

The Biblically Unitarian Architecture of the Redemptive Plan

Abstract

This paper presents a defence of biblical unitarianism against post-apostolic trinitarian orthodoxy, utilising 1 Corinthians 15:24–28 as its hermeneutical anchor. It demonstrates that Paul’s eschatological vision—culminating in the absolute subjection of the Son to the Father so that “God may be all in all”—demands a strict monotheism that cannot be reconciled with trinitarianism.

Tracing the trajectory of divine self-revelation from the covenant name *Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh* in Exodus 3:14 through the prophetic horizon of Numbers 14:21 and Habakkuk 2:14, this study seeks to articulate the biblical paradigm of God self-manifestation. Within this framework, Jesus Christ is not an uncreated, pre-existent *hypostasis* (Person) of a triune God, but the genuine human Son of God, the Last Adam, the representative Saviour, and the prototype (*prōtotokos*) of an elevated, immortalised humanity.

Finally, this paper argues that Chalcedonian dual-nature Christology and Nicene trinitarianism subvert this divine plan by disconnecting Jesus from authentic human agency, replacing biblical covenantal dynamic agency with Hellenistic metaphysics. Biblical unitarianism, by contrast, preserves the integrity of God’s sovereign unity and provides the necessary theological foundation for humanity’s ultimate corporate calling: to manifest the character of Yahweh until the entire creation is filled with His glory.

1. The Eschatological Horizon (1 Corinthians 15:24–28)

The ultimate test of any Christological framework is its consistency with the final *telos* (goal) of cosmic redemptive history. In 1 Corinthians 15:24–28, the Apostle Paul provides an indispensable exposition of the divine chronology, detailing the climax of the Messianic reign and the ultimate configuration of divine authority:

“Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every 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. For ‘God has put all things in subjection under his feet.’ But when it says, ‘all things are put in subjection,’ it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.”¹

This redemptive trajectory unfolds across two distinct eras. In the present era of the Messianic reign, inaugurated by the resurrection of Christ as the “firstfruits,” the exalted Messiah actively subjects all hostile cosmic powers and rebellious authorities under his feet. This phase reaches its climax at Christ’s *parousia* (coming) with the transformation of believers and the final destruction of mortality itself.

However, Paul insists that this Messianic reign is not the final stage of reality. The timeline moves inexorably toward “the end” (*to telos*), marked by a decisive shift in the structure of universal authority: the Son surrenders his delegated kingdom to the Father, entering into a state of ultimate, permanent subjection so that God—the Father—may supremely fill and indwell all creation.

¹ All Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

Analysis of Key Clauses

“When he delivers the kingdom to God the Father” (v. 24)

(Hotan paradidō tēn basileian tō theō kai patri)

Paul employs the temporal conjunction *hotan* (when) with the present subjunctive *paradidō* (delivers) to denote the decisive turning point of history. The resurrected Messiah does not retain absolute, independent sovereignty forever; rather, his messianic exercise of authority is functional, delegated, and temporal. His reign reaches its intended goal precisely when he surrenders the kingdom to the one whom Paul explicitly identifies as “God the Father” (*tō theō kai patri*). Noticeably absent from Paul's grammar is any concept of delivering the kingdom to a triune God; the ultimate recipient of the kingdom is exclusively the Father, who alone stands as the absolute God.²

“Excepted is the one who subjected all things to him” (v. 27)

(Ektos tou hypotaxantos autō ta panta)

Paul quotes Psalm 8:6 (“You have put all things under his feet”), applying this Adam-typology to Christ. However, Paul adds an emphatic logical caveat: God Himself is explicitly excluded from this subjection. The Greek phrase *dēlon hoti* (it is plain/evident that) underscores an axiomatic truth of biblical theology: the God who delegated authority to the Son remains intrinsically, ontologically, and functionally supreme. The Messiah's authority is derived authority; Yahweh's authority is underived and absolute.³

“Then the son himself will also be subjected” (v. 28)

(Tote kai autos ho huios hypotagēsetai)

This clause presents an insurmountable difficulty for historic Trinitarianism. Paul uses the future passive verb *hypotagēsetai* (will be subjected) combined with the intensive pronoun *autos ho huios* (the son himself). This subjection is not described as an event belonging merely to the Incarnation or Christ's earthly humiliation; it occurs *after* the resurrection, *after* the millennial reign, and *after* the destruction of death itself.

