

Studies in the Usage of the Greek Word *Μονογενής*

As Found in the Gospel of John, the Epistle to Hebrews,
First Clement and Other Sources

Variously Translated as Only-Begotten, One of a Kind, and One and Only

B.P. Harris

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*“No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who
is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.”
John 1:18*

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A Quiet Revisionism and Two Common Misunderstandings Concerning the Greek Word *Monogenes*

A Revisionism

A quiet revision has occurred in a well-known Greek lexicon – Liddell and Scott – regarding the Greek word *monogenes* (μονογενής). In 1883 the Liddell and Scott Greek Lexicon, published by Harper & Brothers, defined *monogenes* in this way:

“**μονογενής, ἕς**, (S, Ep. and Ion. (μουνογ-: *only-begotten, single, παῖς* Hes. Op. 374, Th. 426, Hdt. 7. 221, etc. ; μ. αἷμα *one and the same blood*, Eur. Hel. 1685. Adv. - γῶς, growing alone, Arr. Peripl. M Rubri p.n.”¹

However, the newly revised Liddell and Scott Greek Lexicon that is now available online defines *monogenes* in this way.

“**μονο-γενής, ἕς**, Ep. and Ion. μουνο-γενής, (γένος) *the only member of a kin or kind*: hence, generally, *only, single, παῖς* Hes.Op.376, Hdt.7.221, cf. Ev.Jo.1.14, Ant.Lib.32.1; of Hecate, Hes. Th.426. 2. unique, of τὸ ὄν, Parm. 8.4; εἷς ὅδε μ. οὐρανὸς γεγονώς Pl.Ti.31b, cf. Procl.Inst.22; θεὸς ὁ μ. Sammelb.4324.15. 3. μ. αἷμα *one and the same blood*, dub. 1. in E. Hel.1685. 4. Gramm., having one form for all genders, A.D.Adv. 145.18. 5. name of the foot, Heph.3.3. II. Adv. μονογε-νῶς, φέρεται μ. ἐν ἐνὶ τόπῳ *grows only in one place*, Peripl.M.Rubr.56, cf. 11. 2. in a unique manner, Aët. 15.13,14.”²

As you can see, the definition of the word has changed, leaving not a trace of the original meaning of “only-begotten.” A modern reader would have no clue that originally Liddell and Scott understood the word to also mean *only-begotten*. And what is so ironic is that some of the same references that were used to show that the word meant *only-begotten* are now used to support the new meaning of *only member of a kin or kind*.

For instance, Hes. *Op.* 376 (374) is used to support both meanings. However, when we actually look at the text we find out it cannot support the new meaning which they have assigned to *monogenes*.

The Greek text is as follows.

“...μουνογενής δὲ πάις εἷη πατρώιον οἶκον φερβέμεν ὧς γὰρ πλοῦτος ἀέξεται ἐν μεγάροισιν. γηραιὸς δὲ θάνοις ἕτερον παῖδ' ἐγκαταλείπων.”³

¹ Liddell, Henry George, Scott, Robert, Greek-English Lexicon, Seventh Edition (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1883), pg. 976

²Sourced.from:<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.057%3Aentry%3Dmonogenh%2Fs>

³Sourced.from:<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0131%3Acard%3D370>

And in English it would read:

“And might there be an only-begotten son to feed his father’s house, for, as such, possessions will multiply in your dwelling. Moreover, by allowing another child, you may die [ripe] in old age.”⁴

A. W. Mair, Professor of Greek at Edinburgh University, translates it this way.

“May there be an only born son to feed his father's house: for so is wealth increased in the halls. But late be thy death if thou leave a second son.”⁵

And, Willem Jacob Verdenius, professor of the Greek Language at the University of Utrecht, makes this comment as to whether the translation of *monogenes* should be “only-begotten” or “only member of its kin.”

“376: μονογενής. Not ‘the only member of its kin’ (LSJ) but ‘only-begotten’: cf. A. Ag. 898 μονογενές τέκνον πατρι, Pl. *Criti.* 113 d 2 μονογενή θυγατέρα ἐγεννηζάσθην. Although the advice has a general purport, Hes. may be thinking of the fact that his personal difficulties would not have arisen if he had been an only child himself.”⁶

Monogenes cannot mean “only member of a kin” in this context. Now, let’s leave aside the latter part of this text; it makes no difference if the advice is to only have one child, or to have more than one child. The point is if we translate *monogenes* by the new meaning it does not fit the context of the passage, for the first part of the passage would then read, “And might there be an “only member of a kin” to feed his father’s house.” If the son was the “only member of the kin,” who would be left for him to feed? Not only would his father’s household have to be dead, but his own father would also have to be dead, if, indeed, he was the *only member of the kin!*

The only way this new meaning, which has been assigned to *monogenes* would work, would be for the son to be the only one that was living, and that, of course, would make the rest of the passage nonsensical. Nor would it make a difference if one just translated it as “only,” for the general meaning of “only” is still rooted in the meaning of “only member of a kin” according to the definition in Liddell and Scott. In other words, you might solve the problem from an English point of view, but it would do nothing from a Greek

⁴ The word I loosely translated “allowing,” is the Greek word ἐγκαταλείπων which I take to mean within the context, that one does not kill but leaves or allows a second child to live. It must be remembered that sometimes infanticide was practiced. I think what this passage is saying is that if you allow yourself another child, then another child would be there to help take care of the father in his old age, thus allowing him to live to a ripe old age.. The broader context of the passage is talking about the proper way to gain wealth without offending the gods, especially Zeus. In either case, the context would nullify the thought of “only member of a kin.”

⁵ Hesiod, Mair, A. W. (Aberd. Et Cantab.) *Hesiod, the Poems and Fragments, Done into English Prose with Introductions and Appendices*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1908), pg. 14

⁶ Verdenius, Willem Jacob, *A Commentary on Hesiod: Works and Days*, Vv. 1-382 (E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1985), pg. 180

point of view. In Greek, the word would still carry the idea of “only member of a kin,” (that is, according to the new revisers of Liddell and Scott).

Now I know some may say, “Well, yes but the word means the ‘only *other* member of a kin,’ i.e. it excludes the immediate family.” That is well and find and that is what they would have to believe in order to make the new definition make sense, but that is not how the revised Liddell & Scott lexicon defines the word, and that is not what the word means. The lexicon says it means “only member of a kin.” There is no sense of “other” in the word.

If one wanted to clearly communicate the thought of “other” with their new definition, perhaps, it could have been written, ὁ μόνουγενῆς σου δὲ εἶη πατρῷον οἶκον φερβέμεν (And might there be a only member of thy kindred to feed the father’s household). But, if you think about it, that still wouldn’t make sense. If “other” excludes the immediate family, it would mean that the “only other member of a kin” would have to be some distant relative. It could not even be the father’s own son! But the context contradicts that notion because it speaks of him as being the father’s child, as would be a second child.

So any somersault that is made to try to make the new definition fit ends up contradicting the text.

Monogenes, as they define it, could only refer to someone like an orphan, one who had no mother, father, or other relative, one who was the “only member of a kin.” Yet, one finds that the usage of *monogenes*, in almost every occurrence, disallows such a meaning for there always seems to be other kindred involved. The word simply cannot mean “only member of a kin.”

The only way this passage in Hesiod can really make sense is if one understands *monogenes* as *only-begotten*, exactly as Liddell and Scott had originally defined the word; yet to the unsuspecting reader of the revised lexicon, this original meaning has been eliminated and the new definition has replaced it. And, not only that, it claims support for the new meaning, by a text that was used to support the old meaning, which in reality is a text that disproves the new meaning!

You can see for yourself, dear readers, a revisionism has occurred in the treatment of the Greek word *monogenes* but, unfortunately, many readers will not be able to look up the supposed references to see if the new meaning is correct. (In fact, I was not able to locate the other references in Greek in order to ascertain their claim, and so we are at a disadvantage, but the one listed above is enough to demonstrate the fact of the matter).

A Common Misunderstanding

But this negation of the meaning only-begotten is supposedly affirmed by even other literature. For example, another popular claim that is repeated over and over is that Josephus' use of *monogenes* in Ant. 20:20 (Book XX, Ch.2:1) precludes any meaning of only-begotten. The assertion is made that Monobazus, the king of Adiabene had a son named Izates who Josephus calls *monogenes*. Yet the passage plainly states that Monobazus had other children, therefore, *monogenes* could not mean "only-begotten."

The most common translation of this passage is that by William Whiston.

"18 Monobazus, the king of Adiabene, who had also the name of Bazeus, fell in love with his sister Helena, and took her to be his wife, and begat her with child. But as he was in bed with her one night, he laid his hand upon his wife's belly, and fell asleep, and seemed to hear a voice, which bade him take his hand off his wife's belly, and not harm the infant that was therein, which, by God's providence, would be safely born, and have a happy end.

19 This voice put him into disorder; so he awoke immediately, and told the story to his wife; and when his son was born, he called him Izates.

20 He had indeed Monobazus, his older brother, by Helena also, as he had other sons by other wives besides. Yet did he openly place all his affections on this his only-begotten son Izates, 21 which was the origin of that envy which his other brothers, by the same father, bore to him; while on this account they hated him more and more, and were all under great affliction that their father should prefer Izates before them all."⁷

The problem, however, is that Josephus does not say that at all! Let's examine the underlying Greek text.

"18 μονοβαζος ο των αδιαβηνων βασιλευς ω και βαζαιος επικλησις ην της αδελφης ελενης αλους ερωτι τη προς γαμου κοινωνια αγεται και κατεστησεν εγκυμονα συγκαθευδων δε ποτε τη γαστρι της γυναικος την χειρα προσαναπαυσας ηνικα καθυπνωσεν φωνης τινος εδοξεν υπακουειν κελευουσης αιρειν απο της νηδους την χειρα και μη θλιβειν το εν αυτη βρεφος θεου προνοια και αρχης τυχον και τελους ευτυχους τευξομενον

19 ταραχθεις ουν υπο της φωνης ευθυσ διεγερθεις εφραζε τη γυναικι ταυτα και γε τον υιον ιζατην επεκαλεσεν

20 ην δε αυτω μονοβαζος τουτου πρεσβυτερος εκ της ελενης γενομενος αλλοι τε παιδες εξ ετερων γυναικων την μεντοι πασαν ευνοιαν ως εις μονογενη τον ιζατην εχων φανερος ην

21 φθονος δε τουντευθεν τω παιδι παρα των ομοπατριων αδελφων εφρευτο κακ τουτου μισος ηυξετο λυπουμενων απαντων οτι τον ιζατην αυτων ο πατηρ προτιμωη"⁸

When one looks closely at the Greek text one notices that the particle *ως* in the phrase *ως εις μονογενη* has been forgotten in the common translation. The little word *ως* is a particle denoting comparison. Josephus is simply saying Izates was being shown preference "as if" he was an only-begotten child. He is not declaring he was an only-begotten child.

⁷ Whiston, William, Trans., *The Complete Works of Josephus*, (Kregal Publications, Grand Rapids, MI 49501), pg. 415

⁸ A confirmation for this Greek Text can be found at: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/>

Therefore, the phrase should be understood in this sense. "...however he was having open [love], [showing] Izates all favour, like unto an only-begotten son." Thus, if I was using, the traditional translation above, I would modify it to read,

"20 He had indeed Monobazus, "this older [child] of Helena also," as he had other sons by other wives besides. Yet did he openly place all his affections on Izates, as on an only-begotten son."

However, if one disagrees that ὄς is being used as a comparative, the context still indicates Izates may still have been "monogenes" in the traditional sense of *only-begotten* simply because it seems Monobazus was a half-brother of Izates.

Notice in the Greek that Josephus does not clearly say Monobazus, (the sibling), was the elder *brother*, but simply the elder [child] of Helena. So when one reads the context it seems Izates is the only child of Monobazus, (the father), with Helena together. The narrative implies Monobazus fell in love with his sister, married her, and then had their first and only child named Izates. Afterwards, Josephus adds some new information that Helena had another child also name Monobazus, more than likely from a previous husband.

Therefore, it seems Monobazus may have been the adopted father of Monobazus (the half-brother) of Izates, and not the real father. In other words, even though Monobazus (the senior) had other children, Izates was indeed the "monogenes," the only-begotten child of Monobazus that he ever had with his wife (sister) Helena. Her other child Monobazus, (probably named after another family member), would have been Helena's son from previous marriage.

In this sense, Josephus would be using "monogenes" the same way the writer of Hebrews may have used the word. Isaac, obviously, was not the only-begotten son of Abraham, but he surely was the only-begotten son of Abraham and Sarah together.

It should be remembered that "monogenes" was used from three different perspectives in the Bible, at least from the time period from the LXX to the GNT. 1) Monogenes was used "of a father – the father's perspective (e.g. Jud. 11:34). 2) Monogenes was used "of a mother" – a mother's perspective (Lu. 7:12). 3) Monogenes was used "of a father and mother together" – a husband and wife perspective (Heb. 11:17).

Obviously, Josephus was not using the first perspective, for he tells us that Monobazus had other sons by other wives, neither could he be using the second perspective for he tells us Helena had another child, also by the name of Monobazus. However, the context seems to imply Monobazus and Helena

had only one child together – Izates, so he was more than likely using the third perspective if he was not using ὥς as a comparative. However, the more likely option is that he was simply using ὥς as a comparative.

Therefore, anyway you look at it; whether from the point of view of ὥς as a comparative, or from the context of the overall passage, Josephus is using *monogenes* with its traditional understanding of “only-begotten.” If nothing else, this passage does not negate the traditional understanding.

I purposely began this study with a quiet revisionism and a common misunderstanding because it sets the stage for the rest of our study. Over the last hundred or so years there has been an attack upon the traditional meaning of *only-begotten* for *monogenes*. This meaning has fallen into disfavor and it has been replaced with such meanings as *only*, *one and only*, *one of a kind*, or *unique*. But the question that must be asked, “Has this change been based upon fact, or has it been based upon theological reasoning? I assert it has been based upon theological reasoning and not upon the facts, for the facts still support the meaning of *only-begotten*.”

Why has this occurred? Simply because the modern Christian has not understood the Biblical doctrine of the Blessed Trinity and so, in his ignorance, has attempted to understand the Trinity by his logic rather than by the Revelation of God that is Scripture, rather than by the Revelation of God that is Creation (Rom. 1:20), or by the Revelation of God that is Man, he who was made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26).

The problem is that man’s logic has failed him. Just as Eve was deceived by the logic of the serpent, so too, the modern Evangelical – for this phenomenon regarding the meaning of *monogenes* is “largely” contained in the Evangelical world and not in the rest of Christendom – has been deceived.

Man’s logic cannot understand the Biblical assertion that time did not always exist, and so he overlays the concept of time over the ontological existence of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, and concludes by his logic that the Father cannot have an only-begotten Son for that would presume the Father existed before his Son.

How true is the Scripture that says the wisdom of man is foolishness before God. Because Neo-Trinitarians do not believe the testimony of Scripture, which says that time, began, they allow their logic to destroy one of the most precious doctrines in the Bible, the doctrine of the Only-begotten Son of God.

By their lack of faith they have fulfilled the proverb –

Proverbs 21:20 There is precious treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise, But a foolish man swallows it up. NASB

The doctrine of the Only-begotten is a treasure sweet upon the lips of the wise, but man's wisdom, which is foolishness before God, swallows it up. Such a one is not able to savor its sweetness.

Yes, I realize that most who deny this doctrine do so out of a desire to protect the deity of our precious Lord Jesus Christ, but they do not realize they are actually doing the opposite and are actually harming the deity of our Lord and showing dishonor to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I know such men love the Lord and are loved by those near them, but dear brethren, our love must first be to the Lord and our loyalty must first be to the One who died for us upon the tree.

It is my prayer that this study will direct the hearts of many back into the blessed doctrine of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, and that once more Christians will proclaim our Lord, He who is the Only-begotten Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, before all ages, He who was begotten, not made, being of the same substance of God the Father, the One, who in the last days, came down from heaven and was born of the virgin Mary, very God of very God, made in the likeness of sinful flesh, the One who died for our sins upon the cross, paying the debt we could not pay, and who then rose from the dead on the third day, and ascended back into heaven, one day to come back to receive us unto himself.

As we begin this study, one may find some parts to be devotional, and some to be polemical, some may appear didactical, and some may appear apologetical. But whatever it may be, I pray that it will be an edifying and illuminating study blessed by the gracious presence of the Holy Spirit.

It should be noted that I proclaim no new doctrine. I claim no special insight. I am just one who has lifted up his head to the Revelation of God in Creation, Man and Scripture delighting to see his Divine, Processional and Triune nature clearly manifested in all He has made (Rom. 1:20).

I simply follow the Word of God as it has been followed by godly men throughout the last two thousand years in regard to this Faith that once and for all was delivered to the saints. I contend for that Historic Christian Faith. I am just one of the millions who have always clung to that Faith and that blessed doctrine of the Only-begotten.

It is not me, but it is the Neo-Trinitarians who are introducing a new doctrine. I am content to remain within the fold of untold millions of Christians over the last two thousand years who have always believed in the Historic Christian Faith, especially in regard to the doctrine of the Only-begotten Son of God.

And so, it is with that doctrine that would like to begin our study, as we see that μονογενής, *monogenes*, means Only-begotten, and is the revelatory word of our Lord.

MONOGENES –THE REVELATORY WORD OF OUR SAVIOUR⁹

While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; **hear ye him.** Matt. 17:5 (NASB)

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. John 3:16 (KJV)

All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills **to reveal Him.** Matt. 11:27 (NASB)

We are told in these precious portions of Scripture that the Lord Jesus was God's "beloved" and "only-begotten" Son. As such, the Father gives the disciples a command to "hear ye him." This is the heartfelt desire of the Heavenly Father to his children. The Father has many sons (Jn. 1:12), but only one "Only-begotten" Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. As such, the Son is the only one who can reveal the true nature, character and purpose of the Father. None other can show forth the Father, for He alone is in the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). He alone exists in the form of God (Phil. 2:6). He alone is the radiance of his glory (Heb. 1:3). And He alone is the exact representation of His Person (Heb. 1:3).

God the Father desires that we listen to the Son, for only by listening to the Son can the believer come to a full knowledge of who God is according to His nature. When a believer ignores something that the Lord Jesus says, he is restricting his own growth in the knowledge of God. And when a believer nullifies or alters the words of Jesus, he not only restricts his growth in the knowledge of God, he is also stultifying his own growth into Christian maturity. Why is this so? Because Peter tells us that the grace we need for spiritual growth is intimately tied to our knowledge of God Himself (II Pet. 1:2). It is as we grow in our knowledge of our God that His grace is multiplied to us, and it is only by such a multiplication of grace that a Christian can grow into full maturity (II Pet. 3:18; Acts 20:32; cf. Lu. 2:40).

Consequently, it is very important to listen carefully to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, especially when He tells us that He is the "Only-begotten" Son of God (Jn. 3:16). These are revelatory words. Only He can give us those words of eternal life that leads to a full knowledge of God (Jn. 6:68; 17:3). Moreover, how important it is to accept them in their plain and normal sense. Only when one understands the words He gives to us, is one able to grow in

⁹ This chapter is an excerpt from: Harris, B. P., Understanding the Trinity: An Encouragement to Abide in the Doctrine in both Faith and Practice, (Assembly Bookshelf, Sacramento, 2006)

life, for light and life are always closely linked together (Prov. 16:15; Jn. 1:4; 8:12). This is an important principle. Our spiritual well-being is at stake. One will never lose his salvation from such willful ignorance of the words of our Lord, but one will certainly hinder his spiritual growth by such willful ignorance. When we understand this spiritual principle, we can understand why it is so important to contend for the Faith in these last days when some are departing from the Faith.

Scripture warns us that in the last days some Christians will depart from the Faith, and one of the biggest departures from the Historic Christian Faith is being caused by a small group of modern Christian teachers who are altering this important revelatory word of Jesus regarding his relationship to God the Father. They are telling Christians, (in books and in new translations of Scripture), that “monogenes” was misunderstood by the Greek speaking population of the early Church. They are saying that Christian ministers of the first three centuries of the Church did not understand their own mother tongue, and as such, misled generation after generation of Christians for almost 1900 years regarding this important aspect of the Faith.

What they are really claiming is that because they are now on the scene, the “true” Faith is being clarified because they have deciphered the true meaning of “monogenes.” Men, who for the most part, have English for their mother tongue are now telling us that men, whose mother tongue was Greek, did not understand their own language. Christian teachers of long ago, who grew up speaking the Greek language, who learned Greek from the time they were little children, are accused of misunderstanding their own native language. They are saying that for almost two thousand years the true Faith was withheld from the Church and that the Holy Spirit had to wait for the modern teachers to be born in order to reveal to Christians the “true” Faith.

They are in reality saying that for almost two thousand years the Church was teaching error regarding the revelatory word “monogenes,” and for two thousand years the Church did not correctly understand the true Faith! Their assertions really mean there have been no godly ministers for the last 1900 years to correctly teach the Church the truth about the Faith, but now that the new teachers are here, they are able to do so.

This betrays nothing but pride and a separation from those who have gone before. It betrays their belief that the Faith has been obscured for two thousand years and they alone are now teaching the true Faith. And it betrays their belief that our ancient brothers misunderstood the Greek word *monogenes*, thereby producing a false belief that our Lord was begotten of the Father before all time.

Dear brethren, do not be carried away by this new thinking. Hold fast to the Faith that the Holy Spirit has affirmed through untold godly men throughout all of Church History. There is overwhelming historical and linguistic

evidence that “monogenes” was used by the apostle John, indeed, by our Lord Himself, to mean “only-begotten” or “only born.” They claim otherwise, but the evidence contradicts their assertion.

Nevertheless, the new teachers continue to alter the historic definition of “monogenes,” knowing that if they successfully obscure the true meaning of this word they will be successful in obscuring the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son from the Father. (Or, perhaps, they are doing it unknowingly, nevertheless, such a view is a departure from the Faith).

I am afraid the real reason behind this attempt by modern teachers to alter the true meaning of this word is because they have already altered the definition of the Historic Christian Faith in their own minds from an orthodox viewpoint to a heterodox viewpoint.

Many of the modern teachers (Neo-Trinitarians) do not believe, (as the Nicene Creed affirms), that our Lord was begotten of the Father before all time. Perhaps, they think if they can convince Christians of this new definition and the error of the old definition, they can complete their transformation of the Historic Christian Faith into a faith of their own making.

As such, many think it is enough to say in their Statements of Faith regarding the Trinity, “We believe in one God eternally existing in Three Persons – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” This is a sufficient affirmation of orthodoxy in their estimation. (It is admitted some maintain such a Statement of Faith, unwittingly, but other do so purposely).

Dear brethren, such a statement is a **dilution** of the Historic Christian Faith. It is robbing Christians of important truths as to the eternal relationships of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. It is ignoring the words of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who told us He was the “Only-begotten” of the Father.

Compare this new, generic, one sentence Statement of Faith, to the Statements of Faith regarding the Trinity that were utilized by most Christians for almost two thousand years and you will see for yourself what is being altered or left out. You will see what doctrine is being nullified by the Neo-Trinitarians who are trying to alter the meaning of “monogenes.”

The Common Statement of Faith used Today –

“We believe in one God eternally existing in Three Persons – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,”

The Statements of Faith of Yesterday –

The Nicene Creed

“We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things, visible and

invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all time, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens, and was made flesh of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became Man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate and suffered and was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended unto the heavens and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and cometh again with glory to judge the living and the dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end: and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the Life-giver, that proceeded from the Father, who with Father and Son is worshipped together.”¹⁰

The Helvetica Confession

“We believe and teach that the one God, without separation or confusion, is distinguished in the Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; so that the Father from eternity hath begotten the Son; the Son is begotten by an ineffable generation, the Holy Spirit proceeding from both.”¹¹

The Gallic Confession

“The Holy Scripture teaches us that in this singular and simple Divine essence there subsist three Persons, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit; the Father being, in order, the first cause and origin of all things, the Son begotten from eternity of the Father, the Holy Spirit from eternity proceeding from the Father and the Son; which three Persons are not confused, but distinct; not separated, but co-essential, co-eternal, and co-equal.”¹²

The Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England

“There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men. As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also is it to be believed, that he went down into Hell. Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man's nature; wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all Men at the last day.

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance,

¹⁰ See *Documents of the Christian Church*, Henry Bettenson, ed. (Oxford University Press, London 1975)

¹¹ Treffry, Richard, *An Inquiry into the Doctrine of The Eternal Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ*, (Wesleyan Conference Office, London, 1865), pg. 469

¹² *Ibid.*, pg. 469

majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.”¹³

The Confession of the Church of Scotland

“In the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons. Of one substance, power, and eternity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.”¹⁴

The Westminster Confession of Faith

“In the unity of the Godhead there be Three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding, the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.”¹⁵

The Baptist Confession – Philadelphia Confession of Faith

“In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, (I John v.7; Matt. xxviii, 19; II Cor. X111. 14) the Father, the Word (or Son), and the Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and eternity, each have the whole divine essence, yet the (Exod. iii. 14; John xiv. 11; I Cor. vii. 6) essence undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is (John I. 14,18) eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit (John xv. 26; Gal. Iv. 6) proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore, but one God.”¹⁶

Dear reader, you can see for yourself what is being left out in most Statements of Faith today. What you see above is the Historic Christian Faith. It has always been affirmed as such. It has included the important doctrine of the Only-begotten because our Lord and the apostles revealed this truth to be part of the Faith. Now it is gone! It has disappeared from most Statements! The Faith has been transformed before your very eyes because Christians have been convinced that the doctrine of eternal generation is not biblical or, at least, not very important. However, two thousand years of Christian witness contradict such an assertion. Godly ministers generation after generation, century after century, and, indeed, millennium after millennium have declared otherwise. It is a biblical doctrine and is very important and has always been an integral part of the Christian Faith.

Now, I know many of the modern teachers are true Christians. They love the Lord. I am sure they are very affable. Indeed, they more than likely wax eloquent on other doctrines and have been a great help to many Christians.

¹³ Schaff, Philip, *The Creeds of Christendom, Vol. III*, (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1993), pg. 488

¹⁴ Treffry, Richard, *An Inquiry into the Doctrine of The Eternal Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ*, (Wesleyan Conference Office, London, 1865), pg. 470

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 607-608

¹⁶ See, *The Philadelphia Confession of Faith*, (Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc. Grand Rapids, MI)

I'm sure they are beloved by their students and by those in their churches. As such, I am sure they will be defended by such, because love produces loyalty and commitment. However, we must remember our loyalty and commitment must be first to the Lord and to His revelation. Why? Because love does, indeed, produce loyalty and commitment, and if the Lord Jesus is to be our first love, our loyalty and commitment must be first to Him.

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” Rev. 2:4

In other words, we must be first faithful to Him and to the Faith that was delivered to the Church. We must put our respect for the Lord and His Faith before any respect we might have for our Christian leaders and teachers.

It is never pleasant to confront error. In fact, it is very difficult. No one loves contention, but we must realize the Church is under an obligation from the Scripture to remain faithful to the Lord as our first love and to “earnestly contend for the Faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 1:3).

Remember the warning of the Holy Spirit. In the last day's men would depart from the Faith. This is the time when such contending is necessary. However, may we pray to the Lord that it ever be done with humility, forbearance, and most importantly with love, so that those who are in error may realize their mistake and realize that human pride is fleeting and guarded reputations are futile. May they repent of their departure.

Beloved, the Faith was already been handed down to the Church. She has affirmed it for going on two thousand years. It has never been lost. It does not need to be rediscovered.

I do not make this judgment alone. I make it as one of many who have always held to and confessed this precious doctrine of the Church down through the ages. I affirm it as one of untold millions of Christians who have always confessed this Faith. I take my stand with them.

I declare no new doctrine. I have not rediscovered some new truth. I speak with those who have gone on before me. My authority is the Word of God. My witness is the witness of tens of thousands of Christians in every generation of the history of the Church. Our confirmation is the witness of the apostles, and their confirmation is He who was from the beginning, the One who they heard, the One who they beheld, and the One who they handled with their very hands – the Word of life – the precious Lord Jesus Christ (I Jn. 1:1) – the One who revealed to them that He was the “Only-begotten” Son of God.

As for me, I will follow the teaching of the apostles and the witness of Christians for the past twenty centuries, not the teaching of modern teachers who have departed from the Faith.

May we remember the Word of God when He says, “This is my beloved Son, **hear ye him!**” And in our remembering, may we also obey His admonition, especially when He reveals to us that He is the Only-begotten “Son” of God, bespeaking His special, unique and eternal begetting from God the Father. He is the Son, begotten of the Father before all time!

Let us now look specifically at the word *monogenes*.

Various Views on the Translation of Monogenes

A common statement made today is that the Greek word *monogenes* does not mean *only-begotten*, but, (as is seen in many modern Bible translations), must mean *one and only*,¹⁷ *unique*,¹⁸ *one of a kind*,¹⁹ or *only son*.²⁰ The common verse that is used to negate the meaning of *only-begotten* is Heb. 11:17. The reasoning goes that Isaac was not the only-begotten son of Abraham; he had other children; therefore, *monogenes* cannot mean *only-begotten*. Consequently, because of this one verse, they negate the meaning of *only-begotten* in every other verse.

This is how their view would be charted out.

Suggested meaning	Negated by the following verse	Therefore must mean
Only-Begotten	Heb. 11:17	Unique

Now leaving aside for a moment the inaccuracy of their viewpoint, let's use this same reasoning and see if any one verse would negate their chosen meaning. When we do so we find out that all the other suggested meanings also have verses that would negate that meaning. See the chart below.

Suggested meaning	Negated by the following verse	Therefore must mean
Unique	Judges 11:34 (LXX)	Only-begotten
One of a kind	John 1:18 (NA27)	Only-begotten
Only Son	John 3:16	Only-begotten
One and only	John 1:18	Only-begotten

Let us now look at each one individually and then explain why Heb. 11:17 does not negate the meaning of only-begotten.

Unique – The meaning only-begotten is rejected because they say that Isaac in Heb. 11:17 was not the only-begotten son of Abraham; therefore they conclude *monogenes* must mean *unique*. Why? Because when compared with Abraham's other son, Ishmael, they say Isaac was, indeed, unique, since he was the only child of promise. They say the word *monogenes* is a comparative word. It makes a comparison with other siblings and then by some special characteristic the chosen sibling is designated *unique*, different in some way from the other siblings. Without this comparison between siblings or similar objects the meaning of "*unique*" cannot stand, for *uniqueness requires comparison*.

¹⁷ E.g. New International Version (Heb. 11:17), New Living Translation (John 3:16)

¹⁸ E.g. International Standard Version (John 1:14,18), Holman Christian Standard Bible (Heb. 11:17)

¹⁹ E.g. The Message (John 1:18), NET Bible (see footnote to John 1:14)

²⁰ E.g. English Standard Version (John 1:14), Contemporary English Version (John 1:18)

Thus, they say that the writer of Hebrews looked for a word to describe this *uniqueness*, and the word he chose was *monogenes*, thus proving the word did not mean *only-begotten*, since Isaac was not the only-begotten son of Abraham, but showing that it meant *unique*, since Isaac was the only son of Abraham that was a child of promise.

However, using that same logic, we will find there is one verse that would negate the meaning of *unique* for *monogenes*. It is Judges 11:34 in the LXX.

By their same logic, *monogenes* cannot mean *unique* because the same word is found in Judges 11:34 of the daughter of Jephthah, and, when we read Judges 11:34, we find the verse says that Jephthah had no other children!

Judges 11:34 When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, behold, his daughter was coming out to meet him with tambourines and with dancing. Now she was his one *and* only child (μονογενής); besides her he had neither son nor daughter. (NASB)

Therefore, to say that *monogenes* is a word that means *unique* because the writer of Heb. 11:17 used that word to make comparison between Isaac and the other son of Abraham, Ishmael, does not hold up. Why? Simply because the daughter of Jephthah had no other siblings, which by comparison would make her *unique*. However, the understanding of *only-begotten* for *monogenes* fits perfectly; one could say she was Jephthah's *only-begotten* daughter, and not violate the context.

Therefore, the one verse of Judges 11:34 negates the understanding of *unique*. If they allow the one verse of Heb. 11:17 to negate the meaning of *only-begotten* in all other verses, they must allow the one verse of Judges 11:34 to negate the meaning of *unique* in all other verses.

One last thing must be said about this understanding of *monogenes* before we move to the next understanding for *monogenes*. Some may say, "Well, yes, *unique* does carry the meaning of *difference based upon comparison*, but *unique* also carries the meaning of *being the only one* or *sole one*. This meaning of the word carries no sense of comparison. Therefore, the reason the writer chose *monogenes* for Jephthah's daughter was for this very fact; she was the *only one* and had no other siblings. That was, indeed, the very reason why the word *monogenes* was chosen, it means *unique*, meaning *only one*, or *sole one*."

Now, that is all well and fine. The English word *unique* does carry that additional connotation. No one will argue with that. However, if that is the meaning one wants to assign to *unique* and conversely to *monogenes* in Heb. 11:17, one must realize they have not solved anything, for did not Neo-Trinitarians reject *only-begotten* in the first place, because Isaac was not the *sole one begotten* of Abraham? Abraham had other children.

Well, if *only-begotten* must be rejected in their mind because Isaac was not the *only son* of Abraham; there was Ishmael. Would not also *unique*, (with the understanding of *sole one* or *only son*), have to also be rejected for the very same reason? Isaac was not the *sole one* or *only son* of Abraham; there was Ishmael. Abraham had other sons! And if you say, “No, he was the *only son* of promise, you are back to comparison!”

Therefore, any way you look at it, the meaning of *unique* for *monogenes* does not fit. If you choose the meaning of uniqueness by comparison, it is negated by Judges 11:34. If you say, “No, no, it means *unique* by being the *sole one*,” it is negated by the very same verse they say negates the meaning of *only-begotten* – Hebrews 11:17!

One of a kind – That brings us to the meaning of “one of a kind.” The meaning of *one of a kind* is negated by John 1:18, which says, “No one has seen God at any time; the *only-begotten* God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.” It is negated simply because the Son is not a *one of a kind* God. One can not speak of “the one of a kind God who is in the bosom of the Father,” for that would make him to be of a *different kind* than the Father, and that would be heresy. This would be the same as the heresy of Arianism, the common viewpoint of Jehovah’s Witness’ today. The Son is of the *same kind* as God the Father, not of a one of a kind. He is consubstantial with the Father. He is homoousios. He is not one of a kind God.

This meaning is also negated by many other verses, including our previous example of Judges 11:34. The only way the daughter of Jephthah could be a *one of a kind* daughter, would be for her to be of a *different kind* than her father Jephthah. In other words, her father could not be human! He could not be of the same species.

Or consider another example. Neo-Trinitarians love to use the example of the Phoenix in Clement to prove the meaning of *one of a kind*. They say there was only one Phoenix in the entire world. There were no other Phoenixes. The parent Phoenix dies before the new Phoenix is born. Thus the Phoenix was *monogenes* – *one of a kind*. Using the same logic, if Jephthah’s daughter was “one of a kind,” then no other of her species could exist. The rest of the human race would have to vanish for her to be “one of a kind,” let alone her own parents. Obviously, *monogenes* does not mean “one of a kind.”

They claim the meaning of *only-begotten* is negated by one verse, Heb. 11:17. Well, in the same way, the meaning of *one of a kind* would be negated by many verses, such as Jn. 1:18 and Judges 11:34. (To see why the Phoenix was called *only-begotten*, rather than *one of a kind*, see the chapter, *The Phoenix, Ovid, Clement, Monogenes, and Metamorphoses, A Study of First Clement 25:2*)

Only Son – Some conclude *monogenes* means, in and of itself, “*only Son*.” This meaning is clearly negated by John 3:16. John uses not only the adjective *monogenes* in the text, but he also uses the Greek noun υἱός (son). The adjective *monogenes* modifies the noun υἱός. If *monogenes* means “*only son*,” the phrase becomes nonsensical because you would be saying the adjective “*only son*” modifies the noun “*son*,” so that John would be saying God gave “his *only Son Son*.”

Also, Luke 8:42 uses *monogenes* for the daughter of Jairus. Are we to believe Luke meant to write the “*only son daughter*?” Now, of course, one would say, “That is silly. When used with the feminine gender it would mean “*only daughter*.” That is correct, but that still would not help us because Luke also includes the word θυγάτηρ, the noun for daughter. One still has the same problem as John 3:16. If *monogenes* in Lu. 8:42 means *only daughter*, Luke would still be writing “*only daughter daughter*. Nor would it help to change the meaning to “*only child*.” It still becomes nonsensical to say “*only child daughter*.”

However, since *monogenes* is an adjective, and sometimes in Greek an adjective can be used as a substantive, the noun “daughter” could be set in apposition. In that case it could work with the meaning of *only child* if that is the meaning one wished to assign to *monogenes*. It would then read “*only child, [his] daughter*. However, now you run into the same problem that Neo-Trinitarians have with Heb. 11:17, and the reason why they say it cannot mean *only-begotten*.

Neo-Trinitarians say *monogenes* cannot mean *only-begotten* because Abraham had other sons. Well, if you decide *monogenes* must mean *only child* because of the problem of John 3:16 and Luke 8:42, you do solve the problem in those verses, but now you create the same original problem Neo-Trinitarians have with *only-begotten* in Heb. 11:17.

If you say *monogenes* cannot mean *only-begotten*, because Abraham had other children, well, certainly, you cannot now say *monogenes* means *only child*. Why? Because of the same reason, Abraham had other children! You have the same problem!

So if you reject, the meaning *only-begotten* for Isaac, you would have to reject the meaning *only child* for Isaac. Therefore one can see that *monogenes* does not mean *only son*, *only daughter*, or *only child*. The only meaning that fits is *only-begotten*. God so loved the world that he gave his *only-begotten Son* – the adjective, “*only-begotten*,” modifying the noun “*son*.”

One and only – This brings us back to the most common meaning suggested by Neo-Trinitarians for the word *monogenes* – *one and only*.

John 1:18 NASB, (which reads in the NASB as the *only-begotten* God), negates this verse. Why? Because the Son is not a *one and only* God. To say that the Son is a *one and only* God would mean that God the Father could not be God, nor could the God the Holy Spirit be God, because if they were – God the Son would not be the *one and only* God! Thus, the meaning would make God, to be one God in one Person – the Son, (that is, unless one rejects the doctrine of the Trinity and adopts the doctrine of Mormonism – belief in three gods. Then one could say the second god, the Son, is a *one and only* (kind) god different from the other two gods. This, of course, is heresy). To say the Son is the one and only God destroys the fundamental doctrine that God subsists in Three Persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (See below why it must be understood in this way with the translation of *one and only*).

To get around this problem, Neo-Trinitarians, (who claim that the manuscripts that carry the variant “God” in John 1:18 are the better manuscripts than the manuscripts that carry the variant “Son”), re-introduce the concept of “Son” into the text and translate the adjective as a substantive and consider the noun, God, to be in apposition. Therefore, in the Greek they look at this way – Θεὸν οὐδείς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενῆς [υἱός], θεὸς, ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο. Therefore, they end up translating it as is done in the Today’s New International Version, “the one and only *Son*.” But because of their wrong understanding of *monogenes*, they are forced to re-introduce the variant “Son” into the text, (which they formerly did not accept). Why? To get themselves out of their theological pickle.

But God warns us to not add to God’s Word, and that is what they have to do. Now they may then say, “No we are not introducing a new word to the text. It still should read – Θεὸν οὐδείς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενῆς [υἱός], θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο. We are just saying the Greek word *monogenes* means *one and only Son*. It carries the additional meaning of “son” in the actual word, in and of itself.”

However, besides the fact of it not being true, this does not really help them, for now they are back to the same problem that occurs with the meaning of “*only Son*.” If they believe *monogenes* now means “*one and only Son*,” John 3:16 once again, becomes nonsensical. It would have to be read as “God gave his *one and only Son Son*,” or Luke 8:42 becomes, the *one and only daughter daughter*.

Moreover, going back to the meaning *one and only* God, some may argue, saying,

“I see no problem in saying that the Son is the *one and only* God. It does not mean that one then has to adopt the Mormon doctrine, or that one then has to say that God becomes *one God in one Person*. You are wrong to say the meaning *one and only* precludes the other two Persons to also be God, for

does not John call the Father the *one and only* God in John 5:44, and, yet, no one claims that verse means the Son and the Holy Spirit are not also God.”

“How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another, and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God? **John 5:44** NASB

The answer to that question is, “Yes he does call the Father a *one and only* God,” but there is one huge difference. John does not use the word *monogenes* in John 5:44. He does not call the Father (*monogenes*) *one and only* God, but rather (*monos*) *one and only* God.

Πῶς δύνασθε ὑμεῖς πιστεῦσαι δόξαν παρὰ ἀλλήλων λαμβάνοντες, καὶ τὴν δόξαν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ οὐ ζητεῖτε; **John 5:44**

This is a huge difference, as we will presently see, and to understand the difference one simply needs to ask one question, “What do Neo-Trinitarians mean by their phrase (*monogenes*) *one and only*?”

Repeatedly, Neo-Trinitarians have made the assertion that the “*genes*” in *monogenes* is related to “*genos*” meaning “kind.” (However, this is misleading; “*genos*” also means progeny or offspring. See One of a Kind vs. Only-begotten). For example, one of the leading proponents of this assertion is the Neo-Trinitarian Wayne Grudem, Research Professor, Theology and Biblical Studies at Phoenix Seminary. He says in his book on Systematic Theology the following.

“The controversy over the term ‘only-begotten’ was unnecessary because it was based on a misunderstanding of the meaning of the Greek word *monogenes* (used of Jesus in John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; and I John 4:9). For many years it was thought to be derived from two Greek terms: *mono*, meaning ‘only,’ and *gennao*, meaning ‘beget’ or ‘bear.’ Even the received version of the Nicene Creed understand it that way, since the explanatory phrases ‘begotten of the Father before all worlds’ and ‘begotten, not made’ both use the verb *gennao* (beget) to explain *monogenes*. But linguistic study in the twentieth century has shown that the second half of the word is not closely related to the verb *gennao* (beget, bear), but rather to the term *genos* (class, kind). Thus the word means rather the “one-of-a-kind” Son or the ‘unique’ Son. (See BAGD, 527; D. Moody, “The Translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version,” JBL 72 [1953], 213-19.) The idea of “only-begotten” in Greek would have been, not *monogenes*, but *monogennetos*. However, it is not impossible that the Nicene fathers in A.D. 325 and 381 would have understood *monogenes* to include the idea of “begetting,” since the word is used several times elsewhere to refer to someone who is an “only” child, and the idea of begetting could commonly be assumed to be present.”

“The fact that the word does not mean ‘the only son that someone has begotten’ can be confirmed by noticing its use in Hebrews 11:17, where Isaac is called Abraham’s *monogenes* – but certainly Isaac was not the only son Abraham had begotten, for he had also begotten Ishmael.”²¹

²¹ Grudem, Wayne, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2009), pg. 1233

This assertion, of course, is so common to Neo-Trinitarians that there is no need for more documentation, except to say that even Greek Lexicons are being changed to conform to this meaning as we have previously noted.

So we need to understand that Neo-Trinitarians have taken their stand behind the meaning “*one of a kind*.” That is their assertion as to what *monogenes* means. They claim the “*genes*” in *mono-genes* means “*kind*,” and *mono-* means “*one*,” “*only*,” or “*alone*.”

Therefore, with that realization, when we get back to our original question, one should realize that even though they might translate the word by “*one and only*,” they still understand it to mean “***one of a kind!***” To them Christ is “one and only” because he is “one of a kind!”

This point is so important. One must realize that *one and only*, when used by Neo-Trinitarians, cannot be understood to simply mean, *unique*. (That is, if they remain consistent to their claim). They are not using it in that way; they believe the underlying meaning of *monogenes* relates to “*kind*.” So, even if they want to apply the connotation of *unique* to the phrase *one and only*, one must realize that what they really mean is “*unique kind!*”

This is a dilemma of their own making. They have insisted the *-genes* in *monogenes* relates to *kind*. They have rejected two thousand years of Christian witness that *monogenes* means *only-begotten*. They cannot now hide their theological dilemma by trying to make Christians think that what they now mean by *one and only* is simply *unique*. *One and only, when used by them, means one and only kind.*

This is why their use of “*one and only*” destroys the fundamental doctrine that God subsists in Three Persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. If the Son is *one and only* because he is “*one of a kind*,” then other two Persons of the Blessed Trinity cannot be of the same kind. It turns the Son into the *one and only* God of his *kind*. This is the same heresy of Arianism or the heresy of Jehovah Witnesses, as well the heresy of Mormonism.

Therefore, getting back to John 5:44, this verse does not deliver them from their dilemma because even though in English it reads the same, it does not read the same in Greek. John 5:44 does not use *monogenes*, but simply *monos* and there is no problem using the Greek word *monos*. It can be translated as *one and only*, meaning simply *unique*, because it carries no connotation of *kind* in the word.

You see, dear reader, if John wanted to simply say that the Son was the “one and only (monos) God who dwelt in the bosom of his Father,” that would have been alright because that phraseology of dwelling in the bosom is only used of the Son within the Blessed Trinity, and in that sense the Son is, indeed, unique, and is indeed God. The Father is God, the Son is God and the

Holy Spirit is God, not three Gods but one God, and there is only one who is God that dwells in the bosom of the Father, the eternal Son.

But if that is all John wanted to say in John 1:18, he would have been careful to use the Greek word *monos*, a word that carries no sense of kind.

If he wanted to say that the one and only Son (using the variant Son), or the one and only God (using the variant God) dwelt in the bosom of the Father in John 1:18, he would have simply used the word *monos* as he did in John 5:44 and John 17:3.

In fact, other New Testament writers also use *monos* in this way.

“...μόνω σοφῶ θεῶ, διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.” **Rom. 16:27**

“To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.” **Rom. 16:27**

“Τῷ δὲ βασιλεῖ τῶν αἰώνων, ἀφθάρτῳ ἀοράτῳ μόνω θεῶ, τιμὴ καὶ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν.” **1 Timothy 1:17**

“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.” **1 Timothy 1:17**

“Ἦν καιροῖς ἰδίους δείξει ὁ μακάριος καὶ μόνος δυνάστης, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων.” **1 Timothy 6:15**

“Which He will bring about at the proper time-- He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.” **1 Timothy 6:15**

“Παρεσέδυσαν γὰρ τινες ἄνθρωποι, οἱ πάλαι προγεγραμμένοι εἰς τοῦτο τὸ κρίμα, ἀσεβεῖς, τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν χάριτα μετατιθέντες εἰς ἀσέλγειαν καὶ τὸν μόνον δεσπότην καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἀρνούμενοι.” **Jude 1:4**

“For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” **Jude 1:4**

“Μόνω θεῶ σωτῆρι ἡμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν δόξα μεγαλωσύνη κράτος καὶ ἐξουσία πρὸ παντὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.” **Jude 1:25**

“To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.” **Jude 1:25**

Or, let’s turn it around; if we look at it another way – if, and that is a big if, if John understood *monogenes* to mean the same thing as *monos*, (i.e. one and only), he would have then used *monogenes* in John 5:44 and 17:3 and not chosen a different word – *monos*.

So, the question must be asked, “If *monogenes* means *one and only*, why did he not use *monogenes* in these latter verses? If he used *monogenes* in John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18, why not continue to use it in 5:44 and 17:3? Would he not have been consistent in his terminology if he did?” The reason he did not do so is because *monogenes* does not mean *one and only*, but rather means *only-begotten*! And because those later verses refer to the Father, and not to the Son, and because God the Father is unbegotten, it would have been incorrect to say the Father was *monogenes* (only-begotten), although it would be fine to say that God the Father was *monos* (one and only). Why? Because, indeed, he is the one and only Father who is unbegotten. The Son is not unbegotten, nor is the Holy Spirit unbegotten, only the Father is unbegotten and so can be called “monos” “one and only.” In this sense, *monos*, which carries no connotation of kind, simply means *unique*, or *one and only* and refers to his subsistence, not to his substance, which is perfectly orthodox.

You see, there is no problem using *monos* to refer to God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit, because in those usages it refers to the Personhood (subsistence), and, indeed, there is *only one and only* God the Father, *only one and only* God the Son, and *only one and only* God the Holy Spirit. However, one can only use *monogenes* of the Son.

