

# Martyn Lloyd-Jones and the Doctrine of the Trinity

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It has been 1700 years since the writing of the Nicene Creed, which, among other things, set forth what the church believed the scriptures taught about the trinitarian nature of God. In this article, my focus is on the teaching of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, an extraordinary Welsh preacher and Christian leader (1899-1981), on the biblical doctrine of the Trinity. Although Lloyd-Jones affirms the doctrine of the Trinity as articulated in church creeds, such as the Nicene Creed, his approach to teaching on this subject differs from that of many theologians, apologists, and preachers; for this reason, it warrants reconsideration.

Lloyd-Jones' ministry and his desire to communicate critical biblical truths in a way that his listeners could grasp, regardless of their background, did not happen by accident. Having started out in medicine before turning to Christian ministry at the age of 27, he took a deeply pastoral approach to theology. He knew that he was not preaching and writing for the academic theological or philosophical world, but as a Christian pastor and evangelist seeking to win the lost and edify the church of Christ.<sup>1</sup> His ministry spanned 40 years, first at the Calvinist Methodist Mission Church in Aberavon, South Wales, and then at Westminster Chapel in London, England. Some criticized his move from medicine to ministry, but Lloyd-Jones said, "I gave up nothing. I received everything. I count it the highest honour God can confer on any man to call him to be a herald of the gospel."<sup>2</sup> This sense of the privilege and nature of the Christian ministry shaped his years of service.

His preaching was a great blessing and continues to edify the church through his published works and the ministry of the Martyn Lloyd-Jones Trust.<sup>3</sup>

This mindset and conviction are particularly evident in Lloyd-Jones' three-volume work, *Great Doctrines of the Bible*, which is a written record of a series of Friday night lectures that he delivered on biblical doctrine between 1952 and 1955.<sup>4</sup> In the opening chapter, he describes his purpose and method: to study what the Bible teaches about itself, God, man, Christ, salvation, the church, and eschatology.<sup>5</sup> That is hardly surprising. But what is surprising (to many) is his statement that he did is "not going to give a series of lectures on theology."<sup>6</sup> For Lloyd-Jones, lecturing on biblical doctrine is not the same as lecturing on theology. The difference lies in the focus and subject matter. Lecturing on biblical doctrine means that we confine ourselves to what the Bible says, and to what the Bible alone says. According to him, theology encompasses a wider field by examining history, philosophy, and apologetics.<sup>7</sup> In his mind, "the doctrines of the Bible are not a subject to be studied; rather we should desire to know them in order that, having known them, we may not be 'puffed up' with knowledge, and excited about our information, but may draw nearer to God in worship, praise, and adoration, because we have seen, in a fuller way that we have ever seen before, the glory of our wonderful God."<sup>8</sup>

## **THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY AND BIBLICAL REVELATION**

Given this compendium of doctrinal lectures, I naturally looked to them when examining his doctrinal understanding of the Trinity. However, when reading the index, I was immediately struck by the fact that only half a chapter is dedicated to the doctrine.<sup>9</sup> Initially, I was astonished, given the doctrine's significance in Christian theology and the emphasis Lloyd-Jones placed on it in his preaching.<sup>10</sup> However, upon further reflection, I believe he did it this way because he wanted to avoid unnecessary and what he would view as unhelpful philosophical discussion and speculation on this subject. Instead, he wanted to expound on the doctrine as it is presented in the Bible.

For Lloyd-Jones, the doctrine of the blessed Holy Trinity is "holy ground." He agrees with those who view it as "the greatest, the most vital and the most important aspect of the exalted doctrine of God."<sup>11</sup> Not only so, but it is also inescapable; you cannot read the Bible without "coming face

to face with this doctrine of the Trinity.”<sup>12</sup> And yet, for all that, it is one of the most, if not the most, mysterious and challenging doctrines in the Bible. Thus, the presence of the doctrine, combined with its inescapable and incomprehensible nature, means that we are entirely dependent on biblical revelation. We must grapple with what the Bible says, but we must stop where it stops. And so, his exposition of the Trinity focuses on its progressive revelation in the Old and New Testaments, culminating in the fullness of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ. Scripture is the primary and final authority for all Christian doctrine, and this is never more evident than in the case of the Trinity.

Not surprisingly, Lloyd-Jones highlights the bedrock nature of this biblical truth: God is one (Deut 6:4; Mark 12:29). “One” means two things: that there is only one God, not many, and that this one God is unified in himself. This is a non-negotiable truth, and everything else that is revealed about the nature of God does not alter this fundamental fact. This is ground zero. God is one. This is where we must start.

