

† Jesus didn't ask for a lesser honor or a similar honor. He declared that the Son is to receive the same honor as the Father. If Christ were merely a man, this statement would encourage idolatry. Instead, it confirms His full deity. (John 10:30; Philippians 2:9-11)

† To reject the Son is to reject the Father because the Father revealed Himself through the Son. A person's view of Jesus determines whether they truly know the Father. (John 14:6-9; 1 John 2:22-23)

John 8:58

Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

† Jesus didn't say, "Before Abraham was, I was." He declared, "I am," identifying Himself with the divine name revealed to Moses. His words point directly to the eternal self-existence of God. (Exodus 3:14)

† The Jews immediately understood what Jesus was claiming because they picked up stones to kill Him for blasphemy. They recognized that He was identifying Himself with God, not merely claiming to exist before Abraham. (John 8:59; John 10:33)

† Christ's eternal existence is consistently affirmed throughout Scripture. He existed with the Father before creation, entered the world through the incarnation, and remains the eternal Son forever. (John 1:1-3; John 17:5; Hebrews 13:8)

John 10:30-33

I and the Father are one.

The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. Jesus replied to them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" The Jews answered Him, "We are not stoning You for a good work, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

† Jesus declared that He and the Father are one. The Jews understood exactly what He meant because they accused Him of making Himself God. Their response demonstrates that His words were understood as a claim to deity. (John 5:18)

† Jesus didn't deny their understanding. Instead, He continued defending His authority and identity as the One sent by the Father. His entire ministry revealed that He shared the Father's nature while remaining distinct from the Father. (John 14:9-11; John

17:21-22)

† Scripture presents both truths together. The Father and the Son are distinct persons, yet they possess the same divine nature. This is why Jesus could perfectly reveal the Father and accomplish redemption for mankind. (Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3)

Philippians 2:5-11

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, as He already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross. For this reason also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

† Before becoming man, Christ already existed in the form of God. Paul begins with Christ's preexistence, then describes His incarnation. Jesus didn't become God after His resurrection, He was already God before He took on human flesh. (John 1:1-3; John 17:5)

† Christ emptied Himself by taking on the form of a servant, not by giving up His deity. He added humanity to His divine nature so He could accomplish our redemption through His perfect obedience and sacrificial death. (John 1:14; Hebrews 2:14-17)

† Paul concludes by applying to Jesus the words of Isaiah, where every knee bows to Yahweh alone. The universal worship of Christ demonstrates His full deity while bringing glory to the Father. (Isaiah 45:22-23; Revelation 5:11-14)

Titus 2:13

looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

† Paul describes Jesus as our great God and Savior. This isn't merely speaking of two different persons. The construction of the passage identifies Jesus Himself as both God and Savior. (John 20:28; Hebrews 1:8)

† Throughout the New Testament, Christ is presented as possessing the names, works, attributes, and worship that belong to God alone. This verse fits perfectly with that consistent testimony. (Colossians 2:9; John 5:22-23)

† Salvation rests upon the identity of Christ. Only because He is fully God and fully man could His sacrifice completely accomplish redemption for His people. (Hebrews 10:10-14; 1 Timothy 2:5)

2 Peter 1:1

Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by
the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

† Peter joins Paul in identifying Jesus as our God and Savior. The apostles consistently proclaimed Christ's full deity because they understood Him to be the eternal Son who came into the world to save sinners. (John 1:1; John 20:28)

† The faith delivered by the apostles centered upon the true identity of Jesus Christ. Denying His deity rejects the testimony repeatedly given throughout the New Testament. (1 John 2:22-23; 2 John 9)

† Peter's greeting reminds believers that the righteousness by which we stand before God comes through Jesus Christ Himself. Because He is both God and Savior, His work is completely sufficient to redeem all who trust in Him. (Romans 3:21-26; Hebrews 7:25)

1 Timothy 3:16

Beyond question, great is the mystery of godliness:

He who was revealed in the flesh,

Was vindicated in the Spirit,

Seen by angels,

Proclaimed among the nations,

Believed on in the world,

Taken up in glory.