Because there are only Three distinct Persons in the Blessed Trinity, *monos* can be used of any one of the Three Persons. But, because there is only “one substance” in the Blessed Trinity, *monogenes* could not be used for a Person if it meant *one of a kind*. It could never be used for a Person for that would destroy the oneness of substance – homoousios, and make the other Persons to be of a different kind or substance – homoiousios.

However, *monogenes*, meaning only-begotten, can and is used of one of the Three Persons – the Son, for while the Father is an unbegotten and is God, and the Holy Spirit is spirated and is God, the Son is, indeed, only-begotten and is God. All Three are God, not three Gods, meaning three Divine Beings, for there is only One Divine Being, but Three who are called God because they all possess the one and the same substance – one Divine Being in whom subsists God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. The Father being of none, thus unbegotten, the Son being eternally begotten of the Father, thus only-begotten, and the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father through the Son, thus spirated.

Now, some other modern day translations, trying to get around their theological problem, are even more creative in masking the Neo-Trinitarian’s heretical concept of the word in John 1:18. Some introduce the reflexive pronoun “himself” into the text in order to extricate themselves from their theological dilemma; they say something like “the one and only Son, who is himself God.”

By reading it in that way they are using the adjective as a substantive to take the emphasis off substance and put it back on Personhood; but, dear reader, that is adding to God's Word. The Holy Spirit never inspired the reflexive pronoun himself in the text.

Michael W. Holmes wrote the following concerning this:

"In other instances, changes in the translation reflect a difference in judgment regarding how to punctuate the Greek text. In John 1:18 (monogenes Theos) both the 1973 ("God the only Son") and 1984 ("God the One and Only") versions of the NIV understand monogenes ("only" or "unique") as an adjective modifying the noun Theos. The TNIV places a comma between the two terms (understanding monogenes as an adjective functioning as a noun, with Theos in apposition with it): "the one and only Son, who is himself God."²²

However, this does not alleviate the problem. Of course, the Son is God, but it is not enough to simply say Jesus is God. Arius could agree with that statement. Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons could agree with that statement. The question remains, "What do you mean when you say, 'Jesus is God?'" If He is understood as a "one and only," or a "one of a kind" God, Arius, Jehovah Witnesses or Mormons could easily subscribe to such a statement. However, if He is understood to be of the "same kind" as the Father, the Only-begotten of the Father before all time, Arius, Jehovah's Witnesses, or Mormons could never agree with that statement.

It seems the revisers of the NIV understood their original problem and so retranslated the text twice, but in so doing, they have now introduced their own words into the text, and still have not resolved the original problem. John did not exactly write what they now translate. Instead of addressing the real problem – the wrong translation of *monogenes* – they are changing the normal Greek structure of the verse to defend a position which is indefensible.

First of all, even though they basically do not follow the Byzantine text as the underlying text of their translation, they reintroduce the word "Son" from the Byzantine text. The Byzantine text reads, "only-begotten Son." Many earlier texts read, "only-begotten God."

Now, the word, "Son," may indeed be the correct variant, yet they did not follow that variant. They adopted the variant, "God." But now it seems, because they have created a theological problem with their mistranslation of *monogenes*, they are now trying to soften their theological problem by the reintroduction of the concept of "Son" into the text, thereby taking the emphasis of "kind" off of God and putting the emphasis on the newly introduced concept of Son.

²² <http://www.christianitytoday.com/bc/2002/sep/oct/2.25.html> Copyright © 2002 by the author, Michael W. Holmes, or Christianity Today International/*Books & Culture* magazine.

This is done, not by accepting the actual variant of *Son*, but by giving *monogenes* yet another new definition in verse 18. They turn *monogenes* from an adjective into a substantive, and give it a new meaning of “*one and only Son*.” Then they insert a comma after the word “Son” to complete the transformation.

Of course, what they are now doing is introducing a new definition of *monogenes*. They have already rejected the historic definition of *monogenes* as “only-begotten,” replacing it with a definition of “*one of a kind*” or “*one and only*,” as we have already mentioned.

Now, in this verse, they are rejecting their own new definition of *monogenes*, and are introducing yet another completely different definition of *monogenes*, “*one and only Son*,” or “*unique Son*,” all because of the theological problem they created for themselves by abandoning the original meaning of “only-begotten.”

Now, of course, they are doing this in order to try to separate the two terms and make θεός in apposition. The problem is that in so doing, they are introducing more words into the text than John originally wrote. This is no mere introduction of words in order to facilitate translation. They are actually introducing words into God’s Sacred Word to change the Word, in order to try to free themselves from a theological problem they created for themselves by changing the meaning of *monogenes* from “only-begotten” to “*one of a kind*,” then to “*one and only*,” and then to “*one and only Son*.” And then they have to introduce the relative phrase, “who is himself.”

Beloved, the Holy Spirit did not inspire John to write the words, “who is himself.” They are not in the text. If this was the thought of the Holy Spirit, it would have been very easy to inspire John to add a relative phrase, “who being Himself,” which then, added with the rest of the phrase, would be translated as, “who being Himself, God, who is in the bosom of the Father,” or “who being Himself, God, the one being in the bosom of the Father.” The fact of the matter is that such a phrase does not exist in the Word of God. It is a paraphrase of the text by modern translators to correct a theological problem of their own making.

If the word, “God,” was to be understood to be in “apposition” to the word, “monogenes,” it would have been simple to use a relative phrase showing apposition. The fact of the matter is that John did not.

Now, some will say the relative phrase is not added, but is taken from the relative phrase ὁ ὢν (who is), that is already in John 1:18. They say this should be applied to θεός, rather than to the prepositional phrase that follows, but this would be highly irregular. It seems in all cases when John introduces a relative phrase by the root ὁ ὢν, and a prepositional phrase is present, the phrase is completed by the prepositional phrase (Jn.3:13, 6:46, 9:40, and

11:31). Thus the relative phrase in Jn. 1:18 should be completed by the prepositional phrase, “in the bosom of the Father,” and should not be thought to refer back to θεός – “who is God.” Therefore, the words, “μονογενής θεός,” must remain a simple adjective noun combination, with μονογενής in the attributive position modifying the noun θεός.

It would be highly unusual for John to use such an awkward construction. He is using a normal adjective noun combination, which a normal Greek reader would understand as, “only-begotten God,” or “one and only God,” or “one of a kind” God, (assuming their new definitions of monogenes).

Additionally, if the word, “God,” was supposed to be understood in apposition to *monogenes*, without the use of a relative phrase, perhaps John could have used the article before the word “God,” as was done many times in the LXX when translating, “Lord God,” two words that, indeed, are in apposition. In the Greek, the LXX usually reads “κύριος ὁ θεός” when the two words are in apposition by a ratio of almost five to one. That is not to say it cannot be in apposition without the article, but normally in the LXX it carries the article, especially if it is preceded by an adjective.

For instance, John always uses the article without fail in the book of Revelation. Consider Rev. 22:5

Revelation 22:5 καὶ νύξ οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν χρείαν φωτὸς λύχνου καὶ φωτὸς ἡλίου, ὅτι κύριος ὁ θεὸς φωτίσει ἐπ’ αὐτούς, καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων.

Revelation 22:5 And there shall no longer be *any* night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever. as an example.

Perhaps, if θεός was articular in John 1:18 like it was in the book of Revelation, it might have given the sense of apposition so desired.

Therefore, grammatically, John 1:18 should be understood as the earlier versions understood the passage. Monogenes is a simple adjective modifying Theos.

But then, with that grammatical construction, we are back to square one; we are back to the original theological problem. Christ is called an “one and only” God, a “one of a kind” God, which makes the Trinity into a Triad. It turns Trinitarianism into Tritheism.

The only way to clear oneself of the false theological implications, and remain faithful to the Greek syntax, is to understand monogenes as “only-begotten,” rather than “one and only,” or “one of a kind.” Without such an understanding of monogenes, one is left with almost a “Tritheistic” viewpoint.

The newest definition of monogenes in *Today's New International Version* is not correct, but is a theological definition adapted for the purpose of solving a theological problem of their own making. Anyway one wants to look at it, the only meaning that would fit with either variant, i.e. "God," or the variant "Son," would be the meaning only-begotten. It would then read as only-begotten God, as in the NASB, or only-begotten Son, as in the KJV or NKJV. In fact, only with the understanding of *monogenes* as "only-begotten" – an adjective modifying a noun – do all the occurrences of *monogenes* with a noun in Gospel of John make sense.

Monogenes in all its occurrences in the New Testament carries the meaning of only-begotten; it is the meaning that has been assigned to it for all of Church History. The modern attempt to change this meaning of the Greek word fails in every attempt.

Therefore, because of their misunderstanding of how *monogenes* is being used in Heb. 11:17, as we will now demonstrate in the next chapter, the suggested meaning only-begotten for monogenes is, indeed, correct and is not negated by Heb. 11:17, nor any other verse. Thus, the original chart should now be charted as follows.

Suggested meaning	<u>Is not negated</u> by the following verse, or any other verse	And, therefore must <u>still mean</u>
Only-Begotten	Heb. 11:17	Only-Begotten

Therefore, let us now explain, as we said we would, why only-begotten is not negated by Heb. 11:17.

Contextual and Grammatical Considerations of Hebrew 11:17

In order for one to understand why the meaning of *only-begotten* is not negated by Heb. 11:17, one first has to understand how the word *monogenes* is used in Scripture, at least from the time of the Septuagint until the time of the New Testament. It is used from three perspectives.

First, it is used from the perspective of a father – the father’s perspective (Judges 11:34). Second, it is used from the perspective of a mother – the mother’s perspective (Luke 7:12). And, finally it is used from the perspective of a father and a mother together – the parent’s perspective (Heb. 11:17).

The first perspective is easy to understand because that is the most common perspective. A child can be the only-begotten of a father because Scripture usually speaks of a child being begotten by the father (e.g. the genealogies of Matt. 1). However, what many Christians do not realize is the biblical concept of begottenness is also used of a mother, the second perspective. The Greek word for begat is γεννάω which is repeatedly used in the genealogical records of Matthew. It appears throughout the first chapter of Matthew in its aorist form ἐγέννησεν.

Ἀβραάμ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰσαάκ, Ἰσαάκ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰακώβ, Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰούδαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ, **Matthew 1:2**

Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judas and his brethren. **Matthew 1:2 KJV**

However, this very same word is then used in verse 16 with Mary, the mother of our Lord. Young’s Literal Translation brings this out for the English reader.

Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος χριστός. **Matthew 1:16**

And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was begotten Jesus, who is named Christ. **Matthew 1:16 KJV**

Scripture is telling us that children are begotten by mothers also. It is not a concept that is only reserved for fathers. Obviously, with our Lord, it could not be a father’s perspective because Jesus was born of a virgin. He was not begotten by Joseph. All the other fathers in Matthew chapter one are shown to have begotten their sons, but, when we get to verse 16, Matthew tells us Jesus was not begotten by Joseph, but was begotten of Mary, literally “out” of Mary; he was not begotten of Joseph! So, according to Scriptures, a son can also be begotten of his mother (also see the second perspective in Lu. 1: 57 with Elizabeth). This is the second perspective.

The third perspective is used of a father and mother together. This is the parent's perspective. This perspective is demonstrated for us in the passage before us – Heb. 11:17. Isaac was the only-begotten of Abraham and Sarah together. Yes, Abraham had other sons, but they were with other women. With Sarah he had only one son – Isaac. Isaac was the only-begotten son of “Abraham and Sarah” together. This fact is all the more brought out when we realize that Heb. 11:17 is not necessarily translated correctly for the English reader.

There is no possessive pronoun in the Greek text as is shown in the English translation. Literally, it does not say that Abraham “offered up his only-begotten,” but rather it says, Abraham “offered up the only-begotten.” Below is the verse in Greek with Young's Literal Translation, a version which brings this out.

“Πίστει προσενήνοχεν Ἀβραάμ τὸν Ἰσαὰκ πειραζόμενος καὶ τὸν μονογενῆ προσέφερεν, ὃ τὰς ἐπαγγελίας ἀναδεξάμενος.” **Hebrews 11:17**

“By faith Abraham hath offered up Isaac, being tried, and the only-begotten he did offer up who did receive the promises.” **Hebrews 11:17**

Now the question might be asked, “Then why do most English translations say ‘his only-begotten?’” The reason is because sometimes in Greek the definite article, in this case τὸν, is used as a possessive pronoun. For example, consider Mark 7:32.

“And they brought to Him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they entreated Him to lay His hand upon him.” **Mark 7:32**

The last phrase of this verse reads, “ἵνα ἐπιθῆ αὐτῷ τὴν χεῖρα.” There is not a personal pronoun present in the genitive, which is the most common way in the New Testament to show possession as we will presently see. All that is present in the phrase is the definite article. Literally, it could read “that he might lay the hand on him.” But because the context clearly shows that it is the hand of Jesus, it is translated in English “his hand” rather than “the hand.”

It is perfectly normal to understand the Greek in this way. Nevertheless, usually the way to indicate possession is to use a personal pronoun in the genitive case, so that it would read ἵνα ἐπιθῆ αὐτῷ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ, “that he might lay his hand on him.”

It is important to realize that when the personal pronoun in the genitive is missing, one does not automatically translate the definite article as a possessive pronoun. Over and over it functions just like our definite article “the.” That is why Hebrews 11:17 should not automatically be translated as “his only-begotten son.” A personal pronoun is not present. Context should determine if the article is being used in a definite way or in a possessive way. To do that, we must consider many things, but the obvious thing to consider is

how the writer using the article in the immediate context. And when we do that, we realize that when the writer wished to show possession he repeatedly used the personal pronoun in the genitive case.

In 11:4 he says, τοῖς δόροις αὐτοῦ “his gifts” or literally, “the gifts of him.” In 11:7 he writes, τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ “his household.” In 11:16 he writes θεὸς ἐπικαλεῖσθαι αὐτῶν “to be called their God.”

In every case, in the immediate context, when the writer wished to show possession he would utilize the personal pronoun αὐτός, however, when he reached 11:17 he does not use it! And, immediately after verse 17, he starts using it again!

In 11:21 he writes, τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ “his staff,” or literally “the staff of him.” In 11:22 he writes, περὶ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ “concerning his bones.” And, finally in 11:23 he writes, τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ “his parents.”

This shows the writer was not speaking in the context of “his only-begotten,” but was speaking in the context of “**the** only-begotten.” Otherwise, he would have written τὸν μονογενῆ αὐτοῦ προσέφερεν utilizing the personal pronoun αὐτοῦ like he consistently used in the verses leading up to verse 17 and in the verses following verse 17.

Therefore, because of the grammatical and contextual considerations, and because the passage is speaking about the faith of Abraham, (and of Sarah, verse 11), the verse, translated into a very literal fashion, would read,

“By faith, Abraham, being tempted, had offered Isaac, and he was offering the only-begotten, the one having received the promise.”

If we adapted the New American Standard Bible it would read:

Heb. 11:17 “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up [the] only-begotten.” (An adaption of the New American Standard Bible)

One of the earliest English translations of the Bible, the Wycliffe Bible, translated the verse in this way, (although it was based on the Vulgate).

Heb. 11:17 Bi feith Abraham offride Ysaac, whanne he was temptid; and he offride the oon bigetun, which had takun the biheestis.²³

Or we could utilize two other modern translations and/or paraphrases:

Hebrews 11:17 By faith Abraham hath offered up Isaac, being tried, and the only-begotten he did offer up who did receive the promises. (Young’s Literal Translation)

²³ Taken from:

http://wesley.nnu.edu/fileadmin/imported_site/biblical_studies/wycliffe/wycbible-all.pdf

Hebrews 11:17 By faith, Abraham, when tested, offered up Isaac, and, the only-begotten, would he have offered up, who the promises had accepted. (Rotherham Bible, 1902)²⁴

So we see Heb. 11:17 does not negate the use of “*only-begotten*” as the meaning for *monogenes*. The reason so many have not seen this truth is because the passage has been commonly translated in such way that renders the article as a possessive pronoun and not as the normal definite article plainly seen in the Greek. Unfortunately, there are not many English translations that bring this out.

Isaac was, indeed, the *only-begotten*, the *only-begotten* son of Abraham and Sarah together, and, indeed, if one prefers, the *only-begotten* of Sarah. It does not matter that Abraham had other sons. The passage is not saying that Isaac was Abraham’s “*only-begotten*” son, in and of himself. The writer of Hebrews knows Abraham had other sons. He is saying Isaac, as the child of promise, was the *only-begotten* son of Abraham and Sarah *together*, or he was saying that Isaac was the *only-begotten* son of Sarah *alone*.²⁵ Either way we see Abraham trusting God, being willing to offer up – the only-begotten – Isaac.

And so we can see that the use of this verse to negate the meaning of “*only-begotten*” for the Greek word “*monogenes*,” is based upon a misunderstanding of the concept of begottenness in Scripture and a misunderstanding of the grammatical usage of the definite article in the passage. There is nothing in the passage to negate the traditional understanding of *only-begotten*. In fact, the only translation that works with all the various uses of the Greek word *monogenes* in the New Testament is the translation “only-begotten.” It is the only understanding of the word that does not violate all the various contexts.

²⁴ Sourced from onlinebible.net website / cd rom. Used with permission. Copyright © Importantia Publishing.

²⁵ It should be noted that it is also possible that the second perspective is being used in Heb. 11:17, the mother’s perspective. Since the writer says that Abraham offered up “the” only-begotten,” and not “his” only-begotten, he may have, indeed, been thinking of Isaac as the only-begotten son of his mother. Isaac was “the only-begotten son of Sarah.” She had no other children. Therefore, the writer may have also meant that Abraham offered up “the only-begotten son of his wife – Sarah.”

THE PHOENIX, OVID, CLEMENT, MONOGENES AND METAMORPHOSES

A Study of First Clement 25:2-3

“There is a bird, which is named the phoenix. This, being the (μονογενὲς) only one of its kind, liveth for five hundred years; and when it hath now reached the time of its dissolution that it should die, it maketh for itself a coffin of frankincense and myrrh and the other spices, into the which in the fullness of time it entereth, and so it dieth. But, as the flesh rotteth, a certain worm is engendered, which is nurtured from the moisture of the dead creature and putteth forth wings. Then, when it is grown lusty, it taketh up that coffin where are the bones of its parent, and carrying them journeyeth from the country of Arabia even unto Egypt, to the place called the City of the Sun.”²⁶

I Clement 25:2-3

(J.B. Lightfoot's translation)

The epistle of Clement was written by Clement, a co-worker of the apostle Paul. He is mentioned in Philippians 4:3. This portion of his epistle is often appealed to by many Neo-Trinitarians to support the understanding of *one of a kind* for the Greek word *monogenes*. The first part of this passage is commonly translated something like, “There is a bird, which is called the Phoenix. This, being the only one of its kind, lives for five hundred years.” This is given a proof that *monogenes* should be understood as *one of a kind*. In the Greek the line appears as follows: ὄρνεον γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ προσονομάζεται φοῖνιξ τοῦτο μονογενὲς ὑπάρχον ζῆ ἔτη πεντακόσια.

This understanding of this passage is derived from the J.B. Lightfoot's translation as is shown above and from his work on I Clement. This is his note justifying his understanding of *monogenes*.

“**μονογενὲς** - alone of its kind, unique'. This epithet is applied to the phoenix also in Origen, Cyril, and Apost. Const, v. 7, and doubtless assisted the symbolism mentioned in the last note. The statement about the phoenix in Apost. Const. φασὶ γὰρ ὄρνεόν τι μονογενὲς ὑπάρχειν κ.τ.λ.. is evidently founded on this passage of Clement; comp. e.g. εἰ τοῖνον...δι' ἀλόγου ὄρνέου δείκνυται ἢ ἀνάστασις κ.τ.λ.. with Clement's language in § 26. So also in Latin it is 'unica', 'semper unica', Mela iii. 9, Ovid Am. ii. 6. 54, Lactant. Phoen. 31, Claudian Laud. Stil. ii. 417. Thus Milton Samson Agonistes 1699 speaks of 'that self-begotten bird...That no second knows nor third,' and again Paradise Lost V. 272 'A phoenix gaz'd by all, as that sole bird, When to enshrine his reliques in the Sun's Bright temple to Ægyptian Thebes he flies'. Why does Milton despatch his bird to Thebes rather than Heliopolis?’²⁷

However, this is an incorrect translation of this passage, not because some syntactical rule is ignored, but because another important rule in the determination of meaning is ignored – context. Rather, as we will presently demonstrate, the line should be translated: “For there is a bird named the Phoenix. This, being only-begotten, lives 500 years.”

²⁶ Lightfoot, J.B., The Apostolic Fathers, Part I, S. Clement of Rome, (Macmillan & Co. London, 1890), pg. 284-85

²⁷ Ibid., pg. 87

As is seen in the note above, Lightfoot gives his reasoning as to why *monogenes* should be understood as *one of a kind* by listing various references supporting his conclusion. However, even though a few pages earlier, he dissertates on many of the ancient sources leading up to the time of Clement, he completely ignores them in his note. (Some of these references will be found translated into English at the end). In his note he ignores Tacitus (56 – 117AD, and even the most important account of Ovid (43BC – 17AD) – *Metamorphoses*.

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Tacitus' *Annals* are two of the fullest accounts by a near contemporary of Clement, and yet they are completely ignored in his note, and, instead, he includes an obscure reference from Ovid's *Amores*.

Ovid *Metamorphoses* tells the story of the Phoenix as follows. This is taken from Thomas Bulfinch's translation.

"Most beings spring from other individuals; but there is a certain kind which reproduces itself. The Assyrians call it the Phoenix. It does not live on fruit or flowers, but on frankincense and odoriferous gums. When it has lived five hundred years, it builds itself a nest in the branches of an oak, or on the top of a palm tree. In this it collects cinnamon, and spikenard, and myrrh, and of these materials builds a pile on which it deposits itself, and dying, breathes out its last breath amidst odors. From the body of the parent bird, a young Phoenix issues forth, destined to live as long a life as its predecessor. When this has grown up and gained sufficient strength, it lifts its nest from the tree, (its own cradle and its parent's sepulcher,) and carries it to the city of Heliopolis in Egypt, and deposits it in the temple of the Sun."²⁸

Such is the account given by a poet.

Tacitus gives the following in his *Annals*,

"A.D. 34 Paulus Fabius and Lucius Vitellius succeeded to the consulship. In the course of the year the miraculous bird, known to the world by the name of the Phoenix, after disappearing for a series of ages, revisited Egypt. A phenomenon so very extraordinary could not fail to produce abundance of speculation. The learning of Egypt was displayed, and Greece exhausted her ingenuity. The facts, about which there seems to be a concurrence of opinions, with other circumstances, in their nature doubtful yet worthy of notice, will not be unwelcome to the reader.

"That the Phoenix is sacred to the sun, and differs from the rest of the feathered species in the form of its head, and the tincture of its plumage, are points settled by the naturalists. Of its longevity the accounts are various. The common persuasion is that it lives five hundred years, though by some writers the date is extended to fourteen hundred and sixty-one. The several eras when the Phoenix has been seen are fixed by tradition. The first, we are told, was in the reign of Sesostrius; the second in that of Amasis; and in the period when Ptolemy, the third of the Macedonian race, was seated on the throne of Egypt, another Phoenix directed his flight towards Heliopolis, attended by a group of various birds, all attracted by the novelty, and gazing with wonder at so beautiful an appearance. For the truth of this account we do not

²⁸ Bulfinch, Thomas, *The age of fable or beauties of mythology*, (Tilton and Co., Boston, 1872), pg. 413-415

presume to answer. The facts lie too remote; and, covered as they are with the mists of antiquity, all further argument is suspended.

“From the reign of Ptolemy to Tiberius, the intermediate space is not quite two hundred and fifty years. From that circumstance it has been inferred by many that the last Phoenix was neither of the genuine kind, nor came from the woods of Arabia. The instinctive qualities of the species were not observed to direct its motions. It is the genius, we are told, of the true Phoenix, when its course of years is finished, and the approach of death is felt, to build a nest in its native clime, and there deposit the principles of life, from which a new progeny arises. The first care of the young bird, as soon as fledged, and able to trust to its wings, is to perform the obsequies of its father. But this duty is not undertaken rashly. He collects a great quantity of myrrh, and to try his strength, makes frequent excursions with a load on his back. When he has made his experiment through a long tract of air, and gains sufficient confidence in his own vigour, he takes up the body of his father, and flies with it to the altar of the sun, where he leaves it to be consumed in flames of fragrance. Such is the account of this extraordinary bird. It has, no doubt, a mixture of fable; but that the Phoenix, from time to time, appears in Egypt, seems to be a fact satisfactorily ascertained.”²⁹

We see from these two accounts the idea of begottenness, which is missing from Ovid’s *Amores*.

Additionally, when we look at the greater context of Ovid’s account of the Phoenix we find that the story is placed within the context of fecundity and generation.

In his volume *Metamorphoses*, Book XV Ovid states the following:

“Bk XV: 361-390 Pythagoras’s Teachings: Autogenesis

“However if trust is only placed in proven things, do you not see that whenever corpses putrefy, due to time or melting heat, they *generate* tiny creatures? Bury the carcasses of sacrificed bulls (it is a known experiment) in the ditch where you have thrown them, and flower-sipping bees, will be *born*, here and there, from the putrid entrails. After the custom of their parent bodies, they frequent the fields, are devoted to work, and labour in hope of harvest.

“A war-horse dug into the earth is the source of hornets: If you remove the hollow claws of land-crabs, and put the rest under the soil, a scorpion, with its curved and threatening tail, will emerge from the parts interred: and the caterpillars that are accustomed to weave their white cocoons, on uncultivated leaves (a thing observed by farmers) change to a butterfly’s form, symbol of the soul.

“Mud contains the *generative* seeds of green frogs, and *generates* them without legs, soon giving them legs for swimming, and, at the same time, with hind legs longer than their forelegs, so that they are fit to take long leaps. The cub that a she-bear has just *produced* is not a cub but a scarcely living lump of flesh: the mother gives it a body, by licking it, and shapes it into a form like that she has herself. Do you not see how the larvae of the honey-carrying bees, protected by the hexagonal waxen cells, are *born* as limbless bodies, and later acquire legs, and later still wings?

²⁹ Murphy, Arthur, Tr., Cornelius Tacitus, *Murphy's Tacitus: the Eight Volumes Verbatim and Complete in One*, (Jones & Co., Tinsbury Square, 1830) Pg. 167-68

“Who would believe, if he did not know, that Juno’s bird, the peacock, that bears eyes, like stars, on its tail; and Jupiter’s eagle, carrying his lightning-bolt; and Cythera’s doves; all the bird species; are *born* from the inside of an egg? There are those who believe that when the spine decomposes, interred in the tomb, human marrow forms a snake.

“Bk XV:391-417 Pythagoras’s Teachings: The Phoenix

“Yet these creatures receive their start in life from others: there is one, a bird, which renews itself, and *reproduces* from itself. The Assyrians call it the phoenix. It does not live on seeds and herbs, but on drops of incense, and the sap of the cardamom plant. When it has lived for five centuries, it then builds a nest for itself in the topmost branches of a swaying palm tree, using only its beak and talons. As soon as it has lined it with cassia bark, and smooth spikes of nard, cinnamon fragments and yellow myrrh, it settles on top, and ends its life among the perfumes.

“They say that, from the father’s body, a young phoenix is *reborn*, destined to live the same number of years. When age has given it strength, and it can carry burdens, it lightens the branches of the tall palm of the heavy nest, and piously carries its own cradle, that was its father’s tomb, and, reaching the city of Hyperion, the sun-god, through the clear air, lays it down in front of the sacred doors of Hyperion’s temple.”³⁰

As one can see the whole story is set in the context of begetting, fecundity, generation. As such one must ask, “Why is this ignored when one tries to determine the usage of “*monogenes*” by Clement? *Monogenes* in this context must mean *only-begotten*. The Phoenix is the only-begotten offspring of its parent issuing forth from the body of its parent. It is set within the Ovid’s concept of “autogenesis.” The whole section is prefaced with, “...do you not see that whenever corpses putrefy, due to time or melting heat, they “generate” tiny creatures?” Thus, in the greater literary context, “*monogenes*,” in the Clement’s account, would not answer to the meaning “*one of a kind*,” as many claim, it would answer to the meaning of *only-begotten*.

In fact, when we consider Clement’s statement, “...For there is a bird named the Phoenix. This one, being only-begotten, lives 500 years,” we find the parallel passage, that bespeaks the same idea of begottenness in Ovid, translated by Bulfinch as follows: “...from the body of the parent bird, a young Phoenix issues forth.” And Kline translated it as follows: “...they say that, from the father’s body, a young phoenix is reborn.”

The pertinent concept in Ovid is understood by Thomas Bulfinch as “issuing forth,” and by A.S. Kline as being “reborn.” There is no concept of “*one of a kind*” in the birth of the Phoenix in either Bulfinch’s translation or Kline’s translation of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*.

Now, of course, we have been looking at English translations. Let’s look at the pertinent passage in Latin.

³⁰ *Metamorphoses* (A. S. Kline's Version),
<http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/trans/Metamorph15.htm#488378553>

“Haec tamen ex aliis generis primordia ducunt, una est, quae reparat seque ipsa reseminet, ales: Assyrii phoenica vocant; non fruge neque herbis, sed turis lacrimis et suco vivit amomi. haec ubi quinque suae complevit saecula vitae, 395 ilicet in ramis tremulaeque cacumine palmae unguibus et puro nidum sibi construit ore, quo simul ac casias et nardi lenis aristas quassaque cum fulva substravit cinnama murra, se super inponit finitque in odoribus aevum. 400 inde ferunt, totidem qui vivere debeat annos, corpore de patrio parvum phoenica renasci; cum dedit huic aetas vires, onerique ferendo est, ponderibus nidi ramos levat arboris altae fertque pius cunasque suas patriumque sepulcrum 405 perque leves auras Hyperionis urbe potitus ante fores sacras Hyperionis aede reponit.”³¹

In the Latin, we see that Latin words translated by Bulfinch and Kline are “phoenica renasci.” Renasci means “reborn.” As we said before, in this context it carries the idea of begottenness, not kind. Compare the use of ‘renasci’ in John 3:4 with the same sense of begottenness in the Latin Vulgate (1880 edition):

“Dicit ad eum Nicodemus: Quomodo potest homo nasci, cum sit senex? numquid potest in ventrem matris suae iterato introire et renasci? **John 3:4**

“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 (reborn)?” **John 3:4 KJV**

In fact, in *Metamorphoses* Ovid does not even use the word *unica* when referring to the Phoenix as he did in *Amores*, yet *Metamorphoses*, more than likely, is the account Clement was recalling, not *Amores*.

Therefore, if one wants to understand what meaning Clement had in mind when he used the Greek word *monogenes*, one should look to the fuller account in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, not to a lesser account that gives a brief reference to the bird.

Now that is not to deny that Ovid considered the Phoenix to be unique bird. He speaks of this uniqueness of the Phoenix when he uses the words *unica semper* in his work *Amores*. Below is the Latin text with the English translation.

“Siqua fides dubiis, volucrum locus ille piarum dicitur, obscenae quo prohibentur aves. illic innocui late pascuntur olores et vivax phoenix, unica semper avis; explicat ipsa suas ales Iunonia pinnas, oscula dat cupido blanda Columba mari. psittacus has inter nemorali sede receptus convertit volucres in sua verba pias.”³²

“If you can believe it, they say there's a place there for pious birds, from which ominous ones are barred. There innocuous swans browse far and wide and the phoenix lives there, unique immortal bird: There Juno's peacock displays his tail-feathers, and the dove lovingly bills and coos.”³³

³¹ <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/ovid.html>

³² <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/ovid.html>

³³ http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/AmoresBkII.htm#_Toc520535838

But this brief account in Amores does not address any of the facts recounted in Clement's story. And even if it did, *unica semper* does not mean *only one of his kind*. It simply means unique, alone. There is no connotation of *kind* (genus) in either word. The question, then, one must ask oneself is, "Why then appeal to a word in Amores to prove the meaning of *only one of a kind* for *monogenes* when there is no connotation of *kind* (genus) in either word?"

Thus, when considering Lightfoot's conclusion that *monogenes* should be translated as "*only one of a kind*" based upon the Latin words "*unica semper*" in Ovid's Amores account, one has to ask why did Lightfoot utilize the minor reference to the Phoenix, as is found in Ovid's Amores, and did not consider the Latin word *renasci* that is found in the primary account of the bird in Ovid's Metamorphoses? In fact, why did not Lightfoot even include in his note the reference to the account in Metamorphoses; it clearly is the account most like the account of Clement?

Now, of course, we will never know, for he never explained his reasoning, but if we had to choose between Ovid's Amores and Ovid's Metamorphoses as the likely source for Clement's understanding of the story, which do you suppose would be the likely candidate?

In Clement's account, he speaks about the Phoenix living 500 years. Does Amores speak about this fact? No, absolutely not, but Ovid's Metamorphoses relates this fact. Clement speaks of the Phoenix building a nest of spices. Does Amores mention this aspect? No, but Metamorphoses does. Clement says that in the fullness of time the Phoenix enters the nest to die. Amores doesn't mention this fact, but Metamorphoses does. Clement says that after the Phoenix dies another bird is begotten. Amores doesn't address this, but Metamorphoses does! And finally, Clement speaks the new Phoenix carrying the nest and the remains of its parent to a specific city – Heliopolis. Amores mentions nothing of the sort, but Metamorphoses not only speaks of the same phenomenon but even mentions the exact same city – Heliopolis!

So with this information before you, which account of Ovid do you think Clement would have had in mind, Amores, or Metamorphoses? Metamorphoses, of course, but if that is so obvious why does everyone ignore this reference when trying to determine Clement's usage of *monogenes*?

Now we certainly know that Lightfoot was aware of this other account of Ovid, but let's assume for a second that he didn't; even without that account there still would be no reason for such a one to conclude that Clement understood *monogenes* to be an equivalent to the *unica semper* of Amores. Why? First, he was not translating Ovid's Amores. There is absolutely no evidence to suggest such a thing. Therefore, it is totally false to conclude that he considered *monogenes* to be an equivalent word for *unica semper*. In fact, it is very unlikely that Clement had any text of Ovid in front of him when he was composing his epistle to the Corinthians. In our modern age of the

internet we can easily pull up the text when composing a letter and reference it directly in our composition. But it is very unlikely that Clement had a copy before him. Books were not mass published and only the rich were likely to have a private library with such a copy. As such, he must have been using his memory of the magnificent story of the Phoenix rising from the ashes, which means he was not reading, or translating, a copy of Amores with its use of *unica semper*. But if he did have some copy in front of him, it most certainly would have been Metamorphoses with its *phoenica renasci*, and not Amores with its *unica simper*, simply because, (as we have already shown), the narrative of I Clement 24:1-4 follows the narrative of Metamorphoses and not the narrative of Amores.

The second reason is because the context of I Clement 25:1-4 does not allow for the understanding of “*only one of a kind*” for *monogenes*. Clement, in the whole context, is speaking of the resurrection of Christ Jesus from the dead, and since Paul, (in one of the verse’s applications), equates the begetting of the Son in Psalm 2:7, with the resurrection of Christ Jesus in Acts 13:33, it is very likely that Clement would have had this thought in mind when he used the word *monogenes*.

“I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” **Psalm 2:7** KJV

“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.” **Acts 13:33** KJV

This emphasis on resurrection is seen when we look at the fuller account in Clement.

“Let us understand, dearly beloved, how the Master continually showeth unto us the resurrection that shall be hereafter; whereof He made the Lord Jesus Christ the firstfruit, when He raised Him from the dead. Let us behold, dearly beloved, the resurrection which happeneth at its proper season. Day and night show unto us the resurrection. The night falleth asleep, and day ariseth; the day departeth, and night cometh on. Let us mark the fruits, how and in what manner the sowing taketh place. The sower goeth forth and casteth into the earth each of the seeds; and these falling into the earth dry and bare decay: then out of their decay the mightiness of the Master's providence raiseth them up, and from being one they increase manifold and bear fruit.” Let us consider the marvelous sign which is seen in the regions of the east, that is, in the parts about Arabia. There is a bird, which is named the phoenix. This, being the only one of its kind [only-begotten], liveth for five hundred years; and when it hath now reached the time of its dissolution that it should die, it maketh for itself a coffin of frankincense and myrrh and the other spices, into the which in the fullness of time it entereth, and so it dieth. But, as the flesh rotteth, a certain worm is engendered, which is nurtured from the moisture of the dead creature and putteth forth wings. Then, when it is grown lusty, it taketh up that coffin where are the bones of its parent, and carrying them journeyeth from the country of Arabia even unto Egypt, to the place called the City of the Sun; and in the daytime

in the sight of all, flying to the altar of the Sun, it layeth them thereupon; and this done, it setteth forth to return.” **1 Clement 24:1 - 25:4**³⁴

Therefore, we see Clement would have understood *monogenes* as *only-begotten* simply because the understanding of *only one of a kind* would not fit the purpose of his story! Why? Because *only one of a kind* would contradict the entire Christian gospel! Christ was not the *only one of his kind* in his divinity, (he was of the same kind as God the Father – homoousios, not homoiousios); nor was he the *only one of his kind* when we look at his resurrection – he was the *first of his kind*!

“But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming.” **1 Cor. 15:23**

Indeed, he is called the “first-born” of many brethren.

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.” **Rom. 8:29**

And he is called the first-born of the dead,

“He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.” **Col. 1:18**

Clement even prefaces his whole account with the statement that Christ was not the *only one of his kind*. He states in the first sentence: “Let us understand, dearly beloved, how the Master continually showeth unto us the resurrection that shall be hereafter; whereof He made the Lord Jesus Christ the *firstfruit*, when He raised Him from the dead. Therefore, he would not contradict himself a few sentences later and say Christ was *the only one of his kind*.”

There is no way Clement would have used *monogenes* of the Phoenix, (if it meant the *only one of his kind*), to represent the Christ who came from God, nor to represent the one who would rise from the dead, simply because Christ was of the same kind with God the Father in his divinity, not *the only one of a kind*, and he was the *first of a kind* in his resurrection, not the *only one of his kind*. He was the first-fruits! We are to be transformed into his image (II Cor. 3:18); we are to be transformed into conformity to the body of his glory (Phil. 3:21). He was never the *only one of his kind* in his resurrection. He was the beginning of a new creation. That is the message of the Gospel; it is the hope of our salvation!

However, even though he never was the *one of a kind* God (Jn. 1:18), who came from God, or the *one of a kind* Christ who would rise from the dead, he was certainly the *only-begotten* Son of God who came from God and the *only-begotten* Son who would rise from the dead. Nothing in Scripture would

³⁴ Lightfoot, J.B., *The Apostolic Fathers, Part I, S. Clement of Rome*, (Macmillan & Co. London, 1890), Pg. 284-85

contradict the fact that Christ was the *only-begotten* Son of God who came from the bosom of the Father to die upon the cross, and that, as such, he was the *only-begotten* Son of God who would rise from the dead. The Phoenix would be the perfect picture of this.

The Phoenix was an only-begotten bird when he died, and, he would still be considered an only- begotten bird reborn from the ashes of death. Clement gives us various examples of resurrection. He gives us an example from each of the three kingdoms – the physical kingdom, the plant kingdom and the animal kingdom. He gives an example from the universe – day and night. He gives us one example from the plant kingdom – the sowing of seeds; and he gives the one example from the animal kingdom – the Phoenix, and this only-begotten who lived and died and rose again from the dead became the “first” of his kind in his resurrection.

Therefore, the question must be asked once more, “Why would one use this mention of the Phoenix in Amores to justify a new meaning for *monogenes* when Amores does not deal with any of the truths mentioned by Clement in his epistle, and, yet, Metamorphoses does.” Clement deals with resurrection, Amores does not. Clement speaks of begetting. Amores does not. Yet, the account in Metamorphoses is filled with the idea of begetting and rising from the dead. The account in Amores does not.

Why use Amores to support the meaning of *monogenes* in Clement, rather than Metamorphoses. It does not make sense!

When one realizes that Metamorphoses parallels the account in Clement, one then realizes that the context of Metamorphoses supports the meaning of *only-begotten* in I Clement and not the meaning *one of a kind*.

Once again, when one closely examines the historical facts and details, one discovers that the Neo-Trinitarian’s assertion that *monogenes* means “one of a kind,” is actually false, and that the true meaning for *monogenes* remains *only-begotten*, which is the understanding of the word from the earliest times of the Church.

Additional References Regarding the Phoenix Before and During the Time of Clement

“Then I said: ‘I shall die with my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the phoenix.’”

Book of Job 29:18

(Jewish Publication Society, 1917)

“The righteous shall flourish like the Phoenix.”³⁵

Psalm 92:12

Dryden’s Ovid Metamorphoses

“All these receive their birth from other things;
But from himself the phoenix only springs:
Self-born, begotten by the parent flame
In which he burn'd, another, and the same;
Who not by corn, or herbs his life sustains,
But the sweet essence of amomum drains;
And watches the rich gums Arabia bears,
While yet in tender dew they drop their tears.
He, (his five centuries of life fulfill'd,)
His nest on oaken boughs begins to build,
Or trembling tops of palm; and first he draws
The plan with his broad bill, and crooked claws,
Nature's artificers; on this the pile
Is form'd, and rises round, then with the spoil
Of cassia, cinnamon, and stems of nard
(For softness strew'd beneath), his funeral bed is rear'd:
Funeral and bridal both; and all around
The borders with corruptless myrrh are crown'd.
On this incumbent, till ethereal flame
First catches, then consumes the costly frame:
Consumes him too, as on the pile he lies;
He lived on odors, and in odors dies.
" An infant phoenix from the former springs,
His father's heir, and from his tender wings
Shakes off his parent dust, his method he pursues,
And the same lease of life on the same terms renews.
When grown to manhood he begins his reign,
And with stiff pinions can his flight sustain;
He lightens of its load the tree that bore
His father's royal sepulchre before,
And his own cradle: this with pious care
Placed on his back, he cuts the buxom air,

³⁵ Based upon the LXX and understood as such by Tertullian, in his discourse: Anti-Marcion: On the Resurrection of the Flesh, Part VI, Chap. XIII – “God even in His own Scripture says: “The righteous shall flourish like the phoenix;” that is, shall flourish or revive, from death, from the grave—to teach you to believe that a bodily substance may be recovered even from the fire. Our Lord has declared that we are ‘better than many sparrows:’ well, if not better than many a phoenix too, it were no great thing. But must men die once for all, while birds in Arabia are sure of a resurrection?” (Roberts, Alexander; Donaldson, James, ed., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. III*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI 1985, pg. 554)

Seeks the sun's city, and his sacred church,
And decently lays down his burden in the porch.”³⁶

Herodotus (circa 485-424BC)

“They have also another sacred bird, which, except in a picture, I have never seen: it is called the phoenix.³⁷ It is very uncommon even among themselves; for according to the Heliopolitans, it comes there but once in the course of five hundred years, and then- only at the decease of the parent bird.

“If it bear any resemblance to its picture, the wings are partly of a gold and partly of a ruby color, and its form and size perfectly like the eagle. They relate one thing of it which surpasses all credibility: they say that it comes from Arabia to the temple of the sun, bearing the dead body of its parent inclosed in myrrh, which it buries. It makes a ball of myrrh shaped like an egg, as large as it is able to carry, which it proves by experiment. This done, it excavates the mass, into which it introduces the body of the dead bird; it again closes the aperture with myrrh, and the whole becomes the same weight as when composed intirely of myrrh; it then proceeds to Egypt to the temple of the sun.”³⁸

Pliny (23—79AD)

“The Birds of Ethiopia and India are for the most part of a variety of Colours, and such as can hardly be described: but the Phoenix of Arabia is more noble than all others. I can scarcely tell whether it be false or no, that there is never more than one of them in the whole World, and that it is very rarely seen. It is said to be of the size of an Eagle: as bright as Gold about the Neck; the rest of the Body purple: the Tail azure blue, with Feathers distinguished by being of a Rose-colour; and the Head and Face adorned with a Crest of Feathers on the top. Manilius, the noble Senator, excellently well verse in most kinds of Learning, by his own unassisted efforts was the first and most diligent of the long Robe (Toga), who wrote of this Bird; and he reporteth, that no Man was ever known to see him feeding: that in Arabia he is sacred to the Sun: that he liveth 660 Years: and when he groweth old, he builds a Nest with the Twigs of Cassia (Cinnamon) and Frankincense Trees: and when he hath filled it with Spices, he dieth upon it. He saith, also, that out of his Bones and Marrow there breedeth at first, as it were, a little Worm, from which proceeds a young Bird; and the first Thing this young one does, is to perform the Funeral Rites of the former Phoenix, and then to carry away the whole Nest to the City of the Sun, near Panchsea, and to lay it down ilpon the Altar. The same Manilius affirmeth, that the

³⁶ Dryden, John; Pope, Alexander; Congreve, William; Addison, Joseph, *Ovid: The Metamorphoses, Book X-XV. The Epistles Volume 2 of Ovid* (A. J. Valpy, 1833), pg. 174

³⁷ Footnote from below referenced work. “From what is related of this bird the Phoenicians gave the name phoenix to the palm-tree, because, when burnt down to the ground, it springs up again fairer and stronger than ever. The ancient Christians also refer to the phoenix as a type of the resurrection.”

³⁸ Beloe, Rev. William, Tr., *Herodotus, Vol. I*, (Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, London, 1830), pg. 214-215

Revolution of the great Year agreeth with the Life of this Bird; in which Year the same Signification of the Times and Stars return again to their first Points: and that this should begin at Noon, that very Day when the Sun entereth the Sign Aries. And by his saying, the Year of that Revolution was by him showed when P. Licinius and M. Cornelius were Consuls. Cornelius Valerianus writeth, that while Q. Plautius and Sex. Papinius were Consuls, the Phoenix flew into Egypt. He was conveyed to the City (Rome) in the Time that Claudius the Prince was Censor, in the eight hundredth Year of the City, and was showed openly in the Assembly of the People, as appeareth in the Public Records; but no Man ever made any doubt that this was a counterfeit Phcenix.³⁹

³⁹ Holland, Dr. Philemon, Tr., Pliny's, Natural History, Vol. 1 (George Barclay, Castle St., Leicester Sq., 1847-48), pg. 187-88

Misconceptions and Misunderstandings

Regarding the Stem –genes in the Greek Word Monogenes in light of Extra-Biblical Usages

Over and over the statement is commonly heard that the stem –genes in *monogenes* carries the idea of “kind” and has nothing to do with derivation or being born. Many examples are brought forward to prove this point one of the most common one being the use of the word by Parmenides, who lived around 500 B.C., in his poem sometimes entitled “On Nature.”

This assertion is rarely questioned and the revisionist claim is rarely checked for accuracy. However, when one does so, one finds the claim is not based upon reality, but it is actually the result of a skewed analysis of the facts and the taking of out of context of certain texts.

One hears repeatedly the stem has nothing to do with derivation. But when one look at the evidence one finds it repeatedly has to do with derivation – the complete opposite of the truth.

In Liddell and Scott, the stem “–genes” occurs 168 times in various Greek words. In all these occurrences, the *overwhelming majority* carry the sense of “derivation.” Of the 168 occurrences, 109 times it is used with the sense of “derivation” or “born,” and only 19 times is it used with the sense of “class” or “kind!” Of the remaining uses, 28 times the definition is unavailable and the other 12 times miscellaneous meanings are assigned to the word.⁴⁰

Look at the following chart which lists these occurrences.

