

A Biblical Unitarian Debate

A Discussion Between  
Mr. Marc Taylor and Mr. Danny Dixon

Conducted on the <http://CARM.org> Discussion Forum  
<http://www.christiandiscussionforums.org/v/showthread.php?t=13711>

June 22, 2006 to October 10, 2005

### Unitarian Introduction

(1) According to the rules that we have set up for ourselves in this debate, I have an introduction and three presentations to build my case to support the view that a biblical unitarian position is found in the Bible.

(2) To define terms, I am saying that "biblical" and "unitarian" are two adjectival designations to describe a perspective about the nature of God in the Christian Scriptures. When I say "biblical," I mean that the 66 books of the Bible generally accepted by the evangelical Christian community as God's inerrant word. I realize that there are difficulties that exist in trying to determine precisely what the original text is that was transmitted by God through men to outline God's great scheme of redemption. But for the massive testimony of witnesses that we rely on to know what is our Bible, we are virtually certain that it is what it claims to be, the written record of God's dealings with man to bring him back into relationship with him and to receive from him the great blessings that he has promised those who believe in his Son Jesus Christ.

(3) When I say "unitarian," I mean that common language adequately describes that there is one individual who is God. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one and only one person described as Israel's Lord. He is the one Jesus spoke of in Mark 12:28ff, when he was asked by a scribe what the greatest commandment was. He is Jehovah (or Yahweh), the one Lord (*Adonai*), who requires the fullness of our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. He is identified with Jesus honestly, without his fingers crossed behind his back as if he didn't really mean that there was just one individual who was God. He is the one who is:

1. The only God – According to Jesus in John 5:44
2. The only true God – According to Jesus in John 17:3
3. The one God who is the Father – Says Paul in distinguishing the Father as one God from the one who is the one Lord, Jesus the Messiah in 1 Corinthians 8:6
4. The one God who, after Jesus is subjected to him after Christ's last enemy Death is destroyed, will be "all in all," says Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:25-28.
5. The one God and Father who, in distinction from the one Lord Jesus, is the one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all, according to Paul in Ephesians 4:5.
6. The one God who is above mankind who have a mediator between them and God—one of their own kind, the man Jesus, says Paul in 1 Timothy 2:5.

(4) I do not intend to use the phrase biblical unitarian in any sectarian or denominational sense. I only mean to say that the international community of believers in our Lord Jesus the Messiah recognize Father God as the creator of the universe, who, as he wills, orchestrates his divine purposes as he works among men whom he has appointed to carry out his will, to have dominion

over the earth (Genesis 1:26, 27); to represent him among men until he sums up the various dispensations and economies of time and ultimately restores what was lost to mankind in, as far as man is concerned, the final presentment of his (God's) kingdom. Beyond Paradise to come who could imagine what God has in store for those who love him and obey his Son Jesus the Christ, whom he appointed ruler over all things.

#### (5) The Son of God

One ought very carefully to consider what it means to say that Jesus is the "Son of God." The biblical evidence will demonstrate that, in a very significant sense, "Son of God" means that Jesus is God's Ultimate Messianic King. It does NOT mean that he is God the Son.

#### (6) Background Prophecy

On one occasion, king David told Nathan the prophet that he wanted to build God a permanent temple to replace the movable tabernacle. Nathan explains to him that this is not God's will for him, but that God would establish an eternal kingly dynasty from among David's descendants: The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever ([2 Samuel 7:11b-16).

#### The Eternal Dynasty Explained

(7) First, we see here that God purposed to establish a human dynasty, and that, while David had wanted to build a temple for God, the Lord had decided that not David, but David's son would do this (2 Chronicles 17:4ff). Second, notice that a in a succession of kings in Israel would begin with David's family. It would be an ETERNAL dynasty of David's descendants, and whoever was the sitting king in this dynasty would be called, God said, "my son." This began with Solomon and was preserved in the kingly lineage of David's descendants right down to the last king, well, King, in the dynasty, God's final Son, Jesus the Messiah. As the writer of Hebrews pointed out, although in former days he had spoken in the world giving his word to the various prophets, "in these last days he has spoken to us in a son, whom he appointed heir of all things and through whom he made the ages" (Hebrews 1:2).

(8) Beginning with David and continuing on, particularly down through time with the good kings that he blessed and even in the evil kings in David's dynasty whom he preserved, God showed his willingness to carry out his will through his appointed and anointed leaders in Israel, his king. It is through these kings that many statements that we have come to identify as messianic prophecies are applied in a fuller and final sense to the last Anointed One Jesus of Nazareth.

Sometimes the most amazing things are said about those human kings. Sometimes some of the most amazing biblical designations are given to those kings. Sometimes the most amazing deference is shown toward those kings. And while there is no direct biblical reference comparing Joseph to those kings and to Jesus, one cannot help but notice that the language is significant and may accurately be used to describe the prerogatives that God assigned to his Anointed One. As Pharaoh says to Joseph after the son of Jacob correctly interpreted his dreams predicting the next 14 years of Egypt's history:

"Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you." And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt" (Genesis 41:39-41).

(9) Thirdly then, Jesus is God's appointed agent who is like Joseph who, ruled in every way except with regard to the final authority of the throne that Pharaoh reserved for himself. How is this so?

- A. As did Israel's royalty of old, Jesus accepted the prostration of men before him (*proskuneo*, 1 Chronicles 29:20).
- B. As was said of kings in the Davidic dynasty, appellations of absolute deity are ascribed to God's Anointed.
  1. The human king, called God by Jehovah, is said to have an eternal throne, as is Jesus (Psalm 45:6; Hebrews 1:8).
  2. The human king, called Lord by Jehovah, is said to have established the foundations of the earth, as is Jesus (Psalm 102:25; Hebrews 1:10-12).
  3. Just as the Father was honored, so should honor be laid before the Son (John 5:23). Why?
  4. All authority in heaven and on earth has been GIVEN to the Son (Matthew 28:18).
  5. God has MADE Jesus both Lord and Messiah."(Acts 2:36)
  6. Again, God has GIVEN the authority of divine prerogatives including the ability to forgive sins (Matthew 9:2-8); to receive prayer (John 14:13-14); to be worshipped (*latreuo.*, Revelation 22:3).
  7. Even so, according to plan, all that authority that the Son, a man, received as an honor from the Father, will be relinquished BACK to the Father, after Death, the Messiah's last enemy, is destroyed (cf. John 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 15:25-28).

(10) Bottom line, Jesus has great power because he is God's appointed representative, given prerogatives and authority SIMPLY BECAUSE he is God's Anointed "Son," a designation that had a beginning ("You are my Son; today I have become your Father," Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:33), and that will have an end when God the Father will be all in all with Christ Jesus subjected to him.

(11) More along these lines is to follow in my next three constructive presentations.

Danny Dixon

### Trinitarian Introduction

Hey! My name is Marc Taylor and I will be defending the view that the Scriptures declare that God is Triune. I will demonstrate that the Lord Jesus is God based on the following:

- A. He is the recipient of two doxologies as found in 2 Timothy 4:18 and 2 Peter 3:18.
- B. He is included in the prayer in Acts 1:24, 25.
- C. He is the recipient of latreuo in Revelation 22:3.

I will further demonstrate that both prayer and latreuo are due to God alone.

Finally, I will establish that the passages employed that attempt to deny that the Lord Jesus is God are either due to a misunderstanding of the biblical words involved and/or the authors/speakers intended meaning.

Thank you  
Marc Taylor

### Unitarian First Constructive

(1) Mark and I have both presented our Introductory Statements, primarily by pointing out, in general, how we will approach the belief that we hold. Remember the challenge that I proposed was as follows:

(2) On June 21, 2006 at 10:26 p.m. I made the following challenge to the CARMS community of readers:

I am a member of a group called HungerTruth Christian Educational Ministries. This is a biblical unitarian, or non-trinitarian, association. I would like to challenge someone on the forum to debate this topic:

"Is the Biblical Unitarian Position Found in the Bible?"

I would answer "Yes."

I would expect that we would also debate it from the other side if that were deemed fair, as someone could say "No."

The debate would be on the debate board of this forum. We would work out details offline and begin as soon as everything were set. Please contact me! <BereanDAD2003@yahoo.com>

(3) A few short while later, I received notice from Marc Taylor accepting the challenge and Diane the forum Moderator has graciously agreed to let the debate proceed, and I guess we're off to a fine start. As per our agreement, our introductory speeches do not need to engage the other person's points. But as we proceed in the debate, you should expect Marc to address the things I bring up and for me to address the things he brings up. In a debate like this it is normal enough to lay out one's case in the Constructive presentations. Our debate is laid out to have three of those apiece, and actually Marc is permitted to ask me five questions in his next speech that I have to answer in my Second Constructive. Please refer to this URL to see how we agreed to present on the forum:

<http://www.christiandiscussionforums.org/v/showthread.php?t=13711>

(4) Before I get into my First Unitarian Constructive presentation, I think I would like to go ahead and address the things that Marc has already presented in his Introduction. Then I will continue with my own case, which I hope he will address in his presentations in due time.

What Are We Debating?

(5) First of all, Marc informs us that he will be "defending the view that the Scriptures declare that God is Triune." Actually, the debate that he agreed to was to say "No" to the

question “Is the Biblical Unitarian Position found in the Bible.” Keep in mind that I will be presenting a case borne of a challenge that he accepted. If he chooses to leave the Unitarian case untouched, it is not because I am being unfair in my presentation. As you can see above, I was very clear about what the question for the debate would be.

(6) Even so, I would say that it is appropriate for him to approach the topic by pointing out that “the Scriptures declare that God is Triune” as he said he wants to do. For one thing, that position is diametrically opposed to the one that I am presenting. I do intend to address every point and every supporting Scripture that he brings up. You will be able to see this. It is up to him not only to answer the challenges to his “proof” that I present to you the reading audience, but he is obligated to answer my specific case as well. I don’t think he has to be as wordy as I am in his presentation, but he does have to answer the case, otherwise you, the readers will see how he has failed.

(7) Marc’s Case in a Nutshell: *Jesus receives worship reserved for God.*

Marc quotes two passages says, the Lord Jesus is God because he is the recipient of two doxologies as found in 2 Timothy 4:18: “The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.” This is clearly a verse to be applied to Jesus, and not to God alone, as can be seen as Paul’s first reference regarding the Lord in 2 Timothy chapter 4:17 where Paul says that “the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth.”

(8) This immediately reminds me of Paul’s situation in Acts 23:11 shortly after Luke’s record of Paul’s testimony given in front of the Jewish Council: ‘The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, ‘Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.’” So I grant that 2 Timothy 4:18 admits that Jesus is addressed in prayer. Additionally Marc cites 2 Peter 3:18: “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.” So again, Jesus is the one to whom Paul addresses his prayer. You may recall that I had already admitted as much in when I wrote: “God has GIVEN the authority of divine prerogatives including the ability to . . . receive prayer (John 14:13-14, at Unitarian Introduction, Paragraph 9, subpoint 2).

(9) My Case in a Nutshell: *God grants Jesus the honor of worship—the honor is not inherent.*

But notice the REASON that I say Jesus can be given divine prerogatives: Because He is God’s anointed agent, like the king of Israel was prophesied to be. In my Introduction I outlined a devastating array of observations that Marc is going to have to address at some point in his presentations. I pointed out, and biblically demonstrated a number of things: First, I pointed out that the designation “son of God” has among it’s definitions the idea

of being God's anointed king. I showed that Nathan the prophet delivered God's word to king David that his son Solomon, as part of David's dynasty:

(10) The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son (2 Samuel 7:13-14; see discussion at Unitarian Introduction, par. 6.

(11) This prophecy is directly applied to Jesus in Hebrews 1:5:

For to which of the angels did God ever say,  
"You are my Son;  
today I have become your Father"? Or again,  
"I will be his Father,  
and he will be my Son" (Also see Psalm 2:7).

(12) I suspect that Marc is going to try to ignore this concept of Agency, which is my case. He has not ignored the concept of Agency—yet—because in the Introductions neither of us is obligated to address the other's case. But he's past that now. I am providing an explanation for the verses he has presented. Will he ignore them? Or will he demonstrate there is no such thing as the principle of Agency applied to Christ in the Scriptures.

(13) Second, Marc says, the Lord Jesus is God because he is included in the prayer in Acts 1:24, 25. I guess, technically, the doxology that we saw in 2 Timothy 4:18 is a kind of praise prayer. Here in Acts 1:24-25 the prayer is a clear request. The disciples take the initiative to replace Judas who has hanged himself. And they propose a couple of disciples, one of whom, the believe should be an apostle: "For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1:22). The text says that "they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen" (Acts 1:23-24). This reminds me of an entire night that Jesus spent in prayer and of how, the next day, he chose 12 of them:

(14) One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles (Luke 6:12-13).

(15) Clearly, the Eleven believe that the Lord will choose another to bring the number of apostles to 12. Knowing Jesus chose them in the past, they assume that he will choose a replacement. So they ask him, they pray to him, to choose, in the casting of lots, which one should serve in that office. This was entirely appropriate since, as we have seen, Jesus tells them: "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" (John 14:14). The Greek word for "ask" is *aiteo*, which we can clearly see from even the previous verse means to ask in prayer: "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer" (Matthew 21:22). Again, this does not prove that Jesus is Almighty God. It only illustrates what we see in Scripture elsewhere that such

position, powers, and privileges are GRANTED to Jesus. Perhaps it will help if I point out again the reasons that the authority that Jesus had was granted to him.

(16)

1. Jesus reports that just as the Father was honored, so should honor be given to the Son (John 5:23). Why is this so?
2. As Jesus said on the day of ascension into heaven “all authority in heaven and on earth has been GIVEN to the me” (Matthew 28:18).
3. Peter reports that “God has MADE Jesus both Lord and Messiah.”(Acts 2:36)
4. We should be no less amazed than the crowd who saw Jesus claim to forgive sins a man’s sins, something they thought only God could do.
5. However, on that occasion Jesus points out that this was a privilege—this was authority—that was his on earth (Matthew 9:2-8).