Trinitarian commentators frequently attempt to mitigate this passage by invoking “economic subordination” (the functional submission of the second Person of the Trinity) while maintaining “ontological equality.”⁴ However, Paul makes no distinction between an “economic” Son and an “ontological” Son. The subject of *hypotagēsetai* is the exalted, glorified, cosmic Christ—the very Christ who has conquered every enemy. If the Son were co-equal, co-eternal God in substance, an ultimate, permanent post-resurrection act of ontological subjection to the Father would be a logical impossibility within the Godhead.⁵

² Anthony F. Buzzard and Charles F. Hunting, *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998), 154–158.

³ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians, New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 754–758.

⁴ See, for example, Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 245–252.

⁵ Patrick Navas, *Divine Truth or Human Tradition? A Reconsideration of the Orthodox Doctrine of the Trinity* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2007), 182–186.

“That God may be all in all” (v. 28)

(*Hina ē ho theos [ta] panta en pasin*)

The ultimate purpose of the entire redemptive arc is that God (*ho theos*) may be “all in all.” In Pauline usage, *ho theos* with the definite article refers systematically and exclusively to the Father unless specifically noted otherwise.⁶ The ultimate destination of creation is not the eternal worship of a multi-personed Trinity, but the direct, unhindered indwelling of the One True God—the Father—in a fully subjected and glorified creation through his designated human Messiah and his redeemed family.

2. The Covenant Name and the Principle of “God Manifestation”

To understand why the Son surrenders the kingdom so that “God may be all in all,” 1 Corinthians 15:28 must be linked to the Old Testament narrative of divine self-revelation. The overarching purpose of Yahweh has never been to remain an abstracted, transcendent Deity, nor to split himself into three co-equal “Persons”. Rather, the concept of God manifestation describes the process by which the uncreated Father reveals, articulates, and reproduces his character, will and authority in created agents, culminating in a perfected corporate humanity.

This overarching purpose traces a clear trajectory across redemptive history: it is seeded as a divine principle in the disclosure of the covenant name in Exodus 3:14, expanded into a prophetic promise in Numbers 14:21 and Habakkuk 2:14, and realised in its ultimate eschatological fulfillment in 1 Corinthians 15:28. Let’s explore these in turn.

Exodus 3:14: *Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*

When Moses inquired of God's name at the burning bush, Yahweh responded with the formula:

אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה

Ehyeh ‘Ašer ‘Ehyeh

Traditionally translated in Hellenistic and Western traditions as “I AM THAT I AM” (following the Greek Septuagint’s *ego eimi ho on* (I am the Existing One), this rendering reflects an intrusion of Greek philosophy. It recasts Yahweh as a static, abstract, Parmenidean “Being,” shifting the focus toward essence, substance, and metaphysical timelessness.⁷

Modern Hebrew lexicography and Jewish Biblical scholarship demonstrate, by contrast, that *Ehyeh* is the Qal imperfect first-person singular of the verb *hāyāh* (“to be” or “to become”). In biblical Hebrew, the imperfect tense denotes incomplete, ongoing, dynamic, or future action.⁸ Consequently, the grammatically accurate translation is covenantal and active:

“I Will Be Who I Will Be” or “I Will Be What I Will Be”

Umberto Cassuto notes that *Ehyeh* is an assurance of dynamic, active presence: “I will be with you; I will manifest Myself in history according to My purpose.”⁹ Nahum Sarna similarly observes:

⁶ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 29–34.

⁷ Werner Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 45–50.

⁸ Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, ed. E. Kautzsch, trans. A. E. Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), §107.

⁹ Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967), 37–38.

“The phrase expresses the dynamic presence of God...It is not a philosophical definition of God’s essential nature as timeless and self-existent, but an assurance of His active, historical intervention on behalf of His people.”¹⁰

Martin Buber famously rendered the phrase: “*I will be present as I will be present.*”¹¹

Yahweh’s covenant name is an open-ended promise of self-revelation. Yahweh is the God who will cause himself to be manifested in whatever manner, and through whatever agents, he chooses.