Occurrences of the stem “-genes” in Ancient Greek as recorded in Liddell and Scott⁴¹

Connotation of “derivation” or “born”	Connotation of “class” or “kind”	No translation available	Varied meanings	English Definition
			<u>ἀειγενής</u>	everlasting
			<u>ἀετογενής</u>	bearing a mark in the shape of an eagle
<u>ἀφρογενής</u>				foam-born
<u>ἄγενής</u>				unborn, uncreated
		<u>αἰειγενής</u>		
<u>Αἰγυπιογενής</u>				of Egyptian race
<u>αἰθηρογενής</u>				born in ether, sprung from ether

⁴⁰ Perseus Digital Library Project. Ed. Gregory R. Crane. Updated Mar. 31,2009. Tufts University. Accessed Oct. 1, 2009 <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>

⁴¹ Sourced from – Perseus Digital Library Project. Ed. Gregory R. Crane. Updated Mar. 31,2009. Tufts University. Accessed Oct. 1, 2009 <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>

Connotation of “derivation” or “born”	Connotation of “class” or “kind”	No translation available	Varied meanings	English Definition
ἀλιγενής				sea-born
	ἀλλογενής			of another race, a stranger
	ἀμφιγενής			of doubtful gender,
	ἀμπελογενής			of vine kind,
	ἀνομογενής			of different kind,
	ἀνομοιογενής			of different kind,
	ἀρσενογενής			male,
ἀρτιγενής				just born
	ἀρτιογενής			of the even class
			ἀρχηγενής	causing the first beginning of
Ἀσιαγενής				of Asiatic descent,
Ἀσιατογενής				of Asian birth
	ἀσυγγενής			not akin,
Ἀτλαγενής				sprung from Atlas
αὐθιγενής				born on the spot, born in the country, native
αὐτογενής				self-produced,
βοηγενής				born of an ox
		βουγενής		
βραδυγενής				late born
		Βρησαγενής		
		Δαλογενής		
Δαρειογενής				born from Darius
δευτερογενής				produced later,
Δηλογενής				Delos-born
		διαγενής		
διδυμογενής				twin-born
	διγενής			of doubtful sex,
Διογενής				sprung from Zeus,
διογενής				descended from Zeus, Zeus-born
Διθυραμβογενής				Bacchus-born
δρακοντογενής				dragon-gendered,
δυσγενής				low-born
εβδομαγενής				born on the seventh day
ἐγγενής				innate, belonging to one's family
		ἐκγενής		
ἐλειογενής				marsh-born
ἐνδογενής				born in the house
			ἐπιγενής	growing after
	έτερογενής			of different kinds
εὐγενής				well-born, of noble race, of high descent
		εὐθυγενής		
	φιλοσυγγενής			loving one's relatives,
φοινικογενής				Phoenician born
	φθερσιγενής			destroying the race
φθορηγενής				breeding corruption
		γαιγενής		
γηγενής				earthborn
ἠπειρογενής				born
			ἡριγενής	a day
	ἰδιογενής			mating only with its kind
Ἴδογενής				born on Ida
Ἴνδογενής				born in India
ἰθαιγένης				born in lawful wedlock, legitimate

Connotation of "derivation" or "born"	Connotation of "class" or "kind"	No translation available	Varied meanings	English Definition
Καδμογενής				Cadmus-born
κακογενής				base-born
		καταγενής		
κογχογενής				born from a shell
κοινογενής				hybridizing
Κοιογενής				born of Koios
κορυφαγενής				head-born
κρατογενής				head-born
Κρητογενής				born in Crete
		κριογενής		
κρυφογενής				secretly born
Κυπρογενής				the Cyprus born
κυθηγενής				born in secret,
		λαδογενής		
		Λατογενής		
Λητογενής				born of Leto
		Λιβυαφιγενής		
λιμαγενής				born at
λινογενής				born
Λυκηγενής				Lycian-born
μελιγενής				ash-born
			μεσσογενής	middle-aged
μεταγενής				born after
μηλογενής				sheep-born
μιξεριφαρνογενής				of kid and lamb mixed together
μιξογενής				of mixed descent
μοιρηγενής				child of destiny, Fortune's child
μονογενής				only-begotten, single
		μονογενής		
		νεαγενής		
νεηγενής				just born
Νειλογενής				Nile-born
νεογενής				new-born
νοθαγενής				base-born
νυμφαγενής				nymph-born
νυμφογενής				nymph-born
όφιογενής				serpent-gendered
οικογενής				born in the house, homebred
όμβρηγενής				rain-born,
όμηγενής				born together, twin,
	όμογενής			of the same race
	όμοιογενής			akin, of like kind
όνειρογενής				born of a dream,
όρειγενής				mountain-born,
	όρνιθογενής			bird kind,
όρογενής				productive of terms
όστεογενής				produced in the bones
όμιγενής				late-born
παλαιγενής				ancient - born, full of years.
		παλαιογενής		[unavailable]
παλιγενής				born again
			πανευγενής	most noble
		παντογενής		
πατρογενής				begotten of the father
Περσογενής				of Persian origin

Connotation of "derivation" or "born"	Connotation of "class" or "kind"	No translation available	Varied meanings	English Definition
πετριγενής				rock-born
		πετρογενής		
πληγενής				half-brother, half-sister,
		ποικιλογενής		
πολυγενής				of many families,
ποντογενής				sea born,
πορνογενής				spurius,(illegitimate birth)
πρεσβυγενής				first-born
προγενής				born before, primaeval
	προσγενής			akin
			προσθαγενής	previous
προτερηγενής				born sooner, older
προτογενής				first-born, primeval
		Πυλογενής		
Πυλογενής				born in Pylos, bred in Pylos
πυριγενής				born in fire
πυρογενής				fire-born
πυρογενής				made from wheat
πυρσογενής				fire-producing
θαλασσογενής				sea-born
		θεαγενής		
		θεηγενής		
		θειογενής		
θεογενής				born of God
			θερειγενής	growing in summer
Θηβαγενής				Theban born
		Θηβαγενής		
θηλυγενής				of female sex, womanish
	θητογενής			of mortal race
Σινδογενής				Indus-produced
Σουσιγενής				born at Susa
σπαρταγενής				producing the shrub spartos
συγγενής				inherited, inborn
Συριγενής				Syrian-born
Ταρσογενής				born at Tarsus,
		ταυρογενής		
		τετραγενής		
τριγενής				thrice-born,
τριταιογενής				produced by tertian fever,
		Τριτογενής		
τυφλογενής				born blind,
ύδογενής				sprung from the water,
		ύλιγενής		
ύλογενής				born in the forest
			ύπερευγενής	exceeding noble
ύστερογενής				not appearing until after the birth,
ώογενής				born of an egg,
			ώρογενής	who preside over the several hours of the day,
χαμαιγενής				earth-born
Χιογενής				of Chian growth

Connotation of “derivation” or “born”	Connotation of “class” or “kind”	No translation available	Varied meanings	English Definition
ψαλληγενής				sprung from harp-playing,
	ζωογενής			of animate kind, mortal
TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	
109	19	28	12	

As one can see, the most common meaning of *-genes* is not “kind” or “class,” as is repeatedly claimed by Neo-Trinitarians, but rather is “born,” or some sense of “derivation.” (And, as we will see later, even in those cases where “kind” is claimed, in reality, it is still related to derivation). Between the two usages the connotation of born or derivation is favored by a ratio of almost 6 to 1. It occurs a little more than 11% of the time with a connotation of class or kind, and occurs almost 65% of the time with the connotation of born or derivation! Yet what is the common definition given to the stem *-genes* in *monogenes* by Neo-Trinitarians, the majority or the minority definition? The minority definition is the one that is used and the majority definition is all but ignored. This is what I meant by a skewed analysis of the facts, as well as a skewed analysis of the context of the texts.

So with that in mind, let us now look at those who have been responsible for much of this confusion. We will first look at Dale Moody.

Misconceptions and Misunderstandings

Regarding the Greek Word Monogenes as found in Dale Moody's Paper, "God's Only Son: The Translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version"

We would first like to look at some false assertions made by Dale Moody in his paper, *God's Only Son: The Translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version*. He was a Professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

This paper is repeatedly referenced by Neo-Trinitarians and others when discussing this issue. Unfortunately, however, (for those who read the various claims made by Neo-Trinitarians in regard to this paper), they do not know that many of the facts presented in this paper are not facts at all, but rather are half-truths and, in some cases, out and out errors.

We will now look at some of these common misconceptions and misunderstandings, trying to give the reader all the facts, and not just the facts that support our particular view. We will attempt to give all the facts so the reader can decide for themselves.

It should first be noted that the whole purpose of Dale Moody's paper was to defend the RSV's choice of "only" as a meaning of "monogenes" rather than the traditional "only-begotten." And in defending this choice he first states that he is attempting to show that "...the translators have simply corrected an error repeated for fifteen centuries..."⁴²

Dear reader, what audacity and arrogance! Yes, arrogance! Now, I would never make such a charge against someone who interpreted a passage of Scripture differently than I might, if it was dealing with a doctrine that was not essential to our Faith. On non-essential doctrines of the Faith we must forbear with each other in love, and sometimes admit we may be wrong, but when it comes to the essential doctrines of the Faith we must never let our love for someone take precedence over our love for the Lord and for the truth.

As has been mentioned before regarding the modern Neo-Trinitarian:

"I know many of the modern teachers are true Christians. They love the Lord. I am sure they are very affable. Indeed, they more than likely wax eloquent on other doctrines and have been a great help to many Christians. I'm sure they are beloved by their students and by those in their churches. As such, I am sure they will be defended by such, because love produces loyalty and commitment. However, we must remember our loyalty and commitment must be

⁴² Moody, Dale, *God's Only Son: The Translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version*, (Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 72, No. 4; Dec., 1953), pg. 213

first to the Lord and to His revelation. Why? Because love does, indeed, produce loyalty and commitment, and if the Lord Jesus is to be our first love, our loyalty and commitment must be first to Him.” Remember the warning of Rev. 2:4.”

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” Rev. 2:4

“Consequently, we must first be faithful to Him and to the Faith that was delivered to the Church. We must put our respect for the Lord and His Faith before any respect we might have for our Christian leaders and teachers.”

“It is never pleasant to confront error. In fact, it is very difficult. No one loves contention, but we must realize the Church is under an obligation from the Scripture to remain faithful to the Lord as our first love and to “earnestly contend for the Faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 1:3).”

“Remember the warning of the Holy Spirit. In the last day’s men would depart from the Faith. This is the time when such contending is necessary. However, may we pray to the Lord that it ever be done with humility, forbearance, and most importantly with love, so that those who are in error may realize their mistake and realize that human pride is fleeting and guarded reputations are futile. May they repent of their departure.”⁴³

Therefore, sometimes niceties must be set aside when dealing with such issues of the Faith. When necessary our Saviour set aside such niceties, calling some of the Pharisees hypocrites and blind guides! If our Saviour, who was sinless, sometimes deemed it necessary to sometimes speak with such candidness, how much more should we, following his example, do so when confronting one who seeks to change the meaning of the most basic revelatory title given to us by the Lord Himself, a title that has been confirmed by the godly witness of untold millions of Christians for almost two thousand years of Church History?

Dale Moody asserts in his paper that thousands upon thousands of godly Christians, including teachers, pastors and other translators, have been mistaken for fifteen centuries, (most of church history!), and that he and others like him in the 19th and 20th century have now discovered the true meaning of *monogenes*!

Imagine it, for most of Church History untold millions of Christians like have been misled in regard to an integral aspect of the True Faith. Imagine, the Historic Christian Faith has been wrong in its declarations regarding the true nature of Christ and now that modern teachers are on the scene, the Holy Spirit can correct the Church. Again, what audacity! What they are really saying is that the Holy Spirit has left the Church bereft of the true Faith until they arrived on the scene – the Holy Spirit had to wait fifteen centuries for them to appear.

Now I am the first to admit that certain truths of Scripture have been lost over the centuries. Who can deny that false doctrines have crept into the Church?

⁴³ Harris, B. P., *Understanding the Trinity: An Encouragement to Abide in the Doctrine in both Faith and Practice*, (Assembly Bookshelf, Sacramento, 2006), pgs. 128-129

And yes, who can deny that the Holy Spirit has raised up certain individuals, for instance, a man like Martin Luther, to recover certain truths that have been lost or nullified over the centuries by different teachings and traditions of men (Mk. 7: 8-13). But dear reader this has never happened in regard to the Faith!

The Faith has never been lost. It has been the special treasure of the Church for all her history. Every time heretics and apostates have tried to rob her of those precious truths, the Church has stood strong, “contending for the Faith once and for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3). It has clung to that which was delivered to it from the beginning (I Jn. 2:24).

The Faith has never been lost, and for Dale Moody or anyone else to now arise and claim the true meaning of *monogenes* has been lost and the Church has followed an error for fifteen centuries shows that they themselves are misled, and have departed themselves from the Faith in regard to this precious truth.

A good friend has addressed this important issue. Let me include his insight regarding those who affirm that *monogenes* does not mean only-begotten, and those who insist that such denial does no harm to the Historic Christian Faith.

“1. If you throw out the word *monogenes*, (as do this class of Neo-Trinitarians) or marginalize the word, saying that it doesn't really matter what *monogenes* means, in that we can still hold to the Historic Faith regarding the eternal generation of the Son without it, what you have done in effect is to say you can hold to an orthodox doctrine regardless of any biblical support for the meaning of words. It's ok in that there are other biblical texts that can be cited to defend the doctrine of eternal sonship. No it's not ok. To do otherwise, is not according to the apostolic admonition to hold fast to that what has been delivered to the saints (2 Thess. 2:15), not to mention the words of our Lord who commanded His disciples to teach according to what He had commanded them (Mt. 28:20). Now does Jn. 3:16 ring a bell? We do not get to pick and choose what words to use when speaking of God's self revelation, as though they are negotiable, without severe and dire consequences. Do not add – Do not take away – is the divine edict and standard! God used words to reveal Who He is, and the criteria for using certain words is not whether or not we can still maintain a doctrine with or without specific words such as *monogenes*. Should not the criteria be – we use such words because God so chose to use them in revealing Himself? God chooses the vocabulary for revealing Himself to His people – it is not the people who choose. And to ignore God's chosen words, is to ignore God. God doesn't give us the option to choose or not to choose, to use or discard at will revelatory inspired words according to our whim, simply on the basis that they may or may not be helpful to defend or set forth a particular doctrine. He is the One who sets the parameters and the language for us to use... period.

“2. Furthermore, God did not have to give us the word *monogenes* in describing His Son. He could have just used the term *monos*, “only,” and left it that. However, as biblical and solid the word *monos* is in Scripture, it still doesn't approach nor convey the depth and beauty of the word *monogenes*. *Monos* tells us little to nothing regarding the eternal derivation of the Son from the Father. Nor does it give any insight into the Son's nature, his personal subsistence or absolute equality with the Father. As a matter of fact, as with the term son, the term *monos*, only lets us know that God, in some sense, has an “only” Son, but falls short in revealing exactly HOW the Son is God's “only” Son, let alone how His Son is His in the first place? Is it by creation? Is the Son unique in some special way as contrasted with angelic nature or human nature or some other living creature? Is the Son “only” because He is

uniquely equal with God, yet without derivation? So even though the word *monos* is a good and revelatory word in Scripture, inspired by the Holy Spirit and used by Christians to describe Christ as the Son of God, nevertheless, it still lacks the clarity, precision and fullness that the *-genes*, in the word *monogenes*, affords by revealing the Son's unique relationship with His Father.

“3. The following summaries are given to help clarify the distinctions of terms.

“**Summary A** – The term 'Son,' in and of itself, may or may not indicate that Christ is God's Son by nature. Men and angels are also referred to as sons. It would depend on the context.

“**Summary B** – The Christian's use of the term “only Son of God” gives us further clarification; it indicates that his nature must be different and, in some way, unique. But how, and in what way would he be different and unique? Could not Adam also be considered an “only son of God,” albeit, for different reasons?

“**Summary C** – The term “only-begotten Son of God” outright declares and defines precisely how the nature of God's Son is different from human and angelic natures and how he subsists within the Divine Being. While Adam might be considered an “only son of God,” he never could be considered the “only-begotten Son of God. The term only-begotten erases any lingering doubt as to HOW the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God

“4. The term *monogenes* is in truth a gift from God who loves and desires His people to know Him. Such an explicit word as *monogenes* offers further proof that God is truly a revelatory God as evidenced by a term that discloses so much direct and concrete insight into the intra-Trinitarian relations. God offers us a glimpse of Himself and of His divine nature by the word *monogenes*. He wants us to know Him and be able to identify with Him, so He gives a term that we human beings can relate to at the most fundamental core of our own being... our own fecundity. The word greatly aids our understanding of the divine relations between the Father and Son, that otherwise would pose unimaginable difficulties in comprehension, as well as the practical benefits associated with the word. *Monogenes*, understood with its meaning of “only-begotten,” gives a tangible and clear means for understanding divine Personhood, consubstantiality, equality, fecundity, not to mention the benefit it affords for understanding other revealed truths. So why would anyone want to discard such a heavenly gift?

“5. In the world that the apostle John grew up in and later wrote to fellow believers in our Lord Jesus Christ in, he spoke of Jesus as being the “only-begotten” Son. He said that Jesus was not merely God's Son (which in itself can suggest derivation), but that Jesus was God's only-begotten (born) Son. Now let's think about this for a moment. Here's John, writing to Christians living in a world of widespread polytheistic pagan idolatry with the commonly held belief that the gods mate with other gods producing sons and daughters, who in turn are considered to be gods. Now I have one little question for the apostle John given the state of such a worldwide religious environment, “WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?” “John, don't you know that polytheism is rampant. The common perception is that the god's produce offspring. What were you thinking?” “Do you not realize that by saying Jesus is the “only-begotten” Son of God you are playing right into the pagan mythology of gods producing gods?” “Why then would you use such a word as *monogenes* (so graphic, so utterly human) to describe the Son's eternal relationship with His Father?” The apostle, wise and tolerant as time, answers by a small still voice, like that of the evening breeze, “Because, my brother, it is the Truth and I bear witness to the Truth – Jesus is the Son of God, the very *monogenes* from His Father before all ages, and no pagan mythology can ever change or obscure that fact. He is begotten, not created nor formed nor made. He is very God of Very God. He is consubstantial, with His Father's very own Substance. He is equal to His Father in every possible conceivable way. His derivation from His Father is eternal and knows no end. He is the Lord God who created the world and made all things therein; who walked in the cool of the day with Adam; who spoke with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the Lord God who

gave the Law to Moses lovingly inscribed with His own hand; and He shall sit upon the throne of David whose kingdom shall have no end. He is the Great I AM, for He alone is, The ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON OF THE LIVING GOD.”

“6. Our Lord's Sonship is indeed unique, not because that's what the word *monogenes* means, but because He is the *monogenes* Son. God has many who are called His son, but only the Lord Jesus Christ is His only-begotten. And the word *monogenes* clarifies and defines, beyond all doubt, the Son's uniqueness. It provides the only true and definitive answer to the question of the ages: “Who is Christ... Whose Son is He” – by the eternal response of, “He is The Only-Begotten Son of God.”

“7. To toss out or minimize the importance of the true meaning of the word *monogenes*, either for the sake of appeasement or pseudo scholarship, only invites the continued accusation that the Historic Christian Faith, regarding the eternal Sonship, though it “may be” true, nevertheless, doesn't have any real substantial biblical support in so far that *monogenes* doesn't mean only-begotten. Thus, the whole doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son comes into question from a biblical perspective. Its authority, they claim, lies vested in human tradition and not revealed Scriptures. It becomes clouded with doubt and suspicion as a legitimate biblical doctrine. And this is precisely where the enemy wants it to be: clouded, obscured, and marginalized, knowing full well that given enough time and persistence, human nature, being what it is, will eventually come to ignore and reject the doctrine altogether. Remember the vile words from the serpent mouth; "Hath God said?" These three words were the words that brought down the universe and all therein.”⁴⁴

Indeed, words are so important and when we look closely at Dale Moody's paper we see that, even though he makes the assertion that Christians have been repeated an “error” for fifteen centuries, it is actually he who repeatedly makes statements that mislead and in some cases are outright errors! How sad it is that his paper is appealed to over and over, and no one checks his facts. He makes some statements and assertions that simply are not true, as we will now demonstrate. I make this charge not by my judgment alone, but by the judgment of history and the judgment of two thousand years of Christian witness!

Misconception One

The first misconception we would like to look at in Dale Moody's paper is his assertion regarding *monogenes* in a passage by Epiphanius. He states:

“Epiphanius (c. A.D. 315-403), bishop of Constantia (Salamis) in Cyprus was a violent opponent of every form of heresy, particularly those that pertained to the person of Christ. At the close of his work *Ancoratus* (the Anchored One) of A.D. 374, he gives two creeds as a summary of the orthodox teaching on the Holy Trinity. The second creed contains the significant phrase *gennēthenta ek theou patros monogenē* (the only-begotten Son of God the Father.) There in the accusative case it takes both the word *gennēthenta* (begotten) and the word *monogenē* (only) to say ‘only-begotten,’ because *monogenēs* there, as in the NT, has to do with uniqueness rather than conception.”⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Moody, C. L., *On the Importance of God's Revelatory Title "Only-begotten"*

⁴⁵ Moody, Dale, *God's Only Son: The Translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version*, (Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 72, No. 4; Dec., 1953), pg. 214-215

Now the first thing to notice is that he makes a translation of a Greek phrase that is taken out of context. When one looks at the English translation of the Greek phrase he provides, I do not know if it could be translated any other way than the way he provides. But this is misleading to the reader because the Greek phrase is completely taken out of its fuller context. This is the phrase within its context. The phrase he lifts out is underlined.

“Καὶ εἰς ἓνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ γεννηθέντα ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς μονογενῆ τοῦτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς, θεὸν ἐκ θεοῦ, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα, οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ.”⁴⁶

When we see the entire context the first thing we realize is that he is not clear as to the referent of “it,” when he says the following in his paper, “There in the accusative case “it” takes both the word *gennēthenta* (begotten) and the word *monogenē* (only) to say ‘only-begotten.’”⁴⁷ What word or phrase is “it”?

From one perspective he seems to indicate the referent of “it,” is the phrase *γεννηθέντα ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς*, but then he contradicts that by his English translation, “the only-begotten Son of God the Father,” which does not match the Greek text he provides. (Unfortunately, he never translated anything further than that one phrase he offered above in his quote). And so it seems the referent in his mind was *τον υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ* (the Son of God).). However, such an understanding would produce a supposed translation as follows –

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only (μονογενῆ) begotten (γεννηθέντα) Son of God the Father, that is to say of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, the same substance with the Father.”

Notice with this translation two words are left out. By putting *μονογενῆ* and *γεννηθέντα* into a simple attributive position (in his English translation) modifying the substantive *υἱὸν* (Son), and removing *πατρὸς* (Father) from the prepositional phrase “ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς,” (from God the Father) and construing it with *θεοῦ* it at the end of the phrase “*τον υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ*” (the Son of God), he leaves the remaining two words, *ἐκ θεοῦ* (from God), dangling out there alone. And the phrase *τοῦτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς* (that is to say out of the substance of the Father) becomes kind of orphaned. What is it now clarifying without the word *μονογενῆ*, or the participial phrase?

Moreover, if he takes the referent to be the participial phrase, (in spite of his translation), it seems he would have to read it this way in English.

⁴⁶ Epiphanius, Dindorfeus, G., Ed., *Anonymi vita Epiphani. Ancoratus. Anacephalaeosis. Panarii libri I*, (T.O. Weigel, Lipsiae, 1859), pg. 224

⁴⁷ Moody, Dale, Op. Cit., pg. 215

“Καὶ εἰς ἓνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ γεννηθέντα ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς μονογενῆ τοῦτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς, θεὸν ἐκ θεοῦ, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα, οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ.”⁴⁸

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only Begotten One, from God the Father, that is to say of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, the same substance with the Father.”

There seems to be a couple of problems with this. First, if it was to be understood this way, one would expect an articular γεννηθέντα. Secondly, if he one takes γεννηθέντα as a substantive it loses its verbal force. As such it becomes a substantive that is modified, (according to his understanding), by μονογενῆ. Now that would be fine if we were only dealing with the little snippet he gave us, however, when one sees the phrase within the entire context one sees how unlikely that is because it renders the following exegetical phrase, τοῦτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς, nonsensical. What is it now clarifying? With γεννηθέντα as a substantive, one changes ἐκ in the phrase ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς, into a preposition of separation, rather than a preposition of source.

We must remember that prepositions naturally carry a stative or transitive force. Stative prepositions are such prepositions as ὑπο or ἐπι, while transitive prepositions are prepositions that imply movement or motion, such as ἐκ or εἰς.⁴⁹ Now granted, apparently, verbs can sometimes overrule the natural force of the preposition, but when we understand γεννηθέντα in a substantival sense rather than a verbal sense, there is no verb to overrule the natural force of movement contained in ἐκ!

The context demands some verbal force to explain the following exegetical phrase τοῦτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς. With the inclusion of that phrase, one sees that the context is demanding that some type of movement be understood in the preposition ἐκ, (not only in the preceding phrase ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς, but also in the phrase τοῦτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς). It demands an understanding of the movement of something “out of the substance of the Father. And, since it is introduced with τοῦτέστιν, the antecedent of τοῦτέστιν must also be understood as the movement of something out of God.

This demonstrates that γεννηθέντα must be understood as a verbal participle and not as a simple adjective. The phrase should be understood as it is normally translated, “begotten of God the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father.” Or, to bring out the underlying sense it could be translated very literally, “begotten out of God the Father, that is, out of the substance of the Father.”

⁴⁸ Epiphanius, Op. Cit., pg. 224

⁴⁹ See Daniel Wallace’s *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, pages 358-359

Other examples of this normal use of the participle are found in such verses as the following.

Matthew 2:1 Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ γεννηθέντος ἐν Βηθλέεμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ἡμέραις Ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλέως, ἰδοὺ μάγοι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν παρεγένοντο εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα

Matthew 2:1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, (NASB)

Acts 22:3 ἐγὼ εἰμι ἀνὴρ Ἰουδαῖος, γεγεννημένος ἐν Ταρσῷ τῆς Κιλικίας, ἀνατεθραμμένος δὲ ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ πεπαιδευμένος κατὰ ἀκριβείαν τοῦ πατρῶου νόμου, ζηλωτῆς ὑπάρχων τοῦ θεοῦ καθὼς πάντες ὑμεῖς ἐστε σήμερον·

Acts 22:3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, just as you all are today. (NASB)

In these examples it would be nonsensical and unnatural to take the participle as an adjective modifying the head noun, rather than a verbal participial phrase modifying the head noun. In other words, it would be unnatural for the text to say, "Now the begotten Jesus in Bethlehem..." or "I am a begotten Jewish man in Tarsus of Cilicia..." rather than the normal "Now after Jesus was begotten in Bethlehem of Judea..." and "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia..."

It would destroy the natural flow of the text and render the rest of the verse nonsensical. This is also true with the text before us, as one can see, when the full portion is provided.

However, Dale Moody does not mention this or provide the reader with the full portion in Greek to allow the reader to see and decide for themselves. Why?

His translation is assuredly wrong. (Now, of course, that cannot be stated unequivocally, for sometimes there are many possibilities with the Greek language, but being possible does not make it probable). Indeed, such an understanding as his is contrived, for he separates γεννηθέντα from the prepositional phrase it is construed with, (ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς), and then construes γεννηθέντα with Son of God (τον υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ). But let's continue.

He then takes the prepositional phrase that is left from the participial phrase γεννηθέντα ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς, i.e. ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς, and further divides it taking away the substantive πατρὸς, which is in apposition to ἐκ θεοῦ, and puts it in apposition to the phrase τον υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ! His whole take on the passage is most contrived and most unnatural.

Also, if we take his supposed translation of "only: (μονογενῆ) and construe it further back with Son of God like he desires to do, it would then read.

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only (μονογενῆ) begotten (γεννηθέντα) Son of God the Father, out of God, that is to say of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, the same substance with the Father.”

This too is contrived for if this is what the writer meant he most likely would have repeated the word he was trying to clarify to show consistency of flow, therefore, it would have read:

“Καὶ εἰς ἓνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ γεννηθέντα ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς μονογενῆ τοῦτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς [θεοῦ], θεὸν ἐκ θεοῦ, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα, οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ.

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only (μονογενῆ) begotten (γεννηθέντα) Son of God the [Father], out of God, that is to say out of the substance of ~~the Father~~ [God], God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, the same substance with the Father.”

He creates this difficulty by switching πατρὸς from being in apposition with ἐκ θεοῦ and places it in apposition to τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ.

This whole topsy-turvy exercise is unnecessary if one reads it according to its natural flow and understanding, but he cannot read it that way for it would actually support the meaning of “only-begotten” for monogenes – the very meaning he is trying to negate!

Therefore, if we take this passage in context this leaves us with two possibilities. The Greek word μονογενῆ is being used as a substantive, or it is being used as an adjective modifying the substantive υἱόν. As for γεννηθέντα, it makes more sense to leave it as a verbal participle within its own group providing additional information regarding the phrase τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ.

Thus we would have two possible ways of understanding the text.

First, it could be translated as follows.

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of God the Father, only-begotten, that is of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father.”

In other words, γεννηθέντα ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς, is what Robertson calls, a participle of additional statement, modifying Son of God. Then μονογενῆ is placed as an adjectival substantive – an epithet. Now usually adjectival substantives are articular, but not always. For example, μονογενῆς is anarthrous in John 1:14 and is used as an adjectival substantive.

Then we have τοῦτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς (that is of the substance of the Father) clarifying how he is the only-begotten, (μονογενῆ). He is the only one that is begotten out of the substance of the Father. Also, the word πατρὸς (Father) in the phrase ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς (of the substance of the Father), now makes more sense because it is being exegetically construed

with the πατρός in the participial phrase γεννηθέντα ἐκ θεοῦ πατρός (begotten of God the Father).

Or, if we wish to take μονογενῆ, not as a substantive, but as a simple adjective modifying τον υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ it could be translated:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of God the Father, that is of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father

And, as with the first translation, the exegetical phrase τοῦτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρός, (that is of the substance of the Father), still flows smoothly clarifying the participial phrase γεννηθέντα ἐκ θεοῦ Πατρός (begotten of God the Father).

If the writer of the Creed wanted to state what Dale Moody wants it to state, it seems it should have been written in this way. (In this way it would flow naturally and still provide the understanding he wishes).

“Καὶ εἰς ἓνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν γεννηθέντα μονογενῆ ἐκ θεοῦ πατρός τοῦτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρός, θεὸν ἐκ θεοῦ, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα, οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ.”

Notice that μονογενῆ was placed “within” the participle phrase after γεννηθέντα that is now articular. In this way it would be understood as a modifier of a substantive γεννηθέντα and provide the meaning of “only” as he desires. It would then read “only (μονογενῆ) begotten (γεννηθέντα) from God the Father.” If μονογενῆ truly meant “only,” and not “only-begotten,” as he claims, this would be a clear and simple way to write the phrase. In fact, it would be similar to the way Philo wrote a similar phrase.

“**De cherubim 1:53** θαυμάσειε δ’ ἂν τις τὸν τῆς ἐρμηνείας τρόπον, ᾧ πολλάκις ἐπὶ πολλῶν ὀνομασθέντος χρῆται τὸ σύνθετος ἐξαλλάττων. μετὰ γὰρ τοὺς φύντας ἐκ γῆς ἀρχόμενος δηλοῦν τὸν γεννηθέντα πρῶτον ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, περὶ οὗ τὸ παράπαν οὐδὲν εἶρηκεν, ὡς ἤδη πολλάκις τὸννομα αὐτοῦ προειπὼν ἀλλὰ μὴ νῦν αὐτὸ κατατάττων εἰς τὴν ἐν λόγῳ χρῆσιν, φησὶν ὅτι ἔτεκε τὸν Κάιν. ποῖον, ᾧ τεχνῖτα; περὶ οὗ τί μικρὸν ἢ μέγα πάσαι δεδήλωκας.”⁵⁰

“**De cherubim 1:53 XVI.** And one may wonder at the kind of narration which the Jewish lawgiver frequently employs in many instances, where he departs from the usual style. For after giving the history of those parents of the human race who were created out of the earth, he begins to relate the story of the first-born of human parents, concerning whom he says absolutely nothing, as if he had already frequently mentioned his name, and were not now bringing it forward for the first time. Accordingly, he simply says that “she brought forth

⁵⁰ Sourced from: The Philo concordance Datatbase. in Greek, with lemmatization and partial morphological tagging. Copyright © 2005 by Peder Borgen, Kåre Fuglseth and Roald Skarsten, att. Kåre Fuglseth, Institute of Education and Culture, School of Professional Studies, Bodø University College, N-8049 Bodø, Norway. Modifications to the original morphology are Copyright © 2006 BibleWorks,LLC.

Cain." What sort of being was he, O writer; and what have you ever said about him before of either great or small importance?"⁵¹

Notice that Philo takes the adjective *πρῶτον* and places it immediately after the very same participle we have in Ancoratus, *γεννηθέντα*, and then follows it by a prepositional phrase *ἐξ ἀνθρώπων*. In this way it is understood as the "first begotten of man (human parents)."

Notice he also uses an articular participle *γεννηθέντα*, then the adjective, *πρῶτον*, and then a prepositional phrase, *ἐξ ἀνθρώπων*.

Our suggested text follows the same order: An articular participle *γεννηθέντα*, an adjective, *μονογενῆ*, and then a prepositional phrase, *ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς*. If the text says what Dale Moody claims it says, it would have more than likely been written in such a way.

Only then would it make sense. Only then would it support his claim that *μονογενῆ* means "only." *Μονογενῆ* would then be an adjective like *πρῶτον*, modifying *γεννηθέντα* like it does in Philo. Only then would his argument make sense.

But the fact of the matter it was not written in that way. Why? Simply because it would become nonsensical if it was written that way because *μονογενῆ* does mean "only-begotten!" The way this creed was written actually supports a meaning of only-begotten and not, as Dale Moody suggests, a meaning of "only."

If *μονογενῆ* was placed after the participle like the reading above, (*τὸν γεννηθέντα μονογενῆ*), the phrase would become redundant. It would be saying the "only-begotten begotten." It would be the same as if Philo had used *πρωτότοκον* instead of *πρῶτον* with *γεννηθέντα*, i.e. *τὸν γεννηθέντα πρωτότοκον*, that too would have had a redundant meaning, "first begotten begotten."

But the fact that the writer of the Creed did not write it in this manner gives evidence that *μονογενῆ* did not mean "only," but truly meant "only-begotten." If he wanted to say "only" begotten of God the Father, with the adjective modifying the participle, in order to get the meaning "only-begotten," as Dale Moody suggests, he then would have used *μόνον* instead of *μονογενῆ* as he used *πρῶτον* instead of *πρωτότοκον*. It then would have read: *γεννηθέντα "μόνον" ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς*. Then it truly would have read: the "only" begotten of God the Father.

Μονός means "only." *Μονογενῆς* does not. *Μονογενῆς* means "only-begotten." The grammatical structure of this creed demonstrates this fact.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Therefore, we see that the assertion of Dale Moody that this Creed proves the meaning of “only” for μονογενῆς is not only unfounded but is also misleading. He edits the text, not allowing the reader to see the entire phrase in its context, thereby preventing the reader from seeing that it actually makes perfectly good sense to understand *monogenes* as “only-begotten.”

Consequently, any way one wants to look at it, this passage, at the minimum, certainly does not negate the meaning of “only-begotten” for μονογενῆς. In fact, more than likely, it actually supports the meaning of “only-begotten.” But whether one believes so or not, it is totally misleading for Dale Moody to lift the phrase from the text, translate it outside its context, and then use it to prove that *monogenes* cannot mean only-begotten, because it take two words to say only-begotten. It is most misleading.

Misconception Two

To demonstrate this fact further – that it is a misconception to regard “only-begotten” as a combination of two words, γεννηθέντα meaning “begotten” and μονογενῆ meaning “only” – let’s look at a quote made by B. F. Westcott, (who Moody later quotes in regard to another matter).

This quote will direct our thoughts back a hundred years before the writing of *Ancoratus*. Let’s see if it took two words to say only-begotten back then. He says.

“The earliest certain example of the word in this connexion brings out its force very plainly. The Synod of Antioch (269), which condemned Paul of Samosata, in giving the exposition of their ancient belief which they addressed to him, write: 'We confess and proclaim the Son as begotten, 'an only Son (γενντόν, υἰόν μονογενῆ), the image of the unseen God, the 'firstborn of all creation, the Wisdom and Word and Power of God, who was 'before the ages not by foreknowledge but by essence and subsistence, 'God, Son of God, having recognised Him as such both in the Old and New 'Testament' (Routh, Rell. Sacr. iii. 290; comp. Alex. Alexandr. ap. Theodor. H. E. I. 4. 45, (φθσις μονογενῆς).”⁵²

Unfortunately, Westcott does not provide more of the quote. When we see the fuller quote we see that the noun υἰόν is repeated and that we actually have two nouns (υἰόν) in the phrase rather than the one he shows. Here is the full Greek text of the phrase he quotes which is from a letter sent to Paul of Samosata by the orthodox bishops of the synod. I have underlined the phrase he lifted out.

“Τοῦτο δὲ τὸν υἰὸν γεννητόν, μονογενῆ υἰόν, εἰκόνα τοῦ ἀοράτου θεοῦ τυγχάνοντα, πρωτότοκον πάσης κτίσεως, σοφίαν καὶ λόγον καὶ δύναμιν θεοῦ, πρὸ αἰώνων ὄντα, οὐ προγνώσει, ἀλλ’ οὐσία καὶ ὑποστάσει θεόν, θεοῦ υἰόν, ἐν τε παλαιᾷ καὶ νέα διαθήκῃ ἐγνωκότες ὁμολογοῦμεν καὶ κηρύσσομεν.”⁵³

⁵² Westcott, B. F., *The Epistles St. John: the Greek text with notes and essays*, (MacMillan & Co., London, 1883), Pgs. 163

⁵³ Routh, Martinus Josephus, *Reliquiae sacrae: sive auctorum fere jam perditorum secundi tertiique saeculi post Christum natum quae supersunt.... Ed. II, Volume 3* (E Typographeo Academico, 1846), Pgs. 290-291

A very literal English translation would be:

“Now this – [that] the Son is begotten, the Only-begotten Son, being the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation, Wisdom and Word and Power of God, existing before time not foreknown, but to substance and to subsistence God, Son of God, and known both in the Old and New Testaments – we both confess and preach.”

When we see the full quote we see that *τον υἱὸν γεννητὸν* is in what is commonly called the second predicate position and that *μονογενῆ υἱὸν* is an anarthrous first attributive position with *μονογενῆ* modifying the repeated noun *υἱὸν*. The structure is similar to the expression in *Ancoratus*, in that we have the noun *υἱὸν* followed by the adjective *γεννητὸν* (begotten), followed by another adjective (*μονογενῆ*). (One must remember that Dale Moody regarded the participle *γεννηθέντα* in *Ancoratus* as an adjective modifying the preceding noun *υἱὸν*). However, there is one important difference with the adjective *μονογενῆ* in this quote before us. It has its own immediate noun it is modifying. It is not construing with the preceding *υἱὸν*, but is construing with the repeated noun (*υἱὸν*) following, thereby being in an attributive position with that noun.

In other words, if what Dale Moody claims was true, i.e. that it takes two words, “begotten” and “only,” to say “only-begotten” this Creed certainly does not demonstrate such a fact because *μονογενῆ* cannot be construed with *γεννητὸν* in the phrase *τον υἱὸν γεννητὸν* in order to say “only-begotten.” *Μονογενῆ* is modifying its own noun *υἱὸν*. If what Dale Moody claimed regarding *monogenes* was the common understanding, then phrase should have been written: *Τοῦτο δὲ τὸν υἱὸν γεννητὸν μονογενῆ*.

The fact that it does not demonstrate that the bishops were not construing the two adjectives together to say only-begotten. Remember, Dale Moody claims that in *Ancoratus* they were using the adjective only (*monogenes*) with another adjective, begotten (*γεννηθέντα*) to say only-begotten. Well, the Synod of Antioch, occurring a hundred years before *Ancoratus*, did not construe the two adjectives together. As flexible as the Greek language can sometimes be, such a claim cannot stand with the grammatical structure of this Creed. The word *μονογενῆ*, in and of itself, is saying *only-begotten*.

Additionally, we see that the demonstrative pronoun *τοῦτο* points to the completed statement regarding the Son of God. That is, it points to the statement that follows concerning the Son of God, that being what they confess and preach. This explains the neuter gender for the demonstrative pronoun. The pronoun points forward to the coming statement regarding the Son, and emphasizes the statement as something very important. Why? Because they were combatting the heresy of Sabellianism which did away with Persons within the Godhead, believing the one God manifested himself in three successive modes of manifestation – first the Father, then the Son and they the Holy Spirit.

The synod was wishing to show personal distinctions within the Godhead. They did this by showing the supposed second mode of manifestation of the Son, was not simply the Father changing his mode of manifestation, or a logos without hypostatical distinction within the substance of God, but that he was the Son who was “begotten” of God, but not like other sons of God, who were sons through a temporal

and creative act of God by the Holy Spirit, but rather that he was an Only-begotten Son of God (μονογενῆ υἱὸν) by an eternal and necessary act of the Father. Thus he was known as the image of the invisible God the Father, the first born of all creation, Wisdom and Word and Power of God, existing before time not foreknown, but to substance and to subsistence, God, Son of God.

Now while this disproves Dale Moody's claim and demonstrates that *monogenes*, at that time, was not combined with another adjective to say *only-begotten*, one could still argue that even though *monogenes* modifies its own noun and is not directly construed with γεννητόν, it still should be understood as "only," (that is, if one was predisposed to believe that monogenes meant *only*), even though the context seems to indicate otherwise.

Therefore, it would help if one had further evidence to show that *monogenes* was not being understood as "only" at that time. Fortunately, we have that evidence. It is another Creed written approximately at the same time, which, when compared with this Creed, demonstrates that the word was not being understood as "only" as Dale Moody suggests.

This other Creed, written around the same time, was a private Creed written by Gregory Thaumaturgus. He was one of the main participants in that same Synod we have been discussing, the Synod of Antioch. This is what Philip Schaff has to say concerning him in his book *The Creeds of Christendom*.

"Gregorius Thaumaturgus, of Neo-Caesarea. About A.D. 270. Gregory, surnamed the Great or Thaumaturgus, i.e., the Wonderworker (from his supposed power of miracles), was a pupil and admirer of Origen (on whom he wrote an eloquent panegyric), and Bishop of Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus (from about 240 to 270), which he changed from a heathen into a Christian city. He took a prominent part in the Synod of Antioch (A.D. 269), which condemned the errors of Paul of Samosata, and issued a lengthy creed. He was held in the highest esteem, as we learn from Basil the Great, his successor in office (De Spiritu Sancto, cap. 29, § 74, where he is compared to the apostles and prophets, and called a 'second Moses'), and from Gregory of Nyssa (Vita Gregorii). The following creed (ἔκθεσις πίστεως κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν Γρηγορίου ἐπισκόπου Νεοκαισαρείας) was, according to the legend related by Gregory of Nyssa a hundred years later, revealed to him by the Apostle John in a vision, at the request of the Virgin Mary. It is somewhat rhetorical, but more explicit on the doctrine of the Trinity than any other ante-Nicene creed, and approaches in this respect the Symbolum Quicunque. The Greek text in Gallandi, Vet. PP. Bibl. p. 385; in Mansi, Tom. I. p. 1030, and Hahn, p. 97. Hahn gives also two Latin versions, one by Rufinus. Two other creeds ascribed to him are not genuine. An English translation of his writings by S. D. F. Salmond, in the Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Vol. XX. (Edinb. 1871).⁵⁴

This is a most interesting Creed to help one determine the true meaning of *monogenes* at that time. As was indicated before, Gregory was one of the major participants of the Synod. As such, it is reasonable to conclude that Gregory's understanding of monogenes was the same as the understanding of the word in the Creed that came from that Synod. This Creed was written approximately 270 A.D., and, of course, the Creed of the Synod of Antioch was written at 269 A.D.

⁵⁴ Schaff, Philip, *The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes, Vol.2 (Baker Books, Grand Rapids MI, 1993)* , pg. 24

Below is the first portion of Gregory’s creed reproduced in the original Greek Text with an English translation and a Latin translation following.

Greek Text ⁵⁵	English Translation ⁵⁶	Translation of Rufinus ⁵⁷
<p>Εἷς θεὸς πατὴρ λόγου ζῶντος, σοφίας ὑπεστώσης καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ χαρακτῆρος αἰδίου, τέλειος τελείου γεννήτωρ, πατὴρ υἱοῦ μονογενοῦς.</p>	<p>There is one God, the Father of the living Word, who is the substantive wisdom and eternal power and image of God: the perfect origin (begetter) of the perfect (begotten): the Father of the only- begotten Son</p>	<p>Unus Deus Pater verbi viventis, sapientiae subsistentis et virtutis suae et figurae, perfectus perfecti genitor, pater. Filii unigeniti.</p>
<p>Εἷς κύριος μόνος ἐκ μόνου, θεὸς ἐκ θεοῦ, χαρακτῆρ καὶ εἰκὼν τῆς θεότητος, λόγος ἐνεργός, σοφία τῆς τῶν ὄλων συστάσεως περιέκτικῆ καὶ δύναμις τῆς ὄλης κτίσεως ποιητικῆ, υἱὸς ἀληθινὸς ἀληθινοῦ πατρὸς, ἀόρατος</p>	<p>There is one Lord, one of one (only of the only), God of God, the image and likeness of the Godhead, the mighty Word, the wisdom which comprehends the constitution of all things, and the power which produces all creation; the true Son of the true Father, Invisible of Invisible, and Incorruptible of Incorruptible, and Immortal of Immortal, and Everlasting of Everlasting.</p>	<p>Unus Dominus, solus ex solo, figura et imago deitatis, verbum perpetrans, sapientia comprehendens omnia et virtus, qua tota creatura feri potuit, Filius verus very et invisibilis ex invisibili et incorruptibilis ex incorruptibili et immortalis ex immortalis et sempiternus ex sempiterno.</p>

In this creed we see that Gregory calls the Son the Only-begotten (υἱοῦ μονογενοῦς). But then he follows it with the phrase Εἷς κύριος μόνος ἐκ μόνου, θεὸς ἐκ θεοῦ. He states that the *monogenes* Son is “only (μόνος)” of “only (μόνου)!” How can this be if *monogenes* means *only*? Obviously, in Gregory’s mind the Greek word *monogenes* must carry a different connotation than *monos*.

If *monogenes* was never understood as only-begotten, but rather was understood as “only,” (as Dale Moody suggests), why would Gregory then follow up his use of *monogenes* with the phrase μόνος ἐκ μόνου? If *monogenes* meant “only,” why did he not write μονογενῆς ἐκ μονογενοῦς? In other words, if *monogenes* simply meant “only,” why did he not continue with the same thought and the same word and write that the Son was *monogenes* of *monogenous*, thereby, explaining his previous phrase?

⁵⁵ Ibid. pg. 24

⁵⁶ Ibid. pg. 24

⁵⁷ Hahn, August, *Bibliothek der Symbole und Glaubensregeln der apostolisch-katholischen Kirche*, (Verlag Von E. Morgenstern, Breslau, 1897), Pg. 253-254

Obviously, in Gregory's mind *monogenes* carried a different meaning than *monos*. This shows that *monos* is the Greek word for *only*, not *monogenes*. *Monogenes* means *only-begotten*. And since *monogenes* does not mean *only*, it does not need another adjective, *begotten*, to say *only-begotten*. It means *only-begotten* in and of itself. The connotation of "only" is found in its prefix "mono," and the connotation of "begotten" is found in its stem *-genes*.

If *monogenes* was a simple adjective meaning *only*, then, most assuredly, it could be used of any of the Three Persons, but the matter of the fact is that *monogenes* is never used of any of the Persons but the Son! Why? Why not call the Father in the creed, *monogenes Pater*? Or, why not say that the Son was μονογενῆς ἐκ μονογενοῦς, that he was only Son of the only Father? The reason is because *monogenes* does not mean *only*, but means *only-begotten*, and it would be wrong to say he was μονογενῆς ἐκ μονογενοῦς, that he was only-begotten Son of the only-begotten Father. That is why he had to switch from *monogenes* to *monos*. In the Creeds the Father is the Unbegotten. He is the only (*monos*) Father, (cf. Jn. 5:44; 17:3). But He is never the *monogenes* Father. If *monogenes* meant *only* there would be no problem saying *monogenes* Father. The fact of the matter is *monogenes* does not mean *only*; it means *only-begotten*.

It is simply wrong for Dale Moody to categorically state that the meaning of *monogenes* is *only* and that it was combined with the adjective, *begotten*, to say *only-begotten*. In fact, when one examines the evidence closely, one realizes that the evidence actually leads one into the opposite conclusion, i.e. *monogenes* does not mean *only*, but rather means what it has always meant – *only-begotten*, and that in and of itself!

And so we see that a hundred years before Anconatus, *monogenes* was understood as one word meaning only-begotten; it did not take two words to make up that title.