(17) Will Marc address this principle of Agency? Will he admit that the Scriptures teach that Jesus has authority, but that it is authority and honor given to him by the Father? Or will he ignore the Unitarian case? To repeat, I have no problem acknowledging that all of the verses that he presents refer to Jesus. It is Marc who will have to demonstrate that the privileges, prerogatives, and powers, indeed the authority of Christ are not derived, but are inherent because he is God.

(18) Third, Marc, the Lord Jesus is God because he is the recipient of *latreuo* in Revelation 22:3 and that both prayer and *latreuo* are due to God alone. I have a slight problem with only one word in Marc’s statement, and it is to the word “alone.” I will explain momentarily. But first I should acknowledge that I understand that *latreuo*, in all cases other than Revelation 22:3, is used to represent “service” to God. Perhaps there are references where the word is applied to others in passages elsewhere. But I am willing to stipulate the point that the vast majority, if not all, of the appearances of *latreuo* are references to God. In principle, what does this prove? It demonstrates little. In my Introduction, I mentioned the illustration of how Joseph, because he had wisely interpreted the Pharaoh’s dreams, he was granted great powers and authority in Egypt. He says:

(19) Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you." And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt" (Genesis 41:39-41).

(20) Prior to the Pharaoh granting this authority to Joseph, he did not have that authority. It’s a very simple point. But the application is clear. Prior to the Father granting this authority to Jesus, he did not have that authority. To start, it is yet to be biblical demonstrated that he did have it. Additionally, the explanation of the principle of Agency, whereby God GRANTS authority to his representatives, satisfactorily demonstrates that Jesus’ authority is derived. Furthermore, I have provided at least four specific passages where this authority is said to have been granted by God or is due to God’s representative, his Son.

(21) Fourth in my basic outline of discussion Marc says that he intends to “establish that the passages employed that attempt to deny that the Lord Jesus is God are either due to a misunderstanding of the biblical words involved and/or the authors/speakers intended meaning.” Marc, I am waiting to see how you will apply the task you have set for yourself to my presentation: How have I misunderstood the passages I have presented.

(22) *Be careful not to assign to me any arguments that I do not present ! ! !*

(23) Marc, you told me in an e-mail that you didn't use certain arguments to make your case. I will not assume anything. I will only respond to what YOU WRITE. I would ask you to respond to what I WRITE. I am presenting a Biblical Unitarian case. It's my case for what I believe and for what those associated with me ascribe to. It would be pointless for you to waste your time arguing something that I have not presented. My affirmative argument is presently presented in my Introduction, but I will be presenting additional material in my Second and Third Constructive Unitarian presentations. Until then, MY CASE IS HERE at this site in my presentations. You now have TWO presentations before you from which you may address the Biblical Unitarian Position that you are bound to refute.

(24) Marc, by our offline agreement, I didn't have to respond to this post of yours until next Sunday, July 2. But I decided to respond immediately since I have the time. You're not expected to answer back immediately. I have an advantage, as a school teacher, I'm "off" for the most part for the summer. I realize you have a job that you have to go to each day. I? I'm good to go for at least another month without much interruption, so I can respond quickly.

(25) I hope to hear from you soon.

Danny Dixon

### Trinitarian First Constructive

Hi,

I would like to begin by stating that unless otherwise indicated any passage of Scripture that I quote from will be based on the NASB (1977).

I will address some of the passages you brought up. My response to them should cover the other passages you mentioned. If not, then please let me know and I will specifically address each one.

1. When the Lord Jesus stated to the Father that He (the Father) was "the only true God" this should present no problem to the Trinitarian for since each Person of the Trinity is ontologically one they are able to refer to each other as "only" since this is in contradistinction to all other false gods. In Jude 4 the Holy Spirit tells us that the Lord Jesus is the "only Lord" but the Father is given this title by Christians in Acts 4:29.

2. When Acts 2:36 declares that Jesus was "made" Lord this doesn't mean He didn't eternally exist as Lord before this time. The thought is that because of His resurrection (which was Peter's theme) that the title of "Lord" being applied to Him was now confirmed. This can also be seen in Romans 1:4 where it reads that Christ was declared to be the Son of God due to the resurrection but certainly others believed He was the Son of God prior to this time (John 1:49; 9:35-38 and 11:27). The resurrection simply substantiated that He was Lord and the Son of God.

3. 1 Corinthians 8:6 does show the distinct identity of the Father and Son. The Trinitarian has no problem with this fact for they are not the same Person despite the claims of the Modalists (Oneness Pentecostals). "God" (*Theos*) is used primarily for the Father but can be applied to the Son (2 Peter 1:1) while "Lord" (*Kurios*) is used primarily for the Son but can be assigned to the Father (Acts 4:29).

4. 1 Corinthians 15:25-28 refers to the Mediatorial reign of the intercessory work of the Lord Jesus. It does not at all refer to ontological inferiority. It reads that the Son "will be" subjected to God. But that doesn't mean He wasn't subject to Him before this time.

I will now address the passages which demonstrate that the Lord Jesus is God. Let me just say I was relieved that Danny affirms that Christ is the subject of prayer in Acts 1:24, 25; of the doxologies in 2 Timothy 4:18 and 2 Peter 3:18 and the One who is receiving *latreuo* in Revelation 22:3. The testimony from the Scripture declares this obvious truth.

1. The evidence demonstrates that the Father was also being addressed in the prayer in Acts 1:24, 25 along with the Son. Since the earliest Christians believed that the Father and Son were ontologically one they gave us testimony that confirms this truth.

Acts 1:24, 25 reads, And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two Thou hast chosen to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.

- a. The Father is addressed to as "Lord" in prayer as seen in Acts 4:29.
- b. "Knowest the hearts" is the Greek word *kardiognostes* which is the exact same word (used only two times in the NT) Peter (who most likely led this prayer) applied to God in Acts 15:8.
- c. Even though the expression "Thou hast chosen" is applied to the Son in Acts 1:2 in a very real sense the Father is the One whom also chose the apostles in that He "gave" them to the Lord Jesus (John 17:6).
- d. "Ministry" is said to be given by God in 2 Corinthians 5:18.
- e. "Apostleship" is said to be given by God in Galatians 2:8.

The Trinitarian would expect to find such evidence as seen above.

In terms of the word "prayed" (*proseuxomai*) Thayer says "everywhere of prayers to the gods, or to God [cf. *deesis* fin.]. Not one time is this Greek word used for a false god in the NT but is so in the LXX (Isaiah 44:17; 45:20).

Notice that Thayer wrote "cf. *deesis*" showing these words are synonyms. In his definition of *deesis* Thayer writes "in the N.T. requests addressed by men to God." In fact, also in the definition of *deesis* the noted linguist Professor Grimm wrote in regards to "*proseuxomai*" that it "is a word of sacred character, being limited to the prayer of God."

And finally W.E. Vine states in his Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words concerning *proseuxomai* that "in the NT is always addressed to God."

2. That the Lord Jesus receives two doxologies both in 2 Timothy 4:18 and 2 Peter 3:18 does necessitate that He is God.

What is a doxology?

"A hymn of praise to God" (Webster's New World Dictionary and Thesaurus, published by Hungry Minds Inc. New York, New York, 2002, page 190).

"An expression of praise to God..." at dictionary.com  
(<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/doxology>).

That the Lord Jesus receives a doxology proves that He is God.

3. James Hope Moulton and George Milligan in their *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* state concerning *latreuo* "in Biblical Greek always refers to the service of the true God or of heathen deities." The Lord Jesus is either the true God or a heathen deity.

I await your response to the points I brought out above.

Thank you.  
Marc Taylor

### Unitarian Second Constructive

I would like to address Marc's presentation, in order, and continue to build the Unitarian case.

(1) Jesus *has* a God

Regarding John 17:3, Marc asserts (without proof) that the Trinity is "ontologically one," So when Jesus refers to the Father as "the only true God" it should present no problem to the Trinitarian. But several passages speak of Jesus *having* a God, with no suggestion that the Father *has* a God.

(2) Romans 15:6 speaks of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3). The Father of glory is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:17; cf. Colossians 1:3). It is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has caused us to be begotten again, or born again (1 Peter 1:3). There is no way to avoid the distinguishing of one from another as two separate beings.

(3) Additionally, consider Jesus' announcement to Mary Magdalene: that he will ascend to the Father: "I ascend [not "return" as mistranslated in the NIV] to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God" (John 20:17). To the extent that Mary had a God, the resurrected Jesus had a God.

(4) The Father doesn't have a God because he is the Almighty God. The passages Marc listed are not making a distinction between false Gods, which is, of course, a given in Christian understanding. It is establishing a truth about the relationship of the Son as opposed to the Father. Where is the evidence in Scripture for this ontological oneness between the Father and the Son?"

(5) Jesus is *made* "Lord" of the Christian Community (Church)

Marc mentions Jude 4 where ungodly men deny our only Master and Lord is the "only Lord," pointing out in addition that Christians call the Father Lord in Acts 4:29. Jesus is the Lord of the community of believers established on the Day of Pentecost. God has given Jesus that position.

(6) "Lord" is not the same as "God." "Lord" (the Greek word is *kurios*) is a masculine title of respect and nobility, and it is used many times in the Bible. If Christ were God, then by definition he was already "Lord," so for the Bible to say he was "made" Lord could not be true. To say that Jesus is God because the Bible calls him "Lord" is very poor scholarship. "Lord" is used in many ways in the Bible, and others beside God and Jesus are called "Lord." Context is the only thing that is significant regarding who is called "Lord"

(7) For Marc to say that Jesus being *made* Lord in Acts 2:38 "doesn't mean He didn't eternally exist as Lord before this time," is not good enough. Marc understands Peter to mean that the resurrection causes the title of "Lord" to now be "confirmed" for Jesus. He *misquotes* Romans 1:4 to prove his point that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God, when it was clear that others

believed He was the Son of God prior to this time (John 1:49; 9:35-38 and 11:27). He says, “The resurrection simply substantiated that He was Lord and the Son of God.” But what Marc sets forth as a “declaration” of a title already known to exist for Jesus is actually an *appointment* of Christ in a NEW designation. Christ Jesus is said to have been “appointed the Son-of-God-in Power” in Romans 1:4. Note several things:

1. There is a magnified designation unlike the terminology found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Rather than being simply “Son of God,” Jesus is “Son-of-God-in-power” (The trinitarian N.E.T. Bible at Romans 1:4).
2. Jesus’ designation is one of appointment. The Greek word in Romans 1:4 is *orízo*, which, when used of things, means “determine, appoint, fix, set” When it used of persons it means to “appoint, designate, declare” (Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1979, p. 580).
3. Young’s Literal Translation points out the primary significance of who is marked out [*orízo*] Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of sanctification, by the rising again from the dead.
4. According to Paul, Jesus’ appointment, designation, or declaration as Powerful Son of God, or Son of God in/with Power was by means of, or by reason of a particular occasion, namely his resurrection from the dead.

(8) So Jesus is “Super-Sized,” Son of God, so appointed at his resurrection. And there are no Scriptures which speak of Jesus being the Son of God in eternity past. Rather, we read this Psalm in which we discover that Jesus is begotten “*today*”: “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: ‘He said to Me, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.”’”(Psalm 2:7).

Marc drops the very significant application of this verse to refer to Jesus as the Ultimate Messianic King is also dropped. The writer of Hebrews draws a careful connection of 2 Samuel 7:12-16 and Psalm 2:7 in Hebrews 1:5 where both Old Testament passages are quoted. Clearly the citations are given to show how Jesus is declared to be the last messianic king in the dynasty of king David (cf. Hebrews 1:2: “but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son”). The focus in this text is not on the resurrection, though certainly that is the occasion of the crowning of Jesus as Lord and Christ, as we saw at Acts 2:36 (admitted by Marc).

(9) But where is Marc's treatment of Matthew 9:2-8 and Matthew 28:18, passages *key* in the understanding of the concept of *agency*, and *derived authority*, which constitutes the bulk of the unitarian case so far. The crowd present at the healing of the paralytic were amazed that Jesus would forgive the man’s sins. To them, this was something reserved for God alone. Jesus could have said, “Yes, that’s right. *I am God alone.*” But does he do this? *No.* He says, simply that he had the authority *on earth* to forgive sins (Matthew 9:2-8). Matthew’s commentary is telling: “But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men” (Matthew 9:8).

(10) Not only this, but Jesus declares that he had been GIVEN All authority in heaven and on

earth. Marc would simply *assert* that Jesus always had this authority as the eternal Son. Of course that is an assertion that goes unproven. The evidence of the *stated text* is that these aspects of authority were *not* something that Jesus had in the past, but were *given to* him on the earth. Jesus gives his final prime directive to evangelize the world at the end of his earthly ministry and right before his ascension into heaven, prefaced by the following words: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been *given to me*”, he says in Matthew 28:18. Marc is strangely silent on this verse as well.

(11) Marc says, “When Acts 2:36 declares that Jesus was “made” Lord this doesn’t mean He didn’t eternally exist as Lord before this time.” Rather than deal with what the passage *does* say, he talks about what it “doesn’t say didn’t” exist. The passage says God made Jesus both Lord and Messiah. Where is Marc’s biblical evidence that says Jesus was God’s Son in eternity past with divine prerogatives? He doesn’t have such biblical evidence because it doesn’t exist.

(12) Regarding 1 Corinthians 8:6, which Marc admits “does show the distinct identity of the Father and Son,” he confuses my case with that of “the claims of the Modalists (Oneness Pentecostals),” who basically say that God appeared in different modes. I am not saying this *at all*. I am essentially saying that Jesus’ existence *began* when he was born. In that sense, he is distinct from the Father *because he is an entirely different person..*

(13) Marc’s only argument regarding 1 Corinthians 8:6 is that “God” (*Theos*) is used primarily for the Father but can be applied to the Son (2 Peter 1:1) while “Lord” (*Kurios*) is used primarily for the Son but can be assigned to the Father (Acts 4:29). Let’s examine this. First of all, consider the reading of this passage in the American Standard Version:

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and the Savior Jesus Christ

(14) And consider the King James Version, which reads similarly: “Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”

(15) Marc is using the New American Standard Bible, which reads as follows:

To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ

(17) The difference between the translations (“God and the Savior Jesus Christ” / “God and Savior, Jesus Christ”) has to do with a difference of opinion among Greek scholars regarding something called the Granville Sharp Rule (If Marc desires to go into it in detail we will in a future post in this debate). It is sufficient to say that the difference in the translations demonstrates how lacking in decisiveness this is to govern a translation.