The Prophetic Vision: Numbers 14:21 and Habakkuk 2:14

This self-revelatory promise in Exodus 3:14 finds its explicit prophetic objective in Yahweh’s oath to Moses in Numbers 14:21:

וְאֵלֶּם חַי־אֲנִי וְיִמְלֵא כְבוֹד־יְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ

“But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.”

This is reiterated by the prophet Habakkuk:

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.” (Hab. 2:14)

Comparing these passages reveals a clear biblical continuum:

1. Exodus 3:14: God reveals the principle of his name—*he will be manifested*.
2. Numbers 14:21 / Habakkuk 2:14: God declares the scope of his name—*he will manifest his glory throughout the entire creation*.
3. 1 Corinthians 15:28: Paul announces the final fulfillment of his name—*God will be ‘all in all’*.

The mechanism of this manifestation is not the division of the divine essence into three ontological persons, but the principle of agency (*shaliach*).

The Biblical Law of Agency (*Shaliach*)

In Jewish jurisprudence and covenant theology, the concept of agency is encapsulated in the rabbinic maxim:

שְׁלוּחוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם כְּמוֹתוֹ

(*Shelucho shel adam kemoto*: “A man’s agent is as the man himself.”)¹²

A *shaliach* (commissioned representative) is empowered to speak, act, execute covenant duties, and exercise authority in the name of the sender. The sender imparts authority to the agent, who executes that authority before recipients in creation. When the agent acts within the scope of their commission, the legal and functional identity is such that the act is treated as if the sender executed it directly.

¹⁰ Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 17.

¹¹ Martin Buber, *Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), 51–55.

¹² Mishnah, Berakhot 5:5. See also P. R. Davies, “The Law of Agency in Ancient Judaism,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 32, no. 2 (1981): 141–152.

This principle explains Old Testament passages where human or angelic agents bear the divine name and are addressed as God without being Yahweh himself:

- The Angel of Yahweh in Exodus 23:20–21 carries God’s name (“My name is in him”) and exercises divine prerogative (forgiving or retaining transgressions) yet is distinct from Yahweh.
- Moses is made “as God (*Elohim*) to Pharaoh” (Exod. 7:1).
- The Davidic King is addressed in Psalm 45:6 as *Elohim* (“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever”), signifying his role as Yahweh’s anointed human vice-regent on earth.¹³

In the New Testament, this agency reaches its apex in Jesus Christ. Jesus explicitly grounds his ministry in this framework:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, the son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the father doing.” (John 5:19)

“My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.” (John 7:16)

“He who receives me receives him who sent me.” (Matt. 10:40)

Jesus is the greatest *shaliach* of Yahweh—the supreme human embodiment of the divine name. To see Jesus is to see the Father (John 14:9), not because Jesus *is* the Father, nor because Jesus is a “second God-person,” but because Jesus manifests the Father’s character, power, and authority with absolute perfection.¹⁴

3. The Unique Role of Jesus Christ

Biblical unitarianism does not lower the dignity of Jesus Christ; rather, it restores his biblically defined identity. Far from being a mere human or an ordinary prophet, Jesus is the culmination of the divine decree—the unique, virgin-born, sinless, resurrected, and highly exalted Son of God. His identity is defined through four primary scriptural typologies, as follows.

A. The Fully Human Son of God

Biblical unitarianism asserts that Jesus Christ is a real human being (*anthrōpos*) whose existence began not in eternity past, but in the womb of Mary through the miraculous power of God’s spirit (Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:20).

In trinitarian dogma, the “Son” existed from eternity as an uncreated divine person who in some sense “took on” a human nature. In Scripture, however, the title “Son of God” is explicitly tied to his miraculous historical conception, his Davidic kingship, and his resurrection:

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; *therefore* the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.” (Luke 1:35, emphasis added)

Notice the causal adverb *dio kai* (therefore). Jesus is called “the Son of God” *because* God generated him in Mary’s womb by his spirit. His sonship is rooted in a real, temporal, biological-

¹³ A. E. Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), 154–173.