Misconception Three

Continuing with this line of thought, and coming back to the time period of *Anconatus*, we now find Dale Moody stating this:

"It is the word *gennēthentos* that means "begotten," but it does not appear with *monogenēs* in the NT. Now Jerome too was an advocate of the Nicene creed, and it seems clear that his orthodox zeal tempted him to read his creed which required two words (*gennēthenta monogenē*) into the one word (*monogenēs*) found in John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; I John 4:9; Heb. 11:17. These facts may be easily checked in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. II, pg. 35."⁵⁸

He continues with his thought that it takes two words to say only-begotten and concludes that because *gennēthentos* and *monogenē* are not used together, *monogenēs* could never mean "only-begotten," but must mean "only" and only when it is used with *gennēthentos*, does one arrive with the meaning "only-begotten."

⁵⁸ Moody, Dale, *God's Only Son: The Translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version*, (*Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 72, No. 4; Dec., 1953), pg. 215

A couple of things need to be said in regard to this claim. First he says that the word *gennēthentos*, means begotten. Of course, that is true, but he makes it seem that because it does not occur with the compound word *monogenes* in the New Testament that that is somehow significant. Why would that be significant? He makes the additional implication to the reader that *monogenēs* cannot mean *only-begotten* simply because it does not occur with the word *gennēthentos*. What difference would that make?

Using that same logic one could just as easily make the following statement to disprove the Neo-Trinitarians meaning of “only one of a kind” for *monogenes*. Dale Moody says *monogenēs* means “only.” Neo-Trinitarians and Dale Moody also believe *genos* means kind; but it is a fact that *genos* never appears with *monogenes* in the New Testament! So, using his same logic, *monogenes* could never mean “one of a kind” unless it appeared with *genos*. So, if that is true, why does Dale Moody, himself, say *monogenes* can mean “only” or it can mean “one of a kind?”⁵⁹ How could it mean “one of a kind?” *Monogenes* does not appear with *genos* and it takes both words to say “one of a kind!” Using his same logic it could not!

Yet is any of this significant as to the real meaning of *monogenes*? No! And neither is the fact that because *gennēthentos* does not appear with *monogenēs*, *monogenes* can never mean *only-begotten*. These are simply empty arguments that distract from the real issue at hand.

For example, consider this. I will use the exact same sentence he used, except I will substitute *genos* for *gennēthentos*, and *kind* for *begotten*. I will compare them side by side with my concluding sentence above to show you the misdirection of his claim.

Dale Moody’s Claim	Alternate Claim
It is the word <i>gennēthentos</i> that means “begotten,” but it does not appear with <i>monogenēs</i> in the NT. Therefore, <i>monogenes</i> could never mean “only-begotten.”	It is the word <i>genos</i> that means “kind,” but it does not appear with <i>monogenēs</i> in the NT. Therefore, <i>monogenes</i> could never mean “one of a kind.”
His Conclusion	Alternate Conclusion
Therefore he concludes that such a fact must mean – that only when <i>monogenēs</i> is used with <i>gennēthentos</i> , does one arrive with the meaning “only-begotten.” Therefore, <i>monogenes</i> cannot mean only-begotten in the NT.	Therefore, using his same logic, could I not equally conclude – that only when <i>monogenēs</i> is used with <i>genos</i> , does one arrive with the meaning “one of a kind.” Therefore, <i>monogenes</i> cannot mean “one of a kind” in the NT.

⁵⁹ His whole paper is to defend the meaning of “only” for *monogenes* as found in the RSV, but later in his paper, he claims *monogenes* also means “one of a kind,” as we will see later.

By using his same logic, one could equally disprove his meaning of “only one of a kind” for *monogenes*.

Now, obviously, he would object and say something like this, (if I may speak for him), “It does not matter that the two words do not appear together because the meaning of “kind” is found in the stem *-genes* of *monogenes*. Thus it makes no difference that *monogenes* does not appear with *genos*. *Monogenes* means “only one of a kind” in and of itself.

Ah! But, could I not say the same thing? I again will use the same sentence but substitute “begotten” for “kind” and *gennēthentos* for *genos*, and “only-begotten” for “only one of a kind.”

“It does not matter that the two words do not appear together because the meaning of “begotten” is found in the stem *-genes* of *monogenes*. Thus it makes no difference that *monogenēs* does not appear with *gennēthentos*. *Monogenes* means “only-begotten” in and of itself.

This is the type of double-speak and straw man arguments that Dale Moody repeatedly uses in his paper; it is most misleading to the student of Scripture. He will repeatedly set up these presuppositions to prove his point, but his presuppositions are simply irrelevant. Rather than examining the evidence he resorts to a presuppositional language that confuses the issue.

Secondly, when we look closer at his claims, he says in the above quote that Jerome was clearly tempted to read two words (*gennethenta monogenē*) into the one word, only-begotten (*monogenēs*). Where is his evidence for this statement? There is no evidence! It obviously is not true. Jerome accepted the Nicene Creed which was composed long before the Creed in Ancoratus. And the Nicene Creed used *monogenes* in and of itself to mean “only-begotten” long before the time in question. The meaning of *monogenes* was not changed by Jerome. It meant “only-begotten” before Jerome was even born!

Dale Moody makes up these assertions that have no factual basis, but then presents them as being facts. Why is it that the Evangelicals who always appeal to Dale Moody’s paper as proof for the real meaning of *monogenes* have never checked the veracity of his claims? He is simply misleading.

If Dale Moody’s assertion is true, then let me ask, “Where is the documentation?” Most assuredly, if Jerome or any other early Christian decided to change the meaning of *monogenes* from Dale Moody’s assumed meaning of *only*, or *one of a kind* to *only-begotten*, most assuredly they would have left ample evidence explaining their reason for changing the meaning of the word. Why? Because the Church was being inundated with heresies during those centuries. Everyone was trying to destroy the Faith.

To say that the Son was “one of a kind” would have been absolute heresy in those days because they were fighting for the meaning of *homoousios* as opposed to *homoiousios*. If the Son is *one of a kind* he cannot be *homoousios*.

It would have been absolute folly for them to adopt a word that meant *one of a kind* in their Creeds and attempt to change its meaning to *only-begotten* because every Greek speaking person would naturally think that they were saying our Lord Jesus Christ was “*one of a kind*,” unless, somehow, they had received some type of information telling them the word was being redefined.

Not only that, I am sure there would have been many who would have protested this adoption of a word that means *one of a kind*, for the very same reason listed above. They would have not wanted to cause people confusion and would not have wanted to utilize a word in their Creed that might lead people into heresy unless the people first received a massive re-education of the word. Where is evidence of such a vast re-education?

If the early Church Fathers did, what Dale Moody suggested they did, we would have had ample evidence of such a change. But guess what? There is no such evidence. There is not one document that even hints that anyone changed the meaning of *monogenes*. This is just something Dale Moody dreamed up in his own mind. And look at the harm this fabrication has done to the spiritual lives of untold Christians. Look at the harm this has done to the Faith.

If I was alive when Dale Moody was alive, I would have asked him, “Where, O brother Moody, is your evidence for this?” And if he provided it and I found out I was wrong in accusing him of making it up in his mind, I would most assuredly have asked for his forgiveness. But alas, he is gone and he cannot answer us, so all we have left is to make our judgment based upon his paper. But such a judgment needs to be made because his assertion is harming the spiritual lives of many Christians!

But someone might say, “Did he not say that Philip Schaff supports his conclusion?” “Did he not say that Philip Schaff backs up his claim that Jerome read the two words (*gennethenta monogenē*) into the one word (*monogenēs*)?” Yes, he did. But guess what? This too is made up. There is no such confirmation!

The reader can check this out for himself. Dale Moody even gives us the page number; he lists page thirty-five for Philip Schaff’s confirmation, but the reader will search to no avail to find such a confirmation. The only thing on that page that corroborates anything Dale Moody states is that he accurately quotes the Greek line in the Creed he mentions, and also the English translation of that line he adapts. But other than that, nothing confirms his claims, claims, which he identifies as “these facts.” (As for the faulty English

translation of that line, we have already covered that previously in the sub-chapter Misconception One).

As a matter of fact, if using these two words, *gennethenta* and *monogenēs*, was the correct way to say only-begotten, I have not been able to find any occurrence where these two words were used together. And as we have already demonstrated it is wrong to assert they were used together in the Creed that Philip Schaff provides for us on page thirty-five of his book.

As an aside, it is a mystery why Philip Schaff translates those Greek words the way he does, because it is very clear that he never believed it took those two words to say *only-begotten*.

If one looks two pages earlier, on page thirty-three of the same book, one will find the first formula of the same Creed he reproduces on page thirty-five. In this first formula of the Creed, Schaff provides the following Greek Text and English Translation which we will chart out for the reader.⁶⁰

Creed of Epiphanius –First Formula	
Greek Text	English Translation
Καὶ εἰς ἓνα Κύριον Ἰησοῦν χριστόν, τόν Υἱόν τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων.	And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds.

As one can see, *μονογενῆ* is written in a completely different phrase than the phrase containing *γεννηθέντα*. There is absolutely no way the two can be construed together. *Monogenē* (*μονογενῆ*) is not modifying *gennethenta* (*γεννηθέντα*) to say only-begotten. And Philip Schaff provides an English translation that translates *monogene*, as “only-begotten,” and *gennethenta*, as “begotten.”

If the claim made by Dale Moody was true, i.e. that Philip Schaff backs him up, and also believes it took two words to say only-begotten, we should have expected a translation of “only” for *monogene*. And yet Philip Schaff provides an English translation of “only-begotten” for *monogene*!

In fact, on page twenty-six, he even makes this statement in a footnote regarding the Creed of Lucian:

⁶⁰ Schaff, Philip, *The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes, Vol.2*, (Harper & Brothers, Publishers, New York, 1877), pg. 33

“I connect μονογενῆ with θεον, which accords with the reading of some of the oldest MSS, (the Sinaitic and the Vatican), in John i.18 (μονογενῆς θεός instead of υἱός). But according to the usual punctuation adopted by Hahn we must translate, “his only-begotten Son, God.”⁶¹

This is a clear statement that shows that Philip Schaff understood *monogenes* to mean “only-begotten,” and not to mean “only,” or “only one of a kind.”

As to why, when we get to the second formula of the Creed of Epiphanius, he translates it the way he does, I do not know. It certainly was not because he believed *monogenes* did not mean *only-begotten*, and rather meant *only*, nor was it because he thought it took two words to translate the one English word “only-begotten.”

Let me provide for you one more piece of evidence to prove this fact. Look at his statement in a book defending the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. He says this regarding the title “Only-begotten” used for our Lord by the disciple John.

“Thus the manhood of Christ, rising far above all ordinary manhood, though freely coming down to its lowest ranks, with the view to their elevation and redemption, is already the portal of his Godhead. But he calls himself at the same time, as he is most frequently called by his disciples, the Son of God in an equally emphatic sense. He is not merely a son of God among others, angels, archangels, princes, and judges, and redeemed men, but the Son of God as no other being ever was, is, or can be, all others being sons or children of God only by derivation or adoption, after a new spiritual birth, and in dependence on his absolute and eternal Sonship. He is, as his favourite disciple calls him, the “only-begotten” Son, or as the old catholic theology expresses it, eternally begotten of the substance of the Father.”⁶²

He makes the statement, “as his favourite disciple calls him, the “only-begotten Son.” Now, John never called Christ the only-begotten by combining the two words, *gennethenta monogenes*, in his Gospel. He never combined those words at all, nor are they combined anywhere in Scripture. Yet, Philip Schaff says that John called him the “only-begotten Son.” How could the apostle John ever do that, if Dale Moody’s assertion is true that it takes the two words, *gennethenta monogenes*, to say only-begotten? Obviously, Dale Moody’s assertion is wrong. So, what word did John use in his Gospel to say only-begotten? John used the words *monogenes* (only-begotten)!

Since that is the word used by the apostle John, and Philip Schaff says that our Lord’s favorite disciple called him *only-begotten*, then obviously, Philip Schaff believed *monogenes* meant *only-begotten*.

Dale Moody is wrong to claim an authority like Philip Schaff to support his theories regarding the meaning of *monogenes*. Philip Schaff believed nothing

⁶¹ Schaff, Philip, *The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, Vol.2, (Harper & Brothers, Publishers, New York, 1877), pg. 26

⁶² Schaff, Philip, Roussel, Napoleon, Renan, Joseph Ernest, *The Christ of the Gospels and the Romance of M. Renan, Three Essays*, by Rev. Dr..Schaff and N. Roussel, (The Religious Tract Society, London), pg. 53-54

of the kind. He believed the opposite of Dale Moody. He believed *monogenes*, indeed, meant “*only-begotten*,” in and of itself.

As for, the rest of his statements regarding Jerome and the Old Latin MSS and the Vulgate, which are equally misleading, please see the following chapter on *The Testimony of Old Latin Versions, Jerome and the Latin Vulgate*. Once again his assertions are totally without foundation, and sadly these false assertions are repeated as fact over and over on the internet. And sadly, such assertions are accepted as facts by many Christians.

Misconception Four

Dale Moody states:

“As long ago as 1883 B. F. Westcott, in *The Epistles of St. John*, pp. 162-165, made clear that the meaning of *monogenēs* “is centered in the Personal existence of the Son, and not in the Generation of the Son” and concluded that “the grand simplicity of the original idea of the word was lost...towards the close of the fourth century.” Efforts to refute these conclusions from such references as Ignatius (*Eph.* VII.2), *Epistle of Diognetus* 10:2, *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 20:2, and Justin Martyr (*Dial.* 105) are fruitless. This discussion may be closed with a quotation from a writing contemporary with *The Gospel According to John* which shows clearly that the above conclusions on *monogenēs* are correct.

There is a bird which is called the Phoenix.
This being the only one of its kind (*monogenēs*) lives 500 years.
I Clement XXV.2.

Now the Phoenix was neither born nor begotten, but it could be *monogenēs*, the only one of its kind!”⁶³

There is so much that is wrong and misleading with this statement. In the first place, he leaves out an important part of his quote from Westcott. These are the three quotes he takes from Westcott:

“...is centered in the Personal existence of the Son, and not in the Generation of the Son”

And,

“the grand simplicity of the original idea of the word was lost...”

And,

“...towards the close of the fourth century.”

But he takes these quotes completely out of context thereby giving the impression to the reader that Westcott believed the meaning of *monogenes*

⁶³ Moody, Dale, *God’s Only Son: The Translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version*, (*Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 72, No. 4; Dec., 1953), pg. 219

had nothing ever to do with the generation of the Son but was ever centered in the Personal existence of the Son.

But the fact of the matter is, Westcott was not making such a broad conclusion. I will reproduce the greater part of the quote below to let the reader see for himself how the quotes are taken out of context. I will underline and put in bold print the quotes that Dale Moody pieced together.

“These mystical speculations fixed attention upon the term; but perhaps at the same time they checked its technical use in the Church. It does not in fact occur in the earlier types of the Creed, which are found in Irenaeus, Tertullian and Novatian; and in Tertullian the corresponding Latin term *unicus* is used of God (the Father): *de virg. vel. 1; adv. Prax. 2*. But it is worthy of notice that in the confession of Ignatius before Trajan, which follows the great lines of a Baptismal Symbol, the phrase is found: εἷς ἔστιν θεὸς...καὶ εἷς Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ μονογενής (Ignat. Mart. 2; comp. Polyc. Mart. 20). And it was apparently from Antioch that the term spread as an element of the expression of the Catholic Faith.

“In the second half of the third century the word appears in the Confessions of Syria and Asia Minor (Syn. Ant. A.D. 269, Routh, iii. p. 290; Greg. Thaum. ap. Greg. Nyss. 3, p. 912; Lucian, Socr. 2, 10, 7; Apost. Const. 7, 41; Marcellus, Epiph. Host. 72, p. 836); and from that time it gradually obtained a permanent place in the Creeds of the East and the West

“The earliest certain example of the word in this connexion brings out its force very plainly. The Synod of Antioch (269), which condemned Paul of Samosata, in giving the exposition of their ancient belief which they addressed to him, write: 'We confess and proclaim the Son as begotten, 'an only Son (γενντόν, υἱὸν μονογενῆ), the image of the unseen God, the 'firstborn of all creation, the Wisdom and Word and Power of God, who was 'before the ages not by foreknowledge but by essence and subsistence, 'God, Son of God, having recognised Him as such both in the Old and New 'Testament' (Routh, Rell. Sacr. iii. 290; comp. Alex. Alexandr. ap. Theodor. H. E. I. 4. 45, (φύσις μονογενής).”

“The point which is emphasised by the word here is evidently the absolute oneness of the Being of the Son. He stands to the Father in a relation wholly singular. He is the one only Son, the one to whom the title belongs in a sense completely unique and peculiar. The thought **is centred in the Personal existence of the Son, and not in the Generation of the Son.** That mystery is dealt with in another phrase. Consistently with this view the earliest Latin forms of the Creed uniformly represent the word by *unicus*, the only son, and not by *unigenitus* the only-begotten son, and this rendering has maintained its place in the Apostles' Creed and in our English version of it. But **towards the close of the fourth century** in translations from the Greek, *unigenitus* came to be substituted for *unicus*, and this interpretation has passed into our version of the Constantinopolitan Creed (only-begotten).”

“The sense of only Son is preserved by the Syriac versions of the Nicene Creed, which go back to the original word which was rendered in the LXX. *μονογενής* and *ἀγαπητός* [a word from the Syriac *v.* is included here]⁶⁴ following in this the example of the Syriac translation of the N. T., where the word *μονογενής* is so rendered uniformly: Caspari, pp. 101,116.

“The exact phraseology of the true Nicene Creed separates distinctly these two thoughts of the generation of the Son, and of the unique being of the Son. 'We believe...in one Lord Jesus Christ, begotten of the Father 'an only Son' (γεννηθέντα ἐκ πατρὸς μονογενῆ), where the uniqueness of nature is further defined by the addition 'that is to say of the essence of 'the Father.' And this proper sense of the word *μονογενής*, as marking the oneness of the sonship, preserves a close affinity in idea with *ἀγαπητός* well-beloved, the second translation of ἡγάπη.

⁶⁴ We are sorry; we were not able to reproduce the Syriac word.

Both words define that which is essentially singular in filial relationship: 'Only son and well-beloved,' Athanasius writes, 'are the same' (Or. c. Ar. iv. 24).

“But in the interval which elapsed before the Council of Constantinople the important distinction between the sonship and the generation of the Son was beginning to be obscured, and μονογενής was treated as equivalent μόνος γεννηθείς, so as to include both the fact of the uniqueness of the Nature of the Son and the ground (if we may so speak) of His uniqueness.

“In this way **the grand simplicity of the original idea of the word was lost.** Other thoughts, true in themselves, were gathered round it, and at last the sense was given by Gregory of Nazianzus as describing 'not the 'only Son of an only Parent, at one only time, but also that He was (begotten) in a singular way (μονοτρόπως)' (Orat. xxx. 20). And this conception, with which no fault can be found except that it is not contained in the word, became popularly current afterwards and was admirably expressed by John of Damascus: Μονογενής δὲ ὅτι μόνος ἐκ μόνου τοῦ πατρὸς μόνως ἐγεννήθη) (De Fid. Orthod. i. 8. 135).⁶⁵

As can be seen above, he takes the first line from the third paragraph, “is centred in the Personal existence of the Son, and not in the Generation of the Son.” Then he skips down and takes a line from the last paragraph, “In this way the grand simplicity of the original idea of the word was lost.” and then he goes all the way back up to the beginning and concludes with a line from the fourth paragraph, “towards the close of the fourth century.”

This completely misrepresents what B.F. Westcott actually declared, (although, Westcott must have known people would make that conclusion). Dale Moody takes a narrow conclusion regarding the use of monogenes in a particular Creed at a certain time, and turns it into a broad conclusion regarding the use of monogenes at any time, in any usage! To be fair to B. F. Westcott, he does not make such a broad conclusion! He is very careful in the words he chooses, as we will presently see. In fact, in another writing of B. F. Westcott on the Gospel of John, he admits *monogenes* originally meant “only born,” although he then diffuses that meaning by emphasizing the “unique” or “only side.”

He states in his commentary on the Gospel of John the following.

“The rendering "only-begotten" somewhat obscures the exact sense of μονογενής, which is rather "only-born." That is, the thought in the original is centred in the personal Being of the Son and not in His generation. Christ is the One only Son, the One to whom the title belongs in a sense completely unique and singular, as distinguished from that in which there are many children of God.”⁶⁶

And so we see, Westcott is not so clear cut as Dale Moody suggests. Westcott takes great care in his words, as he should, but, like Dale Moody, one sees that he leaves out some important information regarding the usage of *monogenes*

⁶⁵ Westcott, Brooke Foss., *The Epistles St. John: the Greek text with notes and essays*, (MacMillan & Co., London, 1883), Pgs. 163-164

⁶⁶ Westcott, B. F., *The Gospel according to St. John: the Greek text with introduction and notes*, Vol. 1, (John Murray, London, 1908), pg. 23

that would greatly aid the student of God's Word in determining the proper meaning of the Greek Word *monogenes*. So with that in mind let's now continue.

As we already showed, Westcott admitted *monogenes* originally carried the idea of "only born," although, he immediately seeks to prove otherwise. But a careful reader will notice that he limits his examples of the word to the "Creeds!" Notice what he said in his comments from the First Epistle of John.

"These mystical speculations fixed attention upon the term; but perhaps at the same time they checked its technical use in the Church. It does not in fact occur in the earlier types of the Creed, which are found in Irenaeus, Tertullian and Novatian; and in Tertullian the corresponding Latin term *unicus* is used of God (the Father): *de virg. vel. 1; adv. Prax.*"⁶⁷

And,

"The thought is centred in the Personal existence of the Son, and not in the Generation of the Son. That mystery is dealt with in another phrase. Consistently with this view the earliest Latin forms of the Creed uniformly represent the word by *unicus*, the only son, and not by *unigenitus* the only-begotten son, and this rendering has maintained its place in the Apostles' Creed and in our English version of it."⁶⁸

And, finally,

"But towards the close of the fourth century in translations from the Greek, *unigenitus* came to be substituted for *unicus*, and this interpretation has passed into our version of the Constantinopolitan Creed (only-begotten)."⁶⁹

As one can see Westcott is speaking in regard to the Creeds and not to the general usage of the word by those early Church Fathers. Yet Dale Moody, through his editing, made it seem that Westcott was saying that this was true in general usage and not just in regard to the Creeds. (Although, again, who can deny that even though Westcott is careful to limit his statements to the Creeds, he must have known one would naturally take it in a broader sense).

Of course, in reality, the complete opposite is true, yet neither B F. Westcott, nor Dale Moody let the reader to know this. The word *monogenes* is found repeatedly in the writings of the Church Fathers and in places that are not a part of a Creed! Why do Westcott and Moody ignore this important fact? Could it not be because this fact does not agree with their narrative?

Consequently, we can now see that it is a misconception to declare that B. F. Westcott stated that *monogenes* was never was used at any time in any way as bespeaking the generation of the Son. He never makes such a broad declaration, even admitting in his commentary on the Gospel of John that *monogenes* meant "only born." And yet, one cannot but wonder if Westcott

⁶⁷ Op. Cit., Westcott, *The Epistle of St. John*, op. cit., pg. 163

⁶⁸ Ibid., pg. 163

⁶⁹ Ibid., pg. 163

was hoping his readers would make the same conclusion Dale Moody made, for after he admits that monogenes meant “only born,” he then, in the next breath, says that it has nothing to do with generation! How is one born if one is not generated? If monogenes means “only born” it certainly has to do with generation, derivation, and begottenness.

And so we can see how this quote concerning B. F. Westcott is misleading, but let’s read it again so we can examine the remaining claims made by Dale Moody regarding this issue.

“As long ago as 1883 B. F. Westcott, in *The Epistles of St. John*, pp. 162-165, made clear that the meaning of monogenēs “is centered in the Personal existence of the Son, and not in the Generation of the Son” and concluded that “the grand simplicity of the original idea of the word was lost...towards the close of the fourth century.” Efforts to refute these conclusions from such references as Ignatius (*Eph. VII.2*), *Epistle of Diognetus* 10:2, *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 20:2, and Justin Martyr (*Dial. 105*) are fruitless. This discussion may be closed with a quotation from a writing contemporary with *The Gospel According to John* which shows clearly that the above conclusions on monogenēs are correct.

There is a bird which is called the Phoenix.
This being the only one of its kind (monogenēs) lives 500 years.
I Clement XXV.2.

Now the Phoenix was neither born nor begotten, but it could be *monogenēs*, the only one of its kind!⁷⁰

After making the claim that B. F. Westcott stated that monogenes never meant “only-begotten,” or “only born” until the fourth century, when the grand simplicity of the word was lost, he then states that efforts to refute those conclusions by references from the Church Fathers are fruitless

And yet, even though he dismisses the evidence of the “Fathers” as fruitless, he ends up with a quote from the Fathers! He provides a quote from Clement because he thinks it supports his view, but in reality it disproves his view. And not only that, his very last statement regarding that quote from Clement is patently false! It makes one wonder if Dale Moody even read First Clement. He completely misleads the reader. Christians should ask, “Why?” “What is going on with such disinformation?”

We do not need to go into the story of the Phoenix again since we have already addressed this issue in a previous chapter, but for Dale Moody to blatantly tell the reader that the “Phoenix was neither born nor begotten” is totally incredulous! Clement, himself, clearly states the complete opposite; he states the Phoenix was begotten!

He declares in chapter twenty five, verse 3 that the Phoenix was γεννᾶται (begotten). The line reads, “and, as the flesh decays, a certain worm is begotten” (σπητομένης δὲ τῆς σαρκὸς σκώληξ τις γεννᾶται).

⁷⁰ Moody, Dale, Op. Cit., pg. 219

The word γεννᾶται (begotten) is the 3rd person, single, present indicative of γεννᾶω. The meaning of γεννᾶω, of course, is beget, give birth, or be born!

It is inconceivable that Dale Moody could make such a misleading statement, telling the reader that the Phoenix was neither born nor begotten, when the truth was the exact opposite! And it is equally inconceivable that he would then have the gumption to actually use that text to prove to the unsuspecting reader that *monogenes* never had anything to do with begetting or generation. This is most disconcerting.

Now, before we look at the final misleading statement in this quote, perhaps, one thing must be said to be fair to Dale Moody. He chooses his words carefully like Westcott. Notice he says in the final portion of this quote that an effort to refute these conclusions from such Patristic writings as Ignatius, the Epistle of Diognetus, the Martyrdom of Polycarp and Justin Martyr would be fruitless. He does not mention such Patristics as Irenaeus, Tertullian, or Athanasius or many others. So in one sense he was partially correct because the texts he chooses, those of Diognetus and Polycarp are texts that do not give enough information to determine the meaning of *monogenes* one way or the other.

But he was only partially correct – in so far as he was careful to only choose such texts that were so nebulous that he could truthfully say they were fruitless. He was careful to not include such writings as those of Tertullian or Athanasius or others, because they are not unfruitful, but are very fruitful, (as we will see in the later chapter entitled the Patristics).

But why would he, (as well as B. F. Westcott), not tell the reader that there are other texts from this time period that are very fruitful – that there are texts which show that the meaning of *monogenes* was understood to be *only-begotten* or *only born*?

He claims the true meaning of *monogenes* was known in the first four centuries of the Church, that is, until the grand simplicity of the meaning was lost toward the close of the fourth century. So if that is true, why not then examine the evidence from those first four centuries. If his assertion is true, would not those references help prove his claim? Why ignore the evidence from those centuries? Why? Simply because they disprove his claim!

He creates this entire narrative by taking Westcott's quotes out of order, then pastes them together in such a way as to "suggest" that everyone understood the word in its grand simplicity of "unique" or "only" in those first four centuries, until the latter end of the fourth century, when Christians began to assign the meaning of only-begotten to the word. This simply is not true! It is an absolute fabrication! Why does he not provide evidence for his claim? He does not because there is no such evidence. In fact, not only is there fruitful

evidence in the first four centuries of Church witness, there is a total of harvest of fruit that totally disprove his claim as we will see under the chapter entitled *The Patristics*.

Yet in spite of his careful language to limit his examples to those certain references such as Ignatius (*Eph. VII.2*), *Epistle of Diognetus* 10:2, *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 20:2, and Justin Martyr (*Dial. 105*), he still was incorrect; the two references of Ignatius and Justin Martyr are, indeed, very fruitful in disproving his conclusion that *monogenes* was never used with the meaning of “only-begotten,” or “only born” in those first four centuries. Rather they prove *monogenes* was understood as only-begotten in those centuries.

In the very same reference of Ignatius, (*Eph. VII.2*), that Dale Moody claims was fruitless, we find Ignatius making this statement.

“Ἰατρός δὲ ἡμῶν ἐστὶν ὁ μόνος ἀληθινὸς θεὸς, ὁ ἀγέννητος καὶ ἀπόσιτος, ὁ τῶν ὅλων κύριος, τοῦ δὲ μονογενοῦς πατὴρ καὶ γεννήτωρ ἔχομεν ἱατρὸν καὶ τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν θεὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστὸν τὸν πρὸ αἰώνων υἱὸν μονογενῆ καὶ λόγον, ὕστερον δὲ καὶ ἄνθρωπον ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου ὁ λόγος γὰρ σὰρξ ἐγένετο.”⁷¹

“But our Physician is the only true God, the unbegotten and unapproachable, the Lord of all, the Father and Begetter of the only-begotten Son. We have also as a Physician the Lord our God, Jesus the Christ, the only-begotten Son and Word, before time began, but who afterwards became also man, of Mary the virgin.”⁷²

Now, it makes no difference if this quote is from the shorter or longer recension, or whether the epistles of Ignatius are spurious or genuine for we are simply looking for evidence if the word *monogenes* was use as “only-begotten” or “only born” in the first four centuries of the Church.

This quote is from the longer recension, which many consider to be a later interpolation of the epistle. (The shorter recension is different because it does not even use the word *monogenes*, let alone some of the other words in the longer recension). Now some believe it was written in the middle of the second century, others in the middle of the fourth century. It makes no difference, but if the earlier date is true it becomes even more significant because it would have been written a mere fifty years or so after the death of the apostle John.

The passage clearly affirms the traditional meaning of *monogenes*. The meanings of “only member of a kin,” or the meaning of “only” simply would

⁷¹ Saint Ignatius (Bishop of Antioch), Cureton, William Tr., *Corpus Ignatianum: a complete collection of the Ignatian epistles, genuine, interpolated and spurious, together with numerous extracts from them, as quoted by ecclesiastical writers down to the tenth century, in Syriac, Greek, and Latin*, (Asher and Co., Berlin, 1849), pg.23

⁷² Roberts, Alexander; Donaldson, James, ed., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI 1985), pg. 52

not fit the context. However, the meaning of “only-begotten” would fit nicely within the context.

First, Ignatius declares that God the Father is the “only true God.” He uses the Greek word *μόνος* to declare this. Now, if *monogenes* means “only” as Dale Moody asserts, why then did not Ignatius write *ὁ μονογενῆς ἀληθινὸς θεὸς*? Now some may say, “Well he just chose to use the word *μόνος* instead, since it also means only.” Well, enough. But why then did he not continue with his chosen word and use *μόνος* again when referring to the Son? Or why did he not simply use *monogenes* for both the Father and the Son together if it simply means “only?”

I think the answer is simply because *μόνος* and *μονογενῆς* do not mean the same thing. *Monos* means “only,” and *monogenes* means “only-begotten,” or “only born.” Ignatius could not use *monogenes* of the Father because he calls the Father, *ὁ ἀγέννητος* (the unbegotten) and the *γεννήτωρ* (begetter) of the Son. The Father is the only one unbegotten and the Son is the only one begotten, the *Monogenes* – the Only-begotten.

Monogenes is never used of the Father in the Bible or in these writings, yet *monos* is used repeatedly for the Father. Why? If *monogenes* means “only” and not “only-begotten,” why then is it never used of the Father?

Second, if *monogenes* means “only member of a kin,” how could that be true if the Father is also a member of a kin? The Son would not then be the only member of the kin. (Such a thought has all kinds of theological problems. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not members of a kin, but I am simply demonstrating – apart from the theological problems – that linguistically, the Son could not be considered to be the only member of a kin, if his Father was still alive!).

Nor, if we chose the meaning adopted by Dale Moody for the word *monogenes*, the meaning “only,” would it work within the context, simply because the first use of *monogenes* does not include the word *υἱὸς* in the Greek, (unlike the English translation provided by Roberts - Donaldson above). So if *monogenes* simply meant “only,” one has to ask, “Only what? God is the Father and Begetter of “only?” It makes no sense. But it does make sense to say he is the Father and Begetter of the “only-begotten.”

So we see that this is a very significant passage that is not fruitless in regard as to whether *monogenes* was ever understood as only-begotten in the first four centuries of the Church. It is very fruitful in showing it meant only-begotten. However it must be noted that assigning an earlier date to the longer recension is a minority opinion. The general consensus is that the longer recension was composed in the middle of the fourth century and I would tend to agree with the later date.

But does that make any difference? I do not think so for it is still in the fourth century and Dale Moody claims the “grand simplicity” of the world was not lost until the “close” of the fourth century.

Now, I know some will dismiss even this and say it was written at the “close” of the fourth century. Now that is certainly up for debate, but let’s assume they are correct. Let’s give them the benefit of the doubt. Why should that cause this reference to be so curtly dismissed? Does this not still provide evidence as to how *monogenes* was understood? Certainly it would carry more weight if it was written at the early date, but why should it be dismissed out of hand as it is done by Dale Moody? Are we not simply looking for evidence as to how the word *monogenes* was understood in the first four centuries following the time of our Lord? Is this still not within that time period?

Plainly stated, a later date for this reference should not disqualify it for consideration, for if one is willing to look back to Parmenides, to approximately the fifth century before Christ, for help in understanding the meaning of *monogenes*, why would one not be willing to look forward to approximately the fourth century after Christ for help in understanding the meaning of *monogenes*?

At least the evidence should be provided to the Christian so that such a one can decide for themselves as to whether the passage has any significance – a thing Dale Moody was not willing to do, because, in his opinion, he considered such an exercise fruitless, which I hope you can now see is not the case.

The next reference will not be so controversial, for all agree to an early date. Justin Martyr, (A.D. 110-165), was born just a few years after the apostle John’s death. In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, while commenting on Christ’s suffering being predicted in Psalm 22, he makes this important declaration regarding Christ.

“Μονογενής γὰρ ὅτι ἦν τῷ πατρὶ τῶν ὅλων οὗτος, ἰδίως ἐξ αὐτοῦ λόγος καὶ δύναμις γεγενημένος, καὶ ὕστερον ἄνθρωπος διὰ τῆς παρθένου γενόμενος, ὡς, ἀπὸ τῶν ἀπομνημονευμάτων ἐμάθομεν, προεδήλωσα.⁷³

“For I have already proved that He was the only-begotten of the Father of all things, being begotten in a peculiar manner Word and Power by Him, and having afterwards become man through the Virgin, as we have learned from the memoirs.”⁷⁴

⁷³ Justin Martyr, Trollope, Rev. W., tr., *S. Justini philosophi et martyris, cum Trypnone Judaeo dialogus*. Edited with a corrected text and English introduction and notes, Vol. II (Printed by and for J. Hall, Opposite the Pitt Press; and G. Bell, Cambridge, 1847), pg. 71-72

⁷⁴ Roberts, Alexander; Donaldson, James, ed., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI 1985), pg. 251

We can take this portion a couple ways. We can treat the participle as a periphrastic participle and translate the first part as follows:

“For I made clear before that the Only-begotten to the Father of all things, the Word and the Power, was begotten privately out of him, and he afterwards became man through the virgin, just as we have learned from the memoirs.”

Or we can take the first part as an epexegetical participle in which case we could translate it thus:

“For I have made clear before that he was Only-begotten to the Father of all things, Word and Power, being begotten out of him privately.”

The latter translation is probably the better for *λόγος καὶ δύναμις* are anarthrous. But in either case we have *monogenes* being defined by the participle, explaining why he is the only-begotten.

We also have an adverb, *ἰδίως*, which we find fronted, also emphasizing why he is only-begotten. The adverb carries the idea of privacy, peculiarity, or uniqueness. Thus the phrase could be rendered,

“For I have made clear before that he was only-begotten to the Father of all things, word and power, being uniquely begotten out of him,”

or

“For I made clear before that the Only-begotten to the Father of all things, the Word and the Power, was uniquely begotten out of him.”

In essence, with the adverb, Justin is giving further definition to the Greek participle and thus the word it is construed with by explaining how he was begotten and thus only-begotten. In this case, with *ἰδίως*, the term *monogenes* is being further explained by the participle as one who is *only-begotten* because he is *uniquely begotten* from the Father of all things.

In addition, he is also affirming the meaning of *only-begotten* by saying he had already made this point clear. When did he make it clear? For such a statement to make sense he must have said something before where he had affirmed the same thing; he must have already demonstrated that Christ was the only-begotten of the Father of all things.

He did. And it is found in this portion of his Dialogue with Trypho.

“ ‘I shall give you another testimony, my friends,’ said I, ‘from the Scriptures, that God begat before all creatures a Beginning, [who was] a certain rational power [proceeding] from Himself, who is called by the Holy Spirit, now the Glory of the Lord, now the Son, again Wisdom, again an Angel, then God, then Lord and Logos; and on another occasion He call Himself Captain, when He appeared in human form to Joshua the son of Nave (Nun). For He

can be called by all those names, since He ministers to the Father's will, and since He was begotten of the Father by an act of will; just as we see happening among ourselves: for when we give out some word, we beget the word; yet not by abscission, so as to lessen the word [which remains] in us, when we give it out: and Just as we see also happening in the case of a fire, which is not lessened when it has kindled [another], but remains the same; and that which has been kindled by it likewise appears to exist by itself, not diminishing that from which it was kindled. The word of Wisdom, who is Himself this God begotten of the Father of all things, and Word, and Wisdom, and Power and the Glory of the Begetter, will bear evidence to me when He speaks..⁷⁵

This, most likely, is the portion to which he is referring, and in this portion near the end of the paragraph we find him calling Christ, "...the Word of Wisdom, who is Himself this God begotten of the Father of all things"

The pertinent part in Greek is this.

"...ὁ λόγος τῆς σοφίας, αὐτὸς ὦν οὗτος ὁ θεὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων γεννηθεὶς..."⁷⁶

"...the Word of Wisdom being Himself this God having been begotten from the Father of all things..."

In the litany of titles given to Christ in the Old Testament, one of which is his being "God," and "Lord," Justin now states that this same God is this "God Begotten." Notice that he even uses the same imagery as he did in our first quote. He bespeaks of the Father that begat him as being the Father of all things (τῶν ὅλων).

In the first quote he says he had already proven that Christ was the *monogenes* to the Father of all things (τῶν ὅλων). In this quote he says that he "is this God begotten" from the Father of all things (τῶν ὅλων). Obviously, this suggests that in Justin's mind, he who is this "God Begotten," is also he who is this Monogenes – Only-begotten.

However, to define *monogenes* by "only" makes the text nonsensical. The first quote would then read:

"For I have already proved that He was the "only" of the Father of all things, being begotten in a peculiar manner Word and Power by Him, and having afterwards become man through the Virgin, as we have learned from the memoirs."⁷⁷

Justin would then be saying that he had already proved that he was the "only?" What does that mean? Of course, those who believe *monogenes*

⁷⁵ Roberts, Alexander; Donaldson, James, ed., The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI 1985), pg. 227

⁷⁶ Justin Martyr, Trollope, Rev. W., tr., S. Justinii philosophi et martyris, cum Trypnone Judaeo dialogus. Edited with a corrected text and English introduction and notes, Vol. I (Printed by and for J. Hall, Opposite the Pitt Press; and G. Bell, Cambridge, 1846), pg. 124

⁷⁷ Roberts, Alexander; Donaldson, James, ed., The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI 1985), pg. 251

means *only* would say, “No, no, it means “only Son.” Well, we have already proved the word did not mean “only Son” for when we get to verses like John 3:16, which include the Greek word Son after *monogenes*, the verse becomes nonsensical for John would then be declaring that God gave his “only Son Son.”

Now, of course, in certain contexts the word might mean “only born son,” but that would “not” be because the connotation of “son” is in the word *monogenes*, but it would be because of contextual constraints. The connotation in the word is “born” or “begotten,” not son, and that connotation would supply the understanding of “son” when the context so demands, (and when the word “son” is missing), or it could require the understanding of “daughter,” again, not because that connotation is in the word, but also because of contextual constraints.

Neither could *monogenes* mean “only member of a kin” for, obviously, Justin would not be telling Trypho, a Jew, that God the Father was dead and that only the Son was alive, being the only member of a kin. The only meaning that works in Justin’s writings is the meaning “only-begotten.”

And so I hope one can see that what is really fruitless is Dale Moody’s claim that, “...efforts to refute these conclusions from such references as Ignatius (Eph. VII.2), Epistle of Diognetus 10:2, Martyrdom of Polycarp 20:2, and Justin Martyr (Dial. 105) are fruitless.”

He may not agree with the conclusion made above, (that is his prerogative), but he is certainly incorrect to declare to the reader that any evidence from Ignatius and Justin Martyr is fruitless.

The writer of the longer recension of Ignatius understood *monogenes* as “only-begotten.” And most certainly Justin Martyr understood *monogenes* as “only-begotten,” and there are many more references that prove the same thing in those first four centuries after the writing of the New Testament, but we will look at those in a separate sub-chapter entitled *The Patristics*.

Misconception Five

The fifth common misconception is derived from another startling statement made by Dale Moody’s in his article as found in the quote below.

“Monogenēs is a meaningful word in the teachings of the New Testament, both outside and within the Johannine writings. Outside the Johannine writings it is found in Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38 and Heb. 11:17. Even in the passages in Luke, in which monogenēs is translated “only” in the King James Version and all other English translations, to my knowledge, same Rotherham and the Geneva translation (1557) of Luke 7:12, the use of the term is illuminating for the understanding of Johannine Christology. The widow’s son a Nain is called “the only

(monogenēs) son of his mother,” and surely no one would insist that she begat him! That, according to Webster, the Bible (Matt 1: 1-16), and biology is a male function!”⁷⁸

The startling statement is found in the last two sentences. He uses Luke 7:12 to demonstrate for the reader that monogenes cannot carry the meaning of only-begotten because women do not beget children!

He makes the conclusion for the reader that since the word *monogenes* is used in relationship with a woman, then, obviously, the word *monogenes* cannot mean *only-begotten* but must mean “only.” This is the verse he quotes.

Luke 7:12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. (KJV)

Now while he is right that Webster’s assigns begetting to the male, Webster’s is not the final authority on the meaning of biblical words!⁷⁹ It is startling that Dale Moody would make such a statement regarding the meaning of “beget!” Beget is not the sole function of the male. The Bible says that begetting is also a function of women! Scripture even says so in the very verse he references to prove that it does not!

Matthew 1:16 Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος χριστός.

Matthew 1:16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. (KJV)

The Bible tells us in this verse that Mary begat Jesus. The very same word that is used repeatedly of the males in this passage is also used of Mary, a woman. It would be perfectly legitimate to translate this passage as:

“And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, from whom was **begat** Jesus, the one called Christ.”

This is exactly what is written in Greek.

Another verse that states the same is Luke 1:57 –

Luke 1:57 Τῇ δὲ Ἐλισάβετ ἐπλήσθη ὁ χρόνος τοῦ τέκεῖν αὐτήν καὶ ἐγέννησεν υἱόν

⁷⁸ Moody, Dale, God’s Only Son: The Translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version, (Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 72, No. 4; Dec., 1953), pg. 216-217

⁷⁹ However, it should be noted that even in English “beget” is recognized as a more inclusive term. This website provides a very good definition. “To beget means to generate something, usually children, and it can be used to refer to the role of either a mother or a father. If we analyze the word beget, we get the prefix be-, which tends to intensify the meaning of the following verb, and get, which means to cause something to enter one’s possession. The word is usually used to refer to having children, although it can be used to refer to anything that generates something else – for example, an inspiration can beget a brilliant idea.” <http://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/beget>

Luke 1:57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. (KJV)

– where we find the very same word is used with Elizabeth. If we were to translate the phrase literally it would read:

Luke 1:57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she **begat** a son.

Now, it must be admitted that there is no English Bible translation of the Greek above that uses the English word “beget,” but that does not mean the Greek text does not clearly declare that fact. Nor should a translation take precedence over the original language utilized by the Holy Spirit.

This is not some new and strange interpretation. It has long been acknowledged by the Greek Lexicons. This is how Liddell and Scott define the word.

γεννάω, fut. ἴσω... (γέννα) Causal of γίγνομαι (cf. γείνομαι), **mostly of the father, to beget, engender**, Aesch., Supp. 48 Soph. El. 1412; οἱ γεννήσαντες **the parents**, Xen. Mem. 2.1,27,, **but also of the mother, to bring forth, bear**, Aesch. Supp. 47, Arist. G,A, 3.5.6...⁸⁰

And this is what Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich have to say.

γεννάω—**1.** *lit. become the father of...* Mt 1:2ff; Ac 7:8, 29. w. gen. of the mother (Eur., fgm. 479...) ... **2.** of women: *bear* Lk 1:13, 35, 57; 23:29...⁸¹

The basal meaning of the word is to “bring forth.” When it is used of the male it is referring to his part in conception. When it is used of the female it refers to being born or in a general sense being “brought forth”. It was very appropriate for Luke to state that the widow’s son was the “only-begotten” of his mother. She begat him! And he was her “only-begotten.”

As I mentioned before, the word “monogenes” is used from three perspectives – the perspective of a father (Judges 11:34); it is used from the perspective of a mother (Luke 7:12); and, finally it is used from the perspective of a father and a mother together, or parents (Heb. 11:17).”

In the same way γεννάω is used from three perspectives. It is used from a male perspective, so that a child would be known as one who was begotten. It is used with a female perspective, so that a child would be known as one who was born (Lu.7:12). And it was used in a general perspective, so that a child would be known as one who was “brought forth” (Lu. 1:57). This general connotation of the word is even used for things in general (cf. II Tim. 2:23).

⁸⁰ Liddell, Henry George, Scott, Robert, Greek-English Lexicon, Seventh Edition (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1883), pg. 305

⁸¹ Bauer’s, Walter; Arndt, William F.; Gingrich, F. Wilbur, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature, (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1957), pg. 154

Now, while Mr. Moody might not believe women can beget children, a Greek writer had no problem with such a concept. It is totally incredulous that Mr. Moody would make such a statement. Even in English we sometimes use the word of a mother.

Now that is not to deny that the word in English is used more often for a man, than a woman. But it can be used in English of a woman! In fact, it is even used in an English translation of something as strict as a legal code. In the book, *The Code of Napoleon: verbally translated from the French, Vol. 1*, an ancient custom in Saxon territory is referenced. It states, "...the woman who begets children shall have her dower for life... [and] ...the woman, after she had begotten children became entitled to the dower for her life."⁸²

Also, it was perfectly appropriate to use the word in the English language from a parent's perspective, that of a man and a woman together. A sermon in Old English given by Aelfric, Abbot of Eynsham, is rendered in Modern English as follows: "Adam was continuing then in this life with toil, and he and his wife begat children, both sons and daughters."⁸³

So even in the English language, let alone the Greek language the word begat was used for more than just men.

It is disturbing that so many Neo-Trinitarians appeal to Dale Moody as an authority for the true meaning of *monogenes*, and yet Dale Moody continues to make misleading statements, even as to something as basic as the usage of γεννάω. He confuses the issue by making assertions that simply are not true! And if he is wrong in something as fundamental as this, it makes one wonder if he really understood the traditional meaning of "only-begotten." How can he write a paper against the traditional meaning of only-begotten if he does not even understand the basic concept of begottenness?

Monogenes, as traditionally understood, means "only-begotten," "only born," the "only one brought forth." Surely he must know this. Yet, he obscures this truth from the reader by using the passage in Luke 7:12 to supposedly prove his point that *monogenes* cannot mean *only-begotten* because the widow's son was the *monogenes* of his mother, and women do not beget!

Therefore, he can conclude the meaning of *monogenes* must be "only," and not "only-begotten." Unbelievable! This is completely misleading and a bit disturbing. It betrays an "ignorance," or, if not an ignorance, an "ignoring" of the true meaning of "only-begotten" simply to prove a point.

⁸² Barret, Bryant, *The Code Napoléon, verbally translated from the French, Vol. 1*, (Printed for W. Reed, London 1811), pg. ccxlviii (248)

⁸³ Aelfric (Abbot of Eynsham), *The homilies of the Anglo-Saxon church: The first part, containing the Sermones catholici, or Homilies of Ælfric* (Printed for Aelfric Society, London, 1844), pg.21

Apparently, he did not know that when Christians spoke in creedal fashion concerning Son of God, who was begotten of the Father before all ages, that they could understand him as, the “Only-begotten Son of God,” or the “Only Born” Son of God, or even the “Only One brought forth” of the Father before all ages.