(18) Even so, Marc again disregarded a significant scripture that I brought up in my speech,

namely those indicating that individuals other than Jesus could be called God without being the Almighty God. Again my whole AGENCY argument is being ignored.

God's king is said to have an eternal throne, as is Jesus (Psalm 45:6; Hebrews 1:8).

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God's called human king is said to have established the foundations of the earth, as is Jesus (Psalm 102:25; Hebrews 1:10-12).

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Just as the Father was honored, so should honor be laid before the Son (John 5:23).

(19) Why do we have verses like these? Because *God's agents can be called God in biblical context*. Since this is true, the fact that a verse like 2 Peter 1:1 might present Jesus as being called "God" on an "eternal throne" does not mean he is the Almighty God, any more than the king of Israel was Almighty God in Psalm 45:6 (applied to the Son in Hebrews 1:8). Additionally, the fact that divine activity (laying the foundations of the earth) is ascribed to a man who is praying TO God should cause us not to become disturbed when we see Jesus being called God (John 20:28) and doing things that God does (forgiving sins, Matthew 9:5-8).

(20) The Principle of Agency: One's Agent is the Person

Let me illustrate further the principle of agency as it appears in the Scriptures. I believe that the Bible teaches clearly that God is one Person and one Being. I also believe that there is a key to understanding the oneness of God in Scripture, and that is the biblical principle of "agency." In a word, a person's agent is regarded as the person. Examples:

(a) Who spoke to Moses from the burning bush?

Exodus 3:4 tells us that "When the LORD saw that he [Moses] turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush . . ." Yet Acts 7:30 tells us that "After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning thorn bush." Clearly, then, angel represented God, even to the point of being called God, in addressing Moses from the burning bush.

(b) Who parted the red sea?

Isaiah 10:26 teaches that "The LORD of hosts will arouse a scourge against him like the slaughter of Midian at that rock of Oreb; and His staff will be over the sea and He will lift it up the way He did in Egypt." Yet Exodus 14:16 has God address Moses: "As for you [Moses], lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land." Clearly, Moses' action of stretching out his staff over the Red Sea was agency in representing God on whose behalf Moses acted.

(c) Is Moses God?

The answer seems clear enough: No. He is God's agent. But perhaps we should explore the question further. Exodus 7:1 tells us "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'See, I make you

as God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet.” Moses stood as God before Pharaoh.

(d) Were the Judges of Israel Gods?

(21) John 10:35a teaches that Jesus spoke of his Father's perspective regarding judges in Israel: “If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came . . .” Clearly, this indicates that it is not outside of propriety to call individuals "gods" with biblical approval.

(22) The biblical writers’ undeniable use of the title “God” and “gods” for the human agents of Yahweh has—through ignorance or deception—been hidden from public view by ecclesiastical authorities, shielding Trinitarian proof texts from the threat of alternative interpretations that are truer to the theology of the biblical writers. Will Marc perpetuate this blindness or purposeful deception by failing directly to address the concept of agency that I am setting forth? We shall see.

(23) Finally, Marc addresses 1 Corinthians 15:25-28, which he says, “refers to the Mediatorial reign of the intercessory work of the Lord Jesus. It does not at all refer to ontological inferiority. It reads that the Son "will be" subjected to God. But that doesn't mean He wasn't subject to Him before this time.” Once again Marc gives brief treatment to something that requires much more than his mere assertion. I may be mistaken by what I understand Marc to mean by the terminology he has given us. I am hoping he will correct me if my understanding is deficient. “The Mediatorial reign of the intercessory work of the Lord Jesus” means, I think, that Jesus is temporarily reigning as one who intercedes to God on our behalf when we sin. I would not presume to explain Marc’s case for him, but I think I may be correct in assuming that this would refer to such passages as 1 John 2:1-2:

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. <sup>2</sup>He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for[a] the sins of the whole world.

(24) I might also add this one, although it wouldn’t help Marc’s case as much as he might hope it could. It demonstrates that, at present, man has a mediator. That mediator is not God, but is the man Jesus the Messiah: “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).

(25) Even so, Marc seems to be saying that the reign described in 1 Corinthians 15:25-28 is temporary, but it has to do with how believers receive forgiveness of sin since the resurrection, and has nothing to do with Jesus being subordinate to the Father. Again, we have Marc’s “It doesn’t mean that he wasn’t” argument. Again, I would appeal to those reading the present debate not to be distracted by arguments that are not made by the biblical writers, but that you focus on what IS IN FACT being said in 1 Corinthians 15:22-28:

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

(26) This is a statement about Christian hope based upon Christ's repair of what Adam had federally done, resulting in the condemnation of mankind. When one comes "into Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:3-5), he is covered by the blood of Jesus who cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7-9). One day, as Paul gloriously explains in 1 Corinthians 15:35-58, Christians who die, and those who happen to be alive when he comes, receive resurrection bodies.

Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

(27) The prediction here is that one day this system of things, this age, will end, and Jesus will hand his kingdom over to God the Father. All dominion, authority, and power are among the enemies he fights while he rules over his kingdom. Whatever may be true about such things, at some point Jesus will defeat the last enemy—Death. This is not the forum to discuss preterist perspectives about the reign of Christ as opposed to millennial points of view or even a Mediatorial Reign of which Marc informs us.

(28) For he "has put everything under his feet."

(29) 1 Corinthians 15:27 reminds us of at least two Psalms. In reverse chronological order, there is: the significant Psalm 110:1, where Yahweh/Jehovah is clearly set forth as being an entity who is distinct from the king of Israel, who is called "my lord" in the Revised Standard Version:

The LORD says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool."

(30) The American Standard Version presents it as follows: "

Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

(31) Jehovah (Hebrew *YHWH*) is one entity. He is speaking with another individual (Hebrew *Adoni*). I should point out that the Hebrew word *Adoni* is *NEVER* used to refer to God. It always refers to a human Lord and rarely, to an angel (at Daniel 12:8).

(32) Hebrews 2:6-8 is referenced when we think of the other passage in Psalms and that we see in 1 Corinthians 15:27:

But there is a place where someone has testified: "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet? In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him.

(33) This looks to the future as if the events have already taken place. It is from Psalm 8:6-8. Notice the last sentence: "Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him." Is this not the same thing as is said in 1 Corinthians 15:27?

Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

(34) We find that the Son will be made subject to God at some point. We have no indication here of any subordination of the Son to the Father at any point in eternity past, which was Marc's assertion about what the passage is *not* saying. The passage says that Jesus will be subordinated to God, that he is distinct from "God himself." Now we can give a big name to what it is Jesus was doing before being subordinated to God, but the fact remains, he ultimately will be subject to the Father. And there is no evidence that he had been subordinated to God in eternity past.

(35) Can Marc consider these things objectively?

(36) The rest of Marc's presentation is merely my presentation given in my first speech in which I acknowledged every verse that he brings up yet again. The thing you as the audience need to consider is this: How shall we consider passages that say Jesus receives worship? Mark says that this argument alone demonstrates that Jesus is God. I have demonstrated, practically without challenge, the biblical principle of Agency, which lets us know that God can assign to anyone he wishes the designation and prerogatives surrounding his name. Whatever he wants to allow his agent to do in the furtherance of his will, he empowers that agent to do.

(38) Marc demonstrates the significance of *proseuxomai*, which he indicates is found throughout ancient Greek literature to indicate "prayers to the gods, or to God." He emphasizes that this Greek word is never used for a false god in the New Testament. I am also maintaining that never has an agent of God been considered a false God. Even bad "gods" (human judges of Israel) retain the designation in Psalm 82:6. The papyri are useful for giving us terminology, but they are not useful to demonstrate what may be done theologically regarding God's appointed agents.

Danny Dixon

Trinitarian Second Constructive

1. The Lord Jesus had a God because He is and will always be a man. Psalm 119:160 declares "the sum of Thy word is truth." Some passages will declare that He is a man while other passages reveal that He is God. Simply pointing out where He is shown to be a man doesn't tell the full story.
2. In terms of John 20:17 notice that Christ did not say to Mary that He will ascend to "Our Father" because He, unlike her, is ontologically the same as the Father.
3. I agree that Romans 1:4 states that He is declared to be the Son of God with power. This would "equally" apply to Him being made "Lord" in Acts 2:36 for the theme of both texts concern His resurrection.
4. In terms of the Lord Jesus being "given" all authority (Matthew 28:18) this does not at all prove He isn't God. He had it in eternity past, He then voluntarily relinquished certain aspects of His authority at His incarnation then He was given it back after His resurrection. Philippians 2:7 states that He took on the form of a bond-servant. A servant by definition is not allowed to exercise all their authority.
6. 1 Corinthians 15:25-28 refers to "the Mediatorial reign of the intercessory work of the Lord Jesus." Let it also be pointed out that to be in "subjection" (*hupotassō*) to another does not necessarily demand ontological inferiority. The wife is required to be in "subjection" to her husband (Ephesians 5:24) but this does not entail she is ontologically inferior to him. Subjection in function does not necessitate subjection in ontology. In fact, the Lord Jesus "subjected" Himself to Joseph and Mary (Luke 2:51) but I'm not aware of anyone who believes they were ontologically superior to Him.
7. Danny cites 1 Timothy 2:5 which shows the Lord Jesus is a man. Refer to my comments in #1.  
It should also be noted that since the Lord Jesus is our perfect mediator He, like a physical bridge, is ontologically grounded on both shores (God and man). Thus the chasm that separates man from God can truly be bridged.
8. In that *Adoni* (Psalm 110:1) is never applied to God is irrelevant. The fact that Christ receives *latreuo*/doxologies/*proseuxomai* proves that He is God. To employ any passage where Christ is either called a man or is referred to by a title that never applies to God is not taking "the sum" of God's word into account (Psalm 119:160).
9. What I wrote concerning the meanings of a doxology and *latreuo* went ignored. A doxology is a hymn of praise TO GOD. *Latreuo* as used in the New Testament is either given to heathen deities or to the true God. What category does Danny put Christ under?
10. *Proseuxomai* was "touched upon" but for the most part it too went ignored. In terms of how it is used in the New Testament Vine says it is "always used of prayer to God"

(emphasis mine). Grimm (Thayer) states that it is "*limited* to the prayer of God" (emphasis mine).

Ask yourself this question, who is correct Grimm, Thayer and Vine or Danny?

11. Finally, Danny wanted me to address the use of "Agency." That it does occur in the Bible cannot be denied. Danny probably believes that this is the case when the angel stated to Jacob "I am the God of Bethel" in Genesis 31:13. But is this "always" true? And more specifically is this the case here? In Genesis 48:15, 16 Jacob requests (prays to) God AND the angel to bless his descendants. If the Lord Jesus can be prayed to/given latreuo simply because He is God's agent (despite what the lexicons say) would Danny apply this to a created angel as well?

The Hebrew word for "angel" (*mal'ak*) can refer to the created angels (Psalm 148:2) and it can also describe human beings in the sense that they are "messengers" (Joshua 6:25). In Danny's introduction (#3) he wrote concerning the meaning of Unitarian that ". . . there is one individual who is God." Either Jacob is praying to more than one individual thus proving that God is a multi-personal being or he was worshiping a created angel. Which one is it? Let it also be pointed out that this situation was not merely descriptive as opposed to being prescriptive for Hebrews 11:1, 2 and 39 describes what Jacob did (Hebrews 11:21) as an act of "faith" which was "approved."

Is praying to created angels an act of faith which is approved or is praying to a multi-personal God an act of faith which is approved?

Marc Taylor

### Unitarian Third Constructive

(1) I need to attribute my delay in posting to computer damage and Internet breakdown. Let me offer special thanks to Marc for leaving me a message asking if I were okay when I hadn't timely posted my last constructive presentation. In this post, I'll address Marc's Second Trinitarian Constructive comments and make my third and last constructive presentation.

(2) I argued that Jesus has a God. Marc responded saying that this is true because Jesus was and will always be a man, giving several passages to establish this point. But he seems to reverse himself arguing from John 20:17 that he would ascend to "our Father" since he was one in being with the Father ("ontologically the same as the Father," Marc said). I don't see his point. What difference would it make for Jesus to say he was ascending to "my Father and your Father, to my God and your God"? If I have something and you have something, then we have something; it is ours. There's no apparent issue of difference in ontology, or being, in saying "my-your" as opposed to saying "our." They mean the same thing. When Jesus speaks to the disciples of the my-your God relationship, we know that he was speaking of their God. Doesn't Jesus teach the disciples to pray to "Our Father in heaven" (Matthew 6:9)? Doesn't Paul begin letters extending grace and peace to the recipients from "*God our Father* and the Lord Jesus Christ" (at 1 Corinthians 1:3, Galatians 1:3, and Philemon 1:3)? Does he not remember the Thessalonian Christians' work produced by faith before *our God and Father*" (1 Thessalonians 1:3), calling "*God our Father*" to encourage their hearts and strengthen them (2 Thessalonians 2:16)? Isn't there religion which "*God our Father* accepts as pure and undefiled" (James 1:27), and don't we "praise Lord and Father" (James 3:9). Yet who sees a need to talk about ontology as Marc would suggest regarding the "our" language. Additionally, it should be noted, Marc's argument is based on what Christ did not say. This is shaky arguing at best.

(3) Note that in saying Jesus "is and will always be a man," (par. 1), he says this in spite of the fact that Jesus was made just like we are in every way (Hebrews 2:17). I mention this because Marc also wants Jesus to retain an additional nature of divinity, which makes him something that we are not—a God-man—thus making him not like us in every way.

(4) Marc reasons that since the term to pray (*proseuxomai*) is used only of God, if someone is rightly to be the object of prayer, that person must be God. He feels that I've not given this argument due attention. It is, essentially, the same argument about *latreuo* and doxologies, statements of praise, to God. It isn't that I am ignoring what he says about prayer and divine service. I am merely trying to get him to extend his thinking about the concept of biblical agency, which he does accept.