¹⁴ Karl-Josef Kuschel, *Born Before All Time? The Dispute over Christ’s Origin* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 202–210.

spiritual act of creation, not an abstract “eternal generation” imagined in later Origenist and Cappadocian metaphysics.¹⁵

Jesus possessed every essential component of human nature: a physical body, a human mind, a human will distinct from the Father’s (“not my will, but yours be done” Luke 22:42), and human emotions. He experienced growth in wisdom (Luke 2:52), fatigue, hunger, temptation (Heb. 4:15), and mortality. His genuine humanity is essential for his role as the mediator between God and men:

“For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man (*anthrōpos*) Christ Jesus.” (1 Tim. 2:5)

Paul does not say “the divine Word who assumed humanity,” but “the *man* Christ Jesus.” The mediation is executed by a glorified human being.

B. The Second Adam

In 1 Corinthians 15:45–47 and Romans 5:12–21, Paul structures his redemptive theology around a stark Adam-Christ anthropology:

“Thus it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being’; the last Adam (*ho eschatos Adam*) became a life-giving spirit . . . The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man (*ho deuterios anthrōpos*) is from heaven.” (1 Cor. 15:45–47)

This Adamic typology presents a direct structural parallel between the two representative heads of humanity:

- The First Adam: Created from the dust, yielded to temptation, brought sin and death through his disobedience, and became the head of a fallen, mortal race.
- The Last Adam: Born of Mary by the Holy Spirit, overcame all temptation, brought righteousness and life through his obedience, and became the head of a redeemed, immortalised humanity.

For this typology to function, the Last Adam must belong to the same species as the first Adam. The entire integrity of Paul’s argument hinges on genuine human equivalence:

- If the First Adam was a real human exercising moral agency, the Second Adam must likewise be a real human exercising moral agency.
- If the Second Adam were an almighty, uncreated “godman” possessing an invincible divine nature, the parallel collapses. A divine person cannot truly be tempted with evil (James 1:13); a divine person cannot die.

If Jesus overcame sin by virtue of his divine nature, his victory is not a victory for *humanity*, but a demonstration of divine omnipotence. As James D.G. Dunn observes, Paul’s Adam-Christology relies on Jesus as the true representative human who succeeded precisely where Adam failed—in the arena of genuine human testing and vulnerability.¹⁶

¹⁵ R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318–381 AD* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 668–675.

¹⁶ James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 98–113.

C. The Representative Saviour

Trinitarian theology often interprets the atonement through a metaphysical lens: only an infinite “godman” could pay an infinite penalty to satisfy infinite divine wrath. However, Scripture grounds the effectiveness of the atonement not in ontological infinity, but in covenantal representation and perfect human obedience:

“For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.” (Rom. 5:19)

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.” (1 Cor. 15:21)

Notice Paul's insistence: by man (*di' anthrōpou*) came death, and by man (*di' anthrōpou*) came the resurrection.

Jesus is our representative, not our divine substitute who bypasses human agency. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the author explains why the Saviour had to be fully, exclusively human:

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things...Therefore, he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” (Heb. 2:14, 17)

Jesus was qualified to be our High Priest and Saviour because he was “made like his brothers *in every respect*” (*kata panta*). If Jesus possessed a secondary divine nature, a divine consciousness, or an uncreated background that his human brothers do not share, he was *not* made like his brothers in every respect. His representational capacity depends on his shared human identity.

D. The Prototype (*Prōtotokos*) and Pioneer of Elevated Humanity

Jesus is consistently designated as the firstborn (*prōtotokos*) and the pioneer/author (*archēgos*) of our salvation:

- “Firstborn among many brothers” (*prōtotokon en pollois adelphois*, Rom. 8:29).
- “Firstborn from the dead” (*prōtotokos ek tōn nekrōn*, Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5).
- “The pioneer of their salvation” (*ton archēgon tēs sōtērias autōn*, Heb. 2:10).

