

“AFTER ITS KIND”

I recently read about an eating establishment called, “One of a Kind Burgers and Fries”. Then within hours, I heard on TV about the huge Waggoner Ranch in Texas being advertised for sale, as a “one of a kind ranch.” Later I saw the picture of a blue lobster that had been found which was obviously “one of a kind.” After having been studying the claim that Jesus was **not** the “only begotten Son” of God, but was “only” or “one of a kind,” an idea came to my mind. I contacted several directors of our schools of preaching, and teachers of the Greek language, and asked them if one were to take the expression “one of a kind,” (by itself, and not in the context of Jesus' birth), and go **backward** to the Greek language, **what Greek word or words** would best express that idea. Of all the replies, virtually half of them told me it would be *monos* or *monon*. The other half said that the word *monogenes* would best describe it. None of this group explained **why** the “genes” would be necessary to describe any “kind” of something.

The word “kind” has varied meanings in the scripture. The first use is in Gen. 1:12, where God stated that the trees were to **reproduce** after their kind. The Hebrew word there is *min*, which is translated *genos* in the Septuagint of the Old Testament, and in other literature. This refers to the distinctive nature of likeness, or offspring or product being reproduced. This is the word being used in John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18 and 1 John 4:9 in reference to Jesus. Other words are used in Hebrew and in Greek to describe other items that are **not** being reproduced, such as “kinds of tongues” (1 Cor. 12:20). So, “kind” is too broad of a word to use in the expression “One of a kind” in reference to the nature of Jesus in His birth, just as “unique” is too broad of an expression, especially without noting **why** something or someone is unique.

In the matter of reproducing after its kind, it should be noted that the mature product always is before its reproduction. In the creation, the trees were created “mature” and then they could reproduce after their kind. The parent always comes before the offspring. In the matter of the Father and the Son of God, deity begat deity in the person of Jesus. Somehow before coming to earth, it was determined in the mind of God that deity would become flesh to redeem man. The One we think of as God was to remain in heaven, while the One coming to earth (the Word, John 1:1-3) would be the Son, in this “Father—Son” relationship as the Scheme of Redemption was put into motion. Deity that came to earth would obviously remain deity (the Son of God), but would take on flesh to be the Son of man. God gave this deity a body as it pleased him (Heb. 10:5). The means of His coming to the earth would be through the “birth” process. The woman who would bear Him would have no man to cause conception, but the Spirit would come upon her, causing a conception, and one born would be the Son of the Highest, or Son of God (Luke 1:31-35). He was to be “begotten” in the manner prescribed by the angel who addressed Mary. No wonder He would be referred to as “the only begotten Son of God.”

Monogenes is a compound word, made up of *monos* and *genos*, and both words mean something different. If *monos* means “only,” **why** add *genos* to it to make them both mean “only”? If *genos* does not change the meaning of *monos*, it is worthless to use. If it does allude to the nature of Jesus, as of the “divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4), or “deity”, then *monos* would actually be incorrect in this statement, for Jesus was **not** the only One with that divine nature, for the Father is also of the same. As Michael Marlowe wrote, “The biological metaphor, in which the Son (and only the Son) shares the *genus* of the Father, conveys the idea that Jesus Christ is a true *genetic* Son, having the same nature as the Father.”¹ So, Christ is **not** the “only divine one”, or “unique” in His deity, but is the “offspring” of the Father, having been begotten of Him through Mary. Marlowe continues, “John is not saying that the Son is 'one of a kind,' He is saying that Christ is the *second* of a kind, uniquely sharing the *genus* of the Father, because he is the only *begotten* of the Father.”²

Proponents of the claim that Jesus is the “only” Son, usually maintain that Jerome, who

lived in the 4th and 5th centuries, changed the original Latin word *unicus* to *unigenitus* (meaning “only begotten”) in his translation of the Latin Vulgate. This misconception has caused several writers to be misled into blaming Jerome for our confusion. Such believers in this conception absolutely **forget** about some other writers who lived **before** Jerome, who **did** use the word *unigenitus*. Irenaeus, who wrote *Against Heresies* (in the second century—some 200 years before Jerome, speaks of the “only begotten Son” from the word *unigenitus* (Vol. IV, 20,6). Then, there was the Nicene Creed of 325 A.D. which more than once speaks of “the only begotten” Son of God. These two pieces of evidence prove conclusively that Jerome is not the father of “the only begotten” concept, but it was a truth written and read long before his time. This means that the basis for “unique” is fraudulent, and should not be believed. Search for truth should cause us to go back as far as we can in the use of words.

Something of very special interest is noted in all three contexts of John's reference to the only begotten Son of God. First, in John 1:12-13, he refers to believers who are “born” (Gr. *gennaō*) of God, and based upon that revelation of this being from the “will of God”, **immediately** refers to the conception of Jesus (v. 14). Second, in John 3:3-7, John speaks of those who are “born again” (Gr. *gennaō*) of the Spirit and water, and **immediately** speaks twice of Jesus having been “begotten” of God (vs. 16, 18). Third, in 1 John 4:7 John refers to believers who are “born of God” (Gr. *gennaō*), and **immediately** refers to Jesus as the “begotten” of the Father (v. 9). Isn't it interesting to note how John associates both begettals in the same context—every time he writes of the “begotten” Son of God? Jesus **and** Christians are all begotten of God. Jesus was begotten of God by means of the Spirit overshadowing Mary to cause her conception to bring about His birth. He is the “only” One ever, or ever to be, begotten in this manner. Today, Christians are begotten of God through another action of the Spirit, in the word of the Gospel. The Spirit is involved in all these births, while it was a *direct* action in Luke 1:31-35, and an *indirect* action through the word of God in the lives of believers from the first century on. Paul said he had “begotten” the Corinthians through the Gospel (1 Cor. 4:15). James said God begets us through the word (Jam.1:18). Peter said we are born (begotten, ASV) again of “incorruptible seed, the word of God” (1 Pet. 1:23). The comparison is surely not accidental, but confirming of Jesus' incarnation.

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Works Cited

1, 2 Michael Marlowe, *The Only Begotten Son*, www.biblesearcher.com