† Paul describes the incarnation as the great mystery of godliness. The One who was manifested in the flesh did not begin His existence at His birth. Rather, the eternal Son took on human nature and entered the world to accomplish redemption. (John 1:1-3; John 1:14; Philippians 2:5-8)

† The life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ reveal that Jesus is far more than a prophet or a created being. He was seen

by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on throughout the world, and received up into glory because He is the eternal Son of God. (Hebrews 1:6; Acts 1:9-11; Colossians 2:9)

† The incarnation stands at the heart of the Christian faith. Only One who is fully God and fully man could perfectly reveal the Father, bear the penalty for sin, and reconcile mankind to God. Denying Christ's divine nature undermines the very foundation of the gospel. (John 14:9; Hebrews 2:14-17; Hebrews 10:10-14)

John 20:28

Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

† Thomas directly addressed Jesus as both Lord and God after seeing the risen Christ. Jesus accepted that confession instead of correcting him. (John 20:29)

† Throughout Scripture, faithful servants refused worship that belonged only to God. Jesus never refused worship because it rightly belonged to Him. (Matthew 14:33; Revelation 22:8-9)

† The resurrection confirmed everything Jesus claimed about Himself, including His divine identity. (Romans 1:4)

Colossians 2:9

For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

† Paul doesn't say Jesus possesses some divine qualities. He says the entire fullness of deity dwells in Him bodily. Nothing could be stated more clearly. (Hebrews 1:3)

† The incarnation didn't diminish Christ's deity. God Himself was fully present in the Son while He lived among mankind. (John 14:9)

† This verse leaves no room for reducing Jesus to a highly exalted creature. He possesses the complete fullness of God. (Colossians 1:19)

Hebrews 1:8

But regarding the Son He says,

YOUR THRONE, GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER,

AND THE SCEPTER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM.

† The Father Himself addresses the Son as God. This isn't the opinion of men but the testimony of the Father concerning His own Son. (Psalm 45:6-7)

† The Son possesses an eternal throne because His kingdom and

His nature are eternal. (Isaiah 9:6-7)

† Scripture never presents Christ as merely another servant. He is the divine King whose reign has no end. (Revelation 11:15)

Matthew 28:19

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

† Jesus speaks of one singular name while identifying the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The unity of the one name demonstrates the unity of the one God while distinguishing the three divine persons. (Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

† If the Son or the Holy Spirit were merely created beings or impersonal forces, they could never be placed alongside the Father in the sacred baptismal formula. Their inclusion demonstrates their equality within the Godhead. (John 1:1; Acts 5:3-4)

† From the very beginning of the church, believers were identified with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit because salvation is the work of the one true God. (Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2)

Acts 5:3-4

But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God."

† Peter first says Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit and then immediately says he lied to God. Scripture identifies the Holy Spirit as God, not as an impersonal force or merely God's power. (1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 3:17)

† The Holy Spirit speaks, teaches, guides, can be grieved, and can be lied to. These are the characteristics of a divine person, not an impersonal influence. (John 16:13-15; Ephesians 4:30)

† The deity of the Holy Spirit completes the biblical testimony concerning the one God revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Rejecting the Holy Spirit's deity rejects the clear teaching of Scripture. (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

Revelation 1:17-18

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He ~~placed~~
His right hand on me, saying, Do not be afraid; I am the first ~~and~~
the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive
forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

† Jesus identifies Himself as the First and the Last, a title that Yahweh alone uses in the Old Testament. By applying this title to Himself, Christ declares His eternal nature and divine identity. (Isaiah 44:6; Isaiah 48:12)

† The One speaking is the same One who died and now lives forevermore. This reveals the wonder of the incarnation, that the eternal Son took on human flesh, died for our sins, and rose again in victory over death. (John 1:14; Romans 6:9)

† Christ's possession of the keys of death and Hades demonstrates His absolute authority over life, death, and judgment. Such authority belongs to God alone and confirms that Jesus is worthy of all worship and honor. (John 5:22-23; Revelation 5:12-14)

Historical References

† The earliest Christians confessed the full deity of Jesus Christ because that is what they received from the apostles. Their writings consistently identify Jesus as God, Lord, and the Creator who became flesh for our salvation.

† Ignatius of Antioch, writing around A.D. 107, repeatedly referred to Jesus Christ as "our God," demonstrating that the deity of Christ was taught within a generation of the apostles.