The term *archēgos* denotes a pathfinder—someone who breaks open new territory so that others may follow in his exact footsteps. Jesus is the prototype of a new order of human existence. God the Father, as the uncreated Source of all things, initiates the plan; Jesus Christ, as the firstborn prototype, becomes the first human raised to immortality, having perfected his character through suffering (Heb. 2:10) and been exalted to God's right hand. From this prototype flows the corporate body—the replicated family who are transformed into the same image (2 Cor. 3:18) and become partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

His resurrection was not a return to mortal life (like the resuscitation of Lazarus), but a transformation into incorruptible, spirit-empowered, immortalised humanity (*sōma pneumatikon*, 1 Cor. 15:44). Jesus did not achieve this exalted state by reverting to an uncreated divine status; he was raised and elevated by the Father as a reward for his sacrificial obedience:

“Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.” (Phil. 2:9)

“Being made so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” (Heb. 1:4)

An uncreated, eternally supreme God cannot be “highly exalted”, nor can he “inherit” a superior status he did not previously possess. Jesus was elevated to God’s right hand as a perfected, resurrected human being, demonstrating the glorious destiny that awaits all who are united with him.

4. The Grand Plan: Corporate Destiny and the Earth Filled with God’s Glory

The redemptive arc does not terminate with the individual exaltation of Jesus. As the prototype, Jesus is the first of a vast, corporate family destined to undergo the same transformation and fulfill the original mandate given to humanity at creation (Gen. 1:26–28; Psalm 8).

The Divine Sequence of Transformation

The corporate destiny of the redeemed is articulated by Paul in Romans 8:29–30:

“For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.”

The ultimate goal of salvation is conformity to the image of the Son. Believers are called to replicate Christ’s character, moral perfection, and obedience in this present age, and to inherit his transformed, immortalised bodily existence at his return:

“Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.” (1 Cor. 15:49)

“Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.” (1 John 3:2)

This transformation is described by the Apostle Peter in radical terms: believers are called to become “partakers of the divine nature” (*theias koinōnoi physeōs*, 2 Pet. 1:4). This is not some sort of absorption into the uncreated essence of Yahweh, but an elevation into what early Christian writers called *theosis* or deification, correctly understood within a Hebrew covenantal framework.¹⁷ It is being made immortal and God-like in character so as to enjoy everlasting fellowship with him and his friends.

This cosmic plan unfolds in four clear, progressive phases:

1. Individual Prototype: Jesus Christ perfectly manifests Yahweh’s character, overcomes sin as a human being, and is glorified through resurrection.
2. Corporate Maturation: The *ecclesia* (*church*), indwelt by the Father’s spirit, learns to manifest God’s loving character (*agape*), growing into the full maturity and stature of Christ (Eph. 4:13).

¹⁷ Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1–15.

3. Cosmic Resurrection and Subjection: At the second coming, the saints are resurrected into incorruptibility, reign with Christ, and participate in subjecting all rebellious powers to Yahweh.
4. The Ultimate Goal: Christ surrenders the kingdom to the Father, and the whole earth is filled with the glory of Yahweh: God is all in all (1 Cor. 15:28).

The Role of the *Ecclesia* in Manifesting God

The *Ecclesia* (assembly of believers) is not merely a collection of rescued souls waiting for an ethereal transfer to heaven. It is the earthly temple of the living God (2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21–22), designed to be the instrument through which God’s character and wisdom are displayed to the world:

“So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.” (Eph. 3:10)

By walking in love (*agape*), exercising moral holiness, and submitting to the Father’s spirit, the church functions as the corporate extension of Christ’s messianic agency. As Jesus prayed in John 17:

“That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us . . . I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.” (John 17:21, 23)

The oneness between the Father and the Son is not an ontological oneness of substance or essence, but a relational, functional, and spiritual oneness of purpose, love, and character—a oneness into which believers are explicitly invited to participate.

When the saints are transformed at the resurrection and reign with Christ over the restored creation (Rev. 5:10; 20:4; Isa. 11:1–9), the prophetic promise of Numbers 14:21 and Habakkuk 2:14 will find its complete realisation: the entire earth will be inhabited by a glorified, immortal corporate humanity fully reflecting the character, wisdom, and glory of Yahweh. Then, and only then, will the father be “all in all” and the ultimate state of unmediated, all-pervading divine indwelling will be finally realised – a state of total moral, spiritual, and functional saturation where Yahweh’s character, mind, spirit, and sovereign authority will completely inhabit every redeemed human heart and permeate the entire renewed cosmos without friction, resistance, or limitation.

