MINISTÈRE DU PASTEUR CLÉMENT SALOMON · BIBLE STUDY #17

One God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

At the river Jordan, all three showed up at once — and they came for you.

"Grandpa, is it three gods — or one?"

Wilbens was ten years old the Sabbath his big sister Nadège was baptized in the river near Léogâne. The whole church walked down the dirt path singing. The candidates wore white. The water was brown and slow, and the sun bounced off it like a handful of coins.

The pastor stood waist-deep in the river. He lifted his right hand and said the words Wilbens had heard all his life without ever really hearing them: *"...I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."* Nadège went under. She came up laughing and crying at the same time.

On the walk home, Wilbens tugged his grandfather's sleeve. "Papa Toussaint, the pastor said 'the name.' One name. But then he said three. So is it three gods? Or one?"

The old man stopped right in the middle of the road. He was seventy-eight and had been a deacon for fifty years. He laughed softly. "*Pitit*, I have been asking that question longer than your father has been alive."

Then he said something Wilbens never forgot. What was it? We will get there. But first, let's go back to another river, a long time ago.

Another river, three Persons

About two thousand years ago, Jesus walked down to the Jordan River and asked John to baptize Him. Watch carefully what happened next:

> *"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*
>
> **Matthew 3:16-17 (KJV)**

Count them. **The Son** is standing in the water. **The Spirit** is coming down like a dove. **The Father** is speaking from heaven. Three, at the same moment, in the same place.

This was not one person changing costumes. Each One is doing something different — and all three are working together, in perfect agreement, with perfect love.

Christians have a word for this: **the Trinity**, which simply means "three-in-one." You will not find that word in the Bible. But you will find what it describes — right there in the river.

"The LORD our God is one LORD"

Long before Jordan, God had already told His people something very important. They lived surrounded by nations with dozens of gods — a god for rain, a god for war, a god for harvest. Then God said:

> *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD."*
>
> **Deuteronomy 6:4 (KJV)**

Jesus called this the first and greatest truth (Mark 12:29). So the Bible does **not** teach three gods. It teaches **one God**.

And yet the same Bible shows us the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, each One fully God. John says of Jesus, *"the Word was God"* (John 1:1). When Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit, Peter told him, *"thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God"* (Acts 5:3-4). Even the very first page hints at it: *"Let us make man in our image"* (Genesis 1:26), while *"the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"* (Genesis 1:2).

How can both be true — one God, and three Persons? Here is the honest answer: our minds are too small to hold all of God. He says, *"my thoughts are not your thoughts"* (Isaiah 55:8). If we could fit God completely inside our heads, He would be too small to save us.

You do not need to understand how the sun works to feel its warmth on your face. In the same way, **you do not have to understand everything about God to trust what He has shown you** — and to be warmed by His love.

One name, not three

Now back to Wilbens' question. Before Jesus went back to heaven, He gave His followers their mission:

> *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."*
>
> **Matthew 28:19 (KJV)**

Look closely. *"In the **name**"* — not "names." Wilbens noticed what many grown-ups miss. Three Persons. One name. One God.

Think of it like a family name. When someone is baptized, the whole God writes His name over that life, as if to say: *"This one belongs to Us now."* That is why baptism is such a big day. (For more, see our study *"Baptism: A Brand-New Beginning."*)

The Friend who stays

On the night before the cross, the disciples were afraid. Jesus was telling them He would leave. Who would walk with them then? Jesus answered:

> *"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."*
>
> **John 14:16-17 (KJV)**

Notice all three again. The **Son** prays. The **Father** gives. The **Spirit** comes to stay.

And Jesus calls the Spirit *"another Comforter"* — another One just like Himself. The Holy Spirit is not an "it," not a force, not a feeling. He is a Person. He teaches us (John 14:26). He

can be grieved when we hurt Him (Ephesians 4:30). When we do not know what to pray, He prays for us (Romans 8:26). (For more, see our study *"The Holy Spirit: God With Us."*)

Love before the world began

Here is something beautiful. The Bible says simply: *"God is love"* (1 John 4:8). But love needs someone to love. Who did God love before He made angels or people?

Jesus answers in His prayer to the Father: *"thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world"* (John 17:24). Before there was a single star, there was already love — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, together forever.

God did not create you because He was lonely. He created you to invite you *into* a love that was already there.