(5) While he wanted to assign his own argument about agency to me, I'd rather prefer that he address how the following points impact the discussion of the biblical concept of agency:

1. Should we ignore that Israel's human royalty accepts "worship" (KJV) as the people simultaneously prostrate themselves before God and the king (1 Chronicles 29:20)? Isn't this idea consistent with the concept of agency?

2. Should we ignore that Israel's pre-New Testament human royalty is called God and is said to have an eternal throne (Psalm 45:6)? Isn't this idea consistent with the concept of agency?
3. Should we ignore that a human being, who, for most of Psalm 102 had been lamenting the status of fallen Jerusalem, is addressed by God who calls him "Lord"? Should we ignore that, in the corrected Septuagint reading of the Masoretic text in Psalm 102:25, God tells this man that he (the man) had laid the foundations of the earth? Isn't this idea consistent with the concept of agency?
4. Should we ignore that Matthew writes that Jesus forgave a paralytic's sins, something the people recognized only God could do? But should we ignore that Jesus says this was something the Son of Man could do on earth, or that Matthew reports the crowd's amazement that God was giving such authority to men (Matthew 9:2-8)? Isn't this idea consistent with the concept of agency?
5. Should we miss the point that Jesus says all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to him (Matthew 28:18)? Isn't this idea consistent with the concept of agency?
6. Should we ignore that Peter declares that Jesus had been made Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:36). Isn't this idea consistent with the concept of agency?

Should we ignore that all the foregoing are in line with Jesus' observation that if the Father receives honor, then the Son is also to receive honor. This is the Father's arrangement (John 5:23). Are not these concepts consistent with the biblical revelation of what is agency?

(6) I'm not ignoring Marc's comments about prayer and divine service. I am merely trying to get him to recognize that God's son/Son/ anointed/Messiah can, like Joseph, receive any honor or authority that God chooses to give to him. Marc concedes Jesus' appointments as Son of God with power and as Lord in Romans 1:4 and Acts 2:36 respectively because of his resurrection. He attempts a substantial argument trying to establish that Jesus had all authority but relinquished it.

(7) Consequently, I'm doing no violence to the report of the older lexicons Marc cites or the more standard Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, which define the words similarly. What Marc is missing in this whole consideration is that lexicons must be read circumspectly, especially as one seeks theological-hermeneutical understanding. This is the whole point of Moises Silva's insightful book, *Biblical Words and their Meaning*. Marc several times reminded us of the first part of Psalm 119:160, which in the NASB reads "The sum of your word is truth." Both immediate and remote contexts should inform our lexical considerations. There is no real value in pitting scholars against scholars. It's not a matter of Danny vs. Grimm, Thayer, or Vine. It's a matter of comparing the objective discussion of lexicographers and commentators and theology book writers, etc. If they are writing, even unknowingly, from a presuppositional perspective, we are going to expect certain kinds of conclusions. That's true from the Unitarian or the Trinitarian side. So often the Greek or Hebrew words are capable of more than one legitimate definition. And even when there is one definition, the simple words need to be informed by context. For instance the word "all" is a rather clear word. It means

everything or everyone (depending on whether objects or people are under discussion). So what are we to say of Romans 5:18 is informed by the word “many” in Romans 5:19. When Paul says that one act of righteousness brings life “for all men,” the statement ought to be informed by Romans 5:20 which says “so also through the obedience of the one man the many (Greek *polus*) will be made righteous.” Suddenly “all” (Greek *pas*), which lexically means “the totality of any object, mass, collective, or extension,” comes to mean, in context, something more restricted, “many” “a relatively large quantity of objects or events.” (Louw & Nida, 59:23, *pas*; 59:1, *polus*, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on semantic Domains*, Volume 1 [New York: United Bible Societies, 1989]).

(8) He argues that we should understand, in reading Philippians 2:7, that “a servant by definition is not allowed to exercise” all authority. Joseph the Hebrew slave would disapprove of this assessment, particularly after his appointment by the Pharaoh of Egypt: “Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you” Pharaoh tells Joseph, setting him “over all the land of Egypt” (Genesis 41:39-41).

(9) Actually Philippians 2:7 teaches that Jesus was not like Adam, who sought to reach out and grab (Greek *haptō*) equality with God. Rather he chose to be a servant and not grasp for equality with God. He chose to suffer a sacrificial death and was ultimately rewarded with his resurrection and the granting of all authority, with which he ascended into heaven to the Father. Perhaps we will discuss this further in rebuttals.

(10) *Latreuo* and *proseuxomai*, then, are prerogatives that the sum of God’s truth teach us God granted to Jesus when he gave him “authority” during his ministry (Matthew 9:8) and “all authority” after the resurrection (Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:36), which he will give back to the Father, who will be “all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Further Unitarian Arguments:

#### (11) The Old Testament Used in the New Testament

Jehovah is one entity who speaks to a human being in Psalm 110:1. The parallel idea is applied to Jesus in the New Testament in several places. Marc casually dismisses this as being irrelevant. But it is quite relevant, not only here, but in other passages of Scripture as has been demonstrated incidentally, but which I want to stress here. Various passages in the Hebrew Scriptures appear in the Christian Scriptures, always quoted in some form of Greek text. The Septuagint was developed over time by informed Jewish scholars, who had access to then-contemporary Hebrew manuscripts. They translated these documents into the Greek language of the Jewish people spread among the nations. Sometimes the passages as they appear in the New Testament are word-for-word with what is our present Masoretic Text, which “was primarily compiled, edited and distributed by a group of Jews known as the Masoretes between the seventh and tenth centuries” A.D. (Internet Resource. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretic\\_Text](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretic_Text), accessed July 31, 2006).

Significance

(12) A passage like Exodus 3:14, for instance, in the Septuagint, which Jesus is said to have quoted, does not read as it does in John 8:58. The phrase found in the Old Testament in Greek is, "*ego eimi ho on*." (This is the translation in my copy of the volume by Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* [London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, Ltd., 1851]). By quoting this passage in its entirety John had a slam dunk opportunity to let us know that Jesus was making a direct allusion to the name of God as given to Moses. But Jesus doesn't quote the Greek Old Testament. In fact, the passage goes on to say, in translation in the latter part of Exodus 3:14, "Thus shall ye say to the children of Israel, THE BEING (Greek Old Testament: "*Ho On*") has sent me to you." As a matter of fact "*ego eimi*" is used lots of times in the New Testament to mean something other than the name of God as translated from the Old Testament Greek rendering. Consider "*ego eimi*" in the following passages:

1. "I am he"--(Mark 13:6; Luke 21:8; John 9:9; 13:19 ; John 18:5, 6, 8).
2. "It is I"--(John 18:6; Matthew 14:27 ; Mike 6:50 ; John 6:20 ).
3. "I am the one"--(John 8:16 )
4. "I am the one I claim to be"--(John 8:24 , 28)

"I am" (*ego eimi*) is a common way of referring to oneself, and not a means of claiming to be "The Being" (*Ho On*). In context, Jesus claims to be The Son of Man, not the I AM, which, in the Septuagint is translated from the phrase *Ho On* at Exodus 3:14 "*Ho On* has sent me to you," Moses was to say in the Septuagint, not "*Ego Eimi*" has sent you to me.

(13) As I have mentioned earlier in the present post, Psalm 102:25 in the Septuagint, found at Hebrews 1:10-12 does not read the way it does in the Masoretic Text. In nearly all translations of the Hebrew Bible, the lamenting man is speaking to God in Psalm 102:25. In the Septuagint, however, the speaker switches toward the end of the Psalm, and God speaks to the lamenting man, calling him "Lord," and God tells the man that that man "laid the foundations of the earth," a designation that normally wouldn't fit a human being. But this is the way the writer of Hebrews presents it, so it must be correct. The particular point to be considered here is that it is important to consider the idea that the Greek Septuagint represents the more accurate representation of a translation of the Hebrew word of God than what has been preserved in the Masoretic Text which was compiled no earlier than seven hundred years after the New Testament was written.

(14) It is important, then, to understand who the individuals are in the Old Testament first, then consider how to carry the concept over into the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament. This greatly impacts such passages as Psalm 2:7, where the king of Israel is called the begotten Son of God in the original context; Isaiah 7:14, where a young girl/virgin is to become pregnant during the days of Ahaz King of Judah. This event will be a sign to the king and the members of the nation of Judah that "God is with us" and Isaiah 9:6, which had immediate applications at the time they were first written, with a secondary interpretation in the New Testament.

(15) Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear O Israel, Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one." Did he really mean it, or was Jesus speaking with his fingers crossed behind his back since the divine

joke was that in fact he was Jehovah.

(16) At Jesus' trial in Mark 14:53-65, Jesus' blasphemy is that he claims to be the Messiah, not that he claims to be God. A restudy of what constituted blasphemy needs to be reconsidered. The Jews blamed Jesus for a number of things. That did not mean their charges were correct. While they claimed that he was making himself equal to God in John 10:30-39, Jesus corrects their misunderstanding and they back away from that accusation. Recall that they accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath (John 5:1-18, esp. verse 18), but they were incorrect, even though John reports their misunderstanding.

(17) Marc has opted not to mention any of these sorts of arguments since he is content to primarily argue on the basis of the *latreuo, proseuxomai*, doxologies. He has one more presentation in which to bring up new arguments. By our pre-arranged rules, we are not to bring up new arguments after our third constructive presentation. And we are to use the remaining opportunities to post to hash out the arguments that have been made to this point. I have already conceded that Jesus receives the service of *latreuo* and he invites his disciples to pray to him. I make my argument on the larger context of the agency argument that anyone who is God's agent acts on his behalf as he has authorized that person to act. It is that particular point that Marc will need to address thoroughly over the remaining course of the debate. I think I will stop here, and see what to make of the additional arguments that Marc may bring up.

Danny Dixon

### Trinitarian Third Constructive

1. As much as Danny wants to soften this, the fact remains that Christ did not say "our Father" and "our God" in John 20:17. Danny then cites Matthew 6:9 but here Christ is giving instructions to His disciples (Matthew 5:2) and as Adam Clarke comments, "It was a maxim of the Jews, that a man should not pray alone, but should join with the Church, by which they particularly meant that he should, whether alone or with the synagogue, use the plural number as comprehending all the followers of God." John Gill writes, "It is a rule with the Jews, that a man ought always to join himself in prayer with the church." Therefore Christ was not necessarily including Himself in the use of telling them "our."
2. Danny makes mention of Hebrews 2:17 in that Christ was like us in everyway to somehow negate the fact that He is God. However, what the passage is talking about is that Christ became fully human. He is able to call us "brethren" (Hebrews 2:11) and He partook of flesh and blood (Hebrews 2:14). Concerning this passage W.E. Vine states: "of Christ in being "made like" unto His brethren, i.e., in partaking of human nature, apart from sin."
3. Danny mentions Joseph the Hebrew slave to attempt to disprove my statement when I wrote about Christ being a servant is not allowed to exercise all authority. But in fact the case of Joseph would actually bolster my argument. For Joseph would have little or no problem telling his own people to give all their allegiance to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob but he would be far more cautious in going around Egypt telling everyone not to worship their many gods but the true God of heaven.
4. In terms of Acts 2:36:

We see the impact of the resurrection faith, for the resurrection had shown Him to be 'both Lord and Christ' (2:36) (James Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible, page 144).

5. Danny writes in #10 that Christ was given the prerogative of receiving *latreuo* and *proseuxomai* in that He was given "authority" during His ministry and "all authority" after the resurrection. Danny then goes on to tell us that Christ will give these "back to the Father", who will be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28).  
But since *latreuo* and *proseuxomai* are "only" to be rendered unto God the mere fact that Christ is the recipient of them "at any time" proves that they are His due as God both then and for all eternity.
6. Danny writes in #11 that "Jehovah is one entity who speaks to a human being in Psalm 110:1. The parallel idea is applied to Jesus in the New Testament in several places. Marc casually dismisses this as being irrelevant. I'm not too sure about the "casual" part but it is a dismissal in that it doesn't disprove Christ is God. What Danny has once again done is establish that Christ is a man. Simply proving that He is a man does not necessarily establish that He isn't God. It would be just as fallacious as someone stating since Christ rendered *latreuo/proseuxomai/doxologies* that this proves He is God and not man. In both situations it is not a question of either/or (God or man) but a matter of both/and (God and man).

7. When Christ quotes Deuteronomy 6:4 in Mark 12:29 it is not at all conclusive that the word for "one" refers to an absolute one for the Hebrew and Greek words for one can be used to represent a "unified one" (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5).
8. Danny cites Romans 5:18 to get around the plain meanings of *latreuo/proseuxomai*/doxology but this is simply a red herring for he would not apply the same standards to himself when using words of Scripture in his attempt to prove the Lord Jesus is not God.
9. In addition to Thayer, Grimm, Vine, Moulton and Milligan notice the following:

#### Doxology

"Ascriptions of glory or praise to God" (*The New Ungers Bible Dictionary*, Merril F. Unger, R.K. Harrison editor, The Moody Bible Institute, copyright 1988, page 317).

"Brief formula for expressing praise or glory to God" (David W. Music in the *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Holman Publishers, Copyright 2003, page 441).

#### *Proseuxomai*

"From the very first *proseuxomai* means calling on God" (*The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Gerhard Kittel, Volume 2, page 807).

#### *Latreuo*

"The ministry denoted by *latreuein* is always offered to God (or heathen gods...R. 1:25...Ac. 7:42)" (Ibid., Volume 2, page 167).

Here's the scenario:

- Thayer is wrong and Danny is correct.
- Grimm is wrong and Danny is correct.
- Vine is wrong and Danny is correct.
- The Bible dictionaries are wrong and Danny is correct.
- Other dictionaries are wrong and Danny is correct.
- Moulton and Milligan are wrong and Danny is correct.
- Gerhard Kittel is wrong and Danny is correct.