5. Theological Critique: How Trinitarian Orthodoxy Subverts the Divine Plan

Historical trinitarian orthodoxy—codified at Nicaea (325 CE), Constantinople (381 CE), and Chalcedon (451 CE)—is widely regarded as the gold standard of Christian theology. However, an examination of its metaphysical underpinnings reveals that it distorts the biblical narrative, undermines the Last Adam typology, and obscures the true nature of God’s redemptive plan.

By transferring the analytical focus from Hebraic covenantal agency to Greek substance metaphysics, trinitarianism substituted historical, biblically grounded self-revelation with speculative and endlessly confusing new claims. This shift led directly to a distortion of redemption: Jesus’s moral victory over sin was reduced to an expression of uncreated divine power rather than genuine human obedience. Consequently, the Second Adam typology was destroyed, and the practical link between Christ’s triumph and human imitation was severed. Furthermore, by introducing a multi-personed God, trinitarianism subverted 1 Corinthians

15:28, creating an insoluble paradox regarding the post-resurrection subjection of the Son and depriving the Father of His exclusive Deity.

A. The Philosophical Intrusion: Hellenization and Substance Metaphysics

The primitive, apostolic church operated within a Hebraic worldview, grounded in the *Shema* (Deut. 6:4: “Hear, O Israel: Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one”) and defined by dynamic covenantal history. However, as Christianity shifted into the Greco-Roman world during the second through fourth centuries, church “fathers” reinterpreted biblical categories through the lens of Middle and Neo-Platonic philosophy.¹⁸

Whereas the Hebraic model operated on functional, covenantal agency where “monotheism” meant the Father alone is God and the Messiah was a real human Son born in time, the Hellenistic model introduced ontological substance metaphysics where the one God became a triune being of three “Persons,” and the Messiah became “God the Son” who was eternally begotten—a title and an idea wholly absent from Scripture.

Instead of understanding Jesus as the human *shaliach* (agent) who perfectly manifested God’s *character*, by the late fourth century, mainstream, catholic theology redefined him as an uncreated divine *hypostasis* who possessed the divine substance. This philosophical re-interpretation severed Christology from its Old Testament roots, transforming a dynamic covenant history into an abstract, speculative exercise in Greek ontology.¹⁹

B. The Destruction of the Second Adam and Human Representation

The most devastating consequence of Chalcedonian Christology (which decrees that Jesus is “true God and true man,” possessing two complete natures—one divine, one human—in one person) is that it renders Jesus’s human obedience an *illusion*.

The Problem of Temptation and Sinlessness

Scripture insists that Jesus was “tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). But under the Trinitarian framework, Jesus is an uncreated divine person who is essentially omniscient, omnipotent, and impeccable (incapable of sinning). His assumed human nature is *anhypostatic* (lacking its own human personhood). Only persons can be tempted to do wrong. Therefore, a godman Jesus could only be tempted if the divine Son is tempted. At bare minimum, being tempted requires believing it to be possible that one can do wrong. A divine person, being essentially perfectly good, could not do wrong, and being essentially omniscient, he could not fail to know that. Therefore, the “temptation” of a divine Son would be an exercise in theatrical presentation. A divine person possessing an almighty divine nature cannot genuinely be tempted.²⁰

The Destruction of Authentic Human Example

If Jesus resisted temptation, performed miracles, and lived a sinless life by relying on his essential divine nature, he ceases to be an appropriate model for human imitation. Believers do not possess a divine nature that rules out the possibility of being genuinely tempted.

¹⁸ Colin E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 56–68. This Hellenistic shift replaced biblical concepts with non-scriptural, metaphysical terminology: *ousia* (substance/essence), *Hypostasis* (individual person/subsistence), *homoousios* (of the same substance), *communicatio Idiomatum* (communication of attributes).

