

# Chapter One

## *The Watermelon Mystery*

The Sunday School room smelled faintly like crayons and old coffee. I sat cross-legged on the itchy carpet, nervously jiggling my knee, My fingers twisted a loose thread on my shoelaces. My foot bounced faster as I stared at the wall clock. Tick. Tick. Tick. The clock on the wall was moving at the speed of a tired snail.

Mrs. Pang, our Sunday School teacher, stood by the blackboard, adjusting her floral dress as she picked up a piece of chalk. She turned—one of those warm, patient smiles that made her glasses slip down her nose.

"Today," she said, pushing them back up, "we're going to learn about the Trinity. Can anyone tell me what that means?"

Before my brain could even think, my hand shot into the air. "Isn't that like... three gods or something?"

Some kids giggled. Mrs. Pang just chuckled. "Not quite. The Trinity means one God in three persons: the Father, the Son, and

the Holy Spirit. One God—three distinct persons."

I frowned. **One in three? Three in one?** That made *zero* sense. It was like trying to pat your head and rub your belly at the same time—impossible. I couldn't keep my thoughts still. They jumped around like bouncy balls in a glass jar. Mrs. Pang was still talking, but my brain had already raced to the shadowy figure in the basement—I knew it was a ghost, then to the ghost stories T.J. told me last week, then back to wondering what was for lunch.

Ugh. Focus. Seriously, concentrate.

Why couldn't my brain just stay on one thing?

Mrs. Pang kept going, drawing pictures on the board—a triangle, a dove, a cross. "Some people explain it like water—ice, liquid, steam. Different forms, but all still water." She paused. "But even that example doesn't fully capture it. The Trinity is a mystery. No picture we come up with can explain God perfectly."

That didn't help. Ice was ice. Steam was steam. They didn't happen *all at once*. That was the problem.

My foot tapped impatiently against the carpet. I shifted restlessly, trying to sit still, but the more confused I got, the worse the fidgeting became.

The other kids didn't seem to care, already shifting in their seats, whispering about what was for lunch. But I couldn't stop thinking about it. **How could something be three and one at the same time?** It was like trying to hold onto a slippery thought—every time I got close, it just wiggled away.

When class ended, everyone rushed out, shoving and laughing as they burst into the hallway. Jake smacked my shoulder on his way out. "Later, Spaz."

"That's not my name," I muttered, but he was already gone.

I stayed behind, watching Mrs. Pang carefully put her chalk away. She glanced up, still smiling. "Still thinking about it?"

I nodded. "I don't get it. How can God be three things but still *one*?" I hesitated, remembering Mom's warning before church, "Listen really good or you'll be in trouble." I couldn't let the Trinity be another reason for

being grounded. "I swear I was listening real hard, Mrs. Pang," I said, begging for her to agree and tell my Mom the same.

Her smile softened. "That's okay. It's not about getting it all at once. Even adults don't completely understand it. Some things about God are just... bigger than our brains."

I nodded because that's what you do when an adult gives you an answer you don't like but don't want to argue. But the answer sat heavy in my chest, like a puzzle piece that didn't fit because it was from the wrong box. A mystery? Mysteries were meant to be solved. That's what my comic book heroes did.

At home, I stomped into the kitchen and yanked open the fridge. I wasn't even hungry—I just needed something to do. That's when I saw it.

A watermelon.

Thick green rind. Red, juicy middle. Black seeds.

**Three parts. One watermelon.**

Something clicked.

I dragged the watermelon out and plopped it onto the counter.

Then I stared.

I grabbed a knife—too fast. My fingers clumsily fumbled, and the blade clattered noisily onto the counter. **Whoa.** I took a deep breath, picked it up again, and held it the way Mom had taught me (after the peanut butter jar incident, which we *do not* talk about).

The rind was tough, but I sawed through it. The watermelon split open, its red flesh gleaming under the kitchen lights. Juice dripped onto my fingers as I scooped out a handful and chewed.

The rind protected—like **God the Father**.  
The flesh nourished—like **Jesus, the Son**.  
The seeds gave life—like **the Holy Spirit**.

**Three parts. One whole.**

My heart thumped loudly. Could this be it?

I wiped my sticky hands on my shorts and bolted into the living room. “Mom! I think I figured out the Trinity!”

Mom, folding laundry, looked up with a raised eyebrow. “Oh? Do tell.”

I dragged her into the kitchen. “Look! The watermelon! The rind is the Father, the flesh is Jesus, and the seeds are the Holy Spirit. Three parts, but one watermelon!”

Mom pressed her lips together like she was holding back a laugh—but she didn’t. Instead, she ruffled my hair. “That’s a very thoughtful example. And it helps, doesn’t it?”

I nodded.

“But,” she added gently, “even the best pictures we come up with can only take us so far. God is still bigger than a watermelon.”

I blinked at the half-eaten slice in my hand. “...Yeah. I guess He is.”

“But God *loves* when we ask questions like this,” she said. “And sometimes, it’s okay if we don’t figure it all out right away.”

I nodded slowly. Maybe I hadn’t cracked the mystery. Maybe I never would.

But for now, the sweetness of the watermelon felt like a tiny, sticky piece of the puzzle.