They could understand *monogenes* as “Only-begotten” of the Father as seen in John 1:14.

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. (KJV)

They could understand *monogenes* with the sense of “Only Born” Son of God as seen in Psalm 110: 1-3.

Psalm 110:1-3 A Psalm of David. The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send out a rod of power for thee out of Sion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. With thee is dominion in the day of thy power, in the splendours of thy saints: I have begotten thee from the womb before the morning. (Brenton’s LXX Version)

Early Christians routinely understood this LXX version of Psalms 110:1-3, which uses the imagery of a womb, to be speaking of the eternal begetting of the Son of God from the Father.⁸⁴

And, finally, they could understand *monogenes* with a sense of the “Only Brought Forth One,” for Micah 5:2 sees of the Son as “going forth” from eternity and John speaks of Him as being eternally “brought forth” from the Father. This bespeaks his eternal procession from the Father.

John 8:42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.

How can he write a paper trying to disprove the traditional meaning of *monogenes* and not know, or if he did know, ignore the traditional meaning of *monogenes* himself? Indeed, the use of *monogenes* in Lu. 7:12 is a very illuminating verse for understanding Johannine Christology, and it actually confirms the traditional meaning of *monogenes*, bringing to mind all its varied nuances based upon its basal meaning of “bringing forth.” It brings to the forefront the beautiful picture of the Son’s eternal procession from the Father from every perspective, using all the imagery the “Only Born” Son of God,

⁸⁴ Perhaps, it would be important to mention that God is never spoken of in the female gender, (unlike the pagan gods and goddesses). He is always spoken of in the masculine gender. This is very revelatory and should never be abandoned. Yet it is God himself who sometimes employs female imagery to bespeak certain truths about Himself, while never compromising the masculine analogy he has provided to mankind (e.g. Ps. 110:3 LXX; and Lu. 13:34).

the “Only-begotten” Son of God, and the “Only Brought Forth” Son of God – Very God “of” Very God.

Misconception Six

Another common misunderstanding relates to a claim, made by Dale Moody in his paper that Tyndale knew the true meaning of *monogenes* and corrected the error of Jerome in his translation. He suggests that William Tyndale was correcting an error made long ago by Jerome regarding the meaning of *monogenes*. This creates the impression in the readers mind that Tyndale thought *only-begotten* was an incorrect translation. There is no evidence that Tyndale believed this! Not any evidence at all!

This is what Dale Moody states, first regarding Jerome.

“The jumble of Jerome remains in the Latin Vulgate, and from the Latin Vulgate translation “only-begotten” got into the King James Version of 1611, the English Revised Version of 1881, and other translations, with a partial exception, until the error was removed in *The Twentieth Century New Testament* in 1898.⁸⁵

Then he addresses the partial exception.

“It is hoped the furious discussion over the RSV will spread enough knowledge to bring an error to an end! The “partial exception” between Jerome’s Latin Vulgate and *The Twentieth Century New Testament* was no less a person than William Tyndale, the first translator of the NT from Greek to English. He failed to correct Jerome in John 1:14, 18; Heb. 11:17; I John 4:9, but his editions of 1526 and 1534 correct the error in John 3:16, 18.”⁸⁶

Before we examine William Tyndale, however, one thing needs to be said. Dale Moody indicts Jerome with jumbling up the truth about *monogenes*. Then he indicts the translators of the King James Version with simple ignorance as to the correct meaning of the word. What arrogance to imply that the translators of the King James Version were not educated enough to realize the true meaning of the word, as if the translators were not aware of the varied uses of *monogenes* in ancient literature, and so, were so ignorant of the matter, that it takes one like Dale Moody to show the Church the error of her way. Again what arrogance to declare that the Church for all those centuries had been ignorant of an essential doctrine of the Faith, because of one man – Jerome, but now that Dale Moody is on the scene the Holy Spirit is able to shed light on the truth!

Dear reader, do not be misled. Dale Moody is wrong. Jerome was correct in his understanding and the King James translators were correct in their

⁸⁵ Moody, Dale, God’s Only Son: The Translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version, (*Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 72, No. 4; Dec., 1953), pg. 215-216

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 216

understanding of the word. The true Faith was never lost, and it has continued to be borne witness to by godly men throughout the history of the Church.

Now, let's turn our attention to William Tyndale. There is no evidence that William Tyndale considered Jerome's translation of "unigenitus" *only-begotten* an error. Dale Moody couches his phraseology in such a war to suggest this. One could just as easily look at the same facts and state the complete opposite of Dale Moody's conclusion.

These are the facts	
Tyndale's Bible has only-begotten in John 1:14, 18; Heb. 11:17; I John 4:9, and "only" in John 3:16, 18.	
Dale Moody's conclusion to those facts	Same facts, but alternate conclusion to those facts
He "failed to correct" Jerome in John 1:14, 18; Heb. 11:17; I John 4:9, but his editions of 1526 and 1534 correct the error in John 3:16, 18.	He endorsed Jerome's only-begotten in John 1:14,18; Heb. 11:17; I John 4:9, but his editions of 1526 and 1534 failed to endorse him in John 3:16,18.

It is all a matter of one's perspective, isn't it? The fact of the matter is, if one simply looks at Tyndale's translation of *monogenes* in the verses listed by Dale Moody – John 1:14,18; 3: 16,18; Heb. 11:17; and I John 4:9 – one would have to conclude that William Tyndale primarily understood the meaning of *monogenes* to be "only-begotten!" Why? Because 4 out of 6 times he translates *monogenes* as "only-begotten." Only two times does he translate it "only!" In the majority of the cases he translates it as "only begotten."

This is how he translated those verses in the order listed by Dale Moody. They are all from the Tyndale New Testament, 1534 edition.

John 1:14 – And the worde was made flesshe and dwelt amonge vs and we sawe the glory of it as the glory of the only-begotten sonne of the father which worde was full of grace and verite.

John 1:18 – No man hath sene God at eny tyme. The only begotte sonne which is in the bosome of the father he hath declared him.

Hebrews 11:17 – In fayth Abraham offered vp Isaac when he was tempted and he offered him beinge his only-begotten sonne which had receaved the promyses

1 John 4:9 – In this appered the love of god to vs ward because that god sent his only-begotten sonne into the worlde that we myght live thorow him.

John 3:16 – For God so loveth the worlde that he hath geven his only sonne that none that beleve in him shuld perisshe: but shuld have everlastinge lyfe.

John 3:18 – He that beleveth on him shall not be condempned. But he that beleveth not is condempned all redy be cause he beleveth not in the name of the only sonne of God.

So if anything, Tyndale actually supports the traditional understanding of *monogenes* as “only-begotten” by a ratio of two to one, at least, in regard to its usage with Christ. It is wrong to imply that he really knew the word meant “only” but did not correct it in four of the six places.

In the two of the three other places where the word is used in the New Testament, i.e. in the gospel of Luke, (regarding the children of a mother or father, and not of Christ), he uses “only” as did Jerome and as did the subsequent translations of the King James Version. However, in Luke 9:38 he uses a paraphrase of the word not even used by Jerome or the King James Version. He translates *monogenes* as “all that I have.”

Now let’s assume that one believed *monogenes* meant “*all that I have*” rather than “only-begotten.” And let’s assume Dale Moody, also believed this, and therefore he believed Jerome made an error by translating it as “only” and “only-begotten” in the Bible. Using Dale Moody’s same logic and assuming one believed *monogenes* truly meant “*all that I have*,” could not one make the same claim against Tyndale and imply that because he translated it once in Luke 9:38 as “all that I have” he must have been correcting an error made by Jerome.

Therefore, we could take Dale Moody’s same sentence above and rewrite it this way.

“The “partial exception” between Jerome’s Latin Vulgate and *The Twentieth Century New Testament*, was no less a person than William Tyndale, the first translator of the NT from Greek to English. He “failed to correct” Jerome in Luke 7:12 and 8:42, John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; Heb. 11:17; I John 4:9, but his editions of 1526 and 1534 correct the error in Luke 9:38.”

We are using the same logic of Dale Moody, and yet, I do not think anyone would ever claim that Tyndale believed the true meaning for *monogenes* was actually “*all that I have*” and not “only,” or “only-begotten” simply because he translated it that way in one verse.

In the same way, in regard to the verses relating to Christ, why do we assume that William Tyndale really believed the true meaning of *monogenes* was “only” and not “only-begotten” simply because he translated it that way in two verses?

One does not take a minority understanding of a word to establish the primary meaning of a word. Rather, one takes the majority understanding of a word to

set forth its primary meaning. It is misleading for Dale Moody to imply otherwise.

So what is the conclusion? When used of the eternal Son, or when used of one that was a type of the Son, (i.e. Isaac), Tyndale understood *monogenes* as *only-begotten* four out of six times. That is the fact. He definitely supports the meaning of *only-begotten* for *monogenes*.

Now, it is fair to ask, “Well, why then did he decide to translate the word as “only” in John 3:16, 18?” That is a good question. What is the answer? I do not know, and I do not think anyone knows. We would have to discover somewhere in his writings where he gives us the answer to this question, or, perhaps, find some translation notes of his on the subject. But as far as I know, no one has ever discovered such translation evidence.

The matter of fact is we do not know the explanation for the change to “only” in John 3:16, 18.

That being said, as long as we are not dogmatic, we can make some conjectures as to the reason for this change. It certainly is an interesting question, but we must be careful not to make any dogmatic conclusions regarding this anomaly, simply because we do not know the real reason and it would not be right to make a conjecture and then claim that conjecture as an established fact.

Therefore, with that in mind, let’s consider some possible reasons for this change?

1) Dale Moody was correct and William Tyndale really believed the word meant *only*, but was afraid to change it in all verses relating to Christ because he thought he would be persecuted by the Church for changing such a common nomenclature for the Lord, therefore, he tried to introduce the change slowly.

This would be very unlikely because he was already being persecuted simply for translating the Scripture into the English! Also it is unlikely because he was a man of great courage and integrity! Consider what he once wrote to John Fryth regarding the principles guiding his translation.

"I call God to record against the day we shall appear before our Lord Jesus, to give a reckoning of our doings, *that I never altered one syllable of God's Word against my conscience, nor would this day if all that is in the earth, whether it be pleasure, honour, or riches, might be given me.*"⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Ellis, James Joseph, William Tyndale, Men with a Mission (Thomas Whittaker, New York 1890), pg. 92

Therefore, unless, one wants to impute a disingenuous spirit to William Tyndale, he consistently translated *monogenes* as *only-begotten* in John 1:14, John 1:18, Heb. 11:17 and I John 4:9 because he really believed that was what the word meant in those particular contexts.

Equally so, according to his above statement, we must believe he translated the word as *only* in John 3:16 & 18 because he really believed that is what the word meant in that context, (unless he did not translate it by *only* but really by *only-begotten*, as we shall later consider).

2) For some contextual reasons he believed *monogenes* would be better understood just by *only* rather than *only-begotten*. This certainly would be a possibility, but without more information, it would be impossible to explain. Perhaps, since the context was the love of God in giving his Son, rather than the nature of the Son, as in John 1:14, 18, he thought that *only* would better emphasize the love of God, much in the same way Paul uses the expression, τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ, his own Son (Rom. 8:32), to emphasize the nearness and dearness of the Son to God the Father in the giving of him to be a sacrifice for us. Nevertheless, this would be all speculation, because Tyndale does not explain his decision.

3) The word “only-begotten” became a title reserved exclusively for the Lord. Therefore, the word was translated “only” when used of others than Christ, and “only-begotten” when used for Christ.

Today, if we wanted to make this type of distinction we would probably capitalize “Only-Begotten” when referring to the Son and use “only-begotten” when referring to an ordinary child of a mother or father.

This point is not without merit. For example, the same thinking was applied to the Greek word κύριος. When it was used of Christ, it is generally translated, (in the current versions of the King James Bible and not by Tyndale), as “Lord” using an upper case “L.” When it was used of earthly rulers it was generally printed with a lower case “l,” lord. By this distinction the title “Lord” was reserved for our Saviour.

“And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O **Lord**, thou Son of David. Matt. 20:30 KJV

“And Thomas answered and said unto him, My **Lord** and my God. John 20:28 KJV

“Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my **lord**. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write. Acts 25:26 KJV

“But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his **lord** commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. Mat 18:25 KJV

The same thing is generally done today with Greek word βασιλεύς – king.

“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou **King of saints**. Rev. 15:3 KJV

“But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your **King**? The chief priests answered, We have no **king** but Caesar. John 19:15 KJV

But, if this distinction was true, it might explain the verses in Luke, but what of the verses in question, John 3:16 & 18? It would not explain those two verses, for they clearly refer to the Lord.

(Also, it should be made clear, Tyndale did not use this method of distinction. This is a modern day method of distinction. The only point in bringing up this method is to show that there are ways of emphasizing different uses of the same word, and Tyndale and the King James Translators may have done this in regard to the different uses of *monogenes* in Luke and John).

Now, it should be mentioned – as it now stands this solution cannot be correct, and it is so unlikely, in and of itself that I even hesitate to mention it, if not for the final point. For, if the final point is true, then this point may, indeed, be reasonable, because it would only then apply to the verses in Luke which all refer to ordinary children, and to the other verses which refer to our Lord.

If the next point is true, then, indeed, the distinction in this point may be valid, at least, it would then be worthy of mention.

4) The use of *only* in John 3:16 and 18 is a printing error.

In order to illustrate this point, let’s look at the King James 1611 edition of the Bible. After the 1611 edition there were many subsequent printings. Editions were published in 1612, 1616, 1617, etc. And then, in 1629 and 1638, two very significant editions were printed where many changes were made in relation to the 1611 edition. These changes can only be explained by either corrected mistakes made in translation, or corrected mistakes made in printing. However, this is not without precedence.

Everyone remembers the famous example called *The Wicked Bible*. It was a 1631 edition of the King James Version of the Bible. In this edition the printer inadvertently left out the little word “not” in Exodus 20:14! Rather than reading as, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” it read, “Thou shalt commit adultery.” What a terrible printing mistake! It is interesting to note that the printers, Robert Barker and Martin Lucas were, by some accounts, fined £3000 for such a grievous error, which in those days was a lot of money.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ See, *A Dictionary of Printers and Printing* by Charles Henry Timperley, Published by H. Johnson, 1839, pg. 484

So we see that even though great improvements were made in the copying of material by the invention of the printing press, mistakes were still made by the printers that were not the fault of the translators.

This could have been what happened with Tyndale's English Bible. This would make perfect sense since he consistently translated *monogenes* as only-begotten when referring to Christ in all the other verses in the Gospel of John. So if this is true, what may have happened was that a printer, when setting the type from the handwritten copy, inadvertently left out the word begotten of only "begotten" thereby creating the misprint.

Now, someone may say, "Well, I guess that would be a possibility, but it would be unlikely, for if that was the case, why would not the subsequent editions of his Bible have the mistake corrected?"

That is a good question, but one must remember that even today mistakes are made and not caught by proof readers. That is why some books have a page called errata. How much more would it have been true when printing was in its early stages?

For example, consider these mistakes that were made either by the translators or by the printers of the 1611 edition of the King James Version, but which was not noticed and corrected till many editions later.

This is how II Cor. 11:32 read in the original KJV 1611 edition.

"In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me." II Cor. 11:32

It was not noticed till 1629 that the words "of the Damascenes" were left out. This is how it now reads.

"In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me." II Cor. 11:32

Now other editions had been printed in between those two dates but that mistake had not been noticed. Let me give a couple more examples.

The original reading of Psalms 69:32 was as follows.

"The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek good." Psalms 69:32

Notice the last two words that read "seek good." In this case, the printer did not leave out a word but added an extra letter! It was corrected in the 1617 edition to read "seek God!"

"The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God." Psalms 69:32

And, finally, we have an example from I John 5:12 which originally read:

“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life.” I Jn. 5:12

The original printing left out the important words “of God.”

It was corrected in 1629 in one edition, but even so, it continued to be misprinted in many other editions, not being fully noticed in those other editions, apparently, until 1681! The correct reading is now as follows.

“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

This mistake by the printer would be a very similar mistake that might have been made in Tyndale’s Bible. The handwritten copy of Tyndale’s Bible may have had “only-begotten” in John 3:16 and 18, but the printer may have overlooked it and left out the word “begotten,” thus printing “only” rather than “only-begotten. In the same way, the handwritten copy of the King James Bible may have had “Son of God” in I John 5:12, but the printer overlooked it and left out the two words “of God” of the phrase “Son of God,” thus printing the only the word “Son.”

Let me give one more example from the different editions of the King James Bible. This is how Deuteronomy 26:1 read in the original KJV 1611 edition.

“And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which the LORD giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein.” (Deut. 26:1 KJV) 1629, 1637

It left out the words “thy God” after the LORD. It was not noticed and so corrected in subsequent editions until the 1629 and 1637 editions!

It now reads correctly as follows.

“And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein.”⁸⁹

If the printers, apparently, left out an important part of the text, indeed, an important part of the name of God, not noticing it for many years, why could not the same thing have happened in William Tyndale’s English Bible? In fact, this was an error that parallels our example in many ways. The full name was “the LORD thy God,” yet for years it was missed and was printed simply as “the LORD.”

⁸⁹ All these examples are taken from the Appendix A of *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible (1611): Its Subsequent Reprints and Modern representatives*, by F.H.A. Scrivener, (Wipf & Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR), pgs. 147-202

In the same way, the full title of our Lord was “the only-begotten Son,” yet for years it could have been missed being printed simply as “the only Son.” We know it continued to read this way in many subsequent editions.

However, finally, in what was considered to be the final revision of Tyndale’s New Testament in 1552, by Richard Jugge, John 3:16 and 18 were changed to read “only-begotten Son.” This was either a correction like the example above or was a change according to the opinion of Richard Jugge. One must remember this 1552 edition was not edited by William Tyndale. He had died many years before.

J. R. Dore has this to say about this edition.

“Perhaps the best known of all Tyndale’s Testaments are the two quartos printed by Richard Jugge in 1552 and 1553, which, although similar in general appearance, may be easily distinguished from each other, as in the 1552 edition Italic type is used for the headlines, and contents in the margins, while in the 1553 edition the references in the margins are in black letter.”⁹⁰

However, it should be noted that J.R. Dore also has this to say.

“Not only were new marginal notes added to this Testament, but the text itself was so much altered in many places that it should be called Jugge’s revision of Tyndale.”⁹¹

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that in this revision, John 3:16 18 were changed to read “only-begotten son” and not just “only son.”

Let me give one more example as to how printers could make mistakes leaving out a word or two. In fact, in this example, a whole phrase was consistently left out.

According to J.R. Dore, some editions of Tyndale’s Bible printed in 1536 were missing an important part of I Cor. 11:25, which read in Tyndale’s 1534 edition, read as follows:

1 Corinthians 11:25 After the same maner he toke the cup when sopper was done sayinge. This cup is the newe testament in my bloude. This do as oft as ye drynke it in the remembraunce of me.

He says the entire phrase, *this cup is the new testament in my blood*, was left out in many subsequent printings. This is what he tells us.

“Beside the folio, and three quarto, there were also four octavo editions of Tyndale’s Testament published in the year 1536. Three of them are dated, and they all so much resemble each other that there can be little doubt that all four were issued from the same press, and were most likely printed at Antwerp.

⁹⁰ Dore, J.R., *Old Bible: an account of the early versions of the English Bible*, 2nd edition, (Eyre and Spottiswoode, His Majesty’s Printers, 1888), pg. 61

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 63

“All of them have woodcuts, and are printed in black letter without imprints; and, as some of the copies of each edition are perfect, it is certain they were published anonymously. They have all the same number of lines to a page, and the leaves of all four editions are not numbered.

“All four follow the last Testament revised by the translator in omitting the words: ‘this cup is the new testament in my blood,’ I. Corinthians xi. and 25th verse.”⁹²

This mistake can even be found in the well-known Matthew’s Bible of 1537 that brought together all of William Tyndale’s translations and revisions. This is how it reads.

1 Corinthians 11:25 After the same maner he toke the cup when sopper was done saying: This do as oft as ye drynke it in the remembraunce of me.⁹³

Imagine that, an entire portion of the verse left out, even though Tyndale’s earlier editions contained it. This could be none other than the inadvertent error of a printer.

So it is wrong to conclude that because John 3:16, 18 reads the way it does in the Tyndale’s Bible 1526 and 1534 edition, it must have been because Tyndale corrected the error of Jerome and so translated it as “only Son.” It could have very likely been an error of a printer and it should have read:

John 3:16 – For God so loveth the worlde that he hast geven his only-begotten sonne that none that beleve in him shuld perisshe; but shuld have everlastinge lyfe.

John 3:18 – He that beleveth on him shall not be condempned. But he that beleveth not is condempned all redy be cause he beleveth not in the name of the only-begotten sonne of God.

This explanation becomes all the more possible because we have these comments made by Tyndale himself in his prologues to other books. In his prologue to the Book of Exodus he says this.

“For it is not said of that Testament, He that worketh shall live; but "he that believeth shall live:" as thou readest, John iii. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that none which believe in him should perish, but have life everlasting.”⁹⁴

In this prologue Tyndale quotes John 3:16 and guess what? He quotes the verse as "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son" and not as it appears in the printed edition, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." Could this not indicate that a printer left out begotten in the printed edition of Tyndale’s Bible and this explains why in every other case, (Jn. 1:14,18, Heb. 11:17, and I Jn. 4:9) he translates *monogenes* as “only-begotten” in reference to Christ.

⁹² Ibid., pg. 45

⁹³ Sourced from: <http://www.bibles-online.net/>

⁹⁴ Tyndale, William; Frith, John; editor Russel, Thomas, The Works of the English Reformers: William Tyndale and John Frith, Vol. I (Printed for Ebenezer Palmer, London, 1831), pg. 23

At the minimum, this proves that Tyndale believed the Greek text of John 3:16, 18 should be understood as “only-begotten.” Why did not Dale Moody mention this? Perhaps, he did not know, but if that is true, at least it shows one cannot make a dogmatic assertion that Tyndale corrected an error made by Jerome in John 3:16 and 18. There simply is not any evidence to suggest such a thing, although we do have the evidence shown above that shows Tyndale understood *monogenes* in John 3:16 to mean “only-begotten,” thus suggesting a printing error!

Let me give another example to illustrate how printers may have made mistakes – this time a reverse example of the example above. In I John 4:9, in his English Bible, Tyndale translates *monogenes* as “only-begotten.”

“In this appeared the love of God to us ward, because that God sent his **only begotten son** into the world, that we might live through him.” I John 4:9

However, in his exposition on the First Epistle to First John, Vol. II, where each verse is listed before he makes his comments on the verse, it appears this way!

“Herein appeared the love of God unto usward, because God sent his **only son** into the world, that we should live through him.”⁹⁵

He translates it by “only-begotten son” in his Bible, but in his exposition it appears as “only son!” Why? Well, again it could be a printers error for look how William Tyndale quotes the same verse in his Vol. I of the same book in the Parable of the Wicked Mammon (1528).

“I Jn. 4:9 In this (saith he) appeareth the love of God to usward, because that God sent his **only-begotten** Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to make agreement for our sins.”⁹⁶

In this exposition he follows the text just as it appears in his Bible, so he definitely believed *monogenes* meant *only-begotten*. We have two witnesses to that fact – his New Testament and his commentary on the Parable of the Wicked Mammon. So what explains the anomaly in his exposition of First Epistle of John? Another printing error, perhaps? The reader will have to decide.

So in conclusion, what do we see? In most cases William Tyndale translated *monogenes* as *only-begotten* in relation to our Lord. In two places he translates it by *only* in regard to Christ. Those are the facts. Anything beyond

⁹⁵ Tyndale, William; Frith, John; editor Russel, Thomas, *The Works of the English Reformers: William Tyndale and John Frith, Vol. II* (Printed for Ebenezer Palmer, London, 1831), pg. 456

⁹⁶ Tyndale, William; Frith, John; editor Russel, Thomas, *The Works of the English Reformers: William Tyndale and John Frith, Vol. I* (Printed for Ebenezer Palmer, London, 1831), pg. 144

this is conjecture. Plus, there is no evidence that he considered *only-begotten* to be an error of translation, rather he affirms it four times out of six when used with the Lord.

Equally, however, it is conjecture to state that the reason it appears as *only* in John 3:16 and 18 is because it was a printing error – even though we have other works of Tyndale where he translates that verse as *only-begotten*. A printing error may indeed be the reason the second half of the title is missing, but it is only a conjecture and it would be wrong to “dogmatically” conclude that was the real reason, no matter how likely it appears to be so!

But, equally, it was wrong for Dale Moody to conclude that this is evidence that Tyndale understood *monogenes* as *only* and so corrected the error of Jerome in these two verses. It is all conjecture, pure and simple.

I have attempted to give you all the facts. The readers will have to decide for themselves.

Misconception Seven

“Furthermore, Schaff’s comparative table of the gradual formation of the Apostles’ Creed reveals the fact that the word unigenitum as the Latin translation of monogenes is found only in Augustine (A.D. 400) and the Sacramentarium Gallicanum (A.D. 650), and that ultimate text of the Western Creed (A.D. 750) had unicum (only), not unigenitum (only-begotten). Even Augustine at first said unicum! (Philip Schaff, op. cit., pg. 52).⁹⁷

As for this misconception, please see following chapter on *The Apostles’ Creed*. But let me just say in passing, that Dale Moody misleads the unsuspecting reader by asserting that the Apostles’ Creed was basically a Greek text that was translated over time into Latin. And that the reason the Latin Versions had unicus is because it was a translation of the word *monogenes* in the Greek Version of the Creed. This is patently false! Now this is not to say that there never was a translation made from a Greek Text, indeed, there may or may not have been, but that is not how the Latin Creeds were formulated. They were formulated by various churches in different parts of the Empire at different times. Many arose from the baptismal formulas that were used in individual churches. Even the examples he refers to in Philip Schaff were not all translations of one standardized Greek text. There was no standard Greek text of the Apostles’ Creed used throughout all the various churches; such a thing did not exist in those early days. So it is wrong to imply that those Latin Creeds listed were a simply a translation from a Greek Version! For him to make such a statement is most misleading.

There is a completely different another reason why many of the Latin Creeds had *unicus* in their Creeds. That reason is covered in the subsequent chapter entitled the Apostle’s Creed.

⁹⁷ Moody, Dale, God’s Only Son: The Translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version, (Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 72, No. 4; Dec., 1953), pg. 215

One last thing must also be mentioned about the misleading statements that Dale Moody continually includes in his paper. He states that even Augustine first used *unicum* for *monogenes*, but later the word *unigenitus* appeared in his writings. This leaves the reader with the impression that Augustine knew that *monogenes* meant *unicus*, but later adopted *unigenitus* as the meaning. This too, is patently false!

Augustine did not change his understanding of *monogenes* from *unicum* to *unigenitus*, nor was he translating *monogenes* as *unicus*. *Unicus* was an additional word used for our Lord. *Unicus* was not in competition against *unigenitus* as a translation of *monogenes*. *Unicus* was a perfectly fine word to use in regard to our Lord. He was the only Son. Anybody that believes the Son was *unigenitus* (*monogenes*), had no problem in also affirming the Son was also *unicus*, (*monos*), only. He was the only Son because he was the only-begotten Son; both words were true of our Lord, and this is exactly what Augustine affirmed. In his writings he says,

“Since this is the case, I repeat, we believe also in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten [*unigenitum*] of the Father, that is to say, His only [*unicum*] Son, our Lord.”⁹⁸

He clearly calls him first, the *unigenitum* of the Father which CANNOT mean “only.” All agree it means “only-begotten.” Yet, in his next breath, he also calls him *unicus*, which CANNOT mean “only-begotten,” but means “only.” He believed both words to be true of our Lord! In other words, if *monogenes* meant “only,” (*unicus*), why would he first use *unigenitum* (only-begotten) in reference to the Son rather than just *unicum*, if, indeed, that is what *monogenes* meant. Obviously, he understood *monogenes* to mean *unigenitum* (only-begotten), not *unicus*, and so had to add an additional phrase that he was also known as the *unicum* (only) Son.

And so, again, Dale Moody is misleading his readers. It is wrong of him to imply that even Augustine first understood *monogenes* to mean *unicus*, but later changed his mind to believe it meant *unigenitus*. They are two different words with two different meanings, the former meaning *only*, and the latter meaning *only-begotten*, as with the Greek, *monos* meaning *only* and *monogenes* meaning *only-begotten*. Both words were in use by early Christians regarding our Saviour in a multitude of writings and their use in the Creeds does not prove anything regarding the original understanding of *monogenes* by those very same early Christians. The understanding of *only-begotten* for *monogenes* is aptly proved in the writings of the “Church Fathers” without any linkage to the Apostles’ Creed, and as the only-begotten he was also known as the only Son.

⁹⁸ Schaff, Philip, Ed. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series Vol. III*, (T&T Clark, Edinburgh; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI 1993), page 323

Misconceptions and Misunderstandings

Regarding the Dissertation of Francis Marion Warden Entitled, “MONOGENĒΣ In The Johannine Literature”

Dale Moody, apparently, was greatly impressed by a doctrinal dissertation by a professor of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary by the name of Francis Marion Warden. This is what Dale Moody relates regarding this professor:

“However, the most thorough study of monogenēs is a doctoral dissertation by Francis Marion Warden, *Monogenēs in the Johannine Literature* (1938). This exhaustive study, written under the direction of the late W. Hersey Davis of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, demonstrates beyond reasonable doubt that monogenēs means “uniqueness of being, rather than any remarkableness of manner of coming into being, or yet uniqueness resulting from any manner of ‘coming into being’ (pp. 35ff). Unfortunately, this thesis had never been published, but it is available in the Library of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky...”⁹⁹

In the quote above, we find that Dale Moody uses certain legal jargon. He says the evidence presented by Francis Warden proves “beyond a reasonable doubt” that monogenes means “uniqueness of being” rather than the traditional understanding of only-begotten. So let us look at the evidence presented by Francis Warden and see if we can make the same judgment that monogenes, beyond a reasonable doubt, means “uniqueness of being” rather than the meaning of “only-begotten.” But, before we begin, one point should be made.

Here we go again. Dale Moody sets up a presupposition to make his point, but his presupposition is misleading. His whole paper is to prove that the RSV was right in translating monogenes as “only” rather than “only-begotten.” In proving this point he appeals to a dissertation written by Francis Marion Warden. But when he sets the parameters to defend his position, he defines the meaning of “only-begotten” by quoting Francis Warden’s definition of monogenes, “uniqueness of being, rather than any remarkableness of manner of coming into being, or yet uniqueness resulting from any manner of ‘coming into being.’”

The problem with this is he assigns a definition to monogenes that it never possessed. Monogenes never meant “uniqueness resulting from any manner of coming into being.” It never has. He subtly affirms a meaning of the word to more easily prove his position, for it is easy to disprove a meaning that has never been a meaning in the first place!

⁹⁹ Moody, Dale, *God’s Only Son: The Translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version*, (Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 72, No. 4; Dec., 1953), pg. 214

It would be as if I was trying to prove that true meaning of the word, Christ (Χριστός) was “king,” rather than the “Anointed one.” Then, in order to prove my point, I began by stating the word “Χριστός” in the Greek language never meant “the righteous one that was anointed.” (Notice the slight difference. The example does not say it never meant “anointed one” but it says it never meant “the righteous” one that was anointed.”). What I actual ended up doing was that I added a slight nuance to the meaning that it never had so it will be easier to do away with that part of the meaning which I want to nullify.

And, so, in order to disprove that extra meaning I assigned to the word Christ (Χριστός) , I then said that Saul was called the “Anointed,” but he certainly was not a righteous man as seen in I Sam. 26:16-21, so the word Christ (Χριστός) cannot mean “the righteous one that was anointed.” But who can deny he was a king! So, Christ (Χριστός), must mean “king!”

Then, someone else, upon analyzing that evidence that was provided, concludes, “Well, yes Saul was not a righteous man, so this person must be right. The word does not mean “the righteous one who was anointed!”

What has this proved? Nothing! Such an exercise is fruitless because the whole exercise is based upon a false presupposition. Yes, it demonstrates the word does not mean “the righteous one who was anointed,” but that is not hard to prove because the word never carried that meaning in the first place!

The word simply meant “anointed,” irrespective of the personal state of the person. My evidence did nothing to disprove that fact; my evidence simply proved it did not mean “the righteous one that was anointed,” something it never meant anyway.

In the same way, only-begotten has never carried the meaning of a “remarkableness of manner of coming into being, or yet uniqueness resulting from any manner of ‘coming into being.’” That is a false presupposition. To disprove that meaning is easy because monogenes never had that meaning in the first place! What they need to do, if they are trying to disprove the traditional meaning of only-begotten, is to disprove the traditional meaning and not a pseudo-definition they assign to the word.

Only-begotten means just what it says. The one who is begotten, is the only one begotten! He is the only one begotten of his father in conception or the only one born of his mother in birth, or the only one brought forth from his or her parents. Its basal meaning means the only one brought forth. It means no more and no less. Now such a one may end up being unique, but that is not gleaned from the meaning of the word. Uniqueness would be based upon some other reason.

The real agenda of Dale Moody is to prove that monogenes never meant “only-begotten.” He is misdirecting the thoughts of Christians by setting up a presuppositional statement or definition that never existed. Because of this, we will be careful to not run down a rabbit trail, set up by him, to try to defend a pseudo-definition of the word that never existed in the first place. So, with that in mind let’s begin.

At the conclusion of the first part of Warden’s dissertation he provides us with a chart pulling together all the usages of monogenes that he examines. The chart he provides appears as below.¹⁰⁰

How Used	Sources				
	Ex-Bibl.	Old Test.	Apoc.	New Test.	Total
Of an only child	16 (a)	5 (b)	4	4 (b)	29
Of a single fact	4	2	2	-	7
Of solitariness, desolateness	-	2	1	-	3
Of pagan divinities	4 (c)	-	-	-	4
Of miscellaneous singularity	7 (d)	-	-	-	7
Total	31	9	6	4	50

(a) Including *μονογενες*, “only born.” Six of these sixteen citations denote pagan goddesses who were “only daughters.”

(b) Including the references to Isaac.

(c) With possible exception in P. Leid. V. (See page 30).

(d) Including the substantival and adverbial forms, etc.

It should be noted, that in this chart he does not give us a list of where he would place each reference in each column. Nevertheless, with a little bit of analysis, I believe the references, as listed below, would reflect his thinking. I have placed numbers after each reference referring to the number of times that particular usage of the word occurs in that particular column. The designation “OB,” which stands for “only-begotten or born,” is my designation indicating as to how that word should really be understood. The references lined out are ones that are not applicable and so should not be included in the chart. They are indicated by “N/A.” The designation “I/E” indicates the evidence is inconclusive, and “U/V” indicates that I was unable to verify the reference.

¹⁰⁰ Warden, Francis Warden, *MONOGENEZ IN THE JOHANNINE LITERATURE*, (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 1938), pg. 34

How Used	Sources				
	Ex. Biblical	Old Test.	Apoc.	New Test.	Total
Of Only Child	Hesiod: 3OB Aeschylus: 1OB Herodotus: 1OB Plato: 1OB Josephus: 2OB Arrian: 1OB Oppianus, Anazarbensis:1OB Papyri: 4OB Euripides: 1OB Apollonius Rhodius: 1OB TOTAL:16	Genesis:2OB Judges: 1OB Prov:1OB Jer: 1OB	Tobit:4OB	Luke:3OB Heb. 1OB	29
Of a single fact	Parmenides:1 I/E Plato:3OB	Psalms:2 OB	Wisdom of Solomon: 1OB	–	7
Of solitariness, desolateness	–	Psalms: 2 OB	Baruch:1OB	–	3
Of Pagan Deities	Oppianus, Anazarbensis:1 OB Orphic Hymns: 1OB Papyri:2 OB	–	–	–	4
Of Miscellaneous singularity	Hephaestio:1N/A Philodemus:1 U/V Periplus Maris Rubri:1N/A Periplus Maris Erythryes:1N/A Papyri (Clement): 1OB Apollonius Dyscolus:1U/V Epiphenius:1OB	–	–	–	7
Sub Total	31				50
Minus uses not applicable –.	Hephaestio:1N/A Periplus Maris Rubri:1 N/A Periplus Maris Erythryes: 1N/A MINUS: -3				-3
Total	28	9	6	4	47

(OB) This is a designation to indicate that, contrary to his analysis, the usage of the word still indicates only-begotten or only born.

(N/A) This indicates that the usage of the word is not applicable for reasons which will be discussed under each appropriate reference.

(I/E) This indicates inconclusive evidence.

(U/V) This indicates unable to verify; the reference could not be located.

Therefore, after one goes through all his evidence, as we are about to do, this is how the chart should really appear.

How Used	Sources				
	Ex-Biblical	Old Test.	Apoc.	New Test.	Total
As Only-begotten, Only Born	25	9	6	4	44
Of a single fact	1(inconclusive)				1
Of solitariness, desolateness					
Of Miscellaneous, singularity	2(unable to verify)				2
Total	28	9	6	4	47

After removing the three references that are not applicable, we are left with forty-seven uses. After examining all the evidence we will find out that actually monogenes carries the meaning of only-begotten or only born 44 times and not 29 times as he claimed in his original chart. Of these forty-seven only three are used in a way other than only-begotten or only born.

Therefore, the evidence really shows us that about 94% of the references carry the meaning of *only-begotten* or *only born*. And yet Warden's claims the complete opposite and claims the evidence suggests that monogenes cannot possibly mean *only-begotten*.

As in any court of law, (continuing with Dale Moody's terminology), each juror is called to make his own judgment based upon the evidence, so let's now look at the evidence that Warden provides and let the reader, or I should say, juror, make his own decision.

We will not spend time on the original 29 usages he lists under "only child" that goes across the chart horizontally, for by his own admission it carries the meaning of "only born" and "only-begotten." His column heading of "only child" obscures this fact, but he admits it is so, as can be seen in his quote below.

And, before we look at this quote, what is so amazing is that his whole dissertation is to disprove the meaning of only-begotten for monogenes, yet in the beginning of his paper he admits the following.

“The following statements are appropriate here: Μονογενής is literally ‘one of a kind,’ ‘only,’ ‘unique’ (unicus), not ‘only-begotten’ which would be μονογέννητος (unigenitus).¹⁰¹ The word γίνεσθαι has in general usage lost entirely the early sexual sense of the root γεν. It means simply ‘to arise,’ ‘to become.’ It signifies ‘that which previously was not there and had no existence comes into being;’ μονογενής is ‘what alone acquires or has existence.’ “...When we have to do with living beings – men or animals – the meaning ‘born,’ ‘begotten,’ is of course congruous, but there is no emphasis whatever attached to his side.^{102”}”¹⁰³

In other words, in this quote he begins by saying *monogenes* does not mean “only-begotten” but then he admits at the end of the quote it does mean only-begotten! He says that with living beings the meaning of born or begotten is congruous!

Now what does he mean by *congruous*? I tried to find a dictionary close to the time of his writing, (1938), in order to see how that word was defined at that time so we can ascertain his actual meaning. I could not find a dictionary from that decade but I did find the Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary from 1898. This is how they defined the word.

Con'gru-ous (kSn'gru-tts), a. [L. congruus, fr. congruere to come together, to coincide, to agree ; of uncertain origin.] Suitable or concordant; accordant; fit; harmonious; consistent. — Con'gro OUB ly. adv.¹⁰⁴

And *concordant* means,

Con-cord'ant (-ant), a. Agreeing; correspondent; harmonious; consonant. — Con cord'ant-ly. adv.¹⁰⁵

Today *congruous* is defined as follows by Webster,

1a : being in agreement, harmony, or correspondence b : conforming to the circumstances or requirements of a situation : appropriate <a congruous room to work in — G. B. Shaw>
2: marked or enhanced by harmonious agreement among constituent elements <a congruous theme>¹⁰⁶

Congruous means to coincide, to agree, to be harmonious! Any way you look at it, he is admitting that *monogenes* and the meaning of only-begotten or only- born completely agree with each other! He admits that the meaning of *only-begotten* or *only born* is perfectly harmonious with the Greek word *monogenes*!

¹⁰¹ This is his reference to his following footnote which appears as such: Moulton and Milligan. Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, p. 416

¹⁰² This is his reference to his following footnote which appears as such: Kattenbusch, F. “Only-Begotten,” Hastings Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, vol. 2., p. 281

¹⁰³ Warden, Francis Warden, MONOGENES IN THE JOHANNINE LITERATURE, (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 1938), pg. 24-25

¹⁰⁴ Webster, Noah, *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary: A Dictionary of the English Language*, (G. & C. Merriam Co., Springfield, 1898), pg. 180

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pg. 176

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.merriam-webster.com> © 2012 Merriam-Webster, Incorporated

Here he is out to disprove the meaning of only-begotten but at the beginning of his study he quietly admits that with living beings it means only-begotten!

This is why we need not look at his original 29 references in the column listed as “only child,” for a child is a living being and so, by his own admission, the word means “only-begotten” in such cases. That is also the reason why in my chart I renamed the column from “only child” to “only-begotten,” or “only born,” He admits the word means “only-begotten” in those cases, so let’s name the column appropriately.

(Dear reader, is this not amazing, before we even begin this study, by using his “own chart,” he admits that out of 50 times the word *monogenes* is used 29 of those times with the meaning of only-begotten or only born! That means that 58% of the times *monogenes* means “only-begotten,” and 42% of the time he claims it means otherwise. And of those 21 times where it is used otherwise, we must take out those 4 usages that are used of pagan deities, because they too were considered living beings by the Greeks, and, as such, the word also carried the connotation of only-begotten. Therefore that leaves us with only 17 times out of 50 that it is used in the manner he asserts is the primary meaning of *monogenes*! He takes a minority meaning and asserts it is a majority or primary meaning. Something, dear reader, is askew with his analysis, and we have not even started!)

Therefore, with all this laid out for the reader, let’s begin our study of the evidence provided by Warden.

He divides his evidence into three headings within two historical periods. First, the age of the dialects, 1000-300 B.C., second, the age of the Koine, 300 B.C. to 330 A.D., and finally, he looks specifically at the Greek Old Testament from the period of the Koine, (in which category he also includes the New Testament).

The Age of the Dialects

Parmenides

His first assertion as to a different meaning for *monogenes* is the passage from Parmenides. Parmenides is one of the main Greek texts used to negate the traditional meaning of only-begotten for *monogenes*. Since the word occurs along with the word “unbegotten,” to the mind of many, this demonstrates the

word could not possibly mean “only-begotten,” for that would be contradictory.

Warden makes this statement regarding this passage in his introduction.

“An examination of the word as it has been used in all its discoverable sources will do more, perhaps, to bring to light its precise meaning than will lexical and grammatical consideration alone. For the final conclusion must be made in the light of the ways in which the word has been used, never in terms of what any one should like to have it mean.”¹⁰⁷

We heartily agree with such a conclusion. The problem, however, is he concentrates on the usage of the word centuries before the New Testament and ignores those usages that occur decades after the New Testament. But we will address that issue later.

The exercise before us is to examine the evidence that Warden presents, the evidence that Dale Moody claims proves beyond a reasonable doubt, that *monogenes* does not mean “only-begotten.” And the first such evidence is the Poem of Parmenides written around the year 500 B.C.¹⁰⁸ This is the Greek phrase as Warden gives it and the translation he assigns to it.

“οὐδὲν μουνογενές τε καὶ ἀτρεμές ἢ δ’ ἀτέλειστον (Reality is uncreated and indestructible,) both complete and unique, unmoved and eternal”¹⁰⁹

By this text, Warden claims *monogenes* cannot mean only-begotten because it is used in conjunction with the word unbegotten. However, as we will find in many of his examples, he does not provide the reader with all the evidence. Many of his quotes are taken out of context. He does not even provide the reader the full Greek text of the English translation he provides. Nevertheless, let’s continue in examining this text with one quick observation.

The usage of this text may be much ado about nothing because many Neo-Trinitarians may not realize that the word μουνογενές is a variant in the text and may not even be the word Parmenides chose to use! So this reference really does not prove anything and should not be used as evidence because we are unsure of the exact wording. The poem has been handed down to us, not in the original, but in copies found in the various writings of other authors. Thus they are differences between the texts.

In speaking of these variants, John Palmer in his book, *Parmenides and Presocratic Philosophy* tells us this.

“Later authors such as these would have transcribed either from a copy of the poem to which they had access, from an anthology of some type in which certain verses appeared already excerpted, or simply from memory (as Plato and, much later, Proclus often seem to do). It is

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pg. 25

¹⁰⁸ There is disagreement, not only as to when this poem was written, but also, as to when Parmenides was born. Most assign his birth a date from 540 B.C. to 515 B.C.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pg. 26

hardly surprising, therefore, that already in antiquity quotations of Parmenides' poem in different authors and sources should have contained different reports of a word or two here and there. Furthermore, each of the ancient works containing these excerpts has come down to us in multiple medieval manuscripts. Centuries of copying and recopying inevitably produced even more discrepant readings, especially in places where the copyists may have had difficulty understanding the sense of Parmenides' archaic phraseology or were unfamiliar with his epic morphology. The historical vagaries of the poem's partial preservation via an entirely indirect, lengthy, and often conflicting tradition have presented modern editors with the task of trying to determine as best they can what words Parmenides himself actually wrote."¹¹⁰

As such, the true reading at 8:4 in the poem may not even include the reading of οὔλον μονογενές. Some believe the true reading is what is found in Plutarch's copy of the poem. He reads ἔστι γὰρ οὐλομελές rather than οὔλον μονογενές. In Plutarch's copy of the poem the word *monogenes* does not even appear! Consequently, the whole use of the text of Parmenides, proving that *monogenes* cannot possibly mean only-begotten actually becomes mute.

Below one will find the Greek Text of each variant.

Parmenides as found in Plutarch			
Greek Text	English Translation	John Burnet's Translation	
Μόνος δ' ἔτι μῦθος ὁδοῖο λείπεται ὡς ἔστιν·	But still only one story of a way is left – that "it is."	One path only is left for us to speak of, namely, that It is.	
ταύτη δ' ἐπὶ σήματ' ἕασι πολλὰ μάλ'	And in this way, upon very many tokens it may be,	In it are very many tokens that what is,	
ὡς ἀγένητον ἐὸν καὶ ἀνώλεθρόν ἔστιν ἔστι γὰρ οὐλομελές τε καὶ ἀτρεμές ἢ δ' ἀτέλεστον·	just as being unbegotten and indestructible –It is – for it is complete as well as unmovable, and without end.	is uncreated and indestructible, alone, complete, immovable and without end. ¹¹¹	

¹¹⁰ Palmer, John, *Parmenides and Presocratic Philosophy*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009), Pg. 350

¹¹¹ Burnet, John, *Early Greek Philosophy, 2nd. Edition*, (Adam and Charles Black, London, 1908), pg. 199

Parmenides as found in Simplicius			
Greek Text	English Translation		John Palmer's Edition
Μόνος δ' ἔτι μῦθος ὁδοῖο λείπεται ὡς ἔστιν·	But still only one story of a way is left – that “it is.”		As yet a single tale of a way remains, that it is;
ταύτη δ' ἐπὶ σήματ' ἕασι πολλὰ μάλ'	And in this way, upon very many tokens it may be,		and along this path markers are there very many, that What Is
ὡς ἀγένητον ἐὸν καὶ ἀνώλεθρόν ἔστιν οὐλον μουνογενές τε καὶ ἀτρεμές ἡδ' ἀτέλεστον. ¹¹²	just as being unbegotten and indestructible, it is complete, only- begotten, as well as unmovable, and without end.		is ungenerated and deathless, whole and uniform, and still and perfect. ¹¹³

In addition to the variants above, some even believe the true reading is μονομελής (single-limbed), rather than οὐλομελής (complete), or μονογενές (only-begotten).

Therefore, one can see Parmenides is not a reliable text in determining the true meaning of monogenes.

Nevertheless, for the sake of argument, let's assume the true reading for the text is μονογενές. Does its appearance with unbegotten preclude a meaning of only-begotten as Neo-Trinitarians claim? I do not think so; let me explain.