¹⁹ Dale Tuggy, *What Is The Trinity?* (CreateSpace, 2017), 75–92.

²⁰ Buzzard and Hunting, *The Doctrine of the Trinity*, 89–94.

In Chalcedonian Christology, where victory is achieved by divine power residing within a two-natured person, human imitation is logically impossible because human persons lack a divine nature. Biblical unitarianism restores the moral power of Christ's example: Jesus resisted sin as a real human being, empowered not by his own deity, but by his absolute trust in the Father and his total reliance on the God's spirit (Acts 10:38; Heb. 9:14). His victory demonstrates that genuine human obedience empowered by God's spirit is possible, providing a reproducible pattern for his brothers and sisters.

C. Obscuring the Sole Deity of the Father

Jesus explicitly identified the Father as the only true God:

“And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God (*ton monon alēthinon theon*), and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” (John 17:3)

Paul affirmed this explicitly to the Corinthians:

“Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.” (1 Cor. 8:6)

Trinitarianism violates these plain, apostolic confessions by insisting that “God” is a compound entity consisting of three co-equal persons. In doing so, it demotes the Father from being *the* only true God to merely being *one of three* co-equal persons within God.

Furthermore, as demonstrated in the exegesis of 1 Corinthians 15:28, trinitarianism creates an unresolved structural problem for New Testament eschatology. If the son is ontologically equal to the father in every respect, his final, everlasting subjection to the father at the end of the age becomes an illogical pretence. How could an equally divine Son be second place in authority under God, subject to him? Trinitarianism is forced either to deny the literal force of Paul's words or to introduce internal subordinationism into the Trinity—a heresy within its own dogmatic system.²¹

6. Biblical Unitarianism and Divine Purpose

Biblical unitarianism provides a coherent, biblically grounded, and exegetically sound framework that resolves these contradictions and aligns with the overarching arc of Scripture. By synthesising Old Testament strict monotheism (such as the *Shema* of Deuteronomy 6:4 and Yahweh's declaration in Isaiah 44:24 that He alone stretched out the heavens) with New Testament apostolic preaching (where Jesus is proclaimed as a man attested by God and appointed to judge the world), biblical unitarianism establishes a clear, non-speculative interpretive framework: one God (Yahweh, the Father), one Messiah (the real human Son), and one ultimate goal (God all in all via divine manifestation).

A. The Unbroken Continuity of Monotheism

Biblical unitarianism maintains complete harmony between the Old and New Testaments. It preserves the *Shema* of Israel (Deut. 6:4), which Jesus himself declared to be the most important commandment of all (Mark 12:28–34). When a scribe asked Jesus, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” Jesus replied, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.’” (Mark 12:29) The scribe responded: “You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him” (Mark 12:32).

²¹ Navas, *Divine Truth or Human Tradition?*, 210–215.

Jesus did not correct the scribe; he did not say, “Actually, God is a Trinity of three persons.” Instead, Jesus saw that the scribe answered wisely and declared, “You are not far from the kingdom of God” (Mark 12:34).

B. Resolving Psalm 110:1: The Master Key of New Testament Christology

Psalm 110:1 is the most frequently quoted or alluded to Old Testament verse in the New Testament.²² It provides the definitive linguistic key to Christ’s identity:

נָאֻם יְהוָה לַאֲדֹנָי

(*Ne’um Yahweh l’Adoni*)

“Yahweh says to my lord (*adoni*): ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’”

A careful textual analysis of the Hebrew components reveals the precise relationship between God and His Messiah. The first name, “Yahweh,” designates the supreme, uncreated Deity who issues the divine decree. The second entity addressed is designated by the preposed preposition and noun *l’Adoni* (to my lord).

The Hebrew text makes a meticulous distinction between two distinct titles of lordship:

1. Yahweh: The proper covenant name of the One True God.
2. Adoni: Derived from the noun *adon* (lord or master) with the first-person singular suffix (my lord).

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the form *adoni* (*my lord*) is used 166 times, and in *every single instance*, it refers exclusively to a superior human being (or occasionally an angel)—a king, a father, a master, or a husband. It is never used to refer to God. When the Hebrew Bible refers to Yahweh as “Lord,” it uses the distinct form *Adonai* (a plural of majesty used uniquely for Deity).