But although the Bible teaches that God is one, it also clearly affirms that the Father is God (Eph 4:6; Gal 1:1), the Son is God (John 20:28; Col 2:9), and the Spirit is God (2 Cor 3:17-18). However, there are not three gods; instead, there is one God who exists in three persons (Matt 3:16-17; 28:19; John 15:26).

Consequently, Lloyd-Jones notes, we are confronted with one of the greatest, if not the greatest, mysteries of the Christian faith. A truth that distinguishes biblical Christianity from all other religions, including monotheistic ones like Judaism and Islam. It has been revealed to us by God himself. No human being would have conceived of God in this way.

But not only is it the most distinctive of the Christian faith, Lloyd-Jones believes it is an essential doctrine that Christians do not hear enough about. The main reason for this lack of attention is readily apparent.<sup>13</sup> It is a difficult doctrine. There is no way around this. Attempts have been made to make the doctrine more accessible, such as illustrating it by referring to the sun and the rays emanating from it, or to the seed, the soil and the flower — unity and yet division, the three in one and the one in three.<sup>14</sup> But this and other illustrations like it do not begin to explain the unfathomable mystery of who God is.

But no matter how complex and mysterious the doctrine is, Lloyd-Jones believes that we neglect it at our peril. That is because it deals with who God is, and there can be no one greater than that. So often, Christians encounter difficulties in their lives because they take their eyes off God and start to worry about everything that is going on around them.

Lloyd-Jones believes that a high view of God, in which he is exalted in our minds and hearts and is therefore seen to be glorious, fills us with amazement and astonishment. This, in turn, strengthens our faith, kindles our love, and keeps us from pursuing lesser things that can never satisfy. There are lots of gods in the world, but there is only one Triune God. This is the most distinctive doctrine of the Christian faith. It is a mystery that we will never fully understand, yet it is our eternal joy and delight to contemplate the wonder of who God is as the triune God. In the end, our wrestling with the doctrine must result in wonder, awe, and worship before such a God who has condescended to reveal himself to us. And true to this controlling principle, he proceeds to unpack what the Bible teaches about this profound mystery by adhering to what is written.

### **THE BIBLICAL PRESENTATION OF THE TRIUNE GOD**

Lloyd-Jones observes that there is no explicit statement of the doctrine in the Bible; in fact, as we all know the word “Trinity” is not found in the Bible.<sup>15</sup> However, the absence of the word does not mean that the truth being expressed by the church through the word “Trinity” is not found in the scriptures. As we have already noted, the Bible tells us that there is one God, and yet at the same time, the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. Even so, there are not three gods, as in tritheism; there is only one God, as in monotheism, but this one God exists in what Christians call three “persons.”

The problem with the word “persons” in this instance is that we are using it analogically to describe something true of God, but not of human beings, whom we also describe as persons. By human persons, we mean individuals, but when we use “persons” to talk about God, we are using it in a different sense. And yet we use “persons” rather than another word because we cannot think of a higher category. In doing so, we are attempting to describe something about God that is beyond human understanding

and language. Despite the inadequacy of human language, Lloyd-Jones believes that this doctrine is taught in the Bible from the very beginning and then with ever-increasing clarity as we move through the biblical text and follow the unfolding story of redemptive history, which culminates in Jesus Christ.

The OT emphasizes that there is one and only one true God (Deut 6:4). This is how God revealed himself to Israel. It is especially significant because the ancient world was characterized by a polytheistic view of reality, filled with gods and goddesses. In contrast to the gods worshipped by the nations, such as Baal, Asherah, Jupiter, Mars, and Mercury, Israel was instructed to believe and to proclaim the oneness and unity of the one true God.<sup>16</sup> Both things are essential. There was not only one God, but there is a unity to this God, as became evident when the Word and the Spirit, mentioned in the OT, were expounded more clearly and explicitly as “persons” in the NT without nullifying the essential truth that God is one.

### ***Biblical Support for the Doctrine of the Trinity***

To help his readers and listeners understand the doctrine of the Trinity, Lloyd-Jones draws on a wide variety of biblical passages and expressions, beginning with the profound theological introduction of John’s Gospel about the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. In John 1:1, the Word is said to exist from the beginning and to be with God and to be God. At first glance, this may seem to contradict monotheism, but it does not. The Word is God, just as the Father is God. Yet there are not two Gods, but only one. Theologically, this way of speaking expresses the unity and diversity within God, or the “Godhead.” The Father is God and all that God is, and Jesus is God and all that God is. As Jesus himself testifies, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30).