*In summary - All of them are wrong and Danny is correct.*

10. I'm not really sure as to why Danny went through the trouble again of citing passages where the use of Agency is demonstrated when I agree that this can be the case. What I'm even

more uncertain about is why Danny didn't address anything that I wrote concerning Genesis 31:13 and 48:15, 16.

On Genesis 48:15, 16:

This triple reference to God, in which the Angel is placed on an equality with Ha-Elohim cannot possibly be a created angel, but must be the "Angel of God", i.e. God manifested in the form of the Angel of Jehovah..." (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, Volume 1, page 383).

11. Finally, to get around the meanings of the words denoting the worship that is due only to God Danny cited Moises Silva's book *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics*. I'm not sure if Danny is referring to the 1983 edition or the updated and expanded 1994 edition for in the second edition Silva chose to include Karen H. Jobes article "Distinguishing the Meaning of Greek Verbs in the Semantic Domain for Worship" (pages 201-211).

As used in the New Testament, the word *latreuo* denotes actions that are always evaluated positively when God is the grammatical object and negatively with reference to any other object. (Page 203)

Does Christ fall under being the positive recipient of *latreuo* proving He is "God" or does He belong to the "any other" since He is not God and therefore giving Him *latreuo* is "negative." Remember, Danny informed us that Christ can be rendered *latreuo*.

It is true that the New Testament presents Jesus Christ as the incarnation of God and therefore worthy of worship. (Page 206)

Since He is God worship is due Him but Danny basically says He is not God but He can be worshiped anyway.

I am curious to know what Danny thinks about the aforementioned quotations from this book.

Marc Taylor

### Unitarian First Rebuttal

(1) It would be fair to say that this debate has proceeded in a cordial manner. I'm grateful to God for that despite the fact that Marc and I have significantly different points of view on the question of who and what God is and who and what Jesus is. Surely neither of us would pretend to have a perfect understanding of all that God is, nor would either of us say that we completely grasp Jesus' depth of character and being. On the other hand, I would never want to admit that God has not left us with information about himself in that propositional revelation that we call the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, the Bible. There are things that are secrets that God has left obscure. And there are things that God has revealed that are accessible to anyone with a reasonable degree of ability to read and understand. As we read in Deuteronomy 29:29: "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law."

(2) Even so, the debate is probably not what many would have expected. The argumentation has been very limited as far as what has been discussed is concerned. Marc, for the most part has centered on an line of argumentation that basically says that the reason Jesus is God is because he is worshipped. I have presented more arguments, but a basic perspective that I've tried to present is that as God's human Messiah God has granted Jesus authority on the earth to serve as his agent. Anything that God would want accomplished through the Messiah would be done through the granting of authority to get it done. Any glory that God would want to vest into the Messiah is legitimately placed there by God's simple will. Such a thing was amazing to the people who lived during Jesus' time, as is illustrated when he, by implication, forgave sins—something that people clearly had expected only God to do. Yet Matthew's commentary on Jesus' forgiving the paralytic's sins was the simple statement: "When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to men" (Matthew 9:6-8). The affirmation of Scripture is that Jesus said all authority had been given to him in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). Marc assumes that this authority belonged to Jesus in a pre-existent state. Fortunately he finally presents an attempt at establishing the truth of his affirmation in his last post when he makes a brief reference to Philippians 2. In paragraph 4 of his Trinitarian Second Constructive Marc writes:

In terms of the Lord Jesus being "given" all authority (Matthew 28:18) this does not at all prove He isn't God. He had it in eternity past, He then voluntarily relinquished certain aspects of His authority at His incarnation then He was given it back after His resurrection. Philippians 2:7 states that He took on the form of a bond-servant. A servant by definition is not allowed to exercise all their authority.

(3) I responded to this, but will revisit it in the present rebuttal. Actually, this is the time for rebuttals according to the rules that we have set up for ourselves. We are not supposed to bring up new lines of argumentation, but are to spend two rebuttals apiece talking about the cases that we have tried to build in an introduction and three speeches apiece. Jesus identifies the Father as the only true God (John 5:44; John 17:3). That there is only one God, is confirmed by Paul (1 Corinthians 8:6). Jehovah speaks to one who is subordinate to him, one NOT called Jehovah, but given a secondary designation of *Adoni*, a term never applied to God, in Psalm 110:1. Marc's

total response to this was not any reasoning by any measure. He simply affirms: “In that *Adoni* (Psalm 110:1) is never applied to God is irrelevant” (2AC. Par. 8). Such casual dismissals demonstrate the weakness of Marc’s case; rather than argue from any logical perspective, he prefers to think the readers here will be satisfied with a simple authoritative “It just ain’t so!” from him. He at least ought to explain why Jehovah (I’m using that name instead of “Yahweh” since the translation is familiar in the American Standard Version) isn’t speaking to himself in Psalm 110:1. His explanation is that because only God can receive *latreuō* service of worship, that idea alone ought to trump any other concept that is revealed in the text of Scripture. Marc’s understanding of agency is very limited. He admits that its presence in the Bible “can not be denied” (2AC, par. 11). The only argumentation that he gives regarding it is to speak as follows:

That [agency] does occur in the Bible can not be denied. Danny probably believes that this is the case when the angel stated to Jacob "I am the God of Bethel" in Genesis 31:13. But is this "always" true? And more specifically is this the case here? In Genesis 48:15, 16 Jacob requests (prays to) God AND the angel to bless his descendants. If the Lord Jesus can be prayed to, given *latreuo*, simply because He is God's agent (despite what the lexicons say).

(4) The reference is to Genesis 28:13, which reads as follows:

And, behold, Jehovah stood above [the stairway leading to heaven], and said, “I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon you are lying, I will give it to you and to your seed.

(5) Without the commentary of Genesis 31:13, it would be natural to assume that who Jacob saw was Jehovah. But a more involved understanding is simply this: We know from the later passage that the angel’s presence is indeed *representative* of God’s presence with all the authority that is indeed God’s, even when it is God’s *agent*, not God himself, who is the actual one present or speaking. Look carefully at Genesis 48:15-16:

And [Jacob] blessed Joseph, and said, The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God who hath fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel who hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

(6) Any fair consideration of this passage indicates that Jacob is interchangeably using the designation of God and the angel as one entity. “The word “angel” is often used for “God” in the Old Testament (Genesis 16:7-13, the angel speaking to Hagar is “Jehovah,” and “God”; Genesis 21:15-20, the angel of God calling to Hagar out of heaven is the one who says, “I will make [Ishmael her son] a great nation; and Genesis 31:13, which Marc seems to recognize as an agency reference to God as represented by his agent called “the angel of the Lord.”) Marc would have us believe that a unique designation is present in Genesis 48, when only more of what appears earlier in the book of Genesis is present as Jacob refers to “the God who has fed . . . the angel who has redeemed me.” Look at the rather literal American Standard Version reference to Genesis 48:15-16 above, then read the slight addition of the word “and” supplied by Marc, which leaves the appearance that *two* entities are being addressed. He writes: “Jacob requests (prays to) God *and* the angel to bless his descendants.” This is nothing more than the

grammatical device known as an *appositive*, in which a noun phrase renames or describes another noun phrase, with no linguistic element intervening between them. The first noun phrase is “the God who hath fed me all my life long unto this day” immediately followed by the noun phrase “the angel who hath redeemed me from all evil.”

(7) Marc asks a question, based on his own understanding of what is going on in Genesis 48:15-16. He writes: “Jacob requests (prays to) God *and* the angel to bless his descendants. If the Lord Jesus can be prayed to/given *latreuō* simply because He is God's agent (despite what the lexicons say) would Danny apply this to a created angel as well?” I would say that an agent of God has whatever specific authority God has given that agent. There is no reference to two individuals in Genesis 48:15-16, so I won't try to knock down that straw man. But “the angel of the Lord [the angel of Jehovah]” and “the angel of God” represent God as the various contexts where they appear demonstrate their agency. While I appreciate the information Marc provided regarding the Hebrew word for angel (*malak*) as referring to human or angelic messengers, the presence of agency in an angel representing God even by being referred to *as* God (as in other passages) is no argument against my case.

(8) Mark wants us to know that the writer of Hebrews tells us that “By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and, he worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff” (Hebrews 11:21); and he wants to make a big deal out of the fact that when Hebrews 11 speaks of Jacob it does so prescriptively, demonstrating activity of faith approved by God. He thinks he is putting me at some dilemma or disadvantage in having to admit that Jacob prayed to God *and* an angel (I've shown that I don't agree to that.) I do agree that what Jacob did was prescriptive. Jacob is praying, Marc tells us, earlier trying to make a connection of praying to and giving *latreuō* to Jesus as God's agent. What Mark does NOT point out is that when Jacob prayed, this is also called “worship” that Jacob did when he leaned on his staff. The word for “worship” is *proskuneō*, and is obviously connected with prayer.

(9) While Marc's example does NOT provide a clear indication that the angel AND God are two separate entities to be worshiped, in my first speech, my Unitarian Introduction, paragraph 9, at the first bullet, I wrote: “As did Israel's royalty of old, Jesus accepted the prostration of men before him (*proskuneō*, 1 Chronicles 29:20). It would be instructive to cite the passage: “Then David said to all the assembly, “Now bless the LORD your God.” And all the assembly blessed the LORD, the God of their fathers, and bowed low and did homage to the LORD *and* to the king” {I italicize “*and*,” but it's in the text, in both the Hebrew and the Septuagint). The king of Israel is God's agent. That king can be given the obeisance appropriately inherent in the word *proskuneō*, which is functionally equivalent to worship, which Marc says is appropriate only to God.

(10) Marc does disservice to biblical interpretation in his insistence on minimalist use of lexicons and theological dictionaries. There is no legitimate dichotomy between the way I am using language and how one finds doxologies or the words *proseuxomai*, and *latreuō*. God gives a doxology to a man in at least two places, as I have already mentioned. “God tells a man that he has an eternal throne in Psalm 45:6. He tells another man in the highest terms that he laid the

foundations of the earth in the Septuagint reading of Psalm 102:25, the Greek text our author quotes in Hebrews 1:10-12. I pointed this out in my first speech (Unitarian Intro, pars. 9, 18) as well as in my third Unitarian Constructive (pars. 5, 13). These statements, first made to men, use the highest appellations possible, and LATER are applied to Jesus by New Testament writers. Marc has consistently missed this significant point.

(11) The king of Israel in the Davidic dynasty is called the son of God (So it is said of even sinful Solomon in 2 Samuel 7:12-16). God calls his king “God”; and that king is said to have an eternal throne (Psalm 45:6). Additionally, a praying man in Psalm 102:25, according to the Septuagint reading, which the writer of Hebrews prefers over the Masoretic Text, is said to have laid the foundations of the earth (Hebrews 1:10-12). Marc will have to do some fancy tap dancing to escape these obvious truths. Are these passages applied to Jesus? Yep. Are they *only* applied to Jesus? Nope. Are these doxologies? Well, they are “ascriptions of glory or praise,” as Marc indicates. The R.K. Harrison *edited New Unger’s Bible Dictionary* advises us. What’s the scenario? That source gives a designation reserved for God to men, when *the strict definition*, reserves it as belonging “to God,” Marc would remind us. Well, no, it’s not quite like that. Things happen in Scripture. Those things receive dictionary definitions generally, but individual inspired authors, and even God himself, opt to use language metaphorically or figuratively as it suits them and theological realities to be revealed.

(12) Marc fails to address adequately the fuller significance of agency, noting its existence, but clearly not understanding how angels, supplicants, kings—special individuals noted as significant by God—are given his name and his authority and his glory (John 5:23, mentioned in my Introduction, par. 9; my First Constructive, par. 16; my Second Constructive, par. 18; and my Third Constructive, par. 5, all ignored by Marc). If we begin with the assumption that authority is inherent in Jesus’ Son-ship, we will end up where Marc is. If we admit what Scripture plainly says, we will see that men are given such authority to do things that prophets did (like raise the dead and do various miracles) and that even God himself did (forgive sins, Matthew 9:5-8).

### (13) Philippians Chapter 2

By far, the most significant argument Marc has made in the debate thus far is NOT his argument on whether *latreuō* is ever used, or even seemingly exclusively used in the literature only to refer to God. That argument does not fly if, as the Scriptures indicate, God grants authority to men, and a special Man at that, his Messiah Jesus. His argument, based on Philippians 2:5-7, regarding Jesus’ supposed pre-existence and his lack of desire to *keep* his divine prerogatives is more formidable, at least on first observation. There are a number of questions that have to be answered in considering this passage of Scripture:

- What is existence in the “form” (Greek, *morphē*) of God (Philippians 2:6)?
- Is “equality with God” something Jesus held in pre-existence or something that he could have desired to grasp later? (See Greek *haptō*)
- What does it mean to say that Jesus “emptied himself” in the context of Philippians 2:5-8?

Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

(14) It will be my task to show in rebuttal of Marc's presentation of this passage of Scripture that "the form of God" in this passage is a way of speaking of Jesus in the image of God, not unlike Adam who was also made in God's image. Jesus was in his MORPHE, or his physical appearance, the iconic depiction of what God would be like; he was God's image or picture. Similar Greek terminology likens the image on a coin to the one represented, although that imprint is not the person himself. Similarly, Jesus is the picture or image of God, not God himself.

(15) Furthermore, Jesus did not hold privileges of divinity in the "form of God." Rather, he did not give in to temptation "to be like God" as in the sense of the temptation set before Adam and Eve by the Serpent (Genesis 3:5); he did not reach out to grasp, and thus rob, that which was not his, namely equality with God.

(16) Philippians 2:5-8 is a passage about Jesus humility and servant attitude while on the earth. Not some theologically esoteric depiction of what it was like to be God as a Spirit who decided to come as a man essentially emptying himself of divinity.

Danny Dixon

## Trinitarian First Rebuttal

1. After citing Genesis 28:13 and 31:13 Danny writes. "we know from the later passage that the angel's presence is indeed REPRESENTATIVE of God's presence with all the authority that is indeed God's..."

How does Danny "know" this is merely a representation. He is simply declaring what he assumes which isn't proof at all.

