

The Father, the Son, and the Spirit



SABBATH—DECEMBER 7

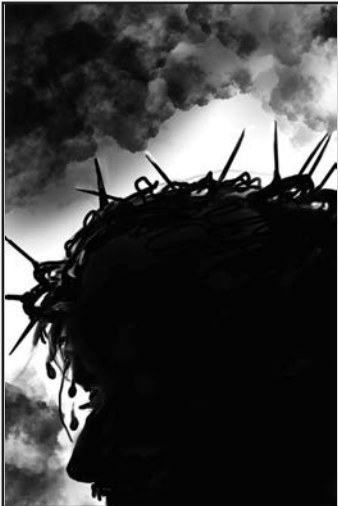
READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 3:16, 17; Genesis 3:7–9; John 7:16; John 1:10–13; John 17:1–26.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘The Helper is the Holy Spirit. The Father will send Him in My place [as my Substitute]. He [the Holy Spirit] will teach you everything and help you remember everything I have told you’ ” (John 14:26, NLV).

THE BOOK OF JOHN shows us many important ideas. John talks about the miracles that Jesus does to show us that Jesus is the promised Savior. John also shares what other people say about Jesus to show us who Jesus is. Jesus uses the seven “I AM” announcements to show us that He is God.

Another important idea in the Book of John is the Godhead. The Godhead is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. John talks about all three members of the Godhead in John 1 (John 1:1–4, 14, 18, 32–34). For hundreds of years, people have tried to understand the Godhead. But because we can't fully understand it, many people reject this Bible truth. This thinking is wrong. We shouldn't reject something because we can't fully understand it.

John says that if you want to understand God, you must look at Jesus and what the Bible teaches us about God. Then you will better understand relationships between the three members of the Godhead, between members of the Godhead and humans, and among ourselves. This week's lesson looks at what the Book of John teaches us about the Godhead in Jesus' Goodbye Sermon (John 13–17).



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OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN (John 3:16, 17)

The Book of John begins with how life started. The Bible starts with this same story. “In the beginning God created [made] the sky and the earth” (Genesis 1:1, ICB). Or: In the beginning, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit made the sky and earth. Together, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are named the Godhead. The Godhead made everything. They made all the planets in outer space and all the people who live on them. On our planet, God made humans. God made humans for a special reason: God wanted us to live in love and peace with Him and with each other.

Sad to say, Lucifer brought sin to this planet. Sin breaks our relationship with God. So, Jesus became a human to help us understand God and to save us from sin.

While Jesus lived on this earth, He obeyed His Father and lived fully under His control. Jesus said, “ ‘My Father and I are one!’ ” (John 10:30, NLV). Jesus also said, “ ‘The Father is in me and I am in the Father’ ” (John 10:38, ERV), and “ ‘If I am not doing my Father’s work, then do not believe me’ ” (John 10:37, WE).

What things did the Father do? Read the following verses to answer the question.

John 3:16, 17; John 6:57: _____

John 5:22, 30 _____

John 6:32; John 14:10, 24 _____

John 6:45 _____

John 15:16; John 16:23 _____

What do these verses show us about the relationship between Jesus and the Father? The Father gave His best gift to save us from sin. What does this Bible truth teach us about His love for us?



**In the beginning,
the Father, Son, and
Holy Spirit made the sky
and earth.**

JESUS AND THE FATHER (Genesis 3:7–9)

As we saw already, the Godhead is the Three-in-One God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Godhead made us for a special reason. God made us for a personal relationship with Him (Genesis 1:26, 27). But sin broke that relationship. We can see in the Garden of Eden story exactly how sin broke our relationship with God.

Read the story in Genesis 3:7–9. How does this story show the problem that sin caused? What does it mean that God searched for Adam and Eve, and that they did not search for Him?

The Godhead offered to heal all humans from sin. God offered this gift to every person. But not everyone would accept God's offer.

To heal the relationship between God and humans, one Member of the Godhead became human. So, Jesus, God's Word, was born in a human body. Jesus lived among us and showed us God's glory (John 1:14–18). Jesus showed us God's love and His mercy. Jesus came to announce God's glory so that our broken relationship with God can be healed and made new. Everyone who accepts with faith all that Jesus offers can have a new relationship with God the Father.



To heal the relationship between God and humans, one Member of the Godhead became human.

Read these verses: John 1:1, 2; John 5:16–18; John 6:69; John 10:10, 30; John 20:28.

“Jesus has life in Himself that does not come from anyone else. Jesus didn't borrow or get life from another person.” —Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 530, adapted. Jesus, the Son, “gave up everything” that belonged to Him in heaven and became a Man (Philippians 2:7, ERV). “Jesus is God. This Bible truth gives Christians hope that Jesus can give them everlasting life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 530, adapted.

Humans didn't know God (John 17:25). So, He sent His only Son (John 9:4; John 16:5) to help people know who He, the Father, is.

Someone who didn't believe in God wrote: “We humans have no hope that help will come from another place to save us from ourselves.” What does the Bible teach that shows us that this man is very wrong?