The apostle Paul says something similar in Romans 9:5, where he, after referring to the human ancestry of Jesus the Messiah, proclaims him to be “God over all, forever praised.” In Colossians 2:9, Paul writes that, “in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.” And in Titus 2:13, he describes waiting for Christ’s return as looking in anticipation for “the blessed hope — the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.” Thus, according to the apostle, Jesus Christ is our great God and Saviour, without in any way descending into polytheism.

Next, Lloyd-Jones discusses divine attributes ascribed to Jesus, which confirm the divine nature of Christ. He is a man, but more than a man at the same time. Eternity (John 8:58: "Very truly I tell you, Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am."), holiness (John 8:46 "Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?"), life (John 5:26 "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself;" cf. 17:2), immutability ("Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Heb 13:8), omnipotence (Matt 28:18 "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."), omnipresence (Matt 28:19 "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."), and omniscience (John 2:24-25 "But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person").

The book of Hebrews begins its remarkable presentation of Jesus and his saving work with words that leave no doubt as to the convictions of the writer. He writes, "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven" (Heb 1:1-3).

The apostle Paul agrees when he writes that Jesus, as the "Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col 1:15-17, cf. John 1:3). Jesus is also said to have the divine right to judge, because in the end "the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that they may honor the Son just as they honor the Father" (John 5:22-23).

From Jesus, the divine Son of God, Lloyd-Jones turns his attention to the Holy Spirit. He explains how, in the NT, the Holy Spirit is referred to as God, alongside the Father and the Son. One example of this is found in Acts 5:34, in the early days of the church, when Ananias, along with his wife Sapphira, decided to lie to the apostles about a sum of money they had received for a real estate transaction. The apostle Peter equates lying

to the Holy Spirit with lying to God. Peter says to Ananias, “How is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept back for yourself some of the money you received for the land . . . You have not lied just to human beings but to God.” This is consistent with the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 12:31, where he warns that “Every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.” Sins against the Father and the Son will be forgiven, but not against the Holy Spirit, because of the unique role he plays in the outworking of salvation and the final and ultimate testimony of the triune God.

Then Lloyd-Jones draws attention to the baptismal formula at the end of Matthew’s gospel, in which Jesus tells his disciples to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name (singular) of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19).” Three persons, including the Holy Spirit, and yet one name and one God. Similarly, Paul’s benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:14 asks that the church in Corinth might know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Again, one God in three persons, the Holy Spirit, being God along with the Father and the Son. We find a similar truth being taught in John 14:16, where the Holy Spirit is referred to as “another comforter,” who will be sent by the Father and the Son to the apostles after Jesus’ departure. And so, we have the full deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, clearly set forth in the New Testament. All three persons are declared to be God without their being three gods as in tritheism.

At this point, Lloyd-Jones is careful to rule out another error known as “modalism.” This concept posits that the Father, Son, and Spirit represent different manifestations of the one God. So that God makes himself known as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, depending on where we are located in redemptive history, as well as the situation or the person involved. Just as I am a husband, father, and professor, even though I am still one person, so God sometimes manifests himself as the Father, at other times as the Son, and at still other times as the Holy Spirit.<sup>17</sup>

Still another variant of modalism is the idea that God appeared primarily as the Father in the OT, as the Son in the Gospels, and as the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles and beyond. But all forms of modalism are incompatible with the teaching of Scripture. For example, “persons” within the Trinity address one another, or they are distinguished from one another

in significant ways. In Luke 1:26-35, the birth of Jesus is foretold. God sends the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph. The virgin's name was Mary, and Gabriel tells her that the Lord is with her. She is told not to be afraid because she has found favour with God, and she will conceive and give birth to a son, and she is to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign forever. Then, when Mary asks how this is possible, she is told that the Holy Spirit will come upon her, and the power of the Most High will overshadow her so that the holy one born to her will be called the Son of God. And so, in one passage, we have God Most High, the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit. These are not three ways of addressing God, nor are they three different manifestations of God, but rather the three persons of the triune God.

