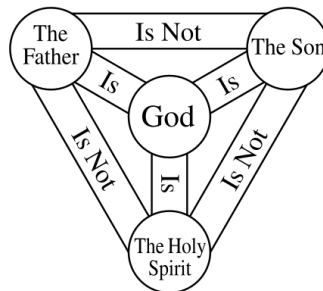


Only Begotten, Unique, or Something More
A Word Study of *Monogenes*

- 1) What does it SAY?
 - a) The Greek word *monogenes* is found 9x (4x in the canon) in the Septuagint (Greek OT). It is a translation of the Hebrew *yahid* [Strong’s # 3173].
 - i) Judges 11:34—lit. *his one and only child*
 - ii) Ps. 21:21 (Eng. 22:20)—*my precious (only) life*
 - iii) Ps. 24:16 (Eng. 25:16)—*desolate, lonely, alone*
 - iv) Ps. 34:17 (Eng. 35:17)—*precious, only*
 - b) The Greek word *monogenes* [Strong’s 3439] is found 9x in the NT
 - i) Luke 7:12—*the only son*
 - ii) Luke 8:42—*an only daughter*
 - iii) Luke 9:38—*my only child*
 - iv) John 1:14—*the only begotten*
 - v) John 1:18—*the only begotten*
 - vi) John 3:16—*His only begotten*
 - vii) John 3:18—*the only begotten*
 - (1) Some Greek texts read *only begotten Son*.
 - (2) Some Greek texts read *only begotten God*.
 - viii) Heb. 11:17—*his only begotten*
 - ix) 1 John 4:9—*His only begotten*
- 2) What does it MEAN?
 - a) There is a debate concerning the root of this term
 - i) Some argue *-genes* comes from *gennaō*, meaning “to beget, to father.”
 - (1) Relationship: this emphasizes the Son’s eternal generation by the Father.
 - (2) Our English words *generation* or *generates*.
 - (3) Rolland McCune (*A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity*, vol. 1) writes: Theologically, however, the connection between the divine essence of Christ and His sonship is eternal generation, the eternal *sonning* of the Son.
 - (a) This emphasizes His essence and person, not His ministry self-humiliation, or some calendar event.
 - (b) The **internal** activity of the Trinity (the eternal trinalizing of the essence) precedes their **external** activity (their transitive work in the temporal sphere via the functional order of economy).
 - (4) When did the Second Person become the Son?
 - (a) He has eternally been the Son.
 - (b) Other views that say His Sonship is temporal:
 - Before Creation
 - At His Incarnation
 - At His Immersion

- At His Resurrection
 - ii) Others argue *-genes* comes from *genos*, various meanings "race of people, kind of people, descendent, lineage".
 - (1) Nature: this emphasizes the Son's distinguishing characteristics, His unique kind or class
 - (2) Our English word *genus*.
 - b) Both terms come from the same root *ginomai*, meaning "become, be born."
- 3) How does it APPLY?
- a) A summary of the so-called *Athanasian Creed* (ca. 400's AD) states:
 - i) The Father is made of none; neither created, nor begotten.
 - ii) The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created; but begotten.
 - iii) The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten; but proceeding.
 - iv) Thus, there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.
 - b) The *Shield of the Trinity* (ca. 1200's AD):



- c) There was never a time (in eternity or in time) when the Son was not.