The problem with this text, as it is quoted by many Neo-Trinitarians, is they only give you a little snippet view of the text, usually the word μονογενές and a few surrounding words, for instance, they might present the phrase as: ὡς ἀγένητον ἐὸν καὶ ἀνώλεθρόν ἔστιν οὐλον μονογενές. Now, of course, it is not surprising when one sees this that one concludes μονογενές cannot mean only-begotten, for it says the reality of things is ἀγένητον (unbegotten) and then says it is μονογενές.

¹¹² Parmenides, Henn, Martin J., *Parmenides of Elea: A Verse Translation With Interpretative Essays and Commentary to the Text Issue 88 of Contributions in Philosophy* (Greenwood Publishing Group, Westport, CT 2003), Pg, 111

¹¹³ Palmer, John, *Parmenides and Presocratic Philosophy*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009), Pgs. 368-369

But the problem, as is the same problem with other quotes used by Neo-Trinitarians is they do not give the reader the full context. When one does so, one realizes, more than likely, it should be understood as only-begotten!

Let me give you John Burnet's English translation for the fuller context.

"Fragment IV & V – Come now, I will tell thee - and do thou hearken to my saying and carry it away - the only two ways of search that can be thought of. The first, namely, that It is, and that it is impossible for anything not to be, is the way of conviction for truth is its companion. The other, namely, that It is not, and that something must needs not be, - that, I tell thee, is a wholly untrustworthy path. For you cannot know what is not - that is impossible - nor utter it; For it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be.

"Fragment VI – It needs must be that what can be thought and spoken of is; for it is possible for it to be, and it is not possible for, what is nothing to be. This is what I bid thee ponder. I hold thee back from this first way of inquiry, and from this other also, upon which mortals knowing naught wander in two minds; for hesitation guides the wandering thought in their breasts, so that they are borne along stupefied like men deaf and blind. Undiscerning crowds, in whose eyes the same thing and not the same is and is not, and all things travel in opposite directions!

"Fragment VII – For this shall never be proved, that the things that are not are; and do thou restrain thy thought from this way of inquiry.

"Fragment VIII – One path only is left for us to speak of, namely, that It is. In it are very many tokens that what is, is uncreated and indestructible, alone, complete, immovable and without end. Nor was it ever, nor will it be; for now it is, all at once, a continuous one. For what kind of origin for it will you look for? In what way and from what source could it have drawn its increase? I shall not let thee say nor think that it came from what is not; for it can neither be thought nor uttered that what is not is. And, if it came from nothing, what need could have made it arise later rather than sooner? Therefore must it either be altogether or be not at all. Nor will the force of truth suffer aught to arise besides itself from that which in any way is. Wherefore, Justice does not loose her fetters and let anything come into being or pass away, but holds it fast." Is it or is it not? " Surely it is adjudged, as it needs must be, that we are to set aside the one way as unthinkable and nameless (for it is no true way), and that the other path is real and true. How, then, can what is be going to be in the future? Or how could it come into being? If it came into being, it is not; nor is it if it is going to be in the future. Thus is becoming extinguished and passing away not to be heard of Nor is it divisible, since it is all alike, and there is no more of it in one place than in another, to hinder it from holding together, nor less of it, but everything is full of what is. Wherefore all holds together; for what is; is in contact with what is. Moreover, it is immovable in the bonds of mighty chains, without beginning and without end; since coming into being and passing away have been driven afar, and true belief has cast them away. It is the same, and it rests in the self-same place, abiding in itself. And thus it remaineth constant in its place; for hard necessity keeps it in the bonds of the limit that holds it fast on every side. Wherefore it is not permitted to what is to be infinite; for it is in need of nothing; while, if it were infinite, it would stand in need of everything. It is the same thing that can be thought and for the sake of which the thought exists.¹¹⁴

What we find is that Parmenides is speaking of the true nature of things personified as a being. John Burnet continues:

¹¹⁴ Burnet, John, *Early Greek Philosophy, 2nd Edition*, (Adam and Charles Black, London, 1908), pgs. 197-200

“He goes on to develop all the consequences of the admission that it is. It must be uncreated and indestructible. It cannot have arisen out of nothing; for there is no such thing as nothing. Nor can it have arisen from something; for there is no room for anything but itself. What is cannot have beside it any empty space in which something else might arise; for empty space is nothing, nothing cannot be thought, and therefore cannot exist. What is, never came into being, nor is anything going to come into being in the future. "Is it or is it not?" If it is, then it is now, all at once.

“That Parmenides was really denying the existence of empty space was quite well known to Plato. He says that Parmenides held "all things were one, and that the one remains at rest in itself, having no place in which to move." Aristotle is no less clear. In the *de Caelo* he lays it down that Parmenides was driven to take up the position that the One was immovable just because no one had yet imagined that there was any reality other than sensible reality.

“That which is, is; and it cannot be more or less. There is, therefore, as much of it in one place as in another, and the world is a continuous, indivisible plenum. From this it follows at once that it must be immovable. If it moved, it must move into an empty space, and there is no empty space.”¹¹⁵

John Burnet makes the observation that Parmenides believed that “what is cannot have beside it any empty space in which something else might arise.” Therefore, “what is, never came into being, nor is anything going to come into being in the future.” This last observation, in my opinion, explains why Parmenides makes the statement about reality that it is both ἀγένητον (unbegotten), and μουννογενές (only-begotten).

It is unbegotten because it has always been and it is only-begotten because there can be no other. It is saying it is what it is, so do not search for anything else. Unbegotten shows it did not come out of nothing but always was, and only-begotten shows it remains immutable, the same – that there can be no other “it is,” for there is no empty space for it to be. It is being looked at from both perspectives. The one rules out a past and the other rules out a future. It simply is. It never was not, nor never will be anything than it is.

This fact that it is and will be no other, explains the use of μουννογενές (only-begotten). This concept is reinforced a few lines later when he says, Οὐδὲ ποτ' ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐφήσει πίστιος ἰσχύς γίγνεσθαι τι παρ' αὐτό· τοῦ εἶνενεν οὔτε γενέσθαι οὔτ' ὄλλυσθαι ἀνῆκε Δίκη χαλάσασα πέδησιν, ἀλλ' ἔχει.¹¹⁶ (Nor will the force of truth suffer aught to arise besides itself from that which in any way is. Wherefore, Justice does not loose her fetters and let anything come into being or pass away, but holds it fast).¹¹⁷

The Greek words Burnet translates as “arise” and “come into being” are respectively γίγνεσθαι, and γενέσθαι. The first γίγνεσθαι is a present

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pg. 206-207

¹¹⁶ Parmenides, Henn, Martin J., *Parmenides of Elea: A Verse Translation With Interpretative Essays and Commentary to the Text Issue 88 of Contributions in Philosophy* (Greenwood Publishing Group, Westport, CT 2003), Pg., 111

¹¹⁷ Burnet, Op. Cit., pg., 207

infinitive of γίγνομαι and the second γενέσθαι is an aorist infinitive of the same verb. The verb γίγνομαι is translated in many different ways as is seen in the translation above, yet it must be admitted that it is also understood with the concept of being born or begotten. It is used in this sense in the following verses in Scripture.

Genesis 6:1 And it came to pass when men began to be numerous upon the earth, and daughters were born to them, (Brenton's LXX Version)

Genesis 17:17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall *a child* be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? KJV

Genesis 21:3 And Abraam called the name of his son that was born to him, whom Sarrha bore to him, Isaac. (Brenton's LXX Version)

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." NASB

Romans 1:3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh. NKJV

Galatians 4:4 But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

Parmenides is looking at reality as "being" so it is perfectly congruous to understand the idea of "born" or "begotten."

Consequently, if one accepts the variant μονογενής (only-begotten) in Parmenides, we find he is simply saying that there is only one reality and that there can be no other reality than what is. I would modify John Burnet's translation to read: "Nor will the force of truth allow anything to be "born" alongside itself from that which in any way is. Wherefore, Justice does not loose her fetters and let anything come into being or pass away, but holds it fast." Or, one could read it, "the force of truth will not allow anything to be "begotten" alongside itself." In other words, Parmenides is saying that reality is like one that is "only-begotten!"

The adjectives unbegotten and indestructible complete and only-begotten, as well as unmovable and without end, while on the surface appear contradictory, are not really. Parmenides is using a paradox! Its purpose is to appear contradictory! However, the thought is perfectly understood once one contemplates the entire phrase within the greater context, i.e. when one contemplates "reality," (It is), from a perspective of the past and a perspective of the future, from a perspective of "nothing," and the perspective of "everything."

Based upon the thinking of Parmenides, since nothingness could never exist, our reality is "unbegotten." And since, our reality is what it is, it will remain alone like one "only-begotten," for there is not empty space, nothingness, for

anything else to be begotten. “What is” cannot have siblings for “What Is,” simply is.

Let us continue. After he makes that paradoxical statement, he then goes and explains what he means by that statement. First he addresses the concept of “unbegotten” by saying,

“For what kind of origin for it will you look for? In what way and from what source could it have drawn its increase? I shall not let thee say nor think that it came from what is not; for it can neither be thought nor uttered that what is not is. And, if it came from nothing, what need could have made it arise later rather than sooner? Therefore must it either be altogether or be not at all.”¹¹⁸

Then he explains the concept of “only-begotten” as follows,

“Nor will the force of truth suffer aught to arise (to be begotten) besides itself (παρ’ αὐτό) from that which in any way is. Wherefore, Justice does not loose her fetters and let anything come into being or pass away, but holds it fast.”¹¹⁹

Parmenides is using paradoxical language. In other words, the use of ἀγένητον, (unbegotten), need not negate the use of μονογενής, (only-begotten). In fact, it strengthens or affirms its use, for he is creating a paradox.

Paradoxical language is used many times in literary pieces. For example, one might recall Charles Dickens’ famous use of paradoxical language in the opening sentence of his *The Tale of Two Cities*. He begins his story,

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way...”¹²⁰

The purpose of paradoxical language is to get one’s attention, so that a person will be forced to delve deeper into the subject in order to understand the subject. This literary technique is not an invention of modern times. Another philosopher, Heraclitus, who was a contemporary of Parmenides, also used paradoxical language. “He believed in the unity of opposites, stating that “the path up and down are one and the same”, all existing entities... [are]...characterized by pairs of contrary properties.”¹²¹ In one of his paradoxes he states: “εἶμὲν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶμεν we exist and do not exist.” Obviously, this was meant to be a paradox and wasn’t meant to be taken literally. The same was true of Parmenides’ use of unbegotten and only-begotten.

¹¹⁸Burnet, Op. Cit., pg., 207

¹¹⁹Burnet, Op. Cit., pg., 207

¹²⁰ Dickens, Charles, *A Tale of Two Cities*, (James Nisbet & Company, London, 1902), pg. 3

¹²¹ Heraclitus, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heraclitus>

Another famous example of the use of paradox as a literary device is used by William Shakespeare in his play *As You Like It*. It is found in Act Three, Scene Two.

"Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life,
but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is naught.
In respect that it is solitary, I like it very well;
but in respect that it is private, it is a very vile life.
Now, in respect it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well;
but in respect it is not in the court, it is tedious.
As is it a spare life, look you, it fits my humour well;
but as there is no more plenty in it, it goes much against my stomach."¹²²

What we see here is that the character Touchstone thought such life as good, yet bad, liked very well, yet hated much. It was a pleasing life, but a tedious life; it fit his desires well, yet turned his stomach. This is the use of paradox and this is what Parmenides is employing.

Nevertheless, in spite of all this I am sure some Neo-Trinitarians will say, "No that is all wrong. The fact that Parmenides uses *μουννογενές* with *ἀγένητον* (unbegotten) proves *monogenes* cannot mean only-begotten, but must mean unique or one of a kind."

If one wishes to believe this and so concludes that *monogenes* does not mean only-begotten in the Bible, all because of this ancient text, then let me ask one question.

Why would someone take a usage of *monogenes* from a pagan philosopher some 600 years before the apostle John wrote his Gospel and then seek to impose that meaning upon *monogenes*, while ignoring the contemporary witness of Christians living within a mere 60 years of the apostle John, and who affirm the complete opposite, that the word did mean only-begotten? Something is askew.

Why would a pagan's witness be taken over a Christian's witness? Why would a pagan's usage bear more weight than a Christian's usage? Why would a pagan's usage of the word almost six hundred years before better reflect the true meaning of the word, rather than a Christian's usage of the word a mere sixty years later? (It is, of course, found in the writings of Justin Martyr, let alone in the contemporary writings of such ones as Luke, the writer of Hebrews, Josephus, and Clement)!

I hope the discerning Christian will realize that current context is what defines a word and not its etymology or previous usage (even though in this case, I think we found that *monogenes*, indeed, still meant only-begotten). But, again,

¹²² Shakespeare, William, Knight, Charles, Ed., *The Pictorial Edition of the Works of Shakspeare, Comedies, Vol. 1*, 2nd Edition, (G. Routledge & Sons, London 1867), Pg., 257

for those who want to disagree, surely you know that a word must be understood by its current context and usage. Many, many words are always undergoing change in all language groups. Let us consider the English language.

If we were to live six hundred years from now, would we define the word “gay” in the twenty-first century, by the usage of the word in the nineteenth century? Of course we would not. The word has drastically changed its meaning. To say a person was “gay” in the nineteenth century meant he was happy and carefree. To say a person is “gay” in the twenty-first century means he is a homosexual! The meaning of a word must be defined by the current usage of its day and not by a usage centuries before.

When we do that, whether in the case of Parmenides, or in the case of Justin Martyr, we find that *monogenes* meant only-begotten. And in the case of the Poem of Parmenides we find the meaning of “only-begotten” actually fits in better within the fuller context of the passage than the meaning “unique.”

Let us now proceed to Warden’s next example.

Plato

Timaeus

After a few more references the next reference he claims clearly shows *monogenes* does not mean only-begotten is that of Plato. He states the following regarding the usage of the word in Plato’s *Timaeus*.

“...ἀλλ’ εἷς ὁδε μονογενῆς οὐρανὸς γεγονὸς ἔστιν καὶ ἔτ’ ἔσται, (The creator made neither two nor countless worlds), but this one and only universe, having come into existence, both is and will be; εἷς οὐρανὸς ὁδε μονογενῆς ὢν, ‘This one and only universe.’ The two virtually identical citations from the *Timaeus* indicate Plato’s striving for (possibly a revelation of) the knowledge of the One cause for the unique universe. The singularity of the universe is grounded in the fact of its being the only universe created; the unique manner of its coming into being, if present at all, is surely not emphasized.”¹²³

On the surface, with the Greek text above, and the translation he made, one would assume his point is well taken. However, as we will find with many of his other quotations, he takes them out of context. He does not give the reader all the evidence. And when we look at the fuller context and see all the evidence, we find that he is wrong and the word *monogenes* is being used in its traditional sense of “only-begotten.”

¹²³ Warden, Francis Warden, *MONOGENESIS IN THE JOHANNINE LITERATURE*, (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 1938), pg. 27

The fuller quote would be this.

“... κατὰ τὴν μόνωσιν ὅμοιον ἢ τῷ παντελεῖ ζῴῳ, διὰ ταῦτα οὔτε δύο οὔτ’ ἀπείρους ἐποίησεν ὁ ποιῶν κόσμους, ἀλλ’ εἷς ὃδε μονογενῆς οὐρανὸς γεγονῶς ἔστιν καὶ ἕτ’ ἔσται.”¹²⁴

“In order then that the world might be solitary, like the perfect animal, the creator made not two worlds or an infinite number of them; but there is and ever will be one only-begotten and created heaven.”¹²⁵

What we see by the fuller context is that the universe is made after what Plato calls a “living being.” As such, he uses words associated with fecundity, i.e. μονογενῆς and γεγονῶς. If one remembers, Warden already admitted that monogenes when used of living beings carries the sense of “only born,” or “only-begotten.” Well, guess what? Plato is placing this text within the context of a living being! This is not brought out by Warden, and he leaves out the part of the text that refers to a living being, κατὰ τὴν μόνωσιν ὅμοιον ἢ τῷ παντελεῖ ζῴῳ (according to the singular one, that it might be like to the perfect living being). The word we find a few words before the beginning of his quote is the word ζῴῳ, which means a living creature, being, or animal.

Regarding this analogy to a living being, James Adam says this,

“In the *Timaeus* there is abundant evidence that Plato regarded the World as a divine creature.”¹²⁶

In fact, this is specifically stated in the section right before the section where Warden obtains his quote. The section, *Timaeus* 30a, states:

“In this way then we ought to affirm according to the probable account that this universe is a living creature in very truth possessing soul and reason by the providence of God.”¹²⁷

But Warden does not take this fact into account in his translation.

According to *Timaeus*, the Maker of all things made this “cosmos” to be like a living being or animal; it was made like that eternal and perfect living being which existed in the mind of the Maker. As such, the cosmos is seen as that which has been begotten, as, indeed, any living creature is so known. This explains why this one and singular cosmos is called “only-begotten.”

Archer-Hind translates this portion before us as follows.

¹²⁴ Plato, *Timaeus*, 31b, Sourced from: www.perseus.tufts.edu

¹²⁵ Jowett, Benjamin, Tr. *Republic. Timaeus. Critias Volume 3 of The Dialogues of Plato*, Benjamin Jowett, 3rd Edition (Oxford University Press, New York, 1892) Pg. 450-451

¹²⁶ Plato, Adam, James, ed., *The Republic of Plato: Books Volume 2* (At the University Press, Cambridge, 1902), pg. 290

¹²⁷ Plato, Archer-Hind, R.D., *The Timaeus of Plato* (Macmillan and Co., London, 1888), pg. 93

“To the end then that in its solitude this universe might be like the all-perfect animal, the maker made neither two universes nor an infinite number; but as it has come into being, this universe one and only-begotten, so it is and shall be forever.”¹²⁸

Warden then references another use of monogenes in Timaeus which reads, εἷς οὐρανὸς ὅδε μονογενὴς ὧν. Warden then translates it and claims it means, “this one and only universe.”

But again, he takes that small phrase out of context. The entire context reads as follows:

“And now let us declare that our discourse concerning this all has reached its end. Having received all mortal and immortal creatures and being therewithal replenished, this universe hath thus come into being, living and visible, containing all things that are visible, the image of its maker, a god perceptible, most mighty and good, most fair and perfect, even this one and only-begotten world that is.”¹²⁹

Notice how Archer-Hind translated the same phrase Warden translated as “this one and only universe.” He translated and understood the same phrase as “this one and only-begotten world that is.” Why? Because he understands the philosophical issues in Timaeus. He understands the fuller context. He did not lift that little line that Warden uses a proof for his claim out of context.

He even includes in his comment on line 10, starting on page 338 of his book, this concluding sentence.

“And so was the universe completed and all that is therein, one and only-begotten, the most fair and perfect image of its eternal maker.”¹³⁰

Other secular writers understand the same thing.

For example, in commenting on the philosophy of Timaeus as understood by that Neo-Platonist Proclus (412 A.D. -485A.D.), Thomas Taylor says this –

“For as the intelligible paradigm was generated one from the one which is the good, so likewise with reference to itself being one, it constituted the world only-begotten. Hence the world is one. And neither are there many worlds; for there are not many first paradigms; nor infinite worlds...”¹³¹

He then continues commenting specifically on this line:

"But this heaven [or universe] was generated, is, and will be one and only-begotten." The only-begotten indeed, adumbrates the monadic cause, and indicates an essence which is comprehensive of all secondary natures, and has dominion over wholes.”¹³²

¹²⁸ Ibid., pg. 95-96

¹²⁹ Ibid., pg. 345

¹³⁰ Ibid., pg. 339

¹³¹ Taylor, Thomas, The Commentaries of Proclus on the Timaeus of Plato, in Five Books Containing a Treasury of Pythagoric and Platonic Physiology, Vol. 1 (Printed for the author by A.J. Valpy, London, 1820), Pg. 385

¹³² Ibid., pg. 386

So we see, when we are presented with the full context, it is misleading for Warden to state that monogenes does not mean “only-begotten” in this particular text. Even philosophical writers, who have no dog in this fight, understood monogenes in to mean only-begotten in this passage.

Finally, before leaving this portion of Plato two more observation need to be made. First, some may be confused as to the use of such human terms for what was considered an act of material creation. But this should not surprise us. Does not Scripture itself use such terminology in describing creation of the world?

The Psalmist speaks of God begetting that which he creates.

Psalm 90:2 Before the mountains were born, Or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

Of course, in Scripture, this must be understood as analogy, for unlike Plato, Scripture never views the heavens and the earth as a living being. But the conceptual language should not surprise us.

Second, before we leave these examples from Plato, we must look once more at the text quoted by Warden, but let’s look at the full text of the sentence which Warden ignores, the full text of the sentence that he does not provide to the unsuspecting reader. Back in Timaeus 31a Plato says this:

“...ἵνα οὖν τόδε κατὰ τὴν μόνωσιν ὁμοιον ἦ τῷ παντελεῖ ζῳῳ, διὰ ταῦτα οὔτε δύο οὔτ’ ἀπείρουσ ἐποίησεν ὁ ποιῶν κόσμους, ἀλλ’ εἰς ὃδε μονογενῆς οὐρανὸς γεγωνῶς ἔστιν καὶ ἔτ’ ἔσται.”¹³³

Benjamin Jowett, translates the Greek as follows:

“In order then that the world might be solitary, like the perfect animal, the creator made not two worlds or an infinite number of them; but there is and ever will be one only-begotten and created heaven.”¹³⁴

This second and last point which I wish to make, and which is most significant, is about a little word ignored by Warden. It is the little word Plato uses in the beginning of the sentence, the Greek word μόνωσιν, which I underlined and which according to Liddell and Scott is defined as follows.

“**A.** solitariness, singleness, Pl.Ti.31 b, Ph.1.559; ἡ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ μ. separation from . . . , Plu. Them. 10, cf. Porph.Abst.4.20.”¹³⁵

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¹³³ Archer-Hind, Op. Cit., pg. 94-95

¹³⁴ Jowett, Benjamin, Tr. *Republic. Timaeus. Critias Volume 3 of The Dialogues of Plato*, Benjamin Jowett, 3rd Edition (Oxford University Press, New York, 1892) Pg. 450-451

¹³⁵ Liddell, Henry George, Scott, Robert, Greek-English Lexicon, Seventh Edition (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1883), pg. 978

Why, did not Plato, when he got to the end of his sentence, simply use the very same word he used in the beginning of his sentence – μόνωσιν? If he wanted to conclude that the universe was, as Warden says, “one and only” he already used a word that carried such a meaning, the word μόνωσιν! The word carried the connotation of “one and only,” “alone,” “single,” or “solitary.”

This fact alone would, more than likely, demonstrate that in Plato’s mind μονογενής carried a different meaning than μόνωσιν. If Plato wanted to conclude and say again the universe was “one and only” he could have simply used the same word, μόνωσιν, again. But he did not.

Unless it was for the sake of euphony, the reason he did not use the same word again was because it would communicate the wrong idea. He did not want to say that the universe is and ever will be one “solitary” (μόνωσιν) heaven. He wanted to say the universe was μονογενής (only-begotten), the only universe that was generated, which, of course, only makes more sense once one understands the greater context of Timaeus

Monogenes, contrary to Warden’s assertion, does not mean “one and only” in Timaeus; it means *only-begotten*.

I hope one begins to see that the evidence, rather than demonstrating, beyond a reasonable doubt, that monogenes cannot mean “only-begotten,” actually affirms the meaning of only-begotten for monogenes!” Neo-Trinitarians have perpetuated a linguistic myth regarding this word. I hope the readers are beginning to see the truth of the matter.

Monogenes is a word chosen by the Holy Spirit to bespeak the beauties of our Saviour in his eternal relationship to the eternal Father as the only one begotten before all time; it bespeaks the one who was eternally generated by the Father and so is truly very God of very God. He is eternal, unlike the claim of Ariens and Jehovah’s Witnesses, and he is also eternally begotten, unlike the claims of Neo-Trinitarians.

Let us now move on to the next quote he gives from Plato.

The Laws

Warden also provides the following quote in his effort to demonstrate that monogenes does not mean only-begotten. He states:

“Plato gives one further use of μονογενής : τὴν τῶν βασιλέων γένεσιν ἐκ μονογενοῦς, ‘the twofold generation of kings descended from one.’”¹³⁶

However, the full sentence reads as follows.

“Θεὸς εἶναι κηδόμενος ὑμῶν τις, ὃς τα μέλλοντα προορῶν, δίδυμον ὑμῖν φυτεύσας τὴν τῶν βασιλέων γένεσιν ἐκ μονογενοῦς.”¹³⁷

And an English translation would be: A god who [seems] to be troubled for you, who foreseeing the future, planted a double generation of kings to you out of one begotten (begetting).

The first thing that needs to be said is that Warden’s translation does not match the Greek text he provides. With the text he provides it should simply read, “The generation of kings from one.” He left out the Greek text that included the Greek word for twofold – δίδυμον.

Why did he do that? We will never know. Perhaps, it was an oversight. But in so doing he left out another important word in order to properly understand the text. He left out the word φυτεύσας which was a word that was used for the planting of something, especially fruit trees.

Liddell and Scott define φυτεύσας this way.

“I. c. acc. of the thing planted, plant trees, esp. fruit-trees, “οὔτε φυτεύουσιν χερσὶν φυτὸν οὔτ’ ἀρόωσιν” Od.9.108; “δένδρεα φ.” 18.359, cf. περιφθεύω; ...2. metaph., beget, engender, Hes.Op.812, Sc.29, Hdt.4.145, Πινδ.,...—Pass., to be begotten, spring from parents, τινοῦς, ἐκ or ἀπο τινοῦς Pind. P.4.256, N. 5. 13...”¹³⁸

But notice it was also used metaphorically of begetting! This is the key to understanding this text. Plato is giving us a parallel thought between planting or sowing seed to that of conception or begetting. Plato relates to us that a god “planted a double generation of kings out of one begetting.” Or, perhaps, it might be translated a god “brought forth a double generation of kings out of one begetting.

Warden’s translation ignores this context of the passage. Plato is not simply saying that a twofold generation of kings descended from “one person,” as Warden suggests. If he wanted to say that he more than likely would have written: τὴν τῶν βασιλέων γένεσιν ἐκ τοῦ ἑνός.

¹³⁶ Warden, Op. Cit., pg. 27

¹³⁷ Plato, England, E. B., The Laws of Plato: The Text Ed. with Introduction, Notes, Etc. Classical series III, Vol. 1, Book I-VI, (University Press, Manchester, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1921) pg. 105

¹³⁸ Liddell, Henry George, Scott, Robert, Greek-English Lexicon, Seventh Edition (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1883), pg. 1702

The sense of the text is telling us that a god, acting in a providential manner, did something extra-special or unusual for Sparta. That which was extra-special was engendering a double generation of kings from one begotten, (i.e., begetting, which is similar to that of planting or sowing). It must be understood from the ancient Greeks understanding of embryology and their theory of epigenesis. In other words, Plato was saying that the god caused the twins to be monozygotic. The god made sure the seed that was sown or “planted” in conception resulted in twins.

Historically these twins were Eurysthenes and Procles, who were the two sons of Aritodemus and Argia. They were considered the heads of the two Spartan dynasties of kings.

So we see that in this text monogenes is being used from a father’s perspective with its basal sense of bringing forth or begetting in the initial stages of conception, rather than from the mother’s perspective of one brought forth or “born.”

However, it must be admitted this is a difficult text. And even with Warden’s understanding of monogenes, it still is a difficult text. Even he does not use his supposed understanding of “one of a kind” for monogenes. In other words, he does not translate the passage as “a double generation of kings out of one of a kind.”

That translation would not make sense either. That is why he ends up with the translation of simply “one” for monogenes. But that would be an unusual way for Plato to say it, (if that is what he wanted to say), since he could have simply used the numeral ἐνὸς (one) in the text.

E. B. England tries to solve the problem of this passage by understanding ἐκ μονογενεῶν as “instead of a single born king.” He says in his note on the passage,

“e.1. ἐκ μονογενεῶν as ‘instead of a single born king’ as there had been before. This seems better than to take ἐκ as merely ‘from,’ i.e. born from.”¹³⁹

While I am not sure of his solution, it is interesting that he retains the basic sense of begetting in his translation.

The only other solution that might be plausible is to understand μονογενεῶν with its normal sense of only-begotten so that it would be translated: A god who[seems] to be troubled for you, who foreseeing the future, planted a double generation of kings to you out from a single born, or out from an “only-begotten.”

¹³⁹ Plato, England, E. B., ed., *The Laws of Plato: The Text Ed. with Introduction, Notes, Etc. Classical series III, Vol. 1, Book I-VI*, (University Press, Manchester, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1921) pg. 385

If Plato was using the word in this manner, then, more than likely, he had Heracles in mind, since he was the only-begotten son of Zeus and Alcmena together; and he was the head of their lineage.

It must be remembered that the Greeks were patronymic. As such certain lineages were known and named after an important ancestor. A lineage was identified by adding –ίδης to the name. Thus, these twin kings of Sparta were known by the patronymic name, Ηρακλείδης (Heraclides), because of their famous ancestor Heracles (Άλκαῖος). And since that was their patronymic heritage, Plato may simply have been referring to the fact that they were descended from Heracles, an only-begotten.

The Age of the Koine

The next historical period, according to his reckoning, is the Koine period – 300 B.C. to 330A.D. He begins with some quotes from the Orphic Hymns, where he allows the translation of only-begotten to stand and then makes some quotes from Josephus where he also lets stand a meaning of only-begotten. He does question, however, the one quote regarding Josephus’ use of monogenes with Isaac, but we have already dealt with that under a previous chapter.

The first references he really uses to prove his point is a quote by Arrian which we will now examine.

Arrian

Warden states the following from Arriani Historia Indica (VIII.15):

“Arrian, sometimes called the ‘second Xenophon,’ uses the term thus: ἄρσενας μὲν παῖδας πολλοὺς θυγατῆρα δὲ μουνογενήην, ‘Very many male children, but only one daughter.’ The fundamental meaning of the word appears here, for the one daughter was truly unique, but her relation to her father did not exclude the presence of other children of the same father.”¹⁴⁰

On the surface, this seems to be one of Warden’s strongest arguments that monogenes cannot possibly mean only-begotten since there were many children from the same father – as the Greek text states, “very many male

¹⁴⁰ Warden, Francis Marion, *MONOGENES IN THE JOHANNINE LITERATURE*, (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 1938). Pg. 28

children, but only one daughter.” However, again, the Greek text he provides is taken out of context; it leaves out some very pertinent information.

Let me give you the complete text.

“Καὶ τοῦτω ἄρσενας μὲν παῖδας πολλοὺς κάρτα γενέσθαι ἐν τῇ Ἰνδῶν γῆ πολλῆσι γὰρ δὴ γυναιξίν ἐς γάμον ελθεῖν καὶ τοῦτον τὸν Ἡρακλέα¹⁴¹ θυγατέρα δὲ μονογενέην οὖνομα δὲ εἶναι τῇ παιδί Παναδαίην...”¹⁴²

As you can see Warden provides ἄρσενας μὲν παῖδας πολλοὺς from the beginning of the sentence which is pasted together with θυγατέρα δὲ μονογενέην at the end of the sentence making it seem as if that is the phrase which was written by Arrian. But that is not true! Warden leaves out the entire middle part of the sentence which gives context to the statement. This totally misleads the reader.

Let me provide an English translation of the passage.

“And to this one very many male children were born in the land of India (for, indeed, he entered into marriage with many women), and this Hercules also had an only-begotten daughter. And the name [given] to the child was Pandaeam.”

The edited text provided by Warden implies that someone, (who we find out is Hercules), and his wife had many, many children, but only one of them was a daughter. This text is then used to prove that monogenes cannot mean only-begotten because the daughter obviously had very many male siblings. How could monogenes mean “only-begotten” if that same parent had many other children with his wife. But the passage says the complete opposite! As one can see, the context of the passage says that Hercules had “many wives,” and by those wives he had many, many, male children, but of all those wives he had only one daughter. Apparently, of all the wives of Hercules only one gave birth to a daughter, and that daughter was her only child with Hercules. She had no other children. As such, Arrian called her monogenes, an “only-begotten” daughter! And this only-begotten daughter he made a ruler in India with great wealth.

Perhaps, it might be helpful to the reader to also see the broader context. I will supply a fuller narrative as is found in Edward James Chinnock’s translation.

“When Dionysus had arranged these affairs and was about to leave India, he appointed as king of the land Spatembas, one of his companions, the man most versed in the mysteries of

¹⁴¹ καὶ τοῦτον τὸν Ἡρακλέα...κ. τ. λ. It seems one would normally expect the nominative here, but it seems we have a case of anaphora as a rhetorical device similar to the example mentioned by Robertson in Acts 7:35.

¹⁴² Arrian, Dubner, Friedrich, Muller, Karl, *Arrianus, Fragmenta Scriptorum de Rebus Alexandri M. Pseudo-callisthenes, Anabasis et Indica, Vol. 26 of Scriptorum Graecorum Bibliotheca* (Editore Ambrosio Firmin Didot, Parisiis, 1846), Pg. 210

Bacchus. When this man died his son Boudyas succeeded to his kingdom. The father reigned fifty-two years, and the son twenty years. Cradeuas, the son of Boudyas, succeeded to the throne. From this time for the most part the kingdom passed in regular succession from father to son. If at any time direct heirs were wanting, then the Indians appointed kings according to merit. The Heracles, who according to the current report came to India (from Greece), is said, among the Indians themselves, to have sprung from the earth. This Heracles is especially worshipped by the Sourasenians, an Indian nation, in whose land are two great cities, Methora and Cleisobora, and through it flows the navigable river Jobares. Megasthenes says, as the Indians themselves assert, that this Heracles wore a similar dress to that of the Theban Heracles. Very many male children, but only one daughter were born to him in India, for he married many women. The daughter's name was Pandaea, and the land where she was born, and over which Heracles placed her as ruler, was named Pandaea after her. From her father she received 500 elephants, 4,000 cavalry, and 130,000 infantry.¹⁴³

This passage does not detract from the traditional meaning of monogenes at all and Warden was misleading to imply otherwise. However, to be fair to him since he is not here to defend himself, he does include an asterisk at the end of the Greek text which says in the footnote: “citations so indicated are unavailable in the in the original contexts.”¹⁴⁴ I am not sure what he meant by that statement, for he obtained the Greek text from somewhere, but, perhaps he meant he only had that one small snippet of Greek as he provided. If so, maybe someone else did the editing of the text and he was not aware of the fuller Greek quote. But then one must ask, “Why use that Greek text to prove his point if he was unsure of the veracity of the text or quote?” That is a legitimate question.

One fact remains, even though he may not have been aware of the fuller Greek text, he was certainly aware of the fuller English context, for he references the English translation of E. J. Chinnock in his footnotes with the same page number that I provide in my footnote below. So he still knew that the greater context says Heracles had many wives, and yet he still withheld that important information from the reader.

Hephaestio

The next reference given as evidence is Hephaestio in his work entitled “On Feet.” Warden declares:

“Hephaestio offers an unusual citation: ὁ ἐπίτριτος τέταρτος, ὁ καὶ μονογενής ---“ “the foot (in which the ratio of θέσις to ἄρσις is 4:3), which is also single (unique.)”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Chinnock, Edward James, tr., *Arrian's Anabasis of Alexander and Indica* (G. Bell & Sons, London, 1893), pg. 408-409

¹⁴⁴ Warden, Francis Warden, *ΜΟΝΟΓΕΝΕΣ IN THE JOHANNINE LITERATURE*, (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 1938), pg. 28

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 29

Again, he makes the same notation about citations not being available in the original contexts. And so, again, one should ask, “Then why reference it at all, using it to prove your point, if you are unsure of the Greek quote.

The fuller Greek text is provided below and once again the context disproves his assertion.

“ἐκ τριῶν μακρῶν καὶ βραχείας, ὁ ἐπίτριτος τέταρτος, ἢ ἀντισπαστικὴ ἐπτάσημος, ὁ καὶ μονογενής ---”¹⁴⁶

“Out of three long (syllables) and a short (one) a fourth epitrite or seven time-unit antispastic (syzygy) which (is) also (called) monogenes.”¹⁴⁷

Because Warden misunderstood this reference, I removed it from the chart at the beginning of this chapter as being non-applicable. (It should be noted; the passage is not dealing with a human foot, but is dealing with certain combination of syllables known as “feet.”). He attempted to translate the word monogenes from the text, but the translation does not make sense because the word μονογενής was never meant to be translated.

According to Ophuijsen’s work on Hephaestion, the word monogenes was used as the nomenclature of a specific seven time-unit. The section deals with words containing four syllables, three long and one short. Monogenes was the name for one of those units. So, since the word was never meant to be translated, what is presented as evidence is, once again, no evidence at all.

This whole work is dealing with Greek meter. Consider the following information regarding Hephaestio and this work.

“Hephaestio, (flourished 2nd century ad, Alexandria), Greek metrist, author of a work on metre in 48 books, which was reduced, by successive abridgments, to form a manual (Greek encheiridion). The manual became a popular school book, and it alone survives. It is the only complete ancient work on metrics extant. Appendixes dealing with poetic structure and with metrical notations may have been added by another hand.”¹⁴⁸

And,

“Ancient metricians such as Hephaestio give us a long list of names for various Aeolic lengths, to which modern scholars have added. For the most part, these names are arbitrary or even misleading, but they are widely used in scholarly writing.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Hephaestio Grammaticus, Trichas, Proclus, Rudolf Georg Hermann Westphal, *Scriptores metrici graeci: Hephaestionis De metris enchiridion et De poemate libellus cum scholiis et Trichae epitomis. Adjecta Procli Chrestomathia grammatical Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana*, (In Aedibus B. G. Teubneri, Lipsiae 1866). Pg. 14

¹⁴⁷ Ophuijsen, J. M., *Hephaestio on Metre*, (Brill, Netherlands, 1987), pg. 54

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1359955/Hephaestio>

¹⁴⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aeolic_verse

This work by Hephaestio was, essentially, a school book explaining different meters. J. M. Van Ophuijsen has this to say about this section of his work.

“Chapter III: Feet – The account of feet is basically the same in both our authors. In H.[Hephaestio] (E.iii/10.11-12) it is reduced to a strictly formulaic catalogue of all the possible combinations of long and short syllables up to a total length of four syllables, in a determined order from fewer to more syllables and within each number of syllables from fewer to more time-units.”¹⁵⁰

“Now H.[Hephaestio] has a good reason to end his enumeration of feet with those of four syllables, and this is the fact that the longest feet which, in his phrase, ‘constitute a metre’ (ὁ πούς ὁ τὸ μέτρον συνιστάς iv. 2/13.10-1) number four syllables. The sole use of the names of the feet which do not constitute a metre, e.g. the spondee, is to provide a label for certain variations of these which do, e.g. the dactyl, and since these variation most often contain either the same number of syllables as, or a smaller number than, the ‘pure’ (καθαρός) foot they replace, the need to refer to a foot of more than four syllables seldom arises.”¹⁵¹

“... the foot is not defined by H.; feet have been said to be systems of syllables according to A.Q. [Aristides Quintilianus] (i22/44.12 συστήματα συλλαβών), the Greek word ‘system’ denoting something which consists of certain parts. The present chapter of H. and the corresponding section in A. Q. each furnish a complete catalogue of all conceivable combinations of syllables long and short up to a total length of four syllables (the common syllable, being not in the metrical structure but in the language material, has no place here). Several of their names are applied to other feet by other authors – and indeed by A. Q. in his account of rhythmic...”¹⁵²

This tells us that the text of Hephaestio is a catalog, a listing of different combinations of various long and short syllables in various Greek words and that, as such, some of the Greek words used in the catalog were not meant to be translated but were simply the nomenclatures given for certain combinations. This was the case for “monogenes” in this passage.

Ophuijsen’s translation shows this: “Out of three long (syllables) and a short (one) a fourth epitrite or seven time-unit antispastic (syzygy) which (is) also (called) monogenes.”¹⁵³

And so, monogenes was never meant to be understood by its literal meaning. It should not have been translated. It did not mean “single” or “unique” as Warden affirms. It was used as a title of a specific seven-time unit within the category of four syllable words. Perhaps, the word monogenes was chosen as a designation of this category simply because it, too, was a four syllable word.

¹⁵⁰ Ophuijsen, J. M., *Hephaestio on Metre*, (Brill, Netherlands, 1987), pg. 14

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 15

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pg. 55

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pg. 54

Periplus Maris Erythryea

The Greek text provided by Warden in this work is different than the actual text in Periplus Maris Erythryea. He writes the following in his dissertation: γίνεται μονογενῶς ὁ λίβανος,¹⁵⁴ and he translates it as “The frankincense comes into being alone.” He then uses this as evidence to negate the traditional meaning of only-begotten for monogenes.

However, a few things need to be mentioned. This text, again, is a text taken out of context. It also had been edited and changed. In the quote he provides, γίνεται is taken from the end of the phrase and is placed in front of μονογενῶς. Then the article ὁ, which follows λίβανος is changed and placed in front of λίβανος, and once again, he includes the disclaimer that the citations “are unavailable in the original contexts.” But someone edited the text, and, as such, the Greek text that is provided is misleading. It ignores the entire middle portion of the phrase thereby making the phrase say something it does not say.

This is misleading to the reader. If his disclaimer meant that he was unsure of the Greek text, then he should not have made a dogmatic statement to the reader that this was what the Greek text said! He asserts that the Greek text read exactly as he provided. Yet it does not! This is what he says.

“ ‘Periplus Maris Rubri,’ (56, p. 11) shows: μονογενῶς ἐν ἐνὶ τόπῳ φέρεται means ‘grows in one place only,’ and ‘Periplus Maris Erythryes; (p. 149, 173) has: γίνεται μονογενῶς ὁ λίβανος, “The frankincense comes into being alone.”¹⁵⁵

Notice he declares that Periplus Maris Rubri “shows” the Greek text he provides. It does not. Notice he says Periplus Maris Erythryes “has” the Greek text he provides. It does not. He makes a statement of fact. But the statement is not accurate. The Greek text does not appear as he claims. Let us first look at Periplus Maris Erythryes and then Periplus Maris Rubri.

This is how the Greek text really appears in Periplus Maris Erythryea..

“ Ἐν ἧ μονογενῶς λίβανος ὁ ιερατικὸς, πλᾶτος ἢ διάφορος γίνεται.”¹⁵⁶

And I would translate it as follows: “where frankincense exists growing alone; the far-side brand, the best and greatest is produced.”

¹⁵⁴ Warden, Francis Warden, MONOGENES IN THE JOHANNINE LITERATURE, (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 1938), pg. 29

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., pg. 29

¹⁵⁶ Arrian, Vincent, William, Tr., Voyage of Nearchus, and the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea (At the University Press, London, 1809), pg. 77

As one can see, unlike the Greek text Warden provides, γίνεται is at the end of the text and the article is before ιερατικός not λίβανος as he claims. Plus one can see the rest of the text that is not provided in his quote.

I believe that μονογενῶς, in this case, is retaining the basal sense of “bringing forth” in its stem. Before it was revised in the new edition of Liddell and Scott, this is how the adverb was defined in the seventh edition,

“μονογενής...Adv. -νῶς, *growing alone*.¹⁵⁷

And this is how the revised edition now defines the adverb:

“Π. Adv. -νῶς, φέρεται μ. ἐν ἐνὶ τόπῳ grows *only* in one place, Periplus.M.Rubr.56, cf. 11.¹⁵⁸

Notice the revised lexicon only italicizes the word *only*, (a common method to indicate the meaning or gloss of a word), thereby indicating the word “*only*” as the actual meaning for μονογενῶς, whereas, in the seventh edition *growing alone* is italicized, thereby indicating that “*growing alone*” was the nuanced meaning for μονογενῶς.

I believe that μονογενῶς should be taken as a compound adverb, meaning “*growing alone*,” as it is so understood in the seventh edition.

If the writer had wanted to simply say that *only* frankincense is produced in that part of the country, he could have written, Ἐν ἧ̃ μόνος λίβανος ὁ ιερατικός, πλᾶτος ἢ διάφορος γίνεται. (in which *only* frankincense is produced, the best and greatest far side brand).

However, the context describes the various trading posts along the Indian sea. Along this coast is a place called “Cape Elephant” where one obtains, not the usual assortment of products, (as one does in other parts of the coast), but in this area, *only* frankincense is obtained. Apparently, this was a special place where *only* the finest frankincense was grown. Within this area, near a laurel-grove, there was a place where it grew by itself. (Sometimes frankincense would be found growing alone in some remote location). This seems to be what the writer is saying, albeit, he states this location was near a laurel-grove.

He was not saying, as Warden suggests, that frankincense comes into being *alone*. That would not make sense. How can frankincense come into being alone? It needs to be harvested by the appropriate bleeding of the trees. Rather the writer seems to be saying that an excellent grade of frankincense was obtained from some remote location at this particular trading post along Cape Elephant.

¹⁵⁷ Liddell, Henry George, and Scott, Robert, Greek English Lexicon, Seventh Edition, (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1883) pg. 976

¹⁵⁸ <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=%CE%9C%CE%BF%CE%BD%CE%BF%CE%B3%CE%B5%CE%BD%CF%89%CF%82&la=greek#lexicon>

Let me provide you an English translation of the fuller text by Wilfred Schoff, so you can see the context for yourself.

“9. Two days' sail, or three, beyond Malao is the market-town of Mundus, where the ships lie at anchor more safely behind a projecting island close to the shore. There are imported into this place the things previously set forth, and from it likewise are exported the merchandise already stated, and the incense called mocrotu. And the traders living here are more quarrelsome.

“10. Beyond Mundus, sailing toward the east, after another two days' sail, or three, you reach Mosyllum, on a beach, with a bad anchorage. There are imported here the same things already mentioned, also silver plate, a very little iron, and glass. There are shipped from the place a great quantity of cinnamon, (so that this market-town requires ships of larger size), and fragrant gums, spices, a little tortoise shell, and mocrotu, (poorer, than that of Mundus), frankincense, (the far-side), ivory and myrrh in small quantities.

“11. Sailing along the coast beyond Mosyllum, after a two days' course you come to the so-called Little Nile River, and a fine spring, and a small laurel-grove, and Cape Elephant. Then the shore recedes into a bay, and has a river, called Elephant, and a large laurel-grove called Acannae; where alone is produced the far-side frankincense, in great quantity and of the best grade.¹⁵⁹”

As you can see the text provided by Warden completely ignores the context of the passage; it changes the order of the words, and leaves out certain other words, yet Warden uses this reference as proof that monogenes has no connotation of begottenness to the word.

(You will notice that Wilfred Schoff translates the sentence differently. He understands it simply to mean *only* frankincense is produced, “produced” being a translation of γίνεταί, and not any nuance from the adverb μονογενῶς. I obviously disagree, because, as I mentioned before, the writer would have used simply μόνος if that is what he wanted to say. I believe μονογενῶς is a compound adverb which, according to Liddell and Scott, means “growing alone.” His translation of “alone” does not give this nuance. What we are finding is that two basic meanings are attached to monogenes as a compound word – *singularity*, or *aloneness*, and *bringing forth*. When used of beings it bespeaks of one who is the *only one* having been *brought forth* through conception or birth, and, apparently, in its adverbial form, according to this reference, it means something that is *alone brought forth*, in other words “*growing alone.*” Thus if I was to use his translation I would change it to read, “...then the shore recedes into a bay, and has a river, called Elephant, and a large laurel-grove called Acannae, where frankincense exists *growing alone*; the far-side brand is produced, the best and greatest).

¹⁵⁹ Schoff, Wilfred H., trans. & ed., *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea: Travel and Trade in the Indian Ocean by a Merchant of the First Century*, (Longmans, Green, and Company, New York, 1912), pg. 26

Periplus Maris Rubri

In the next quote, from Periplus Maris Rubri, Warden provides the following Greek text and English translation: “μονογενῶς ἐν ἐνὶ τόπῳ φέρεται means “grow in one place only.”¹⁶⁰ It is unfortunate that he provides an incorrect Greek text. The words are placed out of order. The verb φέρεται is taken and placed at the end of the phrase giving the impression that μονογενῶς is understood as “only,” and φέρεται is understood as “grow.” This is misleading because the verb φέρεται bespeaks something quite different when one sees it in its proper context. The verb means to “bear along,” or to “convey.” It refers to the pepper being brought by farmers or merchants to a trading station or port. This is how the Greek text really appears with a possible translation.

“φέρεται δὲ πέπερι, μονογενῶς ἐν ἐνὶ τόπῳ τοῦτῳ τῷ ἐμπορίῳ γεννώμενον πολὺ,¹⁶¹ λεγόμενον Κοτοναρικόν.”¹⁶²

“And pepper, being produced far away, growing alone in one place, is conveyed to this port called Contonarikon.”

