

# What Does “MONOGENES” Mean?

In the Bible, Jesus is referred to as the “only begotten Son of God, several times. The term, **only begotten** is translated from the Greek word, **Monogenes**. Although several modern authorities claim that the word “monogenes” should be translated as, “unique” or “one of a kind,” neither the word itself nor the roots from which the word is derived lend any credence to that definition. Look at the meanings of the word, “monogenes” and the words from which it is derived and you will see what I mean. These definitions are taken from The Strongs Hebrew-Greek dictionary.

**monogenes** :- *only-born, i.e. sole:—only (begotten, child).*

(The word Monogenes is derived from the two greek words, *Monos* and *Genos* the meanings of which are given below.)

**monos** :- *remaining, i.e. sole or single; by impl. mere:—alone, only, by themselves.*

**genos** :- *“kin” (abstr. or concr., lit. or fig., indiv. or coll.):—born, country (-man), diversity, generation, kind (-red), nation, offspring, stock.*

It is clear that the word literally signifies the only one of a certain “kindred” (family stock) or of a person’s generation. The word *genos* is of the same root from which we get words such as “genes,” “genealogy,” “generation,” etc.

Since the word *monogenes* appears in the New Testament only nine times and those nine usages are the basis upon which we must form our conclusion as to what the word really means, then we need to ask the question, does the word mean a “unique” son or child in the sense of one who is an offspring by some process other than birth? The *Grace Theological Journal* says,

*“The word translated “only begotten,” (monogenes) is used nine times in the New Testament. It is used in reference to a certain widow’s son (Luke 7:2), to Jairus’ only daughter (Luke 8:42), and to another only child (Luke 9:38). It is used five times in reference to Christ (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9), and once in referring back to an Old Testament character (Heb 11:17).*

*The Greek translations of the Old Testament (Septuagint, Aquila, Symmachus) also employ the word nine times, each time translating a form of the Hebrew word ‘yahid.’ Each one of these occurrences refers to an only child, seven of them to an only child in the ordinary sense. But twice the term is used of Isaac the son of Abraham (Gen 22:2, Aquila; 22:12, Symmachus) . . . . “*

The fact is that in every single usage of the word, *monogenes*, in both the Old Testament (the Septuagint Greek version) and the New Testament, the word refers to a child who was literally born of the parents. It always signified a **filial** relationship. It never referred to an adopted or designated child. Also, in almost every case it had reference to the only child of the parents. The only exception to this is where it refers to Isaac who was actually not the only child of Abraham. The theologians make much of this and use this only case as the definitive one by which they decide on the meaning of the word, “monogenes” (because it fits with their ideas). In

doing this they ignore the great majority of cases. And yet, even in the case of Isaac it is not difficult to see why Isaac is referred to as Abraham's monogenes. He was the only legitimate one as far as both God and Abraham were concerned. God's words to Abraham when He instructed him to sacrifice Abraham were, "take now thy son, thine only son whom thou lovest . . . ."

Of course, we also need to remember that Isaac was the *literal* son of Abraham. In every single case in the Bible the term **monogenes** has reference to a truly begotten child.

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*While Allen Stump and I (David Clayton) were in Tasmania last year we had the pleasure of spending a few days with Brother Paul Borg and his lovely family. His wife Helen is of Greek descent and is from a family where Greek is the language naturally spoken. It was of interest to us to hear her say that she had always understood the word "monogenes" to mean "begotten" or "born of," and that this was how the word had always been understood by her people. The following excerpt from an article by Scott Jones (found on the internet) is interesting in light of this. It is interesting to note that in spite of this defense, Mr. Jones is a Trinitarian (!!)*

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**DEFENSE OF MONOGENES - <http://textus-receptus.com/wiki/Article: Definition of Monogenes by Scott Jones>**

**by Scott Jones**

It is well-known among native Greeks that modern Greek morphology is virtually identical to Koine/Biblical morphology. That means the language has been relatively stable for the past two thousand years and thus the definitions have undergone virtually no change as well.

.... Native Greeks have been reading the scriptures in **GREEK** - their own mother tongue - for the past two thousand years. They understand their own language better than Anglo-bible scholars and modern version translators who can't speak Greek, even though these Anglo-bible scholars and modern version translators who can't speak Greek continue to darken counsel by words without knowledge in their perennial boasts of understanding a language they can't even speak.

Following their own vain imaginations down the corrupt path of their own inner delusions in their never-ending and systematic attempt to devalue the Eternal Son of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, the modern Anglo-Sanhedrin states that *monogenes* means *unique*. Of course, only a non-Greek speaker or someone with a *huge* theological bent would make such an uninformed statement, as the Greek language has had a different word for *unique* for more than two thousand years.

That word is *monadikos* and it antedates Christianity, having been employed by Aristotle, Philo, and others. The Greek word *monadikos* means *unique* or *one of a kind* and nothing else, as native Greeks know. Its morphology hasn't changed in over two thousand years. *Monadikos* is the word that Greek speakers have been using for *unique* for more than two thousand years, and it is the word native Greeks still use today when they want to say *unique* or *one of a kind*.

Neither has the morphology of *monogenes* changed in over two thousand years, and *monogenes* has always meant *only begotten* or its equivalent.

Just as *only begotten* is not equivalent to *unique*, so *monogenes* is not equivalent to *monadikos*. The Greek word *monogenes* does *not* mean *unique*, nor has it ever. The Greek word *monadikos* means *unique*. It has *always* meant *unique*.

Had the writers of the New Testament wanted to say *unique*, they would have used the Greek word which means *unique* – *monadikos*.

The reason the writers of the New Testament didn't employ *monadikos* when they penned the New Testament is simple – because the writers of the New Testament didn't mean *unique*. The writers of the New Testament meant *only begotten* or its equivalent. That's why they used the word *monogenes* instead of *monadikos*.

According to both history and native Greeks themselves, the Greek word *monogenes* means *only begotten* or its equivalent, and it has always been so, notwithstanding the delusions of Anglo-bible scholars and modern version translators who can't speak Greek.

## Modern Versions

Any bible version which translates *monogenes* as *unique* or *one and only* or *one of a kind* - in short, any bible version which forces generational descent out of the semantic domain of *monogenes* - has grossly blundered, especially in those passages relating to the eternally begotten Son of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, since the eternal generation of the Son – that is, the *only-begottenness* of the Son, ergo, the eternal *begetting* of the Son - the very *action of begetting*, and begetting *eternally* - thus establishing *consubstantial identity* - a *begetting*, as the Scripture so plainly reveals to the truly born again, which happens to be *the* cardinal revelation undergirding the Trinity, thereby fixing the Godhead of Jesus Christ immutably, a fixing which only *begetting* can achieve - which begetting *alone* can achieve, this *begetting* thereby *defining* the Trinity and giving it form - that is, this *begetting* revealing the *doctrine* of the Trinity itself, a doctrine that would be forever hidden and withheld from men and angels alike were it not revealed by the Holy Ghost that the Eternal Son of God was *begotten*, and begotten *eternally* from the *same substance* as the Father and the Holy Ghost. But alas, the Trinity is nevertheless a doctrine that modern bibles and modern theologians habitually assail with unrelenting malice - one example being their iniquitous attempt to redefine *monogenes*, as shown here (but only one example of *many*) - even though these same theologians and scholars protest and claim otherwise - some of them even claiming to believe in the Trinity - yet never realizing that their own syntax and verbiage betrays them (blind leaders of the blind) and warns the truly born again that these false teachers are themselves unregenerate.