

ONLY BEGOTTEN SON—BEGOTTEN SONS

In two previous articles we examined the efforts of some to put away the idea of Jesus' being the "only begotten" Son of God, and just make Him a "son" or "one of a kind." We also looked at the efforts of one to show that Jesus was "figuratively" begotten also in His Resurrection, Coronation and Ordination. It is not enough to reach the conclusion that He is God's Son, when in fact, as we describe this relationship, we note that He **is** God's Son **because** He was "begotten" of God. It was foretold in the Old Testament that Jesus would be "begotten". "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (Psa. 2:7). This passage is often quoted in the New Testament, along with other passages in the book of John to identify Jesus as that begotten Son. (The passages are: John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; 1 John 4:9; Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5,6; and Rev. 1:5). The word *begotten* is used a total of 10 times in these passages. The word *monogenes* is used in the first 6 references and once in reference to Isaac in Hebrews 11:7. Three times it comes from *protokos* (i.e. the Hebrew references and Rev. 1:5). The words "only begotten" come exclusively from *monogenes*, which is the word under consideration in this study, but we do find that "begotten" is also used 3 times in 4 of the above verses that include a reference to Jesus or someone else in some manner. *Monogenes* **is** used in a few other places that have no direct bearing on our subject.

Some have contended that since the Spirit overshadowed Mary, that such made the Spirit the "Father" of Jesus. If so, some questions are in order.

- 1) Did not the Father **send** the Spirit upon the apostles, when it was **not** the Father Himself who came?
- 2) Why is the Spirit who **was** sent by the Father, never called "the Father"? John. 14:26
- 3) Was not the Spirit doing the Father's will in both instances?
- 4) Why is it said that **we** are born of God, when actually we are begotten by the Spirit's word? (John 1:12, 13; 1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Pet. 1:23)

Gabriel said Jesus would be **called** "the Son of the highest" (being the Father), **or** He would be "the Son of God." We are children of God (or the "Highest," being the Father). "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the **highest**: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful as your **Father** also is merciful" (Luke 6:35, 36). Do **we** have two heavenly Fathers—Jehovah God **and** the Holy Spirit? No! Did **Jesus** have two Fathers—the Spirit, and the One He addresses as Father when referring to the fact that **that** Father would send the Spirit (another Father)? No! When we address "Our Father which art in heaven, we are not addressing the Holy Spirit **or** the Son of God, for we pray in the "name" of Jesus, according to the instructions of the Spirit in the scripture. Are **we** (being children of the Highest), children of the Holy Spirit because we are begotten by the Spirit's word, the gospel. No!

The following two quotes from Foy E. Wallace Jr. should be considered. "In John 3:16 the word is used to express the special act of creation necessary to send 'his only begotten Son' into the world through the virgin Mary"(231). "The God of Adam could create the condition in Mary to thus produce 'his only begotten Son.' In the process of that word *Genomai* from which begotten is derived—it means *bring into being*, and it

was this 'power of the Highest' that brought 'his only begotten Son' into being in the

body of the virgin Mary” (231).

Jesus was fleshly as the Son of God, and we are born *spiritually* as children of God. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:7). Jesus was begotten through the Spirit’s overwhelming Mary and enabling One to be born physically, while we are begotten by the Spirit’s word, or the gospel (1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Pet. 1:23). This is in our conversion, as we become Sons of God. Though we be brethren with Jesus (Heb. 2:10, 12), we are not children of God in the same sense in which **Jesus** was the Son of God. He was not converted by the gospel to become God’s Son, and neither are we born to Mary or any other woman by the overshadowing of the Spirit to bring about a physical birth. Note the following chart that contrasts the conception and birth of Jesus, with our spiritual birth.