Danny then goes on to cite Genesis 16:7-13 where the angel/messenger (*mal'ak*) is interchangeably used for God. He also sees this as a representation rather than what it actually is - a theophanic appearance.

Danny writes, "Marc would have us believe that a unique designation is present in Genesis 48." However, I never asserted Genesis 48 is a "unique designation" whereby the angel is believed to be God. I simply decided to choose one example "out of several others that exist."

Danny tries to avoid that in "addition" to God the messenger is being addressed by assuming it is a case of apposition but this will not work because this messenger, although being God, is also distinct from God (2 Samuel 24:16; 1 Chronicles 21:15, 16, 20, 27, 30). This is precisely what the Trinitarian would expect to find.

Danny writes, "I would say that an agent of God has whatever specific authority God has given that agent." This comment is indeed frightening because regardless if he believes it or not according to what God has "already" declared doxologies/*proseuxomai/latreuō* are due only to God. But Danny simply applies such terms to created beings. He is willing to give unto the creature what is due to exclusively to the Creator. Thus the nature and glory of God is diminished while the creature is deified.

It is true that the Greek word *proskuneō* is used in Hebrews 11:21 which describes what occurs in Genesis 48. Danny then also cites 1 Chronicles 29:20 where the same word appears in the LXX. But *proskuneō* does not "always" mean the worship due to God alone. Moses rendered *proskuneō* to his father-in-law Jethro in Exodus 18:7 but this does not mean Moses was praying to/worshiping him. Thus it can be used for God "or" for those in positions of authority. Those in 1 Chronicles 29:20 were able to differentiate between the two in relation to God and David. But what occurs in Genesis 48 is described with the Greek word (LXX) *proseuxomai*. This is what a blessing entails (2 Chronicles 30:27; cf. 1 Kings 8:14, 15). The angel/messenger was rendered *proseuxomai* therefore He is God.

2. Still another text where the angel of the Lord is identified as the Lord (YHWH) is found in Judges 6:

- Verse 12 - The angel of the Lord appears unto Gideon.
- Verse 14 - The angel is described as *YHWH*.
- Verse 17 - Gideon says to "Him" (*YHWH*).
- Verse 18 - *YHWH* says He will wait until Gideon returns.

- Verse 19 - Gideon brings out the food to *YHWH* under the oak. This is where the angel of the Lord (*YHWH*) was originally (Verse 11).
- Verse 20-22 - Describes what the angel of the Lord/*YHWH* did to Gideons offer.

Let it also be pointed out that since the angel of the Lord is *YHWH* Danny's claim that *YHWH* is "never" referred to as *Adoni* is false (Verse 13).

3. Danny writes about me, "His explanation is that because only God can receive LATREUO service of worship, that idea alone ought to trump any other concept that is revealed in the text of Scripture." On the contrary, it doesn't trump it but rather complements it -two distinct Persons that comprise the one God. Furthermore, I never asserted that the use of *latreuō alone* accomplished this for I have *also* employed the use of doxologies and *proseuxomai* (Trinitarian Second Constructive paragraph 8; Trinitarian Third Constructive paragraph 6).

4. I reject that anybody else is being referred to both in Psalms 45:6 and Psalms 102:25. Both describe Christ alone.

a. Matthew Henry writes concerning Psalms 45 that "this Psalm is an illustrious prophecy of the Messiah, and points at him only . . . It is meant purely of Christ, and no other, and to him it is applied in the New Testament."

He writes concerning Psalms 102, "The Psalm has reference to the days of the Messiah."

b. John Gill writes concerning Psalms 45 that it is "spoken of the Son of God" (he gives no other interpretation). He further states, "the Targum applies it to him."

c. Albert Barnes writes concerning Psalm 45 that "it seems most probable that it had an original and exclusive reference to the Messiah." Concerning Psalm 102 he states, "in this Psalm, there can be no doubt that *Jehovah* is intended."

d. H.C. Leupold writes concerning Psalm 45 that ". . . this Psalm deals with King Messiah and his bride the church...there are too many fatal weaknesses that mark every other approach." To this James Burton Coffman adds, "Of course, that is the correct view." Coffman also cites Charles Haddon Spurgeon in that he agreed that it refers only to the Messiah. Concerning Psalm 102 Coffman informs us that Derek Kidner "was also willing to label the whole Psalm Messianic." Some claim that Psalm 45 can describe Solomon but what Solomon also loved were many foreign women who caused him to become an idolater (1 Kings 11:1-13).

5. The only thing I pointed out in regards to Philippians 2 was the fact that Christ was a servant and so therefore did not lay claim to exercise "all" His authority and prerogatives as God. Danny tried to refute this by mentioning the relationship between Pharaoh and Joseph. None of my refutation to his assertion was addressed.

6. John 5:23 really doesn't require much of a comment. Since Christ receives doxologies/*proseuxomai/latreuō*, this proves that He is equally God as is the Father. Thus in

honoring Christ as the Father is honored one is honoring Him as God.

7. When the Bible states that the Father is the only true God in John 17:3 this no more disqualifies Christ from being the true God anymore than it does to the Father in reference to Him being the Christian's Lord despite the fact that Christ is called our "only" Lord in Jude 4.

Who then is Danny's "only" Lord?

- The Father (Acts 4:29)?
- The Lord Jesus (Jude 1:4)?

Let it also be pointed out that every time when the expression the "true God" is used in the Bible it is in reference to God being contrasted with false gods (2 Chronicles 15:3; Jeremiah 10:10, 11; 1 Thessalonians 1:9 and 1 John 5:20, 21). Thus its use in John 17:3 does not preclude Christ from being God unless one insists that He is a false god.

8. Do the following two quotes look familiar?

a. As used in the New Testament, the word *latreuo* denotes actions that are always evaluated positively when God is the grammatical object and negatively with reference to any other object.

b. It is true that the New Testament presents Jesus Christ as the incarnation of God and therefore worthy of worship.

I concluded my previous article (#11) with these two quotes and wrote that I was curious to know what Danny's take on them were since they both came from the book in which he cited in a desperate attempt to water down the three different words I employed for worship that are due to God alone.

We'll have to wait and see if Danny ever gets around to responding to them (?)

- Marc Taylor

Psalm 102

"the Psalm has reference to the days of the Messiah" (Matthew Henry - He rejected any other interpretation).

### Unitarian Second Rebuttal

(1) Occasionally In this debate, Mark and I have, appealed to scholars' dispositions to support particular points we have tried to make. This being so, I couldn't help but think about Bill Clinton's successful presidential campaign against George H.W. Bush in which one of the slogans of his bid for the Presidency was, "It's the economy, stupid." I often have to remind myself, similarly, that "It's the arguments, stupid," lest I think that just because I have quoted a particular lexicographer or commentator that I have done my readers a service in the debate. Why? Because Marc can drop as many names of scholars in his presentations as can I. Douglas N. Walton, in his college textbook *Informal Logic*, refers to John Locke's description of the *argumentum ad verecundiam*:

[Locke said,] "When men are established in any kind of dignity, it is thought a breach of modesty for others to derogate any way from it, and question the authority of men who are in possession of it." Thus anyone who does not "readily yield to the determination of approved authors" may be portrayed as impudent or insolent by the arguer who is using the *argumentum ad verecundiam* to prevail on his assent in an argument (*Informal Logic: A Handbook for Critical Argumentation*, p. 173).

(2) I must remind myself that ultimately "it's the arguments, stupid," if I want to present a scholar's conclusions that imply that Marc should yield because I quoted a scholars work or commentary. Apologies are in order if I have done that expecting the readers here to think that I will assume that, when they speak in the area of opinion, that any scholars' conclusions should be accepted as unassailable. Often what they say, even with persuasive adjectives that suggest that their conclusion is singular and incapable of being challenged, can only be used illustratively, since other scholars of equal rank and credentials often say the exact opposite of any particular quotation that I might provide for your consideration. This will continue to be an evident truth in the present debate. It is certainly not true that only scholars' can peruse a text and draw conclusions about what is there. This is not to say that they do not have aspects of expertise in their particular field of study. But, again, on the same points scholars often are poles apart in their conclusions, as the present debate has and will continue to demonstrate. Thus, the reader must take responsibility and say to me and to Marc, "It's the arguments, stupid," kindly thank us for pointing them in directions that alert their awareness of the complexity of particular points of view, and ultimately judge the debate on the merits of the substance as they in their best judgment before God may conclude.

(3) Regarding Genesis 16:7-13; Genesis 28:13; and Genesis 31:13, I and Mark draw different conclusions about what's going on in the text. I say that here an angel is presented as representing God, as some good Trinitarian evangelical scholars would also agree. Dallas Theological Seminary scholars who have given us the N.E.T. Bible write as follows:

. . . it is more likely that the angel merely represents the LORD; he can speak for the LORD because he is sent with the LORD's full authority" (NET Bible, First Beta Edition, p. 59).

(4) While Marc, as a Trinitarian, echoes verses like 2 Samuel 24:16; and 1 Chronicles 21, verses 16, 20, 27, and 30 assuring us that “the Trinitarian would expect to find” God telling his messenger (who is also God) to do this and that, reasonable readers may turn to such passages and draw a different conclusion.

(5) Marc argues regarding the use of *proskuneo* in Exodus 18:7 that “this does not mean Moses was praying to/worshiping him. Thus it can be used for God ‘or’ for those in positions of authority.” Please notice what he has correctly done. He demonstrates that it is the usage of a word that determines its meaning in a particular context. He is careful, however, to do this only when he speaks of doxologies, and of words like *latreu o* and *proseuxomai*. There can be no presupposition regarding a word, like *proskuneo* when a text shows that such deference of respect is given to a man. Indeed, his conclusion is that we have to recognize that the word must have a broader meaning than just to see it as meaning worship since it is used in reference to a man. Obviously other examples in both Septuagint and New Testament Greek can be given to demonstrate this. However, because there is a presupposition that Christ is God, anytime any of the other words are used, we are called upon to conclude that we must never consider the convention that usage determines meaning. It does not matter that Scripture says that even now Jesus is a man (1 Timothy 2:5), and that we can make a presupposition based upon that and other arguments which should govern what we are to believe about the words he has given us, as a word like *o* is often used by Trinitarians to help us conclude that Jesus is God, when the word is used regarding the deference different people showed him (e.g. Matthew 2:2; 14:33, and elsewhere).

(6) Usage always determines meaning. That ancient texts use such words as we have been given in reference to God is not as strong an argument as Marc would have us believe. Consider that there had been no Messiah until Christ had come. No one had come with *all* the authority of God in heaven and on earth given to him. Biblical writers had to accommodate language to an entirely new situation, namely that the Son of God was now here; that he could do things that heretofore only God had done; and that this Messiah made statements that involved realities that had, to this point in time, only been things one would have expected God to say. Consequently on earth, Jesus had powers and prerogatives that God wanted him to have on earth, things that were very obvious to crowds present during some of the more obvious things Jesus did, amazed that such authority had been given to men such as the remitting of sins for example (as can be seen in Matthew’s report and commentary of the crowds disposition in Matthew 9:6-8).

(7) Nor should we forget that this was not entirely unexpected since certain language, particularly in the original contexts of Psalms and other Scriptures, had already been used applying the highest appellative terms to humans. This is acknowledged by trinitarian scholars, even though Marc, a trinitarian does not want to accept their conclusions. That’s fine. But you the reader have to decide if you will take the same course.

(8) I have reported “In grammar, an appositive is a noun phrase that renames or describes another noun phrase, with no word interposed between the two phrases” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appositive>, Internet Resource, Accessed 9-12-2006).

(9) I teach English and deal with this all the time in my high school English classes. And even though I may say that the rather literal American Standard Version reference to Genesis 48:15-16 is a perfect example of such a grammatical usage, or expose that Marc has “interposed [the word “AND”] between the two phrases,” I can only expect that you the reader will be responsible enough to use your own good sense to see what is going on in Marc’s argument. Nor is his case helped when he can list a couple of occasions where an angel, as well as God, are present in separate biblical contexts (Again, 2 Samuel 24:16; and 1 Chronicles 21, verses 16, 20, 27, and 30).

(10) Mark believes that the angel of Jehovah IS Jehovah, based on Judges 6:14. And he says that since the angel is addressed as ADONI, therefore God is referred to by that term which I said is used only of men or of angels. But consider another conclusion, made by respected Trinitarians, regarding the verse:

(11) Some interpreters equate the LORD (*YHWH*) and the messenger in this story; but they are more likely distinct. In [Judges 6:22-23] the LORD and Gideon continue to carry on a conversation after the messenger has vanished ([Judges 6:21]) (Study note 14 at Judges 6:14, N.E.T. Bible, <http://net.bible.org/bible.php?book=Jdg&chapter=6>).

(12) Again, my appeal is to the reader to consider the information, judge it as independently as you believe you may, and determine which argument is more reasonable.

(13) The Use of Hyperbole

Hyperbole is defined as follows:

(14) Hyperbole is a figure of speech in which statements are exaggerated or extravagant. It may be used due to strong feelings or is used to create a strong impression and is not meant to be taken literally. It gives greater emphasis. It is often used in poetry and is a literary device (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyperbole>. Internet Resource Accessed September 12, 2006).

(15) Regarding Psalm 45, Marc is satisfied that a number of scholars believe that Psalm 45 refers only to the Messiah. But consider the commentary of various Trinitarian scholars: Peter C. Craigie, who writes as follows: “In its original sense and context, it is not in any sense a messianic psalm” (*Psalms 1-50*, Word Biblical Commentary, p. 340). Additionally, C.S. Lewis writes regarding the Psalm, “This in its original intention was obviously a laureate ode on a royal wedding” (*Reflections on the Psalms*, p. 128). John Willis writes, “This psalm was written for a royal wedding between some Israelite or Judean king and a foreign princess” (*The Psalms*, The Way of Life Series, vol. 2, p. 3). And Anthony L. Ash writes, “This psalm celebrates a king’s wedding and may even have been used in the ceremony” (*Psalms*, The Living Word Commentary, p. 161). All four scholars grant some form of explanation that the New Testament makes it a “second meanings” psalm, to use Lewis’ terminology (pp. 101-115). It becomes a messianic psalm (Craigie, p. 340; Ash, p. 161, Willis, p. 6).