† Justin Martyr explained that the eternal Word who appeared throughout the Old Testament became flesh in Jesus Christ. He defended Christ's deity directly from the Scriptures.

† Irenaeus opposed those who denied Christ's divine nature, teaching that the eternal Son became man to redeem mankind and reveal the Father.

† Athanasius devoted his ministry to defending the full deity of Christ against those who claimed the Son was a created being. His defense rested upon the consistent testimony of Scripture that the Son is eternal God.

† These writers didn't invent a new doctrine. They defended the same Christ proclaimed by the apostles, the eternal Son who is fully God and fully man. (John 1:1-3; John 20:28; Hebrews 1:8)

How It Applies To Us Today

† Our salvation depends upon who Jesus truly is. Only God ~~could~~ perfectly reveal the Father and provide a sacrifice sufficient ~~to~~ redeem mankind. (John 14:6-9; Hebrews 10:10-14)

† If Jesus isn't truly God, then His worship would be idolatry. Yet Scripture commands all people to honor the Son just as they honor the Father. (John 5:22-23)

† Every believer should examine every doctrine by the Scriptures rather than accepting modern teachings that diminish the identity of Jesus Christ. (Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

† Our worship belongs to Jesus because the Father commands all people to honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Refusing to honor the Son is refusing to honor the Father who sent Him. (John 5:22-23)

† Our confidence in salvation rests upon the identity of Christ. Because He is fully God and fully man, His sacrifice completely accomplished redemption for His people. (Hebrews 10:10-14; Colossians 2:9)

† False teaching often begins by reducing the person of Christ. Scripture continually directs believers back to the apostolic testimony that Jesus is the eternal Son of God who came in the flesh. (1 John 2:22-23; 2 John 9)

† The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are worthy of our worship, obedience, and trust because the one true God has revealed Himself through the Scriptures. (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

Q & A Appendix

Q: Does the Bible directly call Jesus God?

A: Yes. John calls Him God, Thomas called Him God, the Father called Him God, and both Paul and Peter identified Him as God. (John 1:1; John 20:28; Hebrews 1:8; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1)

Q: If Jesus is God, why did He pray to the Father?

A: Because the eternal Son became fully human while remaining fully God. In His humanity He lived in perfect dependence and obedience to the Father while accomplishing our redemption. (Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 2:14-17)

Q: If Jesus is God, why does He call the Father "my God"?

A: As the incarnate Son, Jesus spoke as the perfect man and mediator between God and mankind. His humanity never

diminished His divine nature. (John 20:17; Philippians 2:5-11; 4 Timothy 2:5)

Q: Doesn't the Bible teach there is only one God?

A: Yes. Scripture consistently teaches there is one God while revealing the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as distinct persons who share the one divine nature. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

Q: Is the Holy Spirit God?

A: Yes. Peter declared that lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God. The Holy Spirit also speaks, teaches, guides, and can be grieved, demonstrating that He is a divine person. (Acts 5:3-4; John 16:13-15; Ephesians 4:30)

Q: Is Unitarianism the historic doctrine of the Christian church?

A: No. The apostles proclaimed Christ's full deity, and the earliest Christian writers faithfully defended that same biblical doctrine against those who denied it. (John 1:1; John 20:28; Hebrews 1:8)

Q: Why is the deity of Christ essential to the gospel?

A: Only One who is fully God and fully man could perfectly reveal the Father, bear the penalty for sin, and provide an eternal salvation for His people. (John 14:9; Hebrews 10:10-14; Colossians 2:9)

Q: Can someone deny the deity of Christ and still hold to the apostolic teaching?

A: No. The apostles consistently proclaimed Jesus as the eternal Son of God. Rejecting His true identity rejects the testimony God has given concerning His Son. (John 8:24; 1 John 2:22-23; 2 John 9)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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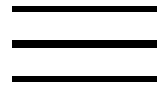
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† John 1:1-3, John 1:14, Micah 5:2, Isaiah 9:6, John 20:28, John 5:22-23, John 8:58, John 10:30-33, Philippians 2:5-11, Titus 2:13, 2 Peter 1:1, Colossians 2:9, Hebrews 1:8, Matthew 28:19, Acts 5:3-4, Revelation 1:17-18

† Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Athanasius

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