Next, Lloyd-Jones goes to Matthew's account of the baptism of Jesus (Matt 3:13-17), which provides further evidence for the Trinity in the description of what transpires. We are told that as soon as Jesus was baptized and came up out of the water, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God descended on him like a dove and alighted upon him. A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." The passage would be nonsensical if the Spirit of God, the Son of God, and God the Father speaking from heaven were all the same person. This would amount to nothing more than God speaking to himself. Once again, we see the three persons interacting with each other, as the Son is set apart for ministry and filled with the Holy Spirit, in fulfillment of OT prophetic expectations (cf. Isa 11:2; 42:1; 61:1). Modalism, which has been a problem down through the years in one form or other does not take scripture seriously.

In John 14-16, we are told about the new covenant ministry of the Holy Spirit, which begins after Jesus' death, resurrection, ascent to the Father's right hand, and the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost. In 15:26, Jesus tells his disciples that when the Advocate comes, that is the Holy Spirit, Jesus himself will send him—the same Advocate who is the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the Father, and who testifies about Jesus, the Son. Here, the Son and the Father send the Holy Spirit to the believing community. They are not one person acting in three different roles,



but three persons working in perfect harmony with one another within the mystery of God.

Two passages already mentioned in connection with the triune nature of God are also relevant here. The baptismal formula in Matthew 28:19 speaks of baptisms being performed in the name, singular, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is one name, yet three names, consistent with the revealed nature of God. Similarly, Paul's apostolic benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:14 asks for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit to be with all God's people. This is not a request that they might know God's grace, love, and fellowship, but that they would specially experience these blessings as they flow from the persons of the triune Godhead.

In our examination of Lloyd-Jones' articulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, we have primarily observed what is said of the divine persons in the NT. This is not surprising, given the progressive nature of God's self-disclosure, which begins in the OT and culminates in the NT, where the life and ministry of Jesus and the new covenant work of the Spirit are recorded. But it does not mean that the Son and the Spirit are absent from the OT. On the contrary, there are numerous references to both. Still, the OT presentation should be read with an awareness of the ever-present threat of polytheism.

Furthermore, due to the progressive nature of biblical revelation and salvation history, a fully developed doctrine of the Trinity could not have been made known before the incarnation of the Son and the Pentecostal descent of the Holy Spirit, what the church rightly identifies as the divine missions of the Son and the Spirit. Only then were God's people adequately prepared to grapple with this profound mystery, and even then, church history chronicles the struggles of Christians as they attempted to proclaim the fullness of God's self-revelation. Nonetheless, as we look back at the OT from the perspective of the NT, there is much important information.

Lloyd-Jones, like many before and after him, references *Elohim* (a plural noun), along with the plural reference of "us" in Genesis 1:26. In that verse, which describes the creation of humans, God speaks of himself in the plural when he says, "Let *us* make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along

the ground.” This also occurs in Genesis 3:22, where the Lord God says, “The man has now become like one of *us*, knowing good and evil.” And in Genesis 11:7, “Come, let *us* go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.” God referring to himself in the plural is also found in Isaiah 6:8, where the Lord asks Isaiah, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for *us*?” All of these are suggestive of the Trinity, especially when read in light of the NT’s contents.

Lloyd-Jones also believes that he finds evidence for the Trinity in the angel of the covenant (Lord, Yahweh), and he views all references to him as pre-incarnate Son. He only references the appearances of the angel of the Lord to Gideon (Judg 6:11) and the parents of Samson (Judg 13:15-22).<sup>18</sup> But this is the Lord Jesus Christ in a preincarnate form.<sup>19</sup>

The Spirit of God is said to “hover over the waters” at the beginning of creation (Gen 1:2). The Spirit enabled the prophets to speak the word of God (2 Sam 23:2). And the Spirit empowered men like Bezalel to do the necessary work in the tabernacle (Exod 31:1-5).

And so, even in the OT, there is ample evidence that, although there was only one God, these distinctions set the God of Israel apart from the idols worshipped by the surrounding nations. This one, God revealed Himself in angelic form and through the mysterious work of the Spirit. There is a unity and plurality within the Holy One of Israel.

### ***The Relations of the Three Persons to One Another***

Lloyd-Jones describes the relations between the three persons of the Trinity as co-equal and co-eternal. This means that each person is both fully God and all that God is. Furthermore, it means that there is no subordination of any of the persons to the others in terms of their divinity. The Father is all that God is. The Son is all that God is. And the Spirit is all that God is. The Son and the Spirit are not subordinate to or less than the Father. This is very important. The introduction of any subordination between the persons means that the subordinate member(s) are less than the one they are subordinate to, and this is unacceptable. God has no parts. All of his attributes are essential to him. He is eternal, uncreated, and perfect in every way. He is from himself (*a se*) and therefore is self-existent and self-sufficient — one mind, one will, one self-consciousness, one absolute personality.

