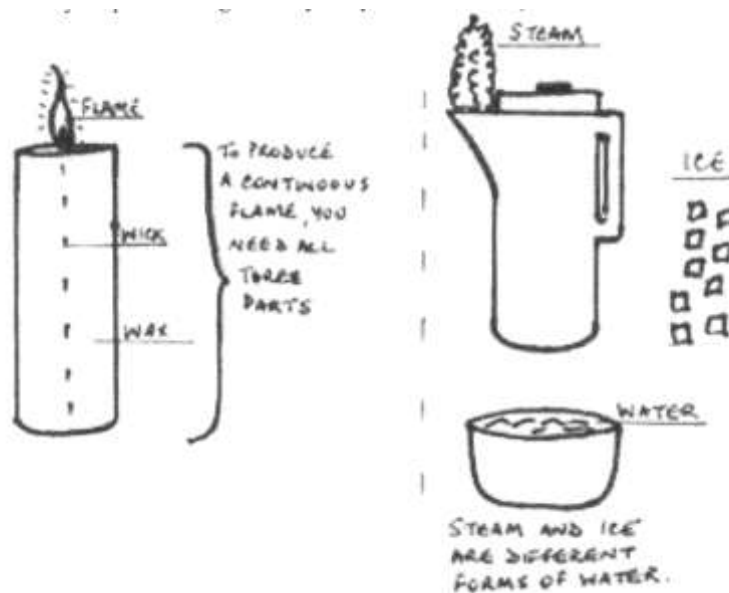


Study 4 – God the Father

God the Father was before the beginning of time (Genesis 1v1; Psalm 90v2: Isaiah 40v28). He was with the Son and the Holy Spirit forming what we call The Trinity (Tri-unity — God in Three Persons).

Although God the Father is sometimes regarded as superior to the Son and Holy Spirit, this is incorrect. He may be superior in function (in history in the process of salvation) (e.g. John 14v28 cf Philippians 2v6–10) but there is complete equality in personality, eternal nature and character (cf. John 14v11 John 17v21). To see Jesus was to see the Father (John 14v7) and the Holy Spirit was to replace Jesus in the world (John 14v16 & 26).

To help you understand that God is One yet Three, *perhaps* two simple illustrations from nature will help to show this:



BUT remember the Persons of the Godhead are separate Persons as well as being One, and these illustrations do not fully explain sufficiently the great mystery of the Trinity.

The following attributes of God the Father are equally true of the Son and Holy Spirit.

a) OMNIPOTENCE (all powerful)

cf. Jeremiah 32v17; Matthew 19v26

b) **OMNIPRESENCE** (present everywhere)

cf. Psalm 139v7–8; Proverbs 15v3; Jeremiah 23v24

c) **OMNISCIENCE** (all knowing)

cf. 1 Samuel 16v7; Psalm 139

d) **IMMUTABILITY** (does not change)

cf. Psalm 102v26–27; James 1v17

e) **TRANSCENDENCE** (cannot be excelled)

cf. 2 Chronicles 6v18.

Other attributes can be found in people but only in God in an absolute, perfect way. E.g. Goodness — God is totally good (Luke 18v19) but people can be good to a degree only (cf Acts 11v24).

These moral attributes of God are totally positive but not so in people. E.g. people may be just or unjust BUT God is only just, incapable of acting unjustly (Deuteronomy 32 v 4). His nature is righteous (Isaiah 42v6), holy (Leviticus 11v44; Isaiah 6v3; 1 John 1v5), love (1 John 4v8) and He never acts contrary to His nature.

God as Father

Though God is our Father in relation to our creation, we forfeited an intimate relationship (fellowship) with Him when sin entered into humanity (cf. Genesis 3). From that moment on we came under Satan's dominion because we acted under his influence (Colossians 1v13; John 8v38–47). The only way now to become a genuine child of God is to be born again into God's family (John 1v12; John 3v3).

God expressed His Fatherhood by sending His Son, Jesus, into the world. Through believing in Jesus' sacrificial death as our sin substitute we can enter into God's family and He becomes our Heavenly Father.

God the Father had one unique Son, Jesus, Who so pleased Him (Luke 3v22) that He wanted more sons like Him. He also wanted us to live like 'sons of God' having access to all His riches (cf Romans 8v14–17, Ephesians 1v8) and, as we mature, act as fathers to the young Christians (1 Corinthians 4v15; 1 John 2v13)

Knowing God the Father (cf Jeremiah 9v23–24: Philippians 3v10)

Being 'born again', or 'conversion' is merely an introduction to Jesus and the Father. But His desire for us is to know Him. Knowing about God, even knowing the Bible, is not the same as knowing God. We cannot know God by using our five senses. We may be aware of God through His Creation (Psalm 19v1) and our conscience (Romans 1v18–25) but we will never know intimate fellowship with Him this way. It only comes by revelation through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1v17–18; cf. Peter's declaration and Jesus' commendation in Matthew 16v15–17).

QUESTIONS

1. In what ways are the Father, Son and Holy Spirit equal?

2. What does the word 'Trinity' mean?

3. List 4 unique attributes of God
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)

4. List 4 moral attributes of God which are found partly in people
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)

5. Before we are Christians whose dominion are we under? (Colossians 1v13)

6. What is God's plan for His 'born again' children?

7. How do we get to know God?

Further Study

Using John Ch. 17 write down how Jesus spoke to His Father and what He asked His Father. What can we learn from this?