GOD
SPIRIT---Luke 1:35
(Seed)
WOMB---Luke 1:31
The Son of God. Luke 1:35
“only begotten”
(John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; 1John 4:9)

GOD
SPIRIT---1 Pet.1:23
(Word)
HEART---Luke 8:10-12
Sons of God. 1 John 3:2
“begotten”
(1Cor. 4:15; Jam. 1:18; 1Pet. 1:3,23; 1John 5:1)

Remember, **BB** (identified in our first article) admits that Jesus **was** the literal Son of God by means of His physical birth. Yet, he says we cannot apply the word “only” to Jesus and not to us also, for we are **all** children of God. Yes, we (who obey the gospel) **are** all children of God, but Jesus is the Son of God in a different way than **we** are children of God. **BB** further says, “But to say that Jesus was 'the only begotten Son of God' (as in the KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB) in John 3:18 is to contradict the verses that say that all Christians are 'begotten' of God (1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18), and the verse that says Jesus had 'many brothers' (Romans 8:29)” (6). **BB** rejects the scholarship of the 148 who translated the KJV and ASV into English, as well as those who translated the NKJ and NASB. In describing those who translated those born again, John records that it is “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh,” while Jesus was made flesh in His incarnation. We are no more God’s children literally than Jesus is the Son of God **figuratively**.

To say Jesus was the “only begotten Son of God is to describe the virgin birth. *Monogenes* admittedly is used to describe Isaac in Heb. 11:17, as the “only begotten son” of Abraham. We need to remember that Isaac was the “only begotten son” of **promise**, as well as being “the only begotten son” of Abraham through Sarah at this time. Abraham later had other children, but they were **not** “children of promise” (Gal. 4:28-29). *Monogenes* is also used in Luke 7:12; 8:42 and 9:38, but in **each** instance it refers to the “only” child of the person identified. Jesus is the **only** One who is ever said to be the “only begotten” **of the Father in heaven**. Sure, Mary had other children, but none of them were begotten of God. They were begotten by Joseph.

As Roy H. Lanier Sr. stated, “Jesus became the Son of God by the incarnation in Luke 1:35.” (231) Remember, the angel said that the Holy Ghost would overshadow Mary, and that which would be born “shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). So, when He was **born**, He became the Son of God. Lanier continues, “So, 'the holy thing' cannot refer to Jesus in His pre-existence state as the Son of God; it simply says that the human side, the humanity, of Jesus is to be called the Son of God, or rather that Person born of Mary is to be called the Son of God.” (231) Then Lanier continues in the

same paragraph, "And being the 'only begotten,' he is the *only* one who ever was, or ever shall be born in the manner in which he was born. Jesus was 'the only begotten Son of God' in the manner, or in a sense, that no other human being ever was or ever can be" (231). So, Jesus was never "figuratively" begotten, either in heaven or on earth. He had no beginning in heaven, and it might be said that He was "unbegotten" while in that relationship. He was "physically" begotten through Mary, becoming the "only begotten" through Mary, becoming the "only begotten" of the Father.

We close with this quotation from J. J. Carroll, in an article in the Gospel Journal.

By whom was Jesus begotten? Was He **begotten** by God the Father through the Medium of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary? Yes. He certainly was (Luke 1:35)! Was Jesus the **only** Son begotten by God the Father in the womb of the virgin Mary? Yes. He was (Luke 1:35)! Did the Father ever beget **anyone other** than Jesus in the womb of Mary or any other woman? No. He did not! Therefore, Jesus was and is the "only begotten Son" of God (26).

To argue that Jesus was God's "only Son" or "the one and only Son" of God, is to plainly contradict other passages that tell us God had other "sons," for He does, even today (those who are begotten by the gospel). To say that He was "unique" does not tell the whole truth, for others in Biblical history have been unique in their particular mission from God. Truth is, Jesus is unique, but it is because of His birth—having been begotten by the Spirit, and born of a virgin. No one else in human history has this background. He is the "only begotten Son of God," and this should not be forgotten.

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Works Cited

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Roy H. Lanier, Sr.. *The Timeless Trinity*, Lanier Pub., Denver, Co. 1974

J. J. Carroll, *Is Jesus the Only Begotten Son of God*, The Gospel Journal, Cibola, Tx. 2003