The whole God, working to save you

Some people imagine the Father as an angry judge and Jesus as the kind One who had to talk Him into loving us. The Bible says no. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son"* (John 3:16). Listen to how Peter describes our salvation:

> *"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."*
>
> **1 Peter 1:2 (KJV)**

The **Father** knew you and chose you. The **Spirit** sets you apart and makes you new. The **Son** gave His blood to wash you clean. Not one Person of the Godhead is sitting this out. **All of God is working for you.**

That is why so many pastors close the service with this blessing:

> *"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."*
>
> **2 Corinthians 13:14 (KJV)**

Grace from Jesus. Love from the Father. Friendship with the Spirit. Three gifts, one God — and they are for *"you all."* That includes you.

What Papa Toussaint said

So what did the old deacon tell his grandson in the middle of that dirt road?

"I cannot explain all of God," he said. "But I can tell you this. Today at that river, the Father was saying about your sister what He said about Jesus: *this is My child*. Jesus is the reason she could go down into that water and come up clean. And the Holy Spirit is the One who brought her there. All of God came to that river for Nadège. And one day, He will come to that river for you."

Paul says it like this: *"God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father"* (Galatians 4:6). Father, Son and Spirit — all in one verse, all for one heart.

Six years later, Wilbens walked down that same dirt path in a white shirt. His grandfather, now with a cane, stood at the edge of the water. When the pastor said, *"in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,"* Wilbens smiled. He still could not explain it all. He did not need to.

You do not have to understand all of God to be loved by all of God.

Before you close this — one question

Has the question "one God or three?" ever confused you? Has someone argued with you about it until you did not know what to believe? Or have you simply never heard that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all working to bring you home?

They are. We would be honored to pray with you, open the Bible with you, and walk with you toward Jesus — even toward the river of baptism, if you are ready.

Would you like to know more about Jesus, study the Bible, or go deeper on this topic? Reach us today:

📞 **903-748-9353** · ✉ **jils19802012@gmail.com**

Or leave a comment, send us a direct message, and **subscribe + follow** on YouTube and Facebook.

Don't miss what's next. The same Holy Spirit who came down at the Jordan gives a gift to every believer — yes, to you too. Our next study: *"Gifted to Serve: Your Place in the Body of Christ."* Subscribe now so it reaches you the moment it's out. If you wait, you'll have to come find it. 🔔

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Viewer Handout

One God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit — pocket version

5 truths to remember

1. There is one God — not three gods (Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29).
2. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are three distinct, eternal Persons, each fully God — seen together at Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:16-17; John 1:1; Acts 5:3-4).
3. Believers are baptized into the one name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).
4. The Holy Spirit is a Person — the Comforter who lives with and in God's children (John 14:16-17, 26; Ephesians 4:30; Romans 8:26).
5. God is love, and the whole Godhead works together to save us (1 John 4:8; John 3:16; John 17:24; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

Memory verse

> *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."*
>
> **Matthew 28:19 (KJV)**

Think & pray about it

- Which picture of God have I carried — a distant Father, a Jesus who has to "convince" Him, a Spirit who is only a force? What does the Bible show instead?
- Where in my life do I most need the Comforter who "dwelleth with you, and shall be in you"?
- If all of God is working to save me, what is one step I can take this week to say "yes" — prayer, Bible study, or preparing for baptism?

FOR TEACHERS & SMALL GROUPS

Presenter Bullet Sheet

- **Open with the story** (an illustrative story: Wilbens at his sister's river baptism near Léogâne, "one name — but three?") — ask: "Have you ever wondered whether Christians worship one God or three?"
- **Point 1 — Three at the river:** Matthew 3:16-17. The Son in the water, the Spirit descending, the Father speaking — at the same moment. Not one Person changing forms.
- **Point 2 — One God:** Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29. The Bible never teaches three gods.
- **Point 3 — Each fully God:** John 1:1 (the Son); Acts 5:3-4 (the Spirit); Genesis 1:1-2, 26 ("Let us make"). Admit the mystery honestly (Isaiah 55:8-9) — we trust what God has revealed.
- **Point 4 — One name:** Matthew 28:19. "Name," singular. Baptism puts God's family name on a life.
- **Point 5 — The Comforter is a Person:** John 14:16-17, 26; Ephesians 4:30; Romans 8:26.
- **Point 6 — Love before the world:** 1 John 4:8; John 17:24. God is love within Himself from eternity; He made us to share it.
- **Point 7 — All of God saves:** John 3:16; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14 (2 Corinthians 13:13 in Louis Segond / Kreyòl); Galatians 4:6.
- **Appeal:** invite each person to accept the Father's love, the Son's sacrifice and the Spirit's presence — and to consider baptism "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
- **Close:** memory verse (Matthew 28:19) + "You do not have to understand all of God to be loved by all of God" + tease the next study ("Gifted to Serve: Your Place in the Body of Christ").