Now, it does not matter if one prefers an adjectival understanding for πολὺ. Our purpose is simply to understand the meaning of μονογενῶς within the context. And if πολὺ is taken as an adjective I do not believe it changes the meaning of μονογενῶς.

As one can see, the context shows that the writer is saying that the pepper is procured from one place, being the only place that it is grown. In other words, μονογενῶς is being used with the understanding of “growing alone,” with a basal sense of “coming forth.” And because it only grows in one place, being produced in great quantities, or being produced far away, (presumably somewhere in the interior), it has to be conveyed or transported (φέρεται) to market for sale.

Apparently, there was a certain place in the interior where only pepper grew. No other crops were grown in that area. It was an area completely given over to the production of pepper and, as such, it was, apparently, produced in great quantities. This large crop was then transported to a port called Contonarikon.

And so again, we see that the Greek text in its full context does not demand a meaning of “only” for monogenes, or I should say for its adverbial form. It is still a compound word with basal meaning of *brought forth alone*.

¹⁶⁰ Warden, Op. Cit., pg. 29

¹⁶¹ It seems πολὺ might be understood adverbially or adjectively.

¹⁶² Arrian, Vincent, William, Tr., Voyage of Nearchus, and the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (At the University Press, London, 1809), pg. 107

And so we see that these two references do not support the conclusions made by Francis Warden. However, even though he does not prove his point, one needs to realize it makes no difference for he is mixing apples and oranges by trying to prove the meaning of the adjectival *μονογενής*, by the adverbial form of the same word. An adverb does not, necessarily determine the meaning of the same word in its adjectival form. So, even if it was proved that *μονογενῶς* simply meant only, it would prove nothing.

This is the reason I removed these examples from the chart. The adverbial form of a word does not necessarily mean the same as its adjectival form.

Robertson speaks to this fact.

“...The adjective and the adverb often mean radically different things. Thus in [Jo. 8:29](#), οὐκ ἄφηκέν με μόνον, the adjective μόνον means that 'he did not leave me alone.' As an adverb, if the position allowed it, it would be 'not only did he leave, but,' etc., just the opposite.”¹⁶³

The same is true in English. For example, if I said, “George works alone.” Alone, in this case, would be an adverb that means “without help.” However, if I said, “George was alone at work,” alone is now an adjective that means He was by himself.

Now, just because in the first example, “alone” carries the meaning of “without help,” I cannot now decide and say “Well, since alone meant without help in the first example, the meaning of “by himself” for alone must be wrong in the second example.

Just because we have the same form of the word used as an adverb and as an adjective does not mean the adjective must be understood with the same meaning of the adverb.

In the same way, even if it was proved that the adverbial form *μονογενῶς* meant “only,” it would not mean the adjectival form of *μονογενῶς* must mean the same thing. It would not negate the adjectival meaning of “only-begotten.”

Therefore, even though we demonstrated that the adverbial form of *monogenes* does not necessarily mean “only,” but, rather means “growing alone,” it still cannot be used as a proof either way and that is why I removed it from Warden’s chart. But, even though these two examples are removed, it is interesting to note that they still retained the basic meaning of something brought forth alone. So even though one could not use this example to prove the meaning of only-begotten for monogenes, it remains consistent with its basal force.

¹⁶³ Robertson, A. T., *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1919), pg. 549

Greek Papyri

Warden next gives an example from a Greek Papyrus which he indicates is taken from a citation in Goodspeed and Colwell's Greek Papyrus Reader. The text can be found in *Antike Fluchtafeln*, edited by Richard Wunsch. Warden provides the following Greek text and English translation: ὀρκίζω σε τὸν θεὸν ...τὸν μονογενῆ, I adjure thee by the god...the only one."¹⁶⁴

The problem is he once again takes things out of context. He stops at μονογενῆ and does not provide the reader the next three words. They are the words τὸν ἐξ αὐτοῦ (the one out of him). Below is the fuller text.

“...ὀρκίζω σε τὸν θεὸν...τὸν μονογενῆ τὸν ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἀναφανέντα...”¹⁶⁵

The additional three words τὸν ἐξ αὐτοῦ supply the contextual sense of derivation, the one out of him, which when we construe it with the following participle would give a translation as follows:

“I adjure you the god...the only-begotten, the one out of him, the one brought to light.”

Therefore, when we see μονογενῆ within its context of derivation, we see the traditional meaning of “only-begotten” actually fits the context better than simply “only one.”

The next text he gives from the papyri is as follows: “ἑισάκοθσόν μου ὁ εἶξ μονογενής, ‘Hearken unto me, thou who art one and unique.”¹⁶⁶

I was not able to obtain the Greek text to see the fuller context, but there is nothing in the texts he supplies that would demand a translation of *monogenes* as *only one* or *unique*. It could just as well be translated as only born or only-begotten. For instance, consider another English translation of the text by Hans Dieter Betz, which I was able to find, even though I could not find the Greek text. He translates *monogenes* as “only-begotten.” “Give heed to me, O one only-begotten.”¹⁶⁷

So we see these two quotes will not help us either way in determining the true meaning of *monogenes*. However, it is disheartening that he presents them to the reader as proof that *monogenes* does not mean only-begotten, because there is no conclusive proof in the texts to support either reading, (although in

¹⁶⁴ Warden, Op. Cit., pg. 30

¹⁶⁵ Wunsch, Richard, ed., *Antike Fluchtafeln*, Vol. 20 (A. Marcus und E. Weber, Bonn, 1907), pg. 18

¹⁶⁶ Warden, Op. Cit., pg. 30

¹⁶⁷ Betz, Hans Dieter, Ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells, Volume 1, 2nd Edition* (University of Chicago, Chicago, 1997), pg. 67

the first one there is compelling evidence for “only-begotten,” simply because of the connotation of derivation is introduced with the two words he leaves out after $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\tilde{\iota}$, the two words $\epsilon\tilde{\xi}\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\tilde{\iota}$ (out of him).

The next three quotes he provides from the papyri fall into the same category. From the Greek texts he provides one finds they are nebulous texts that provide no evidence either way. However, the last reference he provides for evidence is not from the papyri but the First Epistle of Clement to Rome. And, as we have already demonstrated, that which he asserts is absolute proof for the meaning of “one of a kind,” actually is proof for the meaning of “only-begotten,” once one sees the greater context.

As we have found in most of his references, once one sees the fuller contexts, his arguments fade away and in some cases the reference that was supposed to be proof for a meaning other than “only born” or “only-begotten,” becomes a reference that actually proves the meaning of only-begotten. It is most unfortunate that he does not provide the reader the greater context in many of his quotes.

The Greek Old Testament

Francis Warden continues his list of evidence, which Dale Moody claims, demonstrates beyond a reasonable doubt that monogenes cannot be understood in its traditional of only-begotten, by next appealing to the Septuagint.

I hope the reader is beginning to see that if we were in a court of law, there would not only be reasonable doubt as to Dale Moody’s claims, there would actually be evidence to prove the opposite, that monogenes does mean only born or only-begotten and always did!

But let us continue the examination of the evidence. He first mentions the few Septuagint texts that translate the Hebrew in Genesis chapter 22 by monogenes. He really does not make any definite conclusions to this, so we will refrain from commenting on this portion at this time and will, instead, devote an entire separate chapter to this issue. We will treat his references to Psalms in the same way. However, a few passages from the Septuagint we would now like to address are his statements regarding a few passages from the Old Testament Apocrypha. We will begin with his comment on Tobit.

Tobit

Warden quotes three of four occurrences of monogenes in Tobit as “only,” and the last as “only-begotten.” As we have said before, he already admitted that the meaning of “only-begotten” is appropriate in those cases where it is

speaking of “only children,” so we do not, necessarily, have to address each verse individually. So it really makes no difference that the first three verses are translated as “only,” rather than “only-begotten.” It is all arbitrary. They just as easily could have been translated as the fourth verse was translated, as “only-begotten.” There is nothing in the text that would require “only.”

In fact, the King James Version also translated the first three as “only” but then translated the fourth verse as “only-begotten.” The verse reads as follows.

Tobit 8:17 Thou art to be praised because thou hast had mercy of two that were the only-begotten children of their fathers: grant them mercy, O Lord, and finish their life in health with joy and mercy. KJV

This in itself shows that Sara and Tobit were considered to be “only-begotten” by the translators of the King James Version, even though they translated monogenes by “only” in 3:15; 6:11,15 when it referred to them individually. If monogenes meant “only-begotten” in 8:17 when referring to Tobias and Sara together, then certainly monogenes meant “only-begotten” in regard to Tobias and Sara in verses 3:15; 6:11, 15 when it referred to them individually. (The same thing can be said of the New Testament and the Kings James translators’ use of “only” in the Gospel of Luke and “only-begotten” in all other verses. Just because they chose “only” in some verses does not mean it negates the meaning of “only-begotten” for monogenes).

Warden simply quotes all four occurrences and leaves it at that, making no comment on the verses. But I would like to make a comment on one of the verses because I think it demonstrates why *monogenes* should be understood as only-begotten in all four verses.

Tobit 6:10-11 says the following. I will give the Greek and then the English from the King James Version, but remember the LXX and the King James Version follow a different verse division.

Tobit 6:11(10a KJV) εἶπεν ὁ ἄγγελος τῷ παιδαρίῳ ἄδελφε σήμερον ἀλισησόμεθα παρὰ Ραγουηλ καὶ αὐτὸς συγγενῆς σου ἐστὶν καὶ ἔστιν αὐτῷ θυγάτηρ μονογενῆς ὀνόματι Σαρρα.

Tobit 6:12 (10b-11 KJV) λαλήσω περὶ αὐτῆς τοῦ δοθῆναι σοὶ αὐτὴν εἰς γυναῖκα ὅτι σοὶ ἐπιβάλλει ἡ κληρονομία αὐτῆς καὶ σὺ μόνος εἶ ἐκ τοῦ γένους αὐτῆς (and you are the only one of her kin) καὶ τὸ κοράσιον καλὸν καὶ φρόνιμὸν ἐστὶν

Tobit 6:10-11a The angel said to the young man, Brother, today we shall lodge with Raguel, who is thy cousin; he also hath one only [begotten] daughter, named Sara; I will speak for her, that she may be given thee for a wife. ¹¹ For to thee doth the right of her appertain, seeing thou only art of her kindred. ¹² And the maid is fair and wise. KJV

In Tobit 6:10 in the KJV (verse 11 in the Greek) we see that Sara is called the only-begotten daughter of Raguel, the cousin of Tobias. There is nothing in the text to negate the meaning of “only-begotten” as we have already

mentioned. But then in the next verse, verse 11, we see an interesting fact. The verse reads, “For to thee doth the right of her appertain, seeing thou only art of her kindred.” That last phrase in the Greek reads, καὶ σὺ μόνος εἶ ἐκ τοῦ γένους αὐτῆς. Now the question must be asked, “If monogenes means “only member of a kin,” as is claimed in the revised edition of Liddell and Scott, or as “one of a kind” as claimed by Warden, then why not use *monogenes* again since it was used of the Sara in the previous verse? Contextually, it would make perfect sense if *monogenes*, indeed, meant “only member of a kin.”

However, instead of using *monogenes* again, the writer makes the statement, καὶ σὺ μόνος εἶ ἐκ τοῦ γένους αὐτῆς. Literally, it would read, “and you are the only one out of her kin.” The King James Version smooths it out and says, “seeing thou only art of her kindred.” Why not just use *monogenes* again, if *monogenes* meant “only member of a kin,” which would then give a reading of, “seeing thou art the only member of her kin?”

In other words, why not write it as follows: “καὶ σὺ ὁ μονογενὴς αὐτῆς εἶ” (and you are the only member of her kin)? We would have the pronoun αὐτῆς present to nullify any idea that no other kin were alive, (which “only member of a kin” would require in and of itself). If the writer would have utilized *monogenes* again, it would have flowed with the text and it would have used the word consistently? So why did not the writer use the word again to say “seeing thou only art of her kindred?” Well, the simple answer is, because *monogenes* does not mean “only member of a kin,” but means “only-begotten,” and if the writer had written it that way with its real meaning he would have been saying Tobias was the “only-begotten of her!” He would have been saying that Tobias was Sara’s son and would have been saying he was going to marry his mother! Of course, this also would have contradicted the storyline since it was already declared that Tobias was the only son of his mother, Anna, and his father, Tobit (Tobit 1:9, 20; 8:17).

This is pretty compelling evidence that shows that *monogenes* never meant “only member of a kin.”

Monogenes could be used of Tobias being the only-begotten son of Tobit, and it could be used of Sara, being the only-begotten daughter of Raguel (Tobit 8:17), but it could not be used of Tobias in Tobit 6:12 LXX, to say “only member of a kin” because the word did not mean that and if the writer had used it in that verse he would have been declaring to his readers that Tobias was the *monogenes* (only-begotten) of Sara; it would make Tobias the son of Sara!

Baruch

The next reference given by Warden is Baruch 4:16. He says,

“καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν θυγατέρων τὴν μόνην ἠρήμωσαν (A, μονογενὴν, R, ἦ), ‘and left her that was alone desolate of her daughters.’”¹⁶⁸

First we should mention the text he provides does not contain the word *μονογενής*. It is a variation. Warden shows this in the parenthesis at the end. So this verse does not prove anything in and of itself. He makes no comment on the text, but, presumably, since he is trying to justify the meaning of “only” or “alone” for *monogenes*, he provided this reference because he believed that *μόνην* (only or alone) in the text, is equivalent to the variant *μονογενήν*.

The Greek text he provides reads like this.

Baruch 4:16 καὶ ἀπήγαγον τοὺς ἀγαπητοὺς τῆς χήρας καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν θυγατέρων τὴν μόνην ἠρήμωσαν

Baruch 4:16 These have carried away the dear beloved children of the widow, and left her that was alone desolate without daughters KJV

There is really not much need to go into this verse with any depth, if the reason that Warden provided this reference was because he was trying to demonstrate that *monos* and *monogenes* are equivalent terms because one is a variant. Why? Simply because a variant is not automatically equivalent to a word it is replacing.

For example, in Matt. 27:34 we have a variant between wine and a sour wine (vinegar) in the text. The Byzantine text has ὄξος, (which is a sour wine or vinegar), while NA27 has οἶνον (wine). The two are completely different drinks, and so just because one of the two is a variant, one cannot conclude that ὄξος must mean the same thing as οἶνον. They do not.

Therefore, if that is the point that Warden was trying to make, it cannot stand and should not be used as an absolute proof either way.

But that still leaves the question. Why would there be a variant *μονογενής* in the text and how should it be understood if *μονογενής* was the original word?

In the story, Jerusalem, which was the capital of Judea, was left desolate and all alone after the captivity and deportation of the Jews. Because of this, Jerusalem was likened to a widow who was only-begotten. She not only was alone because she was a widow, she was also alone because she was an only-begotten child; she could not even be comforted by a sibling. Her only comfort, her children, had all been taken captive. She was left alone and had no others, a widow with no one to turn to and be comforted. Her husband was dead, she had no siblings to turn to, and her children had been taken away

¹⁶⁸ Warden, Op. Cit., pg. 38

from her. She was a widow, who also had been an only-begotten child, being now left desolate without her children. It is highly picturesque and symbolic language and should not be taken too literally.

As such, some prefer the translation of “lonely” or “alone.” However, that really is an interpolation. The literal rendering would be only-begotten. Nevertheless, if one wishes to use a less than literal translation, preferring “lonely” or “alone,” such a one must remember that that nuance is rooted in the meaning of the *monogenes* as “only-begotten.” With the translation of only-begotten the King James Version would read this way.

Baruch 4:16 These have carried away the dear beloved children of the widow, and left her that was only-begotten desolate without daughters

Or the Revised Standard Version would read this way.

Baruch 4:16 They led away the widow's beloved sons, and bereaved the only-begotten of her daughters.

But this whole discussion is rather mute, for we do not know which variant was original. Was *monogenes* original and a scribe decided that because an only-begotten child is alone, and the idea of being alone is the main thought of the text, the text would be better served by using *monos*; and so he changed it?¹⁶⁹ Or was, perhaps, *monos* the original and a scribe saw the word but thought *monogenes* would better serve the purpose of being completely alone, for a widow bereft of her children could still have many brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews, but if the widow was only-begotten, she would have no other siblings, and so no nieces or nephews, and would truly be desolate, completely alone; and so the scribe changed it, wishing to show how utterly desolate Jerusalem was? Either way, we do not know which was original and so this reference cannot prove the case one way or the other.

Wisdom of Solomon

The final extra-Biblical example Warden gives is found in the Wisdom of Solomon. This is what he says.

“A different conception is found in Wisdom of Solomon 7.22: ἔστιν ἐν αὐτῇ πνεῦμα νοερόν ἅγιον μονογενές πολυμερές λεπτόν, ‘For there is in her (Wisdom) a spirit quick of understanding, holy, alone in kind (Greek: sole-born), subtil. ‘Wisdom was the only one of her kind.’^{170,171}

¹⁶⁹ Infallibility, of course, only applies to Scripture, and not to the Apocrypha, of which Baruch is a part.

¹⁷⁰ Warden’s footnote, at this point, references the following: Harris. Op. cit., p.13 (Harris, R. Origin of the Prologue to John’s Gospel, p. 13)

¹⁷¹ Warden, Op. Cit., pg. 32

This is the full verse.

Wisdom 7:22 ἔστιν γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ πνεῦμα νοερόν ἅγιον μονογενές πολυμερές λεπτόν ἐκίνητον τρανόν ἀμόλυτον σαφές ἀπήμαντον φιλάγαθον ὄξύ

Wisdom 7:22 For wisdom, which is the worker of all things, taught me: for in her is an understanding spirit holy, one only, manifold, subtil, lively, clear, undefiled, plain, not subject to hurt, loving the thing that is good quick, which cannot be letted, ready to do good, KJV

Warden seeks to demonstrate that monogenes in Wisdom of Solomon 7:22 should be understood as only one of her kind, and not as “only-begotten.” But this again is totally arbitrary. In fact, if one searches Scripture one will find that Scripture, itself, assigns the connotation of begottenness to wisdom. Scripture tells us that wisdom was begotten! The LXX version of Prov. 8:25 reads:

Proverbs 8:25 πρὸ τοῦ ὄρη ἐδρασθῆναι πρὸ δὲ πάντων βουνῶν γεννᾶ με

Proverbs 8:25 before the mountains were settled, and before all hills, he begets me. (Brenton’s LXX English Version)

The King James Version translates the Hebrew text thus:

Proverbs 8:25 Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: KJV

And the Geneva Bible translated it as follows:

Proverbs 8:25 Before the mountaines were setled: and before the hilles, was I begotten.

And what is interesting is Warden even admits as much, even though, he ends up assigning *monogenes* a different meaning. If you notice in his quote above he puts “sole-born” in parenthesis.

Now, of course, the Wisdom of Solomon is an apocryphal writing and should not take precedence over Scripture, but it is plain to see that the concept of begetting was fully conjoined with wisdom and it would be completely normal that a writer would use *monogenes*, meaning only-begotten, with wisdom personified. So in reality, this text actually supports the traditional meaning of only-begotten for monogenes.

The Patristics

We are doing this as a separate chapter, rather than a sub-chapter under Misconceptions and Misunderstandings because it is such an important part of the evidence in determining the true meaning of monogenes as understood by those Christians closest to the use of word in the New Testament. However, this chapter will still be the concluding portion on all that was covered in Misconceptions and Misunderstandings. So with that in mind let's begin.

Warden basically ignores the use of monogenes in the Patristics. The question must be asked, "Why?" This becomes an even more important question when we remember he made this statement at the beginning of his dissertation.

"An examination of the word as it has been used in all its discoverable sources will do more, perhaps, to bring to light its precise meaning than will lexical and grammatical considerations alone. For the final conclusion must be made in the light of the ways in which the word has been used, never in terms of what any one should like to have it mean."¹⁷²

He says the examination of the word should be found in "all" its discoverable sources, but then ignores one the major sources for the meaning of the word – the Patristics. How can he make a reasoned judgment as to the proper meaning of the word when he ignores one of the primary sources of the word? He clearly admonishes the reader that "all" sources should be examined in determining the meaning of a word, but then he writes his dissertation, ignoring his own admonition.

He freely examined sources up to five centuries before the New Testament was written, but ignored those sources that were in the five centuries after the New Testament was written. He even ignored those sources that were just one century after the New Testament was written, and even a few sources that were only a few decades after New Testament was written!

He stated, "the final conclusion must be made in the light of the ways in which the word has been used, never in terms of what any one should like to have it mean." And yet, he ignores how the word was used by fellow Christians in those times closest to the time of the New Testament. Why?

I am afraid it is because he knew that one would find the evidence overwhelming supports the meaning of "only-begotten" among the Patristics. The word does not mean "one of a kind" in the Bible. It never has. This is an absolutely false statement that cannot be supported by any evidence. Is not affirmed by the Patristics and has never been borne witness by any godly Christian during the two millennia since the New Testament was written; it is a novel idea that was introduced in the 19th century. The Patristics confirm

¹⁷² Warden, Francis Warden, MONOGENEZ IN THE JOHANNINE LITERATURE, (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 1938), pg. 25

this fact. Listen to what he says regarding the use of the Patristics for evidence.

“The patristic usage of *μονογενής* has been omitted from the survey, because of the fact that the Fathers’ employment of the term is with reference to its meaning in the Johannine literature. Therefore, the Fathers are not especially good witnesses for the meaning of the word in any other connection. Some account of the patristic usage will naturally appear in the last two chapters of this study.”¹⁷³

His reasoning does not make sense. If one wants to determine what John meant by his use of *monogenes* one would look for how that word was used in the same time period that John used it. You would not ignore that evidence. Words change meaning over time and so when one wants to determine a meaning of the word you do not rely solely on etymology, but you look to see how the word is used in the time period in question.

His dissertation is called *MONOGENEZ in the Johannine Literature!* It that not the purpose of his research, to find out how John understood *monogenes*? Why then would he say that the Fathers are not good witnesses as to the meaning of *monogenes* in Johannine literature? Incredible! Was not Greek their mother tongue? Did they not know what the word *monogenes* meant? Did they not even understand their own language, the very language they were taught since they were children? Unbelievable!

Were they not Christians, who were capable of being illuminated by the Holy Spirit as to the meaning of *monogenes* as recorded in the Gospel of John, unlike the pagans and heathens who were dead in their trespasses and sin and who were darkened in their understanding as to the truth of God? Are pagans and heathens “good witnesses” as to the meaning of *monogenes* in the Gospel of John, but Christians are “poor witnesses” as to the meaning of *monogenes* in the Gospel of John? Again, unbelievable! Is it better to look to witnesses who are darkened in their understanding, or is it better to look to witnesses who are enlightened in their understanding? His rationale does not make sense.

He says “some account of patristic usage” will appear in his last two chapters, but that is misleading also, for he does not use them to show forth how they understood *monogenes*, but simply uses them to determine which variant is correct in John 1:18.

Is this not interesting? He has no problem using the Patristics to determine whether the variant “Son” or “God” is correct in John 1:18; they have enough illumination for that. They are good witnesses for that. But they are dismissed as to offering any help in understanding the word which preceded those variants – the word “*monogenes!*”

¹⁷³ Ibid., pg. 35

Again, his reasoning does not make sense. He is the one that said,

“An examination of the word as it has been used in all its discoverable sources will do more, perhaps, to bring to light its precise meaning than will lexical and grammatical considerations alone.”

And so, let’s ignore his practice, and rather, follow his preaching. Let’s follow his admonition and look to the evidence from the Christians closest to the time of the New Testament – the Patristics – and let us see how they understood the word.

We will first include that portion of the Patristics we have already discussed in regard to Dale Moody’s claim. We will not include Clement, of course, as we already devoted a complete chapter to his evidence. But his evidence is certainly important, but we will begin with the evidence from Ignatius and Justin Martyr.

Ignatius

Ignatius makes this statement in his Epistle to the Ephesians, chapter VII, verse 2.

“Ἰατρὸς δὲ ἡμῶν ἐστὶν ὁ μόνος ἀληθινὸς θεὸς, ὁ ἀγέννητος καὶ ἀπόσιτος, ὁ τῶν ὅλων κύριος, τοῦ δὲ μονογενοῦς πατρὸς καὶ γεννήτωρ ἔχομεν ἱατρὸν καὶ τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν θεὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστὸν τὸν πρὸ αἰῶνων υἱὸν μονογενῆ καὶ λόγον, ὕστερον δὲ καὶ ἄνθρωπον ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου ὁ λόγος γὰρ σὰρξ ἐγένετο.”¹⁷⁴

“But our Physician is the only true God, the unbegotten and unapproachable, the Lord of all, the Father and Begetter of the only-begotten Son. We have also as a Physician the Lord our God, Jesus the Christ, the only-begotten Son and Word, before time began, but who afterwards became also man, of Mary the virgin.”¹⁷⁵

Now, it makes no difference if this quote is from the shorter or longer recension, or whether the epistles of Ignatius are spurious or genuine for we are simply looking for evidence if the word *monogenes* was used as “only-begotten” or “only born” in the first four centuries of the Church.

This quote is from the longer recension, which many consider to be a later interpolation of the epistle. (The shorter recension is different because it does not even use the word *monogenes*, let alone many of the other words in the longer recension). Now some believe it was written in the middle of the second century, others in the middle of the fourth century. It makes no difference, but if the earlier date is true it becomes even more significant

¹⁷⁴ Saint Ignatius (Bishop of Antioch), Cureton, William Tr., *Corpus Ignatianum: a complete collection of the Ignatian epistles, genuine, interpolated and spurious, together with numerous extracts from them, as quoted by ecclesiastical writers down to the tenth century, in Syriac, Greek, and Latin*, (Asher and Co., Berlin, 1849), pg.23

¹⁷⁵ Roberts, Alexander; Donaldson, James, ed., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI 1985), pg. 52

because it would have been written a mere fifty years or so after the death of the apostle John.

The passage clearly affirms the traditional meaning of monogenes. The meanings of “only member of a kin,” or the meaning of “only” simply would not fit the context. However, the meaning of “only-begotten” would fit nicely within the context.

First, Ignatius declares that God the Father is the “only true God.” He uses the Greek word *μόνος* to declare this. Now, if monogenes means “only,” why then did not Ignatius write *ὁ μονογενῆς ἀληθινὸς θεὸς*? Now some may say, “Well he just chose to use the word *μόνος* instead, since it also means only.” Well, enough. But why then did he not continue with his chosen word and use *μόνος* again when referring to the Son? Or why did he not simply use monogenes for both the Father and the Son together if it simply means “only?”

I think the answer is simply because *μόνος* and *μονογενῆς* do not mean the same thing. *Monos* means “only,” and monogenes means “only-begotten,” or “only born.” Ignatius could not use monogenes of the Father because he calls the Father, *ὁ ἀγέννητος* (the unbegotten) and the *γεννήτωρ* (begetter) of the Son. The Father is the only one unbegotten and the Son is the only one begotten, the Monogenes – the Only-begotten.

Monogenes is never used of the Father in the Bible or in these writings, yet *monos* is used repeatedly for the Father. Why? If monogenes means “only” and not “only-begotten,” why then is it never used of the Father?

Second, if monogenes means “only member of a kin,” how could that be true if the Father is also a member of a kin? The Son would not then be the only member of the kin. (Such a thought has all kinds of theological problems. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not members of a kin, but I am simply demonstrating – apart from the theological problems – that linguistically, the Son could not be considered to be the only member of a kin, if his Father was still alive!).

Nor, if we chose the meaning “only,” would it work within the context, simply because the first use of monogenes does not include the word *υἱὸς* in the Greek, (unlike the English translation provided by Roberts - Donaldson above). So if monogenes simply meant “only,” one has to ask, “Only what? God is the Father and Begetter of “only?” It makes no sense. But it does make sense to say he is the Father and Begetter of the “only-begotten.”

So we see that this is a very significant reference that should be used as evidence in determining how the word monogenes was understood in Johannine literature. It clearly shows it was understood as only-begotten in those first few centuries. However it must be noted that assigning an earlier

date to the longer recension is a minority opinion. The general consensus is that the longer recension was composed in the middle of the fourth century and I would tend to agree with the later date. But should that make any difference for our study? I do not think so, for it would still be in the fourth century.

Now, I know some will dismiss still dismiss this as evidence, but why? Why should this reference to be so curtly dismissed? Does this not still provide evidence as to how monogenes was understood? Certainly it would carry more weight if it was written at the early date, but why should it be dismissed out of hand? Are we not simply looking for evidence as to how the word monogenes was understood in those first few centuries following the time of our Lord? Is this still not within that time period?

Plainly stated, a later date for this reference should not disqualify it for consideration, for if one is willing to look back to Parmenides, to approximately the fifth century before Christ, for help in understanding the meaning of monogenes, why would one not be willing to look forward to approximately the fourth century after Christ for help in understanding the meaning of monogenes?

At least the evidence should be provided to the Christian so that such a one can decide for themselves as to whether the passage has any significance – a thing Francis Warden was not willing to do.

Clearly, the writer of Ignatius understood monogenes to mean “only-begotten.”

Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr, (A.D. 110-165), was born just a few years after the apostle John’s death. In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, while commenting on Christ’s suffering being predicted in Psalm 22, he makes this important declaration regarding Christ.

“...μονογενῆς γὰρ ὅτι ἦν τῷ πατρὶ τῶν ὄλων οὕτως, ἰδίως ἐξ αὐτοῦ λόγος καὶ δύναμις γεγενημένος, καὶ ὕστερον ἄνθρωπος διὰ τῆς παρθένου γενόμενος, ὡς, ἀπὸ τῶν ἀπομνημονευμάτων ἐμάθομεν, προεδήλωσα.¹⁷⁶

“For I have already proved that He was the only-begotten of the Father of all things, being begotten in a peculiar manner Word and Power by Him, and having afterwards become man

¹⁷⁶ Justin Martyr, Trollope, Rev. W., tr., *S. Justini philosophi et martyris, cum Trypnone Judaeo dialogus*. Edited with a corrected text and English introduction and notes, Vol. II (Printed by and for J. Hall, Opposite the Pitt Press; and G. Bell, Cambridge, 1847), pg. 71-72

through the Virgin, as we have learned from the memoirs.”¹⁷⁷

We can take this portion a couple ways. We can treat the participle as a periphrastic participle and translate the first part as follows:

“For I made clear before that the Only-begotten to the Father of all things, the Word and the Power, was begotten privately out of him, and he afterwards became man through the virgin, just as we have learned from the memoirs.”

Or we can take the first part as an exegetical participle in which case we could translate it thus:

“For I have made clear before that he was Only-begotten to the Father of all things, Word and Power, being begotten out of him privately.”

The latter translation is probably the better for *λόγος* και *δύναμις* are anarthrous. But in either case we have *monogenes* being defined by the participle, explaining why he is the only-begotten.

We also have an adverb, *ἰδίως*, which we find fronted, also emphasizing why he is only-begotten. The adverb carries the idea of privacy, peculiarity, or uniqueness. Thus the phrase could be rendered,

“For I have made clear before that he was only-begotten to the Father of all things, word and power, being uniquely begotten out of him,”

or

“For I made clear before that the Only-begotten to the Father of all things, the Word and the Power, was uniquely begotten out of him.”

In essence, with the adverb, Justin is giving further definition to the Greek participle and thus the word it is construed with by explaining how he was begotten and thus only-begotten. In this case, with *ἰδίως*, the term *monogenes* is being further explained by the participle as one who is *only-begotten* because he is *uniquely begotten* from the Father of all things.

In addition, he is also affirming the meaning of *only-begotten* by saying he had already made this point clear. When did he make it clear? For such a statement to make sense he must have said something before where he had affirmed the same thing; he must have already demonstrated that Christ was the only-begotten of the Father of all things.

He did. And it is found in this portion of his Dialogue with Trypho.

¹⁷⁷ Roberts, Alexander; Donaldson, James, ed., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI 1985), pg. 251

“ ‘I shall give you another testimony, my friends,’ said I, ‘from the Scriptures, that God begat before all creatures a Beginning, [who was] a certain rational power [proceeding] from Himself, who is called by the Holy Spirit, now the Glory of the Lord, now the Son, again Wisdom, again an Angel, then God, then Lord and Logos; and on another occasion He call Himself Captain, when He appeared in human form to Joshua the son of Nave (Nun). For He can be called by all those names, since He ministers to the Father’s will, and since He was begotten of the Father by an act of will; just as we see happening among ourselves: for when we give out some word, we beget the word; yet not by abscission, so as to lessen the word [which remains] in us, when we give it out: and Just as we see also happening in the case of a fire, which is not lessened when it has kindled [another], but remains the same; and that which has been kindled by it likewise appears to exist by itself, not diminishing that from which it was kindled. The word of Wisdom, who is Himself this God begotten of the Father of all things, and Word, and Wisdom, and Power and the Glory of the Begetter, will bear evidence to me when He speaks..”¹⁷⁸

This is the portion to which he is referring, and in this portion near the end of the paragraph we find him calling Christ, “...the Word of Wisdom, who is Himself this God begotten of the Father of all things”

The pertinent part in Greek is this.

“...ὁ λόγος τῆς σοφίας, αὐτὸς ὦν οὗτος ὁ θεὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων γεννηθεὶς...”¹⁷⁹

“...the Word of Wisdom being Himself this God having been begotten from the Father of all things...”

In the litany of titles given to Christ in the Old Testament, one of which is his being “God,” and “Lord,” Justin now states that this same God is this “God Begotten.” Notice that he even uses the same imagery as he did in our first quote. He bespeaks of the Father that begat him as being the Father of all things (τῶν ὅλων).

In the first quote he says he had already proven that Christ was the monogenes to the Father of all things (τῶν ὅλων). In this quote he says that he “is this God begotten” from the Father of all things (τῶν ὅλων). Obviously, this suggests that in Justin’s mind, he who is this “God Begotten,” is also he who is this Monogenes – Only-begotten.

However, to define *monogenes* by “only” makes the text nonsensical. The first quote would then read:

“For I have already proved that He was the “only” of the Father of all things, being begotten in a peculiar manner Word and Power by Him, and having afterwards become man through the Virgin, as we have learned from the memoirs.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Roberts, Alexander; Donaldson, James, ed., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI 1985), pg. 227

¹⁷⁹ Justin Martyr, Trollope, Rev. W., tr., *S. Justini philosophi et martyris, cum Trypnone Judaeo dialogus*. Edited with a corrected text and English introduction and notes, Vol. I (Printed by and for J. Hall, Opposite the Pitt Press; and G. Bell, Cambridge, 1846), pg. 124

¹⁸⁰ Roberts, Alexander; Donaldson, James, ed., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI 1985), pg. 251

Justin would then be saying that he had already proved that he was the “only?” What does that mean? Of course, those who believe *monogenes* means *only* would say, “No, no, it means “only Son.” Well, we have already proved the word did not mean “only Son” for when we get to verses like John 3:16, which include the Greek word Son after *monogenes*, the verse becomes nonsensical for John would then be declaring that God gave his “only Son Son.”

Now, of course, in certain contexts the word might mean “only born son,” but that would “not” be because the connotation of “son” is in the word *monogenes*, but it would be because of contextual constraints. The connotation in the word is “born” or “begotten,” not son, and that connotation would supply the understanding of “son” when the context so demands, (and when the word “son” is not present), or it could require the understanding of “daughter,” again, not because that connotation is in the word, but also because of contextual constraints.

Neither could *monogenes* mean “only member of a kin” for, obviously, Justin would not be telling Trypho, a Jew, that his God was dead and that only the Son was alive, being the only member of a kin.

The only meaning that works in Justin’s writings is the meaning “only-begotten.”

Irenaeus

With Irenaeus, we have a little different situation. We do not have any extant Greek writings of Irenaeus, but we do have his writings in Latin. When discussing the Only-Begotten this is what he says:

“If any one, therefore says to us, 'How then was the Son produced by the Father?' we reply to him, that no man understands that production, or generation, or calling, or revelation, or by whatever name one many describe His generation, which is in fact altogether indescribable. Neither...angels, nor archangels, nor principalities, nor powers [possess this knowledge], but the Father only who begat, and the Son who was begotten...the Only-Begotten Word of God.”¹⁸¹

And in another place he says,

“The Gospel according to John relates the princely, and efficacious, and glorious generation of Christ from the Father...but Matthew relates that generation which belongs to Him as man...”¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Roberts, Alexander; Donaldson, James, ed., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI 1985), pg. 401

¹⁸² Treffry, Richard, *An Inquiry into the Doctrine of The Eternal Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ*, (Wesleyan Conference Office, London, 1865), Pg. 408-409

Now, as was mentioned, we do not have his writings extant in Greek, and so we do not know what Greek word of Irenaeus translated as Only-Begotten. However, we do have other evidence which will confirm to us that he understood monogenes as only-begotten.

Roberts and Donaldson tell us that this work of Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, was translated into Latin sometime after 200 A.D., that is, in the beginning of the third century. They state:

“Dodwell supposes this Latin version to have been made about the end of the fourth century; but as Tertullian seems to have used it, we must rather place it in the beginning of the third.”¹⁸³

And so, what we find is that when Irenaeus' writings were translated into Latin at that time, the Greek word “monogenes” from Jn. 1:18 was translated by the Latin word “*unigenitus*” in his writings, which in Latin can only mean “only-begotten!”

This is how the portion in Latin reads in his writings *Against Heresies*, Book III, chapter XI, verse 6.

“Deum enim, inquit, nemo vidit unquam, nisi unigenitus Filius Dei, qui est in sinu Patris, ipse enarravit.”¹⁸⁴

So here is more evidence disproving the assertions of Dale Moody and the indirect assertions of B. F. Westcott that monogenes was never understood to mean only-begotten until the close of the fourth century. The word was so understood sometime shortly after 200 A.D., or for those who might dispute that date, certainly sometime during the third century.

And so, we must concluded in the above quote, where Irenaeus uses “unigenitum” in the phrase “Only-begotten Word,” that, more than likely, it also was a translation of the Greek word “monogenes.” It is translated as “unigenitum Dei Verbum.”¹⁸⁵

Now, if the translators of Irenaeus understood the Greek word “monogenes” to mean “only,” or “only member of a kin,” or “one of a kind,” then they would not have used the word “*unigenitus*” by which to translate the word for unigenitus can only mean “only-begotten.”

¹⁸³ Roberts, Alexander; Donaldson, James, ed., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI 1985), pg. 312

¹⁸⁴ Available from: [http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/20vs/103_migne_gm/0130-0202,_Iraeneus,_Contra_Haereses_Libri_Quinque_\(MPG_007a_0433_1118\),_GM.pdf](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/20vs/103_migne_gm/0130-0202,_Iraeneus,_Contra_Haereses_Libri_Quinque_(MPG_007a_0433_1118),_GM.pdf) (Bk. III, ch.XI. 6)

¹⁸⁵ Available from: [http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/20vs/103_migne_gm/0130-0202,_Iraeneus,_Contra_Haereses_Libri_Quinque_\(MPG_007a_0433_1118\),_GM.pdf](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/20vs/103_migne_gm/0130-0202,_Iraeneus,_Contra_Haereses_Libri_Quinque_(MPG_007a_0433_1118),_GM.pdf) (Bk. II, ch. XXVIII. 6)

As an aside, this understanding of “monogenes,” to mean “only-begotten,” is also confirmed for us by the fact that in the majority of extant Old Latin translations of the Greek Scripture, “unigenitus” is used to translate the word “monogenes” – by a margin of 4 to 1 in those particular passages where it is used of our Lord.

The Old Latin texts confirm that the most common understanding of “monogenes” was “only-begotten,” in the days of the early Church, and not “only” or “only member of a kin” (We will look into this in more detail in the following chapter entitled, *The Testimony of Old Latin Versions, Jerome and the Latin Vulgate*)

Tertullian

Tertullian (c. 200 A.D.) states,

“Thus does He make Him equal to Him: for by proceeding from Himself He became His first-begotten Son, because begotten before all things; and His only-begotten also, because alone begotten of God, in a way peculiar to Himself,¹⁸⁶ from the womb of His own heart—even as the Father Himself testifies: “My heart,” says He, “hath emitted my most excellent Word.” *The Father* took pleasure evermore in Him, who equally rejoiced with a reciprocal gladness in the Father’s presence: “Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten Thee;” even before the morning star did I beget Thee.”¹⁸⁷

This is the testimony of Tertullian written in Latin and not in Greek, but we do see that Tertullian’s understanding of the doctrine of Christ, as recorded in Scriptures, spoke of him as being the “only-begotten” of the Father because he was the only “one” begotten of the Father.

The pertinent part of this quote is as follows in Latin.

“...exinde eum patrem sibi faciens de quo procedendo filius factus est primogenitus, ut ante omnia genitus, et unigenitus, ut solus ex deo genitus, proprie de vulva cordis ipsius secundum quod et pater ipse testatur, Eructavit cor meum sermonem optimum...”¹⁸⁸

And in English,

“Thus does He make Him equal to Him: for by proceeding from Himself He became His first-begotten Son, because begotten before all things; and His only-begotten also, because alone begotten of God, in a way peculiar to Himself, from the womb of His own heart—even as the

¹⁸⁶ What could be more succinct than this to show that “monogenes” was understood as not only as “only-begotten,” but also as “uniquely begotten.”

¹⁸⁷ Roberts, Alexander; Donaldson, James, ed., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. III* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI 1985), pg. 601

¹⁸⁸ Sourced from Against Praxeas, chapter VII at:
http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/04z/z_0160-0220__Tertullianus__Adversus_Praxean_Liber__LT.doc.html

Father Himself testifies: “My heart,” says He, “hath emitted my most excellent Word.”¹⁸⁹

Tertullian says that he was “*unigenitus*,” only-begotten, because he was the only one, “*solus*,” begotten of God the Father. Not only that, in that begetting Tertullian calls him “*primogenitus*” which also carries the idea of begotteness.

Unlike Irenaeus, this is not a translation, so we have the direct witness of Tertullian showing that he considered Christ to be “only-begotten,” because he was “alone begotten.” In other words, Tertullian understood both the concept of begotteness in *unigenitus* and the concept of “aloneness” in *unigenitus*. But the question must be asked, “Did he consider *unigenitus* to be an equivalent word to the Greek word *monogenes*? And the answer to that question is yes.

In chapter 15 of the same book, *Against Praxeas* he writes,

“Let us, in short, examine who it is whom the apostles saw. ‘That,’ says John, ‘which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.’ Now the Word of life became flesh, and was heard, and was seen, and was handled, because He was flesh who, before He came in the flesh, was the ‘Word in the beginning with God; the Father, and the Word was God, yet was He with God, because He is God of God; and being joined to the Father, is with the Father. ‘And we have seen His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father;’ that is, of course, (the glory) of the Son, even Him who was visible, and was glorified by the invisible Father.”¹⁹⁰

In Latin it reads.

“...denique inspiciamus quem apostoli viderint. Quod vidimus, inquit Ioannes, quod audivimus, oculis nostris vidimus, et manus nostrae contracta- verunt de sermone vitae. sermo enim vitae caro factus, et auditus et visus et contractatus quia caro, qui ante carnem sermo tantum 15 in primordio apud deum patrem, non pater apud semetipsum. nam etsi deus sermo, sed apud deum, quia ex deo deus, quia cumpatre apud patrem. Et vidimus gloriam eius tanquam unigeniti a patre, utique filii scilicet visibilis, glorificati a patre invisibili...”¹⁹¹

Tertullian quotes John 1:14 which we know contains the Greek word *monogenes*, and the Latin word he uses to translate *monogenes* is *unigenitus*, which we have already seen can only mean “only-begotten.”

This is significant evidence that should not be ignored in determining the true meaning of *monogenes*, for unlike Irenaeus, this date cannot be disputed. This work was written around 210 A.D. Most affirm that he died in 225 A.D. And so this is strong evidence, long before the close of the fourth century, that Christians understood *monogenes* to mean “only-begotten” contrary to the claims of Westcott, Moody and Warden.

¹⁸⁹ Roberts, Alexander; Donaldson, James, ed., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. III (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI 1985), pg. 601

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 610-611

¹⁹¹ Sourced from *Against Praxeas*, chapter XV at:

http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/04z/z_0160-0220__Tertullianus__Adversus_Praxean_Liber__LT.doc.html

The reason this provides such evidence is because we know he believed the Latin word *unigenitus* was equivalent to the Greek word *monogenes* in John 1:14, as was seen in the quote above. So if we know how he defines *unigenitus*, we will know what how he defined the Greek word *monogenes*.

Now this is so important because this will provide evidence as to how the Greek word *monogenes* was understood a little more than a hundred years after John wrote his gospel. We have already seen it was still understood as *only-begotten* by a near contemporary, Clement. And we have also seen it was still understood as *only-begotten* a few decades later by Justin Martyr. And now we will have evidence that will show us if the word continued to be understood as *only-begotten* a few decades after that.

And so we have to ask ourselves another question, “Did Tertullian provides us with any information as to how he understood *unigenitus*?” And the answer is yes again. As we saw in the quote from the beginning of this section he understood *unigenitus* as “only-begotten.” because the Son was “alone begotten.” Therefore, it is perfectly appropriate to conclude that Tertullian understood *monogenes* to mean “only-begotten” and not to mean simply “only.”

Here again, we have evidence that contradicts the assertion of Dale Moody and Francis Warden that *monogenes* was not understood as *only-begotten* till the close of the fourth century. In fact, we have a direct timeline for the word directly back to John from the years just after the close of the second century!

The word meant *only-begotten* in c. 210 A.D. in Tertullian’s writing. It meant *only-begotten* in c. 160 A.D. in Justin Martyr’s writings. It meant *only-begotten* in c. 96 A. D. in First Clement, which brings us within five to ten years of its use in the Gospel of John! The word clearly meant *only-begotten* in John and continued to mean *only-begotten* into the third century.

However, before moving on to the next reference from the Patristics it is only fair to mention that I also found an example where Tertullian used *unicus* for *monogenes* when quoting John 1:14 and 3:16 in chapter XXI in his book *Against Praxeas*. As to why he did so, I have to admit I do not know. (The use of *unicus* for the Son will be discussed in the chapter entitled The Apostle’s Creed). However, if we pretend to be objective we cannot hide this example from the reader.

Perhaps, this is also good time to mention that sometimes one will find *unicus* used to translate *monogenes* in other places. It would be foolish to deny it. The same translation occurs in some of the Old Latin texts of the New Testament as we will discuss in a later chapter.

However, it would also foolish to pretend that this minority use of *unicus* for

the Son of God was a common translation of the Greek word *monogenes* in John's Gospel. It was not. It is a minority translation. So even if we cannot explain the reason for its use, it does not change the fact that it is a minority usage, and, as such, should not be put forth as a majority usage. The vast majority of the times one will find *monogenes* translated by *unigenitus* and not *unicus*. That in itself is significant and should not be denied. (This will be fully discussed under the chapter, *The Testimony of Old Latin Versions, Jerome and the Latin Vulgate*). So with that said, let's continue.

The next reference from Tertullian among many others is from his work *Against the Valentinians*. In writing against the Gnostic heretics he says the following.

“Accordingly he is even called the Father himself, and the Beginning of all things, and, with great propriety, Monogenes (Only-begotten). And yet not with absolute propriety, since he is not born alone.”¹⁹²

And in Latin it reads,

“Ita et ipse Pater dicitur et initium omnium et proprie Monogenes; atquin non proprie siquidem non solus agnoscitur.”¹⁹³

Tertullian is referring to the imaginary emanations of the Gnostics system, one of whom was named Monogenes. In Latin, he actually transliterates the actual Greek word Μονογενής. Therefore, we do not need to speculate as to what underlying Greek word he had in mind. We know it was the Greek word *monogenes* since it was simply transliterated.

Why is this reference important? It is important because he tells us to name one of these emanations, Monogenes, is completely incongruous with the word. He says it is not “with absolute propriety, since he is not born alone.

This is an important text for it shows us, again, that Tertullian understood the word *monogenes* to mean “born alone,” “only-begotten,” “only born.” If the primary meaning of *monogenes* was truly unicus, (unique), then he would not have needed to make such an observation, for certainly within the Valentinian system each emanation was unique! If *monogenes* carried the meaning of unique, or only, its use would have been perfectly appropriate in the text without any qualification.

This is another example in the long line of evidence that “one of a kind,” “only,” or “unique” was not the primary meaning of *monogenes*. The primary meaning of *monogenes* was “only born,” or “only-begotten.”