Well now, that authoritative appeal to scholars was helpful, wasn’t it?!

(16) What do you do with this sort of information. Do you say, “Hmm, Danny quoted trinitarian scholars and in the previous speech Marc quoted trinitarian scholars. I like Danny’s scholars better, so Danny is right.” No. What you do is you consider the information and determine in your own heart what is right. At the very least you need to loosen your torque, so to speak, and consider that things are not as solid even among Trinitarians, as one may be inclined to believe without investigation.

(17) And consider F.F. Bruce, a respected Trinitarian scholar of the highest order, regarding Psalm 102, which he quotes in his commentary on Hebrews. Bruce identifies the praying man, or “suppliant” as he calls him, in Psalm 102 as one praying for mercy for himself and for Zion. Bruce grants that in the Septuagint the speaker switches from the suppliant who is addressing God-to-God addressing the suppliant. Bruce then leaves off his contextual consideration of Psalm 102 and jumps to New Testament application of the Psalm as being messianic, which I certainly do not deny (F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament. See commentary and notes, pp. 21-23).

(18) I argued that God’s human agents can be called God, and that such exalted or hyperbolic language heightens the status of the person representing, in a non-literal way, the Almighty God (Second Unitar. Const. pars. 18-19). There is no reason why similar language should not be used in application to the Messiah without making a presupposition that Jesus is any more God than the first anointed individuals like the kings and others (like the suppliant in Psalm 102). Trinitarian scholars write about this use of divine language regarding the Jewish king in Psalm 45, specifically and elsewhere conceptually. Please pardon the lengthy quotation following:

(19). . . the Davidic king is God’s vice-regent on earth, the psalmist addresses him as if he were God incarnate. God energizes the king for battle and accomplishes justice through him. A similar use of hyperbole appears in Isaiah 9:6, where the ideal Davidic king of the *eschaton* is given the title Mighty God . . . Psalm 45:6 and Isaiah 9:6 probably envision a similar kind of response when friends and foes alike look at the Davidic king in full battle regalia. When the king’s enemies oppose him on the battlefield, they are, as it were, fighting against God himself (See note 22 at N.E.T. Bible <http://net.bible.org/bible.php?book=Psa&chapter=45>, p. 952).

(20) Marc used Philippians 2 in his as a passage demonstrating that Jesus “did not lay claim to exercise ‘all’ his authority and prerogatives as God (First Trin. Reb. at par. 5). I misunderstood Marc’s comment that “a servant by definition is not allowed to exercise all their authority” when I compared his wording with Joseph’s privileges as vice-regent of Egypt (Trin. Second Cons. At par. 4). I could have worded my response better.

(21) Third Cons. Pars. 8-9). Bottom line, however, Joseph served with regard to the prerogatives or powers given him by Pharaoh: He was to be made ruler over all Egypt, but would not be above Pharaoh who reserved ultimate authority on the throne. Similarly, Jesus is given all authority (Matthew 28:18). And it is during his reign as Messianic king, which began on Pentecost (Acts 2:36) that all Jesus’ enemies would be placed under his feet—that “all things are put in subjection under him” (1 Corinthians 15:27)—*except* God himself.

(22) Marc is not correct to understand that Jesus ever had authority equal with the Father or that anything in Philippians 2 suggests such. The servants Joseph and Jesus rule to the extent of the authority given to them by their superiors Pharaoh or God respectively. Marc will need to demonstrate either with this verse or some other(s) that Jesus had all authority, formerly sharing any prerogatives as God. Marc began the debate basically riding the one horse of the *preseuxomai-latreuo*-doxologies argument, and, for the most part in his constructive presentations, avoided what most Trinitarians would consider a fuller approach to discussing the issue. By the rules we set for ourselves that no new arguments would be brought up in the rebuttals, it would be out of place for him to bring up those arguments now, despite the fact that he needs to get some fresh horses at the depot. I expect that he will, as he has brought up new arguments in his First Trinitarian Rebuttal.

(23) Sharing Glory with the Father

(24) I should reemphasize that Marc misses the significance of John 5:23. The passage does not teach that “in honoring Christ as the Father is honored one is honoring Him as God.” Let’s quote another scholar, and then in the next post Marc can quote one or two (or ten) and then the reader can weigh the evidence and decide. Carl W. Conrad formerly of the Department of Classics at Washington University and present Moderator of the B-Greek forum wrote the following concerning John 5:23:

*(25) I frankly don't understand what all the fuss is about this. Surely it's not a matter of equality (i.e. "that they should honor the Son exactly as much as they honor the Father) but rather a matter of "insofar as they show honor to the Father, they should also show honor to the Son" (i.e. that honoring the Son is appropriate or obligatory behavior just as much as is honoring the Father) (B-Greek Forum post for June 2, 2006 <http://lists.ibiblio.org/pipermail/b-greek/2006-June/038742.html>, Internet Resource Accessed September 12, 2006).*

(26) Marc makes good response to John 17:3 regarding the Father being the “only true God” in showing the parallel concept of seeing Jesus as “only Lord” when the Father is also Lord (Acts 4:29). I will say, simply, that one should take the whole of the arguments to see if the exalted man Jesus who stands between God and man is being presented as being equal to Almighty God. Marc says that every time the phrase “true God” is used it is to contrast with false gods. Jesus would be a false God, he says, if he claimed to be Almighty God. He says that referring to the Father as “the only true God” wouldn’t preclude Christ from being God unless one insists that He is a false God.”

(27) There must, on the contrary, always be an understanding of how a designation is used. There are those who are not precluded from being called “gods” outside the context of a comparison with idolaters. Consider Moses (Exodus 7:1) or the judges of Israel called ELOHIM (Psalm 82 vv. 1 and 6). And as I said, Jesus responded to a charge that he was making himself equal to God by pointing out that since men can be called “gods” (quoting Psalm 82:6), he was not out of line in going so far, even, as to call himself God’s Son even (Unit. Third Cons. Par. 16). Whereas his accusers would have stoned him for blasphemy (John 10:31-33) based on their

misunderstanding of who he claimed to be, there is no more mention of wanting to stone him in the context. Even at Jesus' trial, he is not accused of the blasphemy of claiming to be equal with God, but of claiming to be the Messiah (Mark 14:53-65).

(28) Regarding his two quotations with which he ended his last presentation, I am sure that I said nothing about them because as Marc continues to make a false dichotomy between who is God and what Jesus is, Jesus does not have to be Almighty God to receive LATREUO worship if God, not since God has given to the Son prerogatives that are God's own. As Carl Conrad explained regarding John 5:23, the Son may be honored insofar as the Father should be honored. But there is a stopping point, and that is when it comes, at the last day, to God's ultimate authority when "the Son himself will be subjected to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all." (1 Corinthians 15:28, cf. Matthew 28:18). Jesus says that this is God's entrustment regarding him. All that is required is that we see which honors and prerogatives Jesus claims for himself, and we see what honor is appropriately render to him:

- While on the earth he can forgive sins (Matthew 9:2-8).
- He can receive prayer (John 14:13-14)
- He can receive worship (*latreuō*, Revelation 22:3)

(29) These are his prerogatives, not because he is equal to God or because of the definitions of words, words that are given additional application to Jesus. They are his privileges because they have been *given* to him by God as Joseph's rights were given to him by Pharaoh. Even so, according to plan, all the authority goes back to the Father after God's Agent and Messiah (not two persons, despite the "and") sees his last enemy Death subjected to him.

Danny Dixon

#### Trinitarian Second Rebuttal

1. As scholars make clear *proskuneō* can be the worship given to God or great respect for those in positions of authority. Numerous sources can be cited. But Danny intends to do the same thing with *latreuō* / *proseuxomai* / doxologies when Greek scholars don't see it that way.

2. Surprisingly Danny cites 1 Timothy 2:5 (again) telling us the Lord Jesus is a man. Once again Danny fails to heed the words of Psalm 119:160 in that Christ is both God and man. In fact, nothing what I wrote about concerning this passage was ever challenged (Trinitarian Second Constructive #7).

3. In terms of John 5:22 it "may" mean what Danny asserts. But again through the use of *latreuō* / *proseuxomai* / doxologies Greek scholars point out that these words are due "exclusively" for God. This then also answers Danny's challenge to me concerning Philippians 2 in which he wrote, "Marc will need to demonstrate with this verse or some other(s) that Jesus had all authority, formally sharing any prerogatives as God."

I have – *latreuō* / *proseuxomai* / doxologies.

4. Concerning the Messianic Psalms (45 and 102) every description Danny cited can apply exclusively to the Messiah. I have given two clear proofs that they apply to Him and no one else that unfortunately went unaddressed.

- a. The Aramaic Targum applies it to Him. That is how the Jews understood it.
- b. The reason why it could "not" refer to King Solomon was completely avoided (1 Kings 11:1-13).

5. Danny makes a big deal that I have inserted the "*and*" in Genesis 48:15, 16. But based on "other" Scriptures we know that *Mal'ak YHWH* (The angel of the LORD) is also distinct from *YHWH* (2 Samuel 24:16; 1 Chronicles 21:16, 20, 27 and 30). Danny just simply brushed these passages off without really refuting what they indeed demonstrate - a separate and distinct personality.

6. Danny pointed out that the Angel vanished in Judges 6:21 while Gideon proceeds to talk with *YHWH* in Judges 6:22. But since the Angel has already been identified as *YHWH* what would prevent Him and Gideon from continuing to carry on a conversation with each other even if He wasn't in Gideon's presence?

But notice something else here. Danny has already told us that the angel of the LORD is simply *YHWH* Himself (Genesis 48:15, 16) but now he wants to ontologically differentiate them here. He is simply trying to have it both ways. Who is the angel of the LORD in Genesis 48:15, 16? Oh, well that is really *YHWH* Himself. Who is the angel of the LORD in Judges 6? Oh, well here they are ontologically distinct beings. Consistency?

7. Danny and I have both cited sources that would support our position concerning the identity of the angel of the LORD and to whom Psalms 45 and 102 refer(s) to. Thus since even the most eminent scholars are sharply divided concerning both topics it would be wiser to embrace what scholars "do" agree upon - that is that *latreuōl proseuxomai /* doxologies as used in the New Testament are due "only" to God. I have cited several authoritative sources that affirm this position while Danny on the other hand has cited none. Since this is indeed the case his theological position is utterly bankrupt.
8. I am well aware that others can be referred to as "gods" but Danny was the one who pointed out that the Father is the "only true" God (John 17:3). I think it would have been quite revealing if we could have received a direct answer from Danny as to whether or not the Father or the Lord Jesus constitutes his "only Lord" (Jude 1:4). Interestingly we may just have his answer. "The one God who is the Father - Says Paul in distinguishing the Father as one God from the one who is the one Lord, Jesus the Messiah in 1 Corinthians 8:6" (Unitarian Introduction #3). Based on this Danny believes that Christ is "the one Lord." If Danny was in the presence of those early Christians when they addressed the Father as "Lord" in Acts 4:29 it would have been quite an unusual scene to hear him exclaim, "Hey you can't do that"!

9. Danny's comments on the two quotes from the book by Moises Silva which he appealed to in an attempt to dilute the meanings of *latreuōl proseuxomai* / doxologies were simply a cop out. The sum of his terribly deficient response was to employ the same tactic using Matthew 28:18 and 1 Corinthians 15:28 as he also did with 1 Timothy 2:5 (See #2 of this article). That is even though these passages have already been answered he simply continues to parrot his false interpretation of them without adequately dealing with my responses to his assertions. Furthermore, Danny thought he found a book where he could run and seek refuge when he realized the lexicons were certainly not in his favor. However, when it was pointed out to him that the very book "he" cited to dismiss these lexicons stated the exact same thing in which he seeks to deny it quickly dropped from his radar screen never to appear again.
10. Concerning Matthew 28:18, as has been previously pointed out since Christ receives *latreuōl proseuxomai* / doxologies "at any time" demonstrates that He is God (Trinitarian Third Constructive #5).
11. In the Trinitarian Second Constructive #6 I explained that Ephesians 5:24 commands the wife to be "subject" under her husband. Will Danny insist that because of this she is ontologically inferior to him? What about Christ being "subject" to Joseph and Mary (Luke 2:51)? Danny for whatever reason(s) decided not to comment at all concerning these two passages. I don't know how many times the point needs to be driven home that:

To be in subjection to another does not necessitate ontological inferiority.

12. In Danny's Unitarian Third Constructive (#7) he writes, "lexicons must be read circumspectly" adding "this is the whole point of Moises Silva's insightful book, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning*."

As used in the New Testament, the word *latreuo* denotes actions that are always evaluated positively when God is the grammatical object and negatively with reference to any other object.

This quote can be found on page 203 of this "insightful" book.