EVIDENCE-BASED · FACT-CHECKED

10 Myths vs. Facts

Myth	Fact (with Bible)
1. Believing in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit means worshiping three gods.	"The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deuteronomy 6:4); Jesus repeated it (Mark 12:29). Believers are baptized in one "name" of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).
2. The word "Trinity" is not in the Bible, so the teaching is not biblical.	The word is not there, but the truth is: the three are named together in Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 13:14 and 1 Peter 1:2, and appear together at Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:16-17).
3. God is one Person who simply wears three "masks" or changes form (like water, ice and steam).	At Jesus' baptism all three are present at once (Matthew 3:16-17). The Son prays to the Father (John 17:1) and the Father sends "another Comforter" (John 14:16). Simple pictures help a little, but they can mislead.
4. Jesus is a created being, less than fully God.	"In the beginning was the Word... and the Word was God... All things were made by him" (John 1:1-3). "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9).
5. The Holy Spirit is only a power or an energy, not a Person.	He teaches (John 14:26), He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30), He intercedes for us (Romans 8:26), and lying to Him is lying "unto God" (Acts 5:3-4).
6. The Father is angry; Jesus had to convince Him to love us.	"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). Jesus said, "the Father himself loveth you" (John 16:27).
7. The Old Testament knows nothing about the Son or the Spirit.	"The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2); "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis 1:26); and the Word who was "in the beginning with God" made all things (John 1:1-3).
8. If I cannot fully understand the Trinity, I cannot really trust God.	"My thoughts are not your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9). We trust what God has revealed: "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

9. A God that big is too busy to care about one ordinary person.	The Father, the Spirit and the Son are all at work in each believer's salvation (1 Peter 1:2); "the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:30).
10. Seventh-day Adventists do not believe in the Trinity.	The Adventist Church's Fundamental Belief #2, "The Trinity," states that there is one God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — a unity of three coeternal Persons, based on texts like Matthew 28:19 and 2 Corinthians 13:14.

Where this comes from (Sources)

This study is built on the Bible and reflects the published beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Verify everything for yourself:

- The Bible — passages on the Godhead: Genesis 1:1-2, 26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 55:8-9; Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 10:30; Matthew 28:19; Mark 12:29; John 1:1-3; John 3:16; John 14:9, 16-17, 26; John 16:27; John 17:1, 24; Acts 5:3-4; Romans 8:26; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:30; Colossians 2:9; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 4:8 (King James Version, public domain). Note: 2 Corinthians 13:14 in the KJV is 2 Corinthians 13:13 in French and Haitian Creole Bibles.
- Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Belief #2, "The Trinity" (see also #3 "God the Father," #4 "God the Son" and #5 "God the Holy Spirit") — official beliefs: https://adventist.org/beliefs
- 28 Fundamental Beliefs (2020 edition, PDF): https://adventist.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ADV-28Beliefs2020.pdf
- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: https://gc.adventist.org/
- Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (ch. 11 "The Baptism"; ch. 73 "Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled") and *Evangelism*, p. 615 ("three living persons of the heavenly trio"), public domain: https://whiteestate.org/ / https://m.egwwritings.org/
- Related studies in this library: *"Who Is Jesus, Really?"*, *"The Holy Spirit: God With Us"* and *"Baptism: A Brand-New Beginning"* — https://pasteurclementsalomon.org/resources.html · Questions? https://pasteurclementsalomon.org/faq.html · Faith Journey: https://pasteurclementsalomon.org/journey.html

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Ministère du Pasteur Clément Salomon — Proclaiming Jesus until He returns.
pasteurclementsalomon.org · 903-748-9353 · jils19802012@gmail.com

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