So, how are the three persons related to one another? Lloyd-Jones does not speak of their personal relations within the Godhead as many do today. He does not speak of the Father as unbegotten, nor the Son as eternally begotten, nor the Spirit as eternally spirated from the Father and Son. Nor does he speak of “perichoresis” and wrestle with how the three persons relate not just to the divine essence, but how they are related to one another within the divine essence. The idea that each of the three persons does not subsist separately within the one undivided essence of God, but the Father inhabits the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the Son and the Holy Spirit inhabit each other.<sup>20</sup> To put it another way, the three persons dwell in each other, person inhabits person, and all three coexist at the same time and in the same space. What can be described as a co-indwelling involving fellowship, communion, communication, love and embrace.<sup>21</sup> Though this theological language is very useful when it comes to expressing what the scriptures teach about the profundity of God’s nature.

Instead, Lloyd-Jones distinguishes the divine persons by the external works they undertake—works of creation, providence, revelation, and, especially, redemption. In these works, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit act inseparably as God, but they also act according to their relations with one another. The Father works through the Son by the Holy Spirit, the Son works from the Father and by the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit works from the Father and the Son. This is also known as the “economic Trinity.”<sup>22</sup>

To save his people from their sins, the scriptures teach that there is a division of labor among the three persons, which Lloyd-Jones speaks about as “a kind of subjugation of the three persons.”<sup>23</sup> And so the Father creates, elects, and plans salvation. The Son is sent by the Father to work out salvation, to bring it about according to the Father’s plan. The Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son to apply salvation to those chosen before the foundation of the world and redeemed by the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For Lloyd-Jones, this is a staggering thought! He writes:

That these three blessed Persons in the blessed Holy Trinity for my salvation have thus divided up the work. The Son has put himself at the disposal of the Father, and the Spirit has put himself at the disposal of the Father and the Son. The Spirit does not speak of Himself, but testifies to the Son. The Son did not speak of Himself but received His words and His works from

the Father, though He was equal and eternal—the economic Trinity. So that while, in a sense, we can say that it was the Father who sent the Son, and the Son who came and did the work, and the Spirit applied it, we must at the same time say this: God was in it all. ‘God was in Christ’ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them’ (2 Cor 5:19).<sup>24</sup>

Again, this is not something we can fully grasp with our minds. We are dealing with the being of the infinite, eternal, self-sufficient, holy, wise, all-powerful, loving, and faithful God. There are no analogies that will work. While we are creatures made in his image, he is and always will be glorious beyond compare and mysterious in the most wonderful sense of the word.

We need to acknowledge that God is God and that, compared to him, we are as nothing. And yet this God has made us for himself and done everything necessary to bring us back to himself, to the praise of his glory and grace. God is beyond our understanding, and there is something gloriously refreshing about acknowledging that. We need to stand in awe and worship him for who he is and for all that he has done for lost and fallen human beings. We need to receive the truth of God’s word with joy and hope. God is in control. He will accomplish his purposes. No one is like our God, the Lord. We need to repent and turn to him, and love and serve him with reverence all our days.

## **THE TRINITY AND THE CONFESSIONS**

In his examination of the doctrine of the Trinity, Lloyd-Jones emphasizes its existence and importance, and our total dependence on biblical revelation for what we know about it, while drawing our attention to the teaching of the Christian church as exemplified in the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) and the Athanasian Creed (5<sup>th</sup> Century), in that order. He quotes Westminster’s statement about the three persons of the Trinity and the Athanasian statement about full divinity and equality of each member of the Trinity.

I want to conclude by quoting these statements and add one more, the Nicene Creed. Although Lloyd-Jones does not mention the Nicene Creed in his chapter on the Trinity, he refers to it when he spells out his purpose and method in the book’s opening chapter: “The rise of heresy

within the church led the early Church to draw up what we commonly call the creeds, for example, the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed."<sup>25</sup> These creedal statements beautifully capture the teaching of scripture and, consequently, Lloyd-Jones' faithful biblical exposition of the triune God.

As he reminded his original listeners and now readers at the beginning of this book, "The secret things belong to the Lord or God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law" (Deut 29:29).