If the Messiah were God, Psalm 110:1 would read *Yahweh l’Adonai* (“Yahweh says to my Lord-God”). Instead, the text reads *Yahweh l’Adoni*—“Yahweh says to my human lord.” The Apostles recognized that Psalm 110:1 predicted the exaltation of a real human Messiah to the right hand of Yahweh, confirming the unitarian paradigm.²³

C. The Apostolic Preaching in the Book of Acts

When the apostles proclaimed the Gospel to the Jewish and Gentile worlds in the Book of Acts, their Christological presentation was thoroughly unitarian. They did not preach an incarnate godman or a Trinity; they preached the glorified human Jesus:

- Peter at Pentecost: “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst” (Acts 2:22).
- Peter at Solomon’s Portico: “The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus” (Acts 3:13).

²² E.g. Matt. 22:44; Acts 2:34–35; Heb. 1:13; 1 Cor. 15:25)

²³ Buzzard and Hunting, *The Doctrine of the Trinity*, 41–46.

- Paul at Athens: “Because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

The Gospel preached by the early church was not a call to accept an intricate, multi-personed divine substance theory, but a call to believe that Yahweh had raised the human Jesus from the dead and made him Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

7. Comparative Synthesis

The conflict between trinitarian orthodoxy and biblical unitarianism represents two fundamentally incompatible theological architectures. Trinitarianism relies on Hellenistic substance metaphysics, defining God as a triune essence and Jesus as an uncreated godman whose divine nature accomplishes salvation through infinite substitution. In contrast, biblical unitarianism maintains strict Hebraic monotheism, identifying the Father alone as Yahweh and Jesus as his virgin-born, fully human son. Operating as the supreme agent (*shaliach*) and representative Last Adam, Jesus conquered sin through spirit-empowered human obedience, establishing an achievable prototype for transformed humanity rather than an inimitable divine standard.

This distinction culminates in their opposing visions of cosmic redemptive history: whereas trinitarianism struggles to reconcile the post-resurrection subjection of an eternally equal son in 1 Corinthians 15:28 without introducing internal subordinationism, biblical unitarianism provides complete structural coherence by framing salvation as a seamless trajectory from Christ's representative victory to the ultimate indwelling of Yahweh in a glorified, transformed humanity.

8. Conclusion

1 Corinthians 15:24–28 provides ultimate clarity on the destiny of creation and the structure of divine authority. The redemptive mission of Jesus Christ is not an end in itself but the divine means to an even grander end. The Father's eternal plan, seeded in the revelation of His name *Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh* at the burning bush (Exod. 3:14), pledged that God would progressively manifest himself in creation. This promise found its prophetic horizon in Numbers 14:21—the oath that the entire earth would be filled with the glory of Yahweh. To accomplish this, Yahweh did not descend as a “godman”; he raised up a Last Adam, a genuine human Son born of Mary, who yielded his human will to the Father, overcame sin, and was exalted as the firstborn from the dead. As the prototype of an elevated humanity, Jesus opened the way for a corporate body of believers—his brothers and sisters—to be transformed into his image, learn to manifest God's perfect character of *agape*, and share in his resurrected, immortal existence.

Trinitarian orthodoxy, by substituting Hebraic covenant history with Greco-Roman ontology, inadvertently sabotaged this architecture. By turning Jesus into an uncreated divine person, it destroyed the Second Adam typology, rendered authentic human imitation impossible, and obscured the supreme deity of the Father.

Biblical unitarianism restores the structural coherence of Scripture. It honours Jesus Christ as the exalted, virgin-born, resurrected Lord, while maintaining the absolute, unbroken monotheism of both Old and New Testaments. When the Messianic age completes its work, when every power is subjected and death itself is destroyed, the glorified human son will step back and bow before his father, delivering the kingdom to Yahweh. Then the Son himself will

also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, so that the one and only true God may be all in all, his self-manifestation being complete, his will now done everywhere (1 Corinthians 15:28; Matt. 6:10).

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