- Marc Taylor

### Unitarian Summary and Conclusions

Is the biblical Unitarian position biblical? I have set forth a number of Unitarian arguments to show that it is:

1. Jesus' positions, terms of address, titles, and worthiness of worship are all based on what is best referred to as "agency" or derived authority given to him by God (Unit. 2 Cons. 20). The crowd responds to Jesus' healing a paralytic when they "praise God, who had *given* such authority to men" (Matthew 9:5-8, 2 Unit. Reb. 28). This passage, coupled with Matthew 28:18-20, unequivocally reports Jesus' comment even at the end of his ministry that he had been *given* all authority in heaven and on earth" (2 Unit. Reb. 21).
2. Jesus is *made* Lord BY God (Acts 2:36). My argument is not weakened when Marc asks, "Who is Danny's 'only Lord'?" in reference to Jude 1:4 when that same designation is given to the Father in Acts 4:29. As Joseph gives nothing to the Pharaoh that is not already his, so Jesus can give nothing to the Father that is not already his. As Joseph is not Pharaoh, Jesus is not God even though "honoring the Son is appropriate or obligatory behavior just as much as is honoring the Father," as Trinitarian Greek scholar Carl Conrad shows that one does not have to be pushed into a corner and be made to defend the idea that the Father is "Lord" in Acts 4:29 (2 Trin. Reb. 8).
3. As Marc says, Jesus can, "at any time," receive certain kinds of worship (*latreuo/proseuxomai/doxologies*) demonstrates that He is God (Trin. 2 Rebut. 10). He says that this is sufficient explanation that he has authority. But this is so because Jesus is *given* those prerogatives. God isn't *given* anything. If Jesus were God, that authority would always have been his as a co-equal member of Marc's supposed Trinity. To argue that the Father is the only God and that he is the only true God (according to Jesus in John 5:44; 17:3, Unit. Intro. 3), demonstrates that Jesus' comments in those passages are an indirect acknowledgment of God's superiority to him.
4. Paul confirms this in 1 Corinthians 8:6 in a clear dichotomy between the fact that there is one God the Father and one Lord Jesus Christ (Unit. 1 Rebut. 3), it should be easy enough to understand that such assignments are made with the concept of *appointments* to position and *derived* authority clearly in place. Marc's cause is not aided when he compares John 17:3 with Jude 1:4 and Acts 4:29 where Christ is called the Christian's only Lord (Trin. 1 Rebut. 7). It is as if, in a sense, God is stepping back and saying, highlighting what his Son had been *given*, rule over the church.
5. I have already mentioned in the context of how God addresses Jesus that when it comes right down to making distinctions the LORD (*YHWH*) is not 'my lord' [Revised Standard Version] in Psalm 110:1 (cf. Acts 2:34-35, Unit. 1 Rebut. 2). God stands above Christ since he is Jesus's God (Unit. 2 Const. 3, John 20:3. But God never calls Jesus "my God"—because Jesus isn't). But he has *appointed* Jesus to a certain position as regards his extended Israel the Church having *made* Jesus Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:36), designations that Jesus didn't have until God *gave* him that authority. The one God who,

after Jesus is subjected to him after Christ's last enemy Death is destroyed, will be "all in all," says Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:25-28. The one God and Father who, in distinction from the one Lord Jesus, is the one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all, according to Paul in Ephesians 4:5.

6. Ultimately it is the context of what people are doing in a passage that determines how we should understand various designations. In Acts 4 the church is praying to the Father. Reference to there is made of Jesus as God's servant and anointed one. It's not as appropriate to confuse terminology. The church quotes scripture in the prayer Marc refers us to in Acts 4 where the nations gather "against the LORD [Gk; the OT Hebrew has *YHWH*] AND against his Anointed One (Acts 4:26). [Recall that Marc likes "and" even to the point of inserting it into the biblical text to create a distinction between two individual entities, Unit. 2 Const. 11, when there is no grammatical distinction in context at Genesis 48:15-16; See Unit. 1 Rebut. 7 and Unit. 2 Rebut. 8].
7. I argued that Jesus has a God (Romans 15:6; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; Ephesians 1:17; Colossians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3), pointing out as well that The Father is never spoken of as having a God because he is Almighty God (Unitarian 2 Const. 1-4). Marc responded simply by affirming that if Jesus spoke of "MY Father" as opposed to "OUR Father," his affirmation that the singular pronoun alone is sufficient to prove that Jesus is ontologically the same as the Father (Trin. 2 Const. 2). "As much as Danny wants to soften this," Marc says, "the fact remains that Christ did not say "our Father" and "our God" in John 20:17 (Trin. 3 Const. 1).
8. But even in considering the father-son relationship between Jesus and God, Jesus is called God's Son, begotten at a particular point in time ("Today"). I argued that Jesus had a beginning as Son of God (See Unit. Intro. 10); that the Old Testament designation "son of God" meant that human members of the Davidic dynasty was to be God's son or king, ultimately fulfilled in Jesus (Unit. 1 Const. 11) that "Son of God" is not some ontological identity that existed into eternity past; that it is because of the resurrection that Jesus becomes Son of God (Romans 1:4. See Unit. 2 Const. 8). Regarding this Marc points out that Jesus was considered to be the Son of God by others prior to his resurrection. He cites John 1:49 where the designation is made parallel to being king of Israel (Unit. 3 Const. 14). He mistakenly quotes John 9:35-38, which speaks of Jesus as being Son of Man, not Son of *God*; and John 11:27 where Martha recognizes Jesus as Messiah, which is a designation for Son of God (Trin. 1 Const. 2). There is no biblical connection between Jesus as Messiah having to mean that the Messiah is God.

I argued that it is the man Jesus who is presently mediator between God and man based on 1 Timothy 2:5. Marc seemed to think (Trin. 2 Rebut. 2) that he had adequately dealt with my citation of that passage in his Trinitarian Second Constructive paragraphs 1 and 7. In the first paragraph he quotes a passage that affirms that it is the totality of God's word on a subject that determines biblical truth on the topic (Psalm 119:160). He grants that Jesus is presently conducting his "Mediatorial reign." And although Jesus' subjection during this reign (as per 1 Corinthians 15:24-28) doesn't prove ontological inferiority, it does contrast "Christ" with "God."

God is the Father (v. 24), who puts everything under Christ (v. 25); “God himself” is contrasted with subjects all things to Christ who is not called God (v. 27); God is contrasted with the one who is made subject to him, and this is to God’s ultimate exaltation over the one called “the Son” (v. 28). Marc says regarding Genesis 31:13 and Genesis 48:15-16, “Either Jacob is praying to more than one individual thus proving that God is a multi-personal being or he was worshipping a created angel. Which one is it?” I tried to show in my response that in saying that one prays to an angel who carries the full authority of God there is no violation of divine protocol. This is what Agency is all about, and this is what the heart of this particular debate is all about.

9. This debate demonstrated that sometimes scholars sometimes differ, perhaps because they allow presuppositions to influence conclusions. Recognized Trinitarian scholars sometimes write things that support a Unitarian perspective, as could be seen in my second rebuttal presentation. Marc quotes scholars’ *conclusions* that Psalm 45 “points at [the Messiah] only” and Psalm 102 “has reference to the days of the Messiah” (Matthew Henry, with no arguments given for the conclusion)
10. The Psalmist informs his readers that he wants to write a Psalm to the Jewish king, referring to his bride and her attendants who are present (Psalm 45:1, 9). The Psalmist uses hyperbole, or literary exaggeration, to refer to this man in the highest terms, recognizing this agent’s eternal throne (Unit. 2 Rebut. 13-15). This passage was the first of several to illustrate the biblical hermeneutical principle that such designations are appropriately applied to humans, and some of them find special application when applied to another man—Jesus (Hebrews 1:8-9). It is wrong, in context, to make the passage refer to God in the Psalm, and there is no reason for the passage to refer to Jesus as anything more than an exalted man hyperbolically designated as was the first king to whom the Psalm was written.
11. Marc’s utterly flat response is to say simply that when eminent scholars are sharply divided (as on Psalm 45 and Psalm 102:25-26) it’s best to embrace what scholars “do agree upon,” at which point he returns to his *latreuō / proseuxomai / doxologies* argument (Trin. 2 Rebut. 7). But one should appreciate the scholars who point out what others seem to ignore. Notice: appreciation is for what the scholars point out, NOT that there are scholars who disagree and therefore we must abandon any consideration of a text.
12. But according to John Gill, Psalm 45, “is spoken of the Son of God,” apparently so because Gill “gives no other interpretation,” Marc says. Some non-referenced Targum (That’s a commentary, not an inspired text. Additionally it is an elusive commentary that I am not entitled to check since Marc gives no reference to *which* Targum he refers.
13. Albert Barnes assures us that in Psalm 45 “there can be no doubt that Jehovah is intended,” but for the life of us we are given no *arguments* as to why this is the case.

14. H.C. Leupold fails to name a single one of the “too many fatal weakness that mark every other approach” than to conclude that Psalm 45 “deals with King Messiah and his bride the church.”
15. And, of course, if James Burton Coffman adds "Of course, that is the correct view"; or if he cites Derek Kidder in support we must yield and be bullied into submission that they are correct. As to our need to consider Psalm 45 in context of Solomon’s desires regarding idolatrous foreign women as in 1 Kings 11:1-13, this is only a straw man argument. The tone of the Psalm clearly communicates a commendation of the unnamed king and his beautiful brides (“My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer,” Psalm 45:1).
16. As I remind myself often, “It’s the arguments, stupid,” not the men who make them. I can’t ignore the fact that Psalm 45 has a human king, whose wife and bridesmaids are present, who is being doxologized (sorry, but I can’t think of another more authentic word). It is honest Trinitarian scholars who point out the fact. They do not see that the passage has any impact on the weakening of Trinitarian argumentation. Or perhaps they DO see the problem but opt not to mention it lest the drawing of attention to it disturb the students who read their work. It’s easy enough to see what is going on simply by reading the psalm. I cite the scholars simply to point out that Marc has to figure out a way of dealing with the presentation of the fact. He cannot responsibly just defer, in contradiction, to the doxology-worship principle. The very passage that applies a doxology to a man--Psalm 45:6-12—is applied to Jesus as a man in Hebrews 1:8-9.
17. What are the arguments? The Psalmist informs his readers that he wants to write a Psalm to the Jewish king, referring to his bride and her attendants who are present (Psalm 45:1, 9). The Psalmist uses hyperbole, or literary exaggeration, to refer to this man in the highest terms, declaring that as God’s representative the man had an eternal throne (Unit. 2 Rebut. 13-15). This passage was the first of several to illustrate the biblical hermeneutical principle that such designations are appropriately applied to humans, and some of them find special application when applied to another man—Jesus (Hebrews 1:8-9). It is wrong, in context, to make the passage refer to God in the Psalm, and there is no reason for the passage to refer to Jesus as anything more than an exalted man hyperbolically designated as was the first king to whom the Psalm was written.
18. Psalm 102:25-28 is no less problematic for Marc. He speaks of division among the scholars regarding the text. There is no division, there is the simple fact that a man is spoken of in hyperbolic terminology –again literary overstatement and exaggeration in the Septuagint translation that the inspired writer of the epistle to the Hebrews uses. If it was Paul, we know that he often quotes from the Septuagint, since it was the Bible of the Greek speaking Jewish world. That he quotes the passage suggests that he acknowledges a degree of authority to the translation. The Hebrew Masoretic text that stands behind most Old Testament translations into English today follows the writing of the book of Hebrews roughly by more than 700 years. We should depend upon what there is no question about: Psalm 102:25-26, which is quoted at Hebrews 1:10-12, has God speaking

to a man who, in the rest of the psalm is speaking to God. God *tells that man*, “O lord, you laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens are the work of your hands . . . your years will never end.”

19. This reminds me of Daniel, who addresses king Darius the Mede as “O king, live forever!” (Daniel 6:21), and of Nehemiah, king Artaxerxes’ Jewish cupbearer, who says, “May the king live forever!” (Nehemiah 2:3). Neither believed the king would live forever. Yet it was appropriate for men (and God, in Psalm 102:25-26) to speak to men in this way. That such a psalm can be applied to Jesus is even more appropriate since Jesus did die, but has now been raised and “cannot die again” (Romans 6:9). This constitutes an *argument* that must be considered: men receive hyperbolic doxologies from even godly men and from God.
20. Marc points out that Jesus was considered to be the Son of God by others prior to his resurrection. He cites John 1:49 where the designation is made parallel to being king of Israel (Unit. 3 Const. 14). He mistakenly quotes John 9:35-38, which speaks of Jesus as being Son of *Man*, not Son of *God*; and he references John 11:27 where Martha recognizes Jesus as Messiah, which is a designation for Son of God (Trin. 1 Const. 2). There is no biblical connection between Jesus as Messiah having to mean that the Messiah is God.

Much ground has been covered in this debate. Much more could have been said with different arguments and considerations. May God bless this discussion and those who come to read it.

Danny Andre' Dixon

## Trinitarian Summary and Conclusions

In the name of the Triune God, Amen

### A. Concerning the meaning of "latreuo" as used in the New Testament

- The number of sources Marc cited: Three
- The number of sources Danny cited: Zero

### B. Concerning the meaning of *proseuxomai* as used in the New Testament

- The number of sources Marc cited: Four
- The number of sources Danny cited: Zero

### C. Concerning the meaning of "doxology" as used in the New Testament

- The number of sources Marc cited: Four
- The number of sources Danny cited: Zero

If this wasn't embarrassing enough I would direct your attention to Danny's comments as found in his Unitarian First Rebuttal (#3) in which he writes concerning me:

Such casual dismissals demonstrate the weakness of Marc's case: rather than argue from any logical perspective, he prefers to think the readers here will be satisfied with a simple authoritative "it just ain't so!" from him.

In light of A, B and C Danny's comment is both highly ironic and extremely strange.

In an email before this debate began Danny informed me that he teaches English as a Second Language. I have also taught this same subject in South Korea and Japan. Picture the scene. You are a student learning the English language. You go to class one day and you give what you believe is the accurate definition of a word citing at least two authoritative sources. However, your teacher responds by saying that all the sources you cited were in error. You then ask the teacher if he has any sources to back up his claim. He then refers you to a particular book.

In your zeal to really understand the English language you go out and purchase the book. To your surprise, the book which your teacher referred you to in order to refute all of your sources states the very same thing that your sources were telling you all along. During the next class you bring this information to your teacher's attention but instead of him acknowledging his mistake he simply refuses to comment on the definition given in the book in which "he" recommended. Then your teacher proceeds to tell you and the rest of the class that all your sources that you cited were still in error (this would have to include the very book he referred you to as well). What would you think if this actually happened to you? I don't know about anybody else but I would immediately transfer to a new English class never to sign up for any other course from

this particular teacher ever again.

Danny's refusal to admit what Greek scholars have already concluded (even from the very source he cited) reminds me of what Humpty Dumpty said in Alice in Wonderland: "When I use a word it means just what I choose it to mean."

I can not think of a more appropriate quote that so accurately and succinctly describes Danny's position.

Thank you

- Marc Taylor

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#### NOTE

Marc and I have agreed that responses to this debate are appropriately placed at the Trinity forum at the <http://CARM.org> apologetic web site.

<http://www.christiandiscussionforums.org/v/showthread.php?t=19617>

This will keep responses centrally located and will keep the present site clean so that people can read the debate itself without any distractions.

Danny Dixon