### ***The Westminster Confession of Faith (1646)***

There are three Persons within the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

### ***The Athanasian Creed (Fifth Century AD)***

The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods but one God. The Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Ghost is Lord, and yet there are not three Lords but one Lord. For as we are compelled by Christian truth to acknowledge each person by Himself to be God and Lord, so we are forbidden by the same truth to say that there are three Gods or three Lords.

### ***The Nicene Creed (325)***

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation. He came down from heaven; He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and was made human.

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried. The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will never end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, He spoke through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and to life in the world to come. Amen.

As we reflect on these witnesses from the past, let us marvel at their united testimony and heed the appropriate pastoral exhortation of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones:

Well, I told you when I began that we were approaching the greatest mystery in the Bible and the Christian faith—the most exalted and the most sublime truth. May I beg of you, do not try to understand all of this with your minds. It is for us humbly and as little children to receive the truth as it is revealed; to stand in worship, in adoration and amazement. It is beyond us, but it is true. And it is all true in a special way for us and for our salvation.<sup>26</sup>

- 1 Lloyd-Jones served as the Chief Clinical Assistant to Sir Thomas Horder, the King's Physician for King George V, from 1923 to 1924.
- 2 Quoted on the book jacket: Iain Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The First 40 Years 1899-1939* (Carlisle: Banner of Truth, 1982).
- 3 See [www.mljtrust.org](http://www.mljtrust.org). Greg Jones, the President of the MLJ Trust, confirmed via email on January 11, 2023 that there have been 16.7 million downloads or plays since the trust started in 2013. In 2022 alone, there were close to 3 million downloads or plays. These sermons are available for free.
- 4 See: Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2003). Three volumes, one book.
- 5 Vol. 1, 3.
- 6 Vol. 1., 4
- 7 Vol. 1, 4-5.
- 8 Vol. 1, 10.
- 9 Vol. 1, 79-91.
- 10 All one has to do is listen to his sermons on Romans or Ephesians, for example, and this will be obvious.
- 11 Lloyd-Jones, *Great Doctrines of the Bible*, vol. 1, 83.
- 12 Vol. 1, 83.
- 13 Although he also mentions laziness on the part of Christians. He writes, "I fear it is another example of the laziness that has come upon us – the desire for comfort, and the tendency to rest upon experiences, and to avoid anything that demands intellectual effort. But if we have neglected the doctrine of the Trinity, shame on us! It is, in a sense, the most exalted and the most glorious of all doctrines; the most amazing and astonishing thing that God has been pleased to reveal to us concerning Himself" Vol. 1, 84.
- 14 Vol. 1, 84.
- 15 Tertullian, 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, Carthage, Roman Province of Africa.
- 16 Deut 6:4-7 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commands that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."
- 17 Lloyd-Jones puts it this way, "And they try to use human analogies to help us to understand, they say, for example, that the same man can be a husband and a father and a preacher — one person in three relationships" (*Great Doctrines of the Bible*, vol. 1, 88).
- 18 See other references to the angel of the Lord or God in the OT. For example, Gen 16, 32; Exod 3:2; 23:20-21; 33:2; Num 20:16; 22; 1 Chron 21:15 Judg 2:1-4; Mal 3:1. Lloyd-Jones does not reference these in his treatment of the Trinity but does express the belief that all OT references to the Angel of the Covenant refer to the Lord Jesus Christ. It was not his incarnation; it was a theophany, an appearance of the Son as the Angel of the covenant (Vol. 1, 89).
- 19 "Then you remember that in one of the earlier lectures we referred to the Angel of the Covenant, to whom so many references are made in the Old Testament, and we were driven to the only possible conclusion – that the Angel of the Covenant is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself ... It was not His incarnation; it was a theophany, an appearance of the Son as the Angel of the Covenant" (Vol. 1, 89).
- 20 See Stephen J. Wellum, *Systematic Theology: From Canon to Concept*, vol. 1 (Brentwood: B&H Academic, 2024), 697-701, for a concise summary of the conceptual development of the doctrine of the Trinity that took place between Nicaea (325) and the Council of Constantinople (381).
- 21 Not person to essence but person to person within the Godhead. Cf. Lane G. Tipton, "Cornelius Van Til's Trinitarian Theology," Reformed Forum Podcast, Season One, Episode Three, *Perichoresis*, October 19, 2022.
- 22 Lloyd-Jones, *Great Doctrines of the Bible*, vol.1, 90.
- 23 Vol. 1, 90.
- 24 Vol. 1, 90-91.
- 25 Vol. 1, 8.
- 26 Vol. 1, 91.