KNOWING THE SON IS THE SAME AS KNOWING THE FATHER (JOHN 7:16)

All through the Book of John, John tells us how Jesus, the Son, does things that show us the Father. Jesus shows us God's relationship with the human family. John 1:18 tells us that Jesus shows us who the Father is. The word "shows" comes from the word "exēgeomai" in the Greek language. "Exēgeomai" means "to explain." Again and again, Jesus shows or explains who God is. The word "Father" is "patēr" in the Greek language. "Father" is written 136 times in the Book of John, and 18 times in John's three letters. That adds up to more than 1/3 of the times it is used in the New Testament! Jesus' Goodbye Sermon is a top chapter in the Bible where Jesus shows us the Father the most.

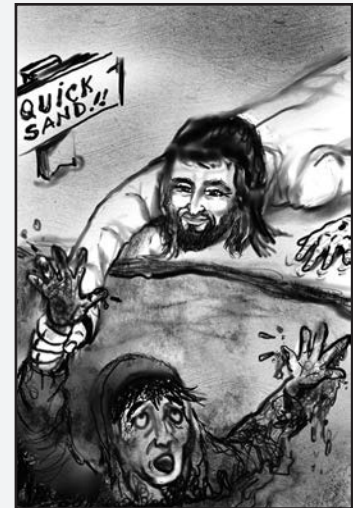
When Jesus lived on this earth, He was an example or exact copy of the Father. Jesus came to this earth to live out, in a human body, the Father's plan. Jesus said that He wished to please His Father in everything and not Himself (John 5:30). This announcement shows us that Jesus gave His whole life to God.

Jesus also said that God sent Him to finish His work. God's work was saving sinners. The Father saw and accepted the work that Jesus did (John 5:36–38).

Jesus announced that the Father sent Him to be the only one who can help humans come to God (John 6:40, 44). The Father wants people to accept everlasting life. This life comes from Jesus, who promises to wake us up from the dead at the Second Coming.

What do the following verses teach us about Jesus and the Father's relationship? John 7:16; John 8:38; John 14:10, 23; John 15:1, 9, 10; John 16:27, 28; John 17:3.

Jesus says some surprising things about His relationship with the Father. Jesus announces that all His teachings are the Father's teachings. Everything that He says comes from the Father. Jesus also says that if we believe in Him, that is the same as believing in the Father. All of Jesus' words and miracles come from the Father. Jesus and the Father are joined together in their love for humans. Together, they work to save sinners. All of these things that Jesus says show that He and His father are very close in their hearts and minds.



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THE HOLY SPIRIT (John 1:10–13)

The Holy Spirit doesn't appear as much in the Book of John as the Father and the Son do. But the Holy Spirit's help is very important to the success of Jesus' work.

Read John 1:10–13. What do these verses teach us about how important the Holy Spirit is in God's work of changing our hearts and saving us?

In John 1, we can see that the Holy Spirit's work is very important in God's plan to save sinners. John tells us that everyone who believed in Jesus became God's children. "They became God's children, but not in the way babies are usually [almost always] born. It [becoming God's children] was not because of any human desire [wish] or plan. They [God's children] were born from God himself" (John 1:13, ERV). This change comes from the work of the Holy Spirit.

What do John 3:5–8; John 6:63; John 14:26; John 15:26; and John 16:7–11 teach us about the Holy Spirit's work?

"Jesus explained to His followers about the Holy Spirit's work. Jesus wanted to fill the hearts of His followers with the same joy and hope that filled His own heart. Jesus was happy because of the help He gave to His church. The Holy Spirit was the most important gift that Jesus could ask His Father to give to His people. The Spirit gave God's people new life. Without this gift, Jesus' death on the cross wouldn't save anyone. The power of evil grew worse and worse. People chose to serve evil and Satan. They became his slaves. People could win the fight against sin with the help of the Holy Spirit. God poured His Spirit fully on His church."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 671, adapted.

We get a blessing when we accept the Holy Spirit. The Spirit tells us that God is true (John 3:33). The Spirit shows us our sins. The Spirit tells us how to be holy and tells us when we are wrong (John 16:8–11). If we want to know what is right, true, and good, we must give our lives to God and obey His Word. Then the Spirit will help us. He will convince us we must change our lives. He will give us the power to stop sinning.



The Holy Spirit was the most important gift that Jesus could ask His Father to give to His people.

JESUS' PRAYER (John 17:1–26)

John 17 is often named Jesus' high-priestly prayer. A high priest was the top spiritual leader in Jesus' day. Jesus' prayer comes at the end of His Goodbye Sermon. Jesus came to this earth to save humans and to change their lives. Jesus wants to help humans have a relationship with God again. Jesus did the miracles that God told Him to do. With words and actions, Jesus showed God to the people.

Soon Jesus would leave this earth. He wanted His followers to know how much He loved them. Jesus also wanted them to understand the close relationship between Himself, the Father, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus wanted to help people to enjoy the same personal relationship with God the Father and the Holy Spirit that He had.

Read John 17:1–26. What words does Jesus say that show how much He wants to have a close, loving relationship with His Father and with His followers?

