

## Understanding the Only Begotten

There are different organizations today who would try to confuse Christians about the divinity of Christ. They bring up scriptures to try and show that Jesus was created and was not eternal. It is crucial for us, as Christians, to have an understanding in this area. It really is not difficult, though people try to make it seem that way. Let the scriptures define the words and their use.

**Greek word: Monogenes**, Strong's #3439- single of its kind, only, being the only one of the same kind or class - 'unique, only

### 1. Scriptures that use that particular word.

Luke 9:38

And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child.

John 1:14

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

- This does not indicate that he is created, it says that we beheld the glory of unique one of the Father, the glory of the only one of his kind, who in verse one of this chapter is said to be God. The word begotten does not mean that this was his origin.

John 1:18

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

- Again, this is not speaking of his origin, but rather of his uniqueness.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

- God gave his unique son, his only one.

John 3:18

He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

- Same as John 3:16

Heb 11:17

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

- His unique son. Abraham had other sons, but Isaac was his unique one, the one given by promise.

1 John 4:9

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only

begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

- It becomes pretty clear that the use in these scriptures is not God creating his Son, it is speaking of the uniqueness of his only Son.

**Greek word: Gennao**, Strong's #1080- become the parent of, beget, to give birth to, bear, to cause someth. to happen, bring forth, produce, cause, fig. of various kinds of production

## 2. Scriptures using this word.

John 3:3-4

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

John 3:7

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must *be born* again.

- These verses are speaking about a natural birth and a spiritual birth. This word is used in many scriptures regarding natural birth.

Acts 13:33-37

God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

- Now in this verse we must begin to pay careful attention to the context. It actually starts around verse 22 of this chapter and goes to verse 37.
- God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour of the seed of David, Jesus.
- He was crucified.
- God raised him from the dead! Because of this, they said we declare glad tidings, how the promise which was made to the fathers, God has fulfilled for us their children, in that he has raised up Jesus again; as it is written in the second Psalm, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."
- Verse 34 is taken from Isa. 55:3 "I will give you the sure mercies of David", God said this because he raised Jesus from the dead and he would no more face corruption.
- Verse 35 is taken from Psalm 16:10 which is considered a Messianic Psalm. This was quoted in Acts 2:24-27 relating to Jesus, even as in this portion of scripture.
- There are two other verses which need to be considered with this portion from Acts:

Heb 1:5

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

Heb 5:5

So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

- The question is, was Jesus begotten at his resurrection?
- We will need to look at a third word in order to clarify Acts 13. We will do a summary at the tail end of this lesson which will draw everything together.

**Greek word: Prototokos**, Strong's #4416-firstborn, pertaining to existing prior to something else - 'existing first, existing before, 'superior to, above all', expressing His priority to, and preeminence over, creation.

### **3. Scriptural use of this word.**

Luke 2:7

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

- Used just as written, it was the first son born to her.

Rom 8:29

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

- This is not talking about birth, but being the first one, the preeminent one. The brethren are to be conformed to his image, for he is the superior one.

Col 1:15

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

- The context of this verse is clarified in verse sixteen, by him were **all** things made, all were created by him, and for him. This would make the word firstborn in verse 15 to mean that he is the origin of every creature, not that he was the first one made.

Col 1:18

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Rev 1:5

5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

- He is the first to rise from the dead, death having no hold on him, now or forevermore. He is the one who has the preeminence in all things.

Hebrews 1:5-6

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? [6] And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

- We have already seen from Col. 1:15-16 that he is the origin of all created things so this verse cannot be speaking of him being the first one born or created. I lean toward the same usage as in Rom. 8:29, the first one, the preeminent one.

### **Summary**

1. We have seen that Jesus is the unique son of the Father. He is one of a kind. Nowhere in the use of this word when speaking of Jesus does it indicate that God created him.

2. The one word that really speaks about a natural birth is primarily used about Jesus and the resurrection! It is not speaking about Jesus being born or created. In Acts 13:22-37 "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee" speaks of the resurrection. Jesus was the Son of God from eternity, who humbled himself and became a man. 1 Cor. 15:21 says that since death came by man, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. Jesus by the resurrection glorified the humanity received from the Father. In Rom. 1:4 it says that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power-by the resurrection of the dead.
3. The use of the word firstborn when relating to Jesus, other than Mary having her first child, has to deal with his preeminence or being the first one to rise from the dead.

Our conclusion can only be that God gave his only Son, his unique Son, the firstborn or origin of all creation, to become flesh (Heb. 2:16) and die in our place, become the firstborn from the dead and have the Father proclaim at the resurrection "You are my Son, this day have I begotten you (from the dead).

Nowhere is there any hint of Jesus being a created being or less than what the scriptures call him. Jn. 1:1, Heb. 1:8, 1 Tim. 3:16