Many people think that John 17 says that the only things that are important are love and peace. For sure, God's plan includes healing our relationship with Him and with all people. But if we read John 17 more carefully, we see a more powerful connection between love and truth.

Jesus prayed, " 'And this [teaching] is eternal [everlasting] life: that people can know you, the only true [real] God, and that they can know Jesus Christ, the one you sent' " (John 17:3, ERV). Jesus also added, " 'You gave me some men from the world [the people on this earth]. I have shown them what you are like [who you are]. . . . I gave these men the teachings that you gave me. They accepted those teachings. They know that I truly [really] came from you' " (John 17:6, 8, ICB). Finally, Jesus prayed, " 'Use the truth [Bible teachings] to make them holy. Your word [the Bible] is truth' " (John 17:17, Nlrv).

Jesus came to show us the Father. Many people believed false ideas about God. In the Book of John, Jesus showed us God's teachings and actions. If Bible truth isn't important, why did Jesus spend so much time preaching it and obeying God?

Jesus' life was often hard. In the end, the Jewish leaders rejected Him. Judas, Jesus' follower, sold Him for money. The people He came to save nailed Him to a cross.



The people He came to save nailed Him to a cross.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “ ‘Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled,’ ” pages 662–680, in *The Desire of Ages*; “Additional Note on [John] Chapter 1,” pages 911–919, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, volume 5.

Jesus’ enemies judged Him with their own human rules and ideas. That’s why Jesus told them, “You judge me the way people judge other people” (John 8:15, ERV). These men are not under the control of the Holy Spirit. They judge Jesus without the Spirit’s help (read John 3:3–7). The leaders saw Jesus as a man. They didn’t believe He was God in a man’s body or God’s words living in a human body (John 1:14).

“The Holy Spirit is our Helper. He is also named ‘the Spirit of Truth.’ The Holy Spirit’s work includes showing us Bible truth and helping us to live it. First, the Holy Spirit lives in the heart as the Spirit of truth. When He lives in our hearts, we feel hope and peace. That’s because Bible truth helps us feel peace and hope. We can’t feel real peace or hope when we believe lies. When we accept false ideas and beliefs, Satan gets control over our minds. Satan tricks us into accepting false ideas. When we do, our thoughts, feelings, and behavior become evil. The Holy Spirit talks to our minds through the Bible. The Holy Spirit shows Bible truth to our hearts. The Holy Spirit also shows us false beliefs and ideas and helps us to reject these things. The Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts as we read the Bible. The Spirit helps us to give our lives fully to Jesus. In this way, Jesus works through the Holy Spirit to bring His people fully under His control.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 671, adapted.



“The Spirit helps us to give our lives fully to Jesus.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What does it mean to really know God (John 17:3) and not just information about Him? If someone asked you, “Do you know God?” what would you say? How does Jesus fit in with your answer?
- ② What does Jesus mean when He prays to the Father and says, “ ‘Your teaching is truth’ ” (John 17:17, ERV)?
- ③ Read more of Jesus’ prayer in John 17:15. How do our choices change God’s answers to our prayers?

A DREAM IN DALLAS

Samuel told the Bible worker on the phone that he wasn't interested in Bible studies. The Bible worker was a member of the Dallas First Seventh-day Adventist Church in the state of Texas in the United States of America. The Bible worker said, "But you wrote that you were interested on a card we sent you."

Samuel said, "Well, I'm not interested."

A week later, another Bible worker called Samuel.

Samuel said, "I'm not interested."

The next week, the Bible worker called again.

Samuel asked, "How much will Bible studies cost?"

The Bible worker said, "Nothing."

At the first Bible study, Samuel said he and his wife were looking for a church. Their son invited them to his church. But the sermon about the seventh-day Sabbath and how it was changed upset them. Samuel said, "I'll never visit another Seventh-day Adventist church again."

The Bible worker prayed in his heart for help and continued the Bible study.

After several weeks, the Bible worker invited Samuel to meetings at the Dallas First Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Bible worker wondered if Samuel would accept the invitation. Samuel agreed to go.

At the first meeting, Samuel looked with interest around the church. The building was very beautiful. It also was different from most churches. The inside room where people worshiped was round. The ceiling was round, too. The church benches or seats curved around the platform at the front of the church. Samuel searched for the Bible worker and told him, "I need to talk to you!" The Bible worker was getting ready for the meeting that night. He asked Samuel to wait until the meeting was over. Samuel agreed and sat down. He listened to the preacher's sermon about Daniel 2. After the sermon, Samuel found the Bible worker. He said, "I want to be baptized!" The Bible worker was surprised. He said, "What?!"

Samuel explained that he had a dream 18 years earlier. "In the dream, Jesus led me to a church. Jesus said, 'This is My church.' When I walked into the church this evening, I saw that I finally found the church in my dream. I want to be baptized."

The Bible worker took Samuel to the preacher, Slavik Ostapenko, who also was surprised when he heard about the dream. What made the story so powerful was that the church burned down 13 years ago, and a new church was built. Samuel saw the new church in his dream five years before it was built! The preacher said, "Everything is possible when we cooperate with God in His work."

INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



"Jesus said, 'This is My church.'"



Slavik Ostapenko