¹⁹² Roberts, Alexander; Donaldson, James, ed., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. III (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI 1985), pg. 507

¹⁹³ Sourced from *Against the Valentinians*, chapter VII at:
http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/04z/z_0160-0220__Tertullianus__Adversus_Valentinianos__LT_EN.doc.html

Hippolytus

Hippolytus wrote near the beginning of the third century. In his work entitled the *Refutation of all Heresies*, Book VIII, chapter II, he writes:

“When, therefore, those three Æons were adorned with all virtue and with all sanctity, so these teachers suppose, as well as that only-begotten child—for he alone was begotten by those infinite Æons from three immediately concerned in his birth...”

In this text we find the same understanding of *monogenes* as we found in Tertullian’s writings. Unlike, Tertullian’s writings, however, this text was written in Greek. The pertinent Greek text reads:

“...καὶ τοῦ παιδὸς ἐκείνου τοῦ μονογενοῦς – γέγονε γὰρ μόνος...”¹⁹⁴

“...and of that only-begotten child – for he alone was begotten...”

Now, whether one translates the text as above or one translates it as the translation of J. H. Macmahon in the Ante-Nicene Fathers, one sees that Hippolytus understood *monogenes* to mean one who is the only “one” begotten. This again is clear evidence that Christians understood the word by its traditional connotation of “only-begotten” long before the close of the fourth century. This work was written just a hundred and so years from the time of the apostle John. Is this not important evidence in determining the meaning of the word? Clearly, *monogenes* meant only-begotten in this text. Remember it was Francis Warden, who admonished his readers,

“An examination of the word as it has been used in all its discoverable sources will do more, perhaps, to bring to light its precise meaning than will lexical and grammatical considerations alone. For the final conclusion must be made in the light of the ways in which the word has been used, never in terms of what any one should like to have it mean.”¹⁹⁵

And yet, what do we find him doing with this discoverable source? He withholds it from his readers. This is an important piece of evidence, written by a Christian a mere hundred years or so from the time of the apostle John.

And, again, as we have said before, what is more amazing is the reason he gives for dismissing such evidence. He said,

“The patristic usage of *μονογενής* has been omitted from the survey, because of the fact that the Fathers’ employment of the term is with reference to its meaning in the Johannine

¹⁹⁴ Hippolytus, Wendland, D. Dr. Paul, Bonwetsch, G. Nathanael ed., *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller Der Ersten Drei Jahrhunderte, Hippolytus Werke, Dritter Band, Refutatio Omnium Haeresium, Vol. 3*, (J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchandlung, Leipzig, 1916) Pg. 228

¹⁹⁵ Warden, Francis Warden, *MONOGENES IN THE JOHANNINE LITERATURE*, (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 1938), pg. 25

literature. Therefore, the Fathers are not especially good witnesses for the meaning of the word in any other connection.”¹⁹⁶

They are not good witnesses for the meaning of the word? Godly Christians who were willing to give their lives for the cause of Christ, Christians who willingly fought against all kinds of heresies raised up against their Saviour, Christians who faithfully contended for the Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints were not good witnesses? Absolutely amazing! Warden considered Parmenides to be a good witness as to the meaning of the word. He considered Plato to be a good witness as to the meaning of the word. He considered various pagan writers to be good witnesses as to the meaning of the word. But Ignatius is not a good witness for the meaning of the word? Justin Martyr is not a good witness as to the meaning of the word? Irenaeus is not good witness? Absolutely incredible!

However, even if he dismisses the witness of those Christians because their witness was only in connection with the Gospel of John, what about the last two witnesses of Tertullian and Hippolytus? Tertullian was not writing in connection with the Gospel of John’s usage. He was writing in connection with usage of Valentinus. Hippolytus was not writing in connection with the usage in John, he was writing in connection with the usage of some Gnostic heretic! Why did not Warden utilize these references? Why?

Dear brethren, the primary meaning of the Greek word *monogenes* was only-begotten, and it was understood as such, not only by Ignatius and Justin Martyr, but also by Irenaeus, Tertullian and Hippolytus, and many others, including the one we will finish with, that great defender of the Faith, Athanasius.

Athanasius

Athanasius (A.D. 298-373) whose mother tongue was Greek, the great defender of the Faith up to, during, and after the Council of Nicaea says this:

“If then He is Only-begotten, as indeed He is, ‘First-born’ needs some explanation; but if He be really First-born, then He is not Only-begotten for the same cannot be both Only-begotten and First-born, except in different relations;—that is, Only-begotten, because of His generation from the Father, as has been said; and First-born, because of His condescension to the creation and His making the many His brethren.”¹⁹⁷

The first line above begins, “If then He is Only-begotten, as indeed He is, ‘First-born’ needs some explanation; but if He be really first-born, then He is not Only-begotten for the same cannot be both Only-Begotten and first-born...”

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., pg. 35

¹⁹⁷ Schaff, Philip; Wace, Henry, sup., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. IV*, (T&T Clark, Edinburgh; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI 1991), pg. 382 (Against the Arians, II, 58)

In the Greek it reads:

“Εἰ μὲν οὖν μονογενὴς ἐστίν, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ ἔστιν, ἐρμηνευέσθω τὸ πρωτότοκος. εἰ δὲ πρωτότοκος ἐστὶ, μὴ ἔστω μονογενὴς πγ.”¹⁹⁸

Now let me quote something he had said a few lines before this quote, (with the appropriate Greek text), that will clearly show forth his understanding of monogenes.

“Ὁ γὰρ τοι μονογενὴς, οὐκ ὄντων ἄλλων ἀδελφῶν, μονογενὴς ἐστίν. ὁ δὲ πρωτότοκος διὰ τοὺς ἄλλοιθς ἀδελφοὺς πρωτότοκος λέγεται.”¹⁹⁹

“For the term ‘Only-Begotten’ is used where there are not brethren, but ‘First –born’ because of brethren.”²⁰⁰

And then let me quote one other statement he makes later,

“...who also is therefore the Only-begotten, since no other was begotten from Him.”²⁰¹

“...ὁ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ μονογενὴς ὢν, ἐπειδὴ οὐκ ἄλλος τις ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἐγεννήθη.”²⁰²

What could be more succinct? Clearly, Athanasius understood monogenes to mean only-begotten. It could not mean “one of a kind,” or “unique.”

Athanasius says that, “If then He is Only-begotten, as indeed He is, ‘First-born’ needs some explanation; but if He be really first-born, then He is not Only-begotten for the same cannot be both Only-Begotten and First-Born...” But that would not be a true statement if *monogenes* meant *unique*. In that case, one could be “unique (monogenes) and still be a first-born son. In fact, out of all of the sons of Mary, was not Jesus unique? Of course, he was; he was the Messiah; his brothers were not. So if monogenes meant “one of a kind” or “unique” there would not need to be an explanation by Athanasius concerning the use of those two terms, for the two terms would not necessarily contradict each other. If *monogenes* does not mean *only-begotten*, there is no contradiction between the two terms!

But if *monogenes* does mean *only-begotten*, if the stem *-genes* does carries a derivative sense, then, indeed, there would be great incongruity between the two terms and the double use of those words would have to be explained.

¹⁹⁸ Athanasius, Bright, William, *St. Athanasius Orations Against the Arians*, (At the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1884), pg. 132

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., pg. 132

²⁰⁰ Op. Cit., Schaff, Philip; Wace, Henry, pg. 382

²⁰¹ Schaff, Philip; Wace, Henry, sup., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. IV*, (T&T Clark, Edinburgh; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI 1991), pg.434 (Against the Arians, IV, 4)

²⁰² Athanasius, Bright, William, *St. Athanasius Orations Against the Arians*, (At the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1884), pg. 225

Dear brethren, Athanasius clearly says the Son was only-begotten because there were no other begotten of Him. He says the word *monogenes* is used where there are no other brethren, and First-born is used where there are other brethren. Clearly, he understood a connotation of begottenness in the word; it is so self-evident. Why were not these references provided by Warden and Moody?

Dale Moody and Francis Warden both wrote papers to show that the Church, for most of her history, was wrong to believe *monogenes* meant “only-begotten.” Their papers were written to correct what they considered to be an error, as Dale Moody says, an error that existed for 1500 years. What arrogance! Two men from the twentieth century, whose mother tongue is English and not Greek, accuse Christians from those early centuries, whose mother tongue is Greek, that they do not even understand the language of their birth! They conclude that Christians for nearly two thousand years were deceived as to the true meaning of *monogenes*, assigning a meaning and title to our precious Lord Jesus Christ that was false and misleading, and, now, that ones like them are on the scene the Holy Spirit has finally found men he can use to recover the true nature of our Lord. What audacity! For two thousand years the true Faith has been hidden in regard to this truth and now that they are on the scene the Holy Spirit can finally unveil the truth!

Could this not be the real reason why Francis Warden dismissed the Patristics as not being good witnesses and why Dale Moody dismissed the witness of the Patristics as being “fruitless?” They did not want to introduce any evidence from the Patristics, because the Patristics would confirm that the word, indeed, meant “only-begotten” and not “one of a kind!” And if that was true, it would contradict their preconceived ideas of the Blessed Trinity, that, in reality, were a departure from the Historic Christian Faith.

If Francis Warden, Dale Moody, or any modern other Evangelical today denies that our Lord was the only-begotten Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father before all time, such a one has departed from the Historic Christian Faith.

The onus is on the Neo-Trinitarian. The traditional understanding of only-begotten has two thousand years of Church witness. The meaning of “one of a kind” is a recent idea that began in the 19th century based upon faulty scholarship that will not even consider all the evidence. I understand that some may read this and accuse me of making conclusions based upon how I would like the word to mean, as Francis Warden said. I understand that. And we should be humble enough to admit that none of us are beyond subjective reasoning. But again, the onus is not on me, but it is on them. They are the ones introducing a new doctrine. They must present enough evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt, to prove that their new meaning for *monogenes* is right and the traditional meaning of *monogenes* is wrong. And in this exercise they

have failed. The verdict is against them. The Church has been vindicated in her witness as to true meaning of monogenes as used of our precious Lord Jesus Christ – the Only-Begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all time. They have been proven wrong.

In closing, I hope, that even if I have been too subjective at times, I have at least shown enough objectivity to demonstrate the utter failure of their attempt to prove a meaning for *monogenes* in the New Testament other than the traditional meaning of “only-begotten.”

This concludes the examination of the references given by Francis Warden. Dale Moody inferred that his study proved beyond a reasonable doubt that monogenes does not mean “only-begotten.” I hope the reader will now see that is not so, and that in fact, the references given by Warden, for the most part actually affirm the meaning of “only-begotten” (i.e. once one sees the references in their fuller context).

Unfortunately, there were two references that he gave that could not be located. Therefore, they could not be verified either way. But it would not surprise me that if they are seen in their full context the same conclusion would be found – that the word means “only-begotten” or “only born,” or at least some meaning in line with its basal force of “brought forth.”

Therefore, in conclusion, this is once again how the evidence stacks up, if we were to use his chart.

How Used	Sources				
	Ex-Biblical	Old Test.	Apoc.	New Test.	Total
As Only-begotten, Only Born	25	9	6	4	44
Of a single fact	1(inconclusive)				1
Of solitariness, desolateness					
Of Miscellaneous, singularity	2(unable to verify)				2
Total	28	9	6	4	47

Out of a total of forty-seven cases, monogenes meant only-begotten or only born forty-four times and had an alternate meaning only one time, (minus the two cases

that could not be verified). And if one believes that Parmenides was actually using paradoxical language, and so should not be considered inconclusive, one then discovers that monogenes was understood as only-begotten or only born one hundred percent of the time!

Now, I am sure that there will be those who still disagree. I understand that, but I think that any of them who do disagree, would have to now admit that the evidence, at least, does not preclude the meaning of only-begotten, and that certainly, the case against it is not proven beyond a reasonable doubt!

The Greek Septuagint

We have already examined the use of *monogenes* in the Septuagint from the perspective of the Apocrypha. That leaves us with those uses of the word in the canonical portion of the Septuagint. It seems two basic points are commonly made from its usage in that portion of Septuagint.

- 1) That *monogenes* means *only* or *alone* because it translates the Hebrew word “yachid.”
- 2) That *monogenes* and *agapetos* are equivalent terms and as such this explains why *monogenes* is not used in the Synoptics Gospels, but is used in the Gospel of John.

Let’s now look at both points separately.

Yachid

First, much has been made of the fact that *monogenes* cannot mean only-begotten because it is a translation of the Hebrew yachid which does not mean *only-begotten*, but *only*. On the surface, this sounds reasonable, but it has a fallacy. Why do we presume that monogenes must mean *only* because *yachid* means *only*, rather than *yachid* must mean only-begotten because *monogenes* means only-begotten. In other words, why do we define the Greek word by the Hebrew word and not the Hebrew word by the Greek word? Some may say, “But *yachid* does not have any root meaning of “generation” or begottenness, therefore, we must give preeminence to the Hebrew word’s meaning of *only*.”

This, of course, is an error of judgment because one should never judge the meaning of a word by its etymology. It is true etymology can give corroborating evidence, but it never can be the conclusive evidence because the meanings of words must be gleaned by its current usage and context. A word may mean one thing at one time, but then centuries later may mean something completely different.

So, the fact that the Hebrew translators chose *monogenes* to translate *yachid* may prove that *yachid*, indeed, carried a nuance of only-begotten!

Another point needs to be made. One must be careful in back translating a meaning from one language into another. We do not know why translators may have chosen the word they chose. They may have been giving a loose translation or paraphrase of a text. The LXX translators of the Hebrew Bible did not always use a literal word for word translation. As far as my

understanding goes, from those who have devoted their lives to the study of the LXX, the Septuagint is a mixture of both dynamic and formal equivalence.

This may explain why some versions of Gen. 22:2 have *monogenes* for “yachid,” but *agapetos* in verses 12 and 16 of the same chapter. They were making a loose or dynamic translation of the passage and believed the force of the chapter required the idea of only-begotten in one portion of the text, while in other places it required the idea of “beloved.” We simply do not know the reason why they chose *monogenes*, and we will never know for sure unless one discovers a document contain the translators notes regarding the choice of certain words for certain words.

Nevertheless, we can piece together some information, which, while it may not be help us precisely, it can give some indication as to how those who spoke the Hebrew language understood the Hebrew word “yachid.”

God told Abraham to take his son, his only son (yachid) in Gen. 22:2 and go to the land of Moriah.

“**Genesis 22:2** And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."

Of course, this verse is speaking of Isaac, the child of promise. This word is translated by some versions by the Greek word *monogenes*. Some believe this demonstrates that *monogenes* means *only* or *unique* since *yachid* means *only* or *unique*.

Dale Moody had this to say regarding this thought.

“No passage illustrates the meaning of monogenēs more clearly than Heb. 11:17 when read in the light of the OT. It is said that Abraham was “ready to offer up his only (monogenē) son,” and it is impossible to say Isaac was the only son begotten by Abraham. What about Ishmael (Gen 16:3-5; 17:25), thirteen years before Isaac (17:19, 21; `8:10)? Isaac was the only son of promise, the only one of his kind, but not the only son Abraham begat. The uniqueness of Isaac is seen the fact that God said: ‘Through Isaac shall your descendants be named’ (Gen. 21:12; Heb. 11:18). However, the most important thing in the Isaac reference is the context from which the event mentioned in Heb. 11:17 is taken. Three times in the famous story of Abraham’s faith Isaac is called his ‘only (yachid) son’ (Gen. 22: 2, 12, 16). Yachid is the common Hebrew word for ‘only.’ Aquila’s Greek translation uses monogenēs to translate it in Gen. 22:2, and Symmachus does the same in Gen. 22:12. So Heb. 11:17 declares Isaac to be Abraham’s ‘unique’ son, but it clearly does not mean ‘only-begotten.’”²⁰³

Therefore, Neo-Trinitarians state that *monogenes* means “one of a kind’ or “unique.” They say that the writer of Hebrews understood *yachid* to mean *only* or *unique* and therefore used the word *monogenes* when referring to

²⁰³ Moody, Dale, God’s Only Son: The Translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version, (Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 72, No. 4; Dec., 1953), pg. 217

Isaac. Therefore, in their mind *monogenes* must equal *yachid* and *yachid* must equal *unique*.

Now, assuming that is true, one needs to ask, “Did the readers of the Old Testament understand why Isaac would be unique? The answer, of course, would be yes, they understood why he was unique. Also the question needs to be asked, “Did Abraham understand that Isaac was unique?” And the answer is most assuredly he knew why Isaac was unique, because Isaac was born of a miracle, being that child of promise, so that, if necessary, he knew that God would raise him from the dead (Heb. 11:19).

Therefore, if *yachid* meant *unique* and Isaac was *unique* and Abraham knew Isaac was *unique*, then when God asked him to offer up his *yachid* (unique) son, then most assuredly Abraham would have known it meant Isaac and not Ishmael, and any reader of the Old Testament would know it would only mean Isaac and not Ishmael, for only Isaac was the unique one, being the child of promise; Ishmael was not.

So if that is true, one must ask why the Rabbis interpreted this passage with this following interpolation. When Abraham was asked to offer up his son in sacrifice, they have him replying, unlike the Scripture,

“But I have two sons.” 'Thine only one, 'was the reply.' “But each is the only one of his mother!” 'Whom thou lovest,' he was told. “But I love both!” and the answer came 'Even Isaac.'²⁰⁴

If *yachid* meant “unique,” and *monogenes* meant “unique,” thereby explaining its choice as a word to translate *yachid*, why then did the Rabbis say in their midrash on the passage that Abraham was confused as to what God was asking? Certainly Abraham knew which one of his sons was *one of a kind*, *unique*, (*yachid*) – his son Isaac. Why did they have Abraham ask God which son he meant? Perhaps, because *yachid* does not necessarily mean *unique* as so many presume? Perhaps, instead, the word meant *only-begotten* when used in such contexts! Perhaps, it did not carry a meaning of *one of a kind* or *unique*, and that is why the Rabbis believed Abraham needed more information, because they did not believe God was asking Abraham to offer up his *unique*, (*yachid*), son, but, rather God was asking Abraham to offer up his *only-begotten*, (*yachid*), son.

In other words, the Rabbis understood that God was telling Abraham to offer up his only-begotten (*yachid*) son. Of course Abraham would be confused for both his sons, Isaac and Ishmael, were both only-begotten of their mother. Isaac was the only-begotten of Sarah and Ishmael was the only-begotten of Hagar, (at least as of that time). Which one did God mean?

²⁰⁴ Cohen, Dr. A., *The Soncino Chumash*, (The Soncino Press, London, Jerusalem, New York, 1983), pg. 108

This helps explain why the Rabbis put this response into the mouth of Abraham, “But each is the only one of his mother!” In other words, the phrase “only one of his mother” bespeaks begottenness and derivation and means “only-begotten of his mother.” If we were to rewrite that line in Greek, I believe it would read:

Ἐγὼ δὲ ἔχω τοὺς δύο υἱούς, καὶ εἶπεν ὁ μονογενῆς σου, ἀλλ’ ἕκαστος τὸν μονογενῆ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ ἔστιν

“But I have two sons.” “Your only-begotten,” He answered. “But each one is the only-begotten of his mother.”

So, apparently, in the Rabbis’ minds the Hebrew word *yachid* did not communicate enough information to Abraham. Now if *yachid* meant *unique*, it would have communicated enough information. But because it, apparently, carried the additional meaning of only-begotten, the Rabbi’s had Abraham reply to God, “But they are both the “yachid” (only-begotten) of their mothers.” Only then did God tell him directly he meant Isaac, which would have been completely unnecessary if *yachid* simply meant *one of a kind* or *unique*, as Neo-Trinitarians would have us believe.

Now it makes no difference that this really did not occur in Scripture, for we are simply trying to ascertain what the Hebrew word *yachid* meant according to the Hebrew mentality during the time of the LXX to the time of the first century A.D. Apparently, it did not simply mean *unique* as we have been told. Apparently, it also carried the heightened sense of only-begotten in certain contexts.

Our problem in all of this is that we do not have a wide corpus of Hebrew literature like we have of Greek literature; therefore, our sources for determining the meaning of a Hebrew word are not as great as they are in Greek. The Hebrew word is only used twelve times in the Old Testament, so our analysis is limited, and we must look in other sources like the Midrash Rabbah to help us understand the meanings of some words.

Now some may object and say, “Well we know we said *monogenes* meant unique in the story of Isaac in Heb. 11:17, but we never said that *yachid* and *monogenes* are completely equivalent; they are just similar. *Monogenes*, indeed, means “unique” in Heb. 11:17 when speaking of Isaac, but *yachid* means “only,” not unique in Gen. 22:2 when speaking of Isaac. You are being too rigid to say that if one means “this” the other must mean “that,” to say, if *monogenes* means *one of a kind* or *unique*, then *yachid* must mean *one of a kind* or *unique*.”

Well enough, I can understand your reasoning. You want to use more of a dynamic equivalence in translating the Hebrew, rather than a strict formal equivalence. That is fine, but then, please be consistent. If you tell me not to

be so rigid, then you cannot be so rigid. You cannot say that since *yachid* means “only,” then *monogenes* must mean “only,” or “unique” as Dale Moody says above. You would then be doing the same thing you accuse me of doing. You must allow that the two words only need to be similar. Therefore, just because *yachid* means “only,” does not mean *monogenes* must mean “only.” It needs only to be a similar word.

Well, guess what? *Monogenes* meaning “only-begotten,” would be a similar word that could be used in a dynamic equivalent translation. The translator of Gen. 22:2 used *monogenes* to translate *yachid* because he knew Isaac was, indeed, the only-begotten son of Abraham and Sarah together and as such he was greatly beloved. *Monogenes* gave that heightened connotation and so they used that Greek word to translate *yachid*.

And it doesn’t even need to be a dynamic equivalent word; it could be a formally equivalent word. In other words, the fact that Greek word *monogenes* is used to translate the Hebrew word *yachid*, could prove that *yachid* carried the additional meaning of only-begotten when used in the context of offspring. So what happens is that Aquila’s and Symmachus’ translation of *yachid* by *monogenes* becomes a proof text that *yachid* also meant *only-begotten* in the Hebrew language at that point of time. It certainly, seems the Rabbis understood the word in that way.

Therefore, anyway you look at it; it seems there can only be three possible reasons for the use of *monogenes* for *yachid*. 1) The use of *monogenes* for *yachid* proves that *yachid* carried the sense of *only-begotten* in certain contexts. 2) The Jewish translators sometimes followed dynamic equivalence in their translation. Therefore, they looked for a dynamic equivalent word for *yachid*, and the word they settled upon was *monogenes*, meaning only-begotten. *Monogenes* was never thought to be a completely equivalent word, it was only meant to be similar. 3) The Neo-Trinitarians are right and *monogenes* is a formally equivalent word, strictly meaning “only.”

Consequently, because our limited corpus of Hebrew literature, we cannot make any definite conclusions regarding the use of *monogenes* for *yachid*. Any of the three reasons above could be possible.

And certainly, the use of *monogenes* for *yachid* does not rule out a meaning of only-begotten for *monogenes*, and this passage might actually confirm that meaning when it is coupled together with the Rabbinic understanding of the story.

Agapetos

And this brings us to the second point commonly made, that *monogenes* and *agapetos* must mean the same thing because sometimes *yachid* is translated by

monogenes and other times by *agapetos*, and that is why the Synoptic Gospels do not use *monogenes* but do use *agapetos* of our Lord (Matthew 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; 12:6; Luke 3:22; 9:35; 20:13). This too is faulty reasoning for a number of reasons.

First, we do not know if the underlying Hebrew text had *yachid* in all the same verses. One knows that in many places the LXX had a different underlying Hebrew text, than the Masoretic. In some cases, the LXX follows more closely to the Dead Sea Scrolls than the Masoretic text. For example, perhaps, in those places, like Gen. 22:12 and 16 the Hebrew text before the LXX translators had *yadid* rather than *yachid*, and that explains why Aquila uses *μονογενῆ* in one verse and *ἀγαπετὸν* in the rest. *Yadid* (יָדִיד) does mean beloved and is used in many other places in the Old Testament (e.g. Ps.45:1; 127:2). As you can see *yachid* (יָחִיד) and *yadid* (יָדִיד) are very similar and it is entirely possible that a scribe may have made an error and confused the two words. This alone may explain the use of *monogenes* in verse 2 and *agapetos* in verse 12 and 16. The LXX translators may have had a Hebrew text that had “*yadid*” in those verses, while Aquila had a variant text and had “*yachid*” in Gen. 22:2.

Now, of course, this is an argument from silence and does not really prove anything, but the opposite assumption that there were no variants in this chapter is also an assumption. We cannot make any definite conclusion regarding the meaning of *monogenes* from this chapter alone, but it is useful in considering all the information.

Also, if we automatically assume that *monogenes* cannot mean only-begotten but rather means “beloved” simply because *monogenes* and *agapetos* were used to translate the same Hebrew word *yachid*, what do we do with the word *μονότροπος*? The word *monotropos* was also used to translate *yachid* in Ps. 67:7 (68:6). Does that now mean that *monotropos* cannot mean “solitary” but must mean “beloved” because both *monotropos* and *agapetos* were used to translate the same Hebrew word *yachid*?

In other words, do the two words automatically become synonyms because they translated the same word? Neo Trinitarians would say,

“Since *monogenes* was used to translate *yachid*, and *agapetos* was used to translate *yachid*, and *agapetos* means “beloved,” therefore *monogenes* must carry a meaning of “beloved” and be a synonym of *agapetos*.”

If that reasoning is true, could we not take that same sentence and substitute the word *monotropos* for *monogenes* making the same conclusion?

“Since *monotropos* was used to translate *yachid*, and *agapetos* was used to translate *yachid*, and *agapetos* means “beloved,” therefore *monotropos* must carry a meaning of “beloved” and be a synonym of *agapetos*.”

No, of course we could not do that. It does not matter that one word is translated by two different words. That does not make those two words equivalent or synonyms. It simply means the translated word has various nuances or meanings according to its context. In this case, the word *yachid* has various nuances.

Therefore, it makes no sense to negate the meaning of “only-begotten” and replace it with “beloved” simply because both words were used to translate the one Hebrew word. Like was mentioned before it is perilous to base the meaning of one word in one language by how it was used to translate the words of another language.

All it shows is that some translators understood *yachid* as *beloved* and some understood it as *only-begotten*. It does not mean *only-begotten* means *beloved*. It means translators had a difference of opinion regarding the meaning of *yachid* in the text!

For example, suppose I was to write a paper in Greek, (in the midst of today’s wide disagreement regarding the meaning of *monogenes*). And suppose I used the word *monogenes* in that paper, and then asked certain translators to translate my paper into English. After completing the task suppose they give me their translations and I found that one translated *monogenes* by “one of a kind,” but another translated it by “only-begotten.” Would that mean that since two different English words or phrases were used to translate the one Greek word *monogenes*, that, “one of a kind” and “only-begotten” were synonymous phrases? No, of course not! Why? Because one translator’s opinion was that *monogenes* meant “one of a kind” and another translator understood it as “only-begotten.”

If they were considered synonymous, I think that those who truly believe that *monogenes* means “one of a kind,” and not “only-begotten,” would be completely disheartened by that conclusion.

I would be disheartened also, for I do not believe “only-begotten” means “one of a kind!”

Another way we could look at it is this way. Let’s suppose, A – *agapetos*, translates B – *yadid*, (which it does in Ps. 127:2), and also translates C – *yachid*, (which it does in Gen. 22:16), does that mean B – *yadid* has the same meaning of, C – *yachid*, and that we must now believe *yadid* must mean “only?” No, of course not, *yadid* still means beloved.

Well, in the same way if C – *yachid* is translated by A – *agapetos*, (which it does in Gen. 22:16), and it is also translated by D – *monogenes*, (which it does in Aquila’s version in Gen. 22:2), does that mean A – *agapetos* must have the same meaning as D – *monogenes*, and we must now believe *agapetos* means

only-begotten? No, of course not, *agapetos* still means beloved and not only-begotten.

All this shows is that it is better to first determine a meaning of a word in its own language by its own usage and not by back translating it from another language. There can be many reasons why one word is chose above another in translating one language into another. Adolf Deissmann addresses this fact in his book on Philology.

“People think that the problem is solved by ascertaining what Hebrew word or words are represented by the Septuagint word. They then look up the meaning of the Hebrew and thus obtain what they consider the ‘meaning’ of the Septuagint word. Equivalence of the words—an obvious fact, easily ascertainable—is taken without further ado to denote equivalence in the ideas conveyed. People forget that the Septuagint has often substituted words of its own rather than translated. All translation, in fact, implies some, if only a slight, alteration of the sense of the original. The meaning of a Septuagint word cannot be deduced from the original which it translates or replaces but only from other remains of the Greek language.”²⁰⁵

And, finally, let me offer one other reason why *yachid* may have been translated by *monogenes* (only-begotten), and other times by *agapetos* (beloved), and other times by *monotropos* (solitary). It does not mean *monogenes*, *agapetos* and *monotropos* all mean the same thing. It simply means *yachid* in the minds of the LXX translators had more than one meaning according to the context. Sometimes *yachid* meant only-begotten in a certain context and sometimes it meant beloved and sometimes it meant solitary. This is not unusual. The same thing occurs in our own English language. We call them homonyms. Here are a few examples where the exact word can have different meanings based upon its context.

Common English Homonyms

Bank – meaning a bank of a river	Bank – meaning a place to keep money
Bat – meaning a baseball bat.	Bat – meaning a bat that eats insects
Sole – meaning the sole of the foot	Sole – meaning the only one
Trunk – meaning a trunk of an elephant	Trunk – meaning a tree trunk

In other words, *yachid* may have been what we call a Hebrew homonym. Depending on the context, it might mean only-begotten, beloved or solitary. If I wrote, “The elephant swung its trunk,” and then concluded that since trunk, in English, means a tree trunk, well then, the elephant must have had a tree trunk that it played with from time to time, swinging it around, I would be most likely wrong – although it might be possible, an elephant could swing

²⁰⁵ Deissmann, Adolf, Strachan, L., Tr., The Philology of the Greek Bible, Its Present and Future, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), pg. 88-89

around a tree trunk! But more than likely the sentence above means the elephant swung his “proboscis” from side to side!

Now, let’s assume someone was translating that sentence a thousand years from now and one translated it with a word in their language that meant a tree trunk and someone else reading that sentence translated it with a different word in their language that meant the proboscis of an animal. Does that mean that those two different words in that other language, one meaning tree trunk, and the other meaning proboscis, must be synonyms and must mean the same thing? Of course not! In the same way, it is wrong to conclude that *agapetos* and *monogenes* mean the same thing because they were used to translate the same word and that is the reason why the Synoptic Gospels use *beloved* and John uses *monogenes*!

Therefore, the fact that *monogenes* was used to translate *yachid* cannot really be used to determine the meaning of *monogenes*. It is a purely subjective exercise and should never be used as definite proof for the meaning of the word. *Monogenes* may have been used in certain contexts because that is what the translators believed *yachid* meant in those contexts, or it may have been because there was a Hebrew variant in the text, or it may have been two translators had a difference of opinion as to what *yachid* meant at the time of Moses. In either case, *monogenes*, with the meaning of only-begotten, still fits nicely with the context of every occurrence of the word in the Septuagint. And with that thought in mind, let us now look at those other occurrences.

Monogenes is used five times in the canonical Old Testament. We have already discussed its usage in the Apocrypha and its usage in Genesis 22 and in Judges 11:34, so that leaves us with its uses in the Psalms. We would now like to look at those passages.

Psalm 22:20 (21:21) & Psalm 35:17 (34:17)

Psalm 22:20 Deliver my soul from the sword; my only-begotten one from the power of the dog. (Brenton’s LXX Version)

Psalm 35:17 O Lord, when wilt thou look upon me? Deliver my soul from their mischief, mine only-begotten one from the lions. (Brenton’s LXX Version)

Here we see that *monogenes* was again used to translate *yachid*. Most English translations do not follow Brenton’s translation above. Most follow a meaning like the King James Version or like the New American Standard, because some translators believed the Hebrew word *yachid* meant “beloved,” thus the concept of “darling” in the KJV. Other translators thought that the Hebrew *yachid* carried more the meaning of “solitary,” thus the meaning “only” in the NASB. But some like the translators of the LXX and Brenton understood *yachid* to mean “only-begotten” in the context. So let’s examine how we

might understand *monogenes* in this verse as only-begotten, as translated by Brenton.

The first reason is really quite simple if we look at it as an adjective of the soul. When one understands the processional nature of man this statement makes perfect sense. Man is created spirit, soul and body. His soul proceeds out of his spirit as does his physical life. Each human being has only one soul, that so proceeds from the very source of life within him – his human spirit.

Franz Delitzsch, when commenting on the trichotomous nature of man said it this way.

“Man is "...spirit, soul, and body; but spirit and soul belong to each other as principium ad principia... the former has its life immediately from God, the latter mediately from the spirit.”²⁰⁶

In this sense, *monogenes* would be used in its most basal sense of “bringing forth.” It was not until God breathed in the nostrils of man, that man became a “living soul.” This is simply a confirmation of the processional nature of man. Only one soul is brought forth from our spirit. It is the procession of life. As such, in one sense, our soul can be spoken as having been begotten from the spirit, and since each human being has only one soul, the soul is only-begotten from the spirit at the moment of conception when spirit, soul and body come into existence. Thus the soul is figuratively spoken as being an only-begotten, and is our most prized possession, i.e. our very life!

However, some saw another reason why *monogenes* was used in these Psalms. Some early Christians took the Psalm as a prophetic picture of Christ.

For example, Justin Martyr says this:

"And what follows of the Psalm,--'But Thou, Lord, do not remove Thine assistance from me; give heed to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword, and my only-begotten from the hand of the dog; save me from the lion's mouth, and my humility from the horns of the unicorns,'-- was also information and prediction of the events which should befall Him. For I have already proved that He was the only-begotten of the Father of all things, being begotten in a peculiar manner Word and Power by Him, and having afterwards become man through the Virgin, as we have learned from the memoirs. Moreover, it is similarly foretold that He would die by crucifixion. For the passage, 'Deliver my soul from the sword, and my only-begotten from the hand of the dog; save me from the lion's mouth, and my humility from the horns of the unicorns,' is indicative of the suffering by which He should die, i.e. crucifixion.”²⁰⁷

Now one may ask, “How can this be a prophetic picture of the Messiah? Jesus was not the only-begotten of Mary, for Mary had other children.” Well, a couple points need to be made. There is a uniqueness regarding our Lord’s

²⁰⁶ Franz Delitzsch, *New Commentary of Genesis*, (Klock and Klock Christian Publishers, Minneapolis, MN), 1978, vol. 1, pg. 120

²⁰⁷ Roberts, Alexander; Donaldson, James, ed., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI 1985), pg. 251-252

birth from Mary that has never been true, and will never be true of any other human being. Jesus was born of a virgin! He was eternally begotten of God as to his Divinity and temporally begotten of Mary as to his humanity. As such, he is known as the Only-begotten Son of God as to his Divinity, and he is “prophetically” known as the only-begotten son of a virgin as to his humanity.

He was and ever be the only-begotten son of a “virgin.” After the birth of Jesus, Mary had other children with Joseph, but she only had one child in her virginity. This is what would make some to regard Jesus, prophetically, an only-begotten son of a virgin, in regards to his humanity.

And because Mary was of the lineage of David and because Mary had the seed or DNA of David running through her veins, Christ was said to be of the “seed of David.”

2 Timothy 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: KJV

Rom. 1:3 Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh. NKJV

Now, since, Jesus was of the seed of David he was known as a son of David (Matt. 1:1), and as such David could prophetically call him “my only-begotten,” in Psalm 22:20 and Psalm 35:18 – the only-begotten son of a virgin. Remember, according to the Hebrew idiom, a father could call his grandson, great-great grandson or any direct descendent of his, his own son. It was for this reason that Jesus could be called the “son of Abraham, the son of David” (Matt. 1:1).

This only-begotten was the promised Messiah of the seed of David, the Deliverer of Israel.

Acts 13:23 Of this man's seed hath God according to *his* promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: KJV

No other man was born as he was born of a virgin of the seed of David. In this sense David could prophetically refer to him as “my only-begotten.” What a beautiful prophetic picture of the virgin birth of our Lord.

One last point should be made regarding this. Jesus is not called the Only-begotten Son of God the Father in regard to his humanity. He is the Only-begotten Son of God the Father in regards to his Deity. In other words, he is not the Only-begotten Son of God the “Father and Mary together.” Never is that language used of our Lord! That would be heretical. From the standpoint of his Divine Nature, He is called the “Only-begotten” Son of God the Father, eternally begotten or brought forth from the Father, in and of Himself, without any other, before all time. And from the perspective of his human nature, He

is prophetically called the Son of Man, the only-begotten or brought forth from Mary in and of herself, without any human father.

However, we can say this miracle of birth was a result of the power of the Most High and the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. We must be careful to only say what Scripture says and not exceed what is written.

The reason he cannot be called the Only-begotten of God the Father and Mary together is because there was not fusion of natures in the incarnation of our Lord, as there is a fusion of male and female DNA in human birth.

Our Lord “took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phi 2:7 KJV). He was made in “likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:3). He was truly human, but without sin, or a sin nature (II Cor. 5:21; I Peter 2:22). The Word “became flesh” and dwelt among us (John 1: 14), but he was not a “mixture” of the human and the divine natures. The Divine Nature and Human Nature were unionized in One Person, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation. The Divine Nature was not unionized with the Human Nature becoming a composite of the two. They two natures remain distinct, but not separate; they remain unionized in the one Person, but not with change; the Divine Nature remained the Divine Nature and the Human Nature remained the Human Nature; they were only unionized in the one Person.

We must be careful on this point, rejoicing in the prophetic word of David bespeaking him who he could call my only-begotten, because he would be begotten by a miracle out of Mary, and rejoicing in the fact that God the Father so loved the world that he sent His Only-begotten Son to become flesh and dwell among us.

As John of Damascus said, he was made flesh, “not by procreation, but by creation of the Holy Spirit” (An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, Book III, chapter 2). Scripture tells us that in the womb of Mary a body was prepared or created (Heb. 10:5). It was made or created of her human nature which, in turn, was of David, of Abraham, and ultimately of Eve, which made Christ the Promised Seed (Gen. 3:15).

And so Scripture says he was begotten of Mary, thereby, making him the only one ever begotten or born of a virgin, and it was because of that, that David could prophetically call him, “my only-begotten.”

Now it makes no difference whether Justin Martyr was right in his interpretation, or whether what I have just shared is the right interpretation. It makes no difference because in this study we are just trying to show that Early Christians had no problem understanding *monogenes* in this verse as meaning only-begotten.

So whether it refers to the fact that the soul proceeds from the spirit as an only-begotten proceeds from another, or it refers prophetically to the virgin birth, it makes no difference. There is no conclusive proof that *monogenes* in this verse must only mean “alone” or “solitary.” It can linguistically be understood as “only-begotten” and was so understood by those living closest to the times of the apostles.

Psalm 24:16

The last Psalm and occurrence of *monogenes* in the canon portion of the LXX is Psalm 24:16

Psalm 24:16 ἐπίβλεψον ἐπ’ ἐμὲ καὶ ἐλέησόν με ὅτι μονογενῆς καὶ πτωχός εἰμι ἐγώ

Psalm 25:16 Look upon me, and have mercy upon me; for I am an only child and poor. (Brenton’s LXX Version)

This verse could also be translated as follows.

Psalm 25:16 Look upon me, and have mercy upon me; for I am only-begotten and poor. (Brenton’s LXX Version)

One must understand that David is speaking in hyperbole. David must have felt so alone at the time of the writing of this Psalm that he describes himself an only-begotten child. Perhaps, David knew someone in his past who as an only-begotten child and through friendship knew the loneliness of an only child. In any case, it seems David is speaking in generalities and is using hyperbole, using the word only-begotten as an expression of his isolation and loneliness. Perhaps, his own brothers at this point of his life were aloof. In any case, it should not be taken literally.

Now some may argue, “But he cannot use that term of himself because he had other brothers. It does not fit.” Well I would agree, but he is speaking figuratively and not literally. This was a common means of expression in Hebrew.

In Psalms 22:6 he says, “ I am a worm, and not a man.” Do anyone say that σκόληξ (worm) in this verse cannot mean “worm” but must mean something else because obviously David was not a worm! No, of course not. We understand he is speaking figuratively. Well, if that is true, then why would anyone say regarding Psalms 25:16, “Μονογενῆς (only-begotten) in that verse cannot mean only-begotten but must mean something else because obviously David was not only-begotten? There is no justification for that conclusion because David could be speaking figuratively.

The one reason why we know that he was speaking figuratively was because of the very next adjective, πτωχός (poor). David also said he was poor. Yet we

know David was not poor. David was rich! He was the king. So, obviously, again, he is speaking figuratively.

There is no reason to presume from this verse that *monogenes* means anything other than only-begotten. It fits perfectly with the context of the Psalm. Now, as to whether it should be taken that way or not is a matter of interpretation. Some may disagree that it means only-begotten. That is fine. But the important fact to remember is that linguistically there is nothing to prohibit *monogenes* from meaning anything other than only-begotten. This last verse from the Septuagint does not negate the meaning of only-begotten nor should it be taken as proof that *monogenes* must mean “only,” “solitary,” or “alone.”

So this concludes our section on the Greek Septuagint. What we are finding, as we have in other usages, is that there has never been any conclusive proof that *monogenes* means anything other than only-begotten. There certainly is not evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt to prove such a claim!

There is overwhelming evidence that *monogenes* means only-begotten and has always meant only-begotten, even if one prefers to see that *-genes* comes from *genos*. But let us presuppose for the sake of argument that such ones are right and that it cannot mean only-begotten because *-genes* in *monogenes* does not come from *gennao*, but from *genos* which means “kind.” Would that conclusion be true? Let’s now consider that thought.

“Only-begotten” vs. “One of a Kind”

An Assumption

This is an assumption, so let me again state that I believe there is absolute evidence that the translation of “monogenes” as “Only-begotten is the correct translation, even if –genes comes from *genos*. But let presuppose for the sake of argument that those who deny it are right. What does it then teach us according to Scripture?

A common statement heard today among those who deny the eternal generation of the Son from the Father is that the word *monogenes* is mistranslated as “Only-Begotten” in such versions as the KJV, NKJV, ASV, and NASB. Consequently, the translation of this word has been changed to “One and Only” in such Bibles as the NIV or to “One of a Kind” in such paraphrases as the Message.

Such Christians contend that godly men for over two millennia have misunderstood the meaning of the word and that modern scholars have now discovered its true meaning. They state that the problem was that for most of church history men erroneously thought the suffix *-genes* was related to the word *gennao* which means *to beget*, rather than being related to *genos* which means “kind” or “class.” Now, forgetting the fact, that such is not the case – (many scholars, who preferred to see *genes* as related to *genos*, still believed it should be translated as “only-begotten,”) ²⁰⁸ – let us look at what Scripture reveals if we “assume” that such an assertion is true.

This is an important exercise because this new view is being supported and taught by more and more Christians, and is usually combined with the denial of the eternal generation of the Son from the Father. Indeed, I am afraid the real reason for their new understanding of *monogenes* has less to do with any new linguistic data, but has more to do, in some cases, with their need to marginalize the doctrine of eternal generation.

And what is sad is this wholesale conversion of the modern Christian to this new way of thinking is being aided by the acceptance of such newer versions as the NIV, RSV, ESV, NET and a multitude of other paraphrases as the Message, Contemporary English Version, etc. which Christians do not know are misleading. And the greater tragedy of this all is that many Christians do not know that such a view destroys the unity of the Godhead and actually contradicts the Historic Christian Faith.

²⁰⁸ See Kittel, Gerhard, ed., Bromiley, Geoffrey W., trans. & ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. IV, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1967), pg. 738-741

Now to be fair, such teachers think they are protecting the deity of the Lord by their denial of the eternal generation of the Son, but, beloved, this betrays a lack of true Trinitarian understanding, and actually leads destroys the truth of the eternal relations.

The doctrine of the eternal generation does not lessen the deity of our Lord or reduce the nature of his Person. Instead, the doctrine actually strengthens the Lord's deity and shows him to be equal to the Father. It shows that true equality is understood by order and submission, not by a mutual autocracy. Consequently, in contradiction to this new mindset, the terms Father and Son are revelatory and do show forth the primacy of the Father within the Godhead.

The doctrine of eternal generation has always been confessed by godly men throughout the history of the church, and this new view, which is being silently foisted upon the unsuspecting Christian by Neo-Trinitarians, has actually always been considered a grievous error.

Consider the testimony of John Gill in his treatise, *A Dissertation Concerning The Eternal Sonship of Christ, Showing By Whom It Has Been Denied and Opposed, and By Whom Asserted and Defended in All Ages of Christianity*:

“Upon the whole, setting aside the said persons, the testimonies for and against the eternal generation and Sonship of Christ stand thus:

For Eternal Generation, etc.

“Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Clemens of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Gregory of Neocaesaria, Dionysius of Alexandria, the three hundred and eighteen Nicene Fathers; Athanasius, Alexander bishop of Alexandria, Epiphanius, Hilary, Faustinus, Gregory of Nazianzum, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Jerome, Ruffinus, Cyril of Jerusalem, besides the many hundreds of bishops and presbyters assembled at different times and in different places, as at Syrmium, Antioch, Arminum, Seleucia, and Constantinople, and elsewhere;

Augustine, Chrysostom, Leo Magnus, Theodoret, Cyril of Alexandria, Paulinus, Flavianus, Victor, Maximus Tauriensis, six hundred and thirty fathers in the council at Chalcedon; Fulgentius, Gregory Furnensis, Fortunatus, Cassiodorus, Gregorius Magnus, the many bishops in the several councils at Toletum, the Roman synod of a hundred and twenty-five under Agatho, Damascene, Beda, Albinus, and the fathers in the council of Frankfort, with many others in later times, and all the sound Divines and evangelic churches since the reformation.”

Against It,

“Simon Magus, Cerinthus, and Ebion, and their respective followers; Carpocrates and the Gnostick, Valentinus, Theodotus the currier, Artemon, and others their associates; Beryllus of Bostra, Praxeas, Hermogenes, Noetus and Sabellius, the Samosatensians, Arians, Aetians, Eunomians and Photinians, the Priscillianists and Bonotians; Mohammed and his followers; the Socinians and Remonstrants; and all Anti-trinitarians.

“Now since it appears that all the sound and orthodox writers have unanimously declared for the eternal generation and Sonship of Christ in all ages, and that those only of an unsound mind and judgment...have declared against it, such must be guilty of great temerity and rashness to join in an opposition with the one against the other; and to oppose a doctrine the Church of God has always held, and especially being what the scriptures abundantly bear testimony unto, and is a matter of such moment and importance, being a fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, and indeed what distinguishes it from all other religions, from those of Pagans, Jews and Mohammedans, who all believe in God, and generally in one God, but none of them believe in the Son of God: that is peculiar to the Christian religion.”²⁰⁹

And bringing it up to modern times we ourselves could add to John Gill’s list the following Christians who are for eternal generation and those who are against eternal generation. The spiritual warfare continues.

For Eternal Generation:

Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Gill, J. C. Philpot, J. G. Bellett, Dean Burgon, Franz Delitzsch, Henry Alford, C.H.Spurgeon, Andrew Murry, Robert Jamieson, R.C.H. Lenski, A. T. Robertson, Louis Berkhoff, W. H. Griffith Thomas, Henry C. Thiessen, D.Martyn Lloyd-Jones, H.A. Ironside, C.S. Lewis, A. W. Tozer, Kenneth Wuest, John Walvoord, Henry Morris, and William MacDonald.

Against Eternal Generation:

J. Oliver Buswell, Lorraine Boetner, Mark Driscoll, Millard Erickson, Wayne Grudem, Bruce Ware, Walter Martin, Robert Reymond.

Needless to say eternal generation has always been part of the Historic Christian Faith; the Lord Jesus Christ was considered to be the Eternal Son of God, begotten before all time, being known as the “Only-Begotten” Son of God. To be against this doctrine is a departure of the Historic Christian Faith.

Nevertheless, let’s assume that the modern scholars are right and that –genes of *monogenes* is related to *genos* and not *gennao*. Does it change anything regarding the doctrine of the Son’s eternal generation from the Father? No! Absolutely not, although, Neo-Trinitarians would like one to think it does negate the doctrine. Nor does it change the fact that *monogenes* can still be understood as only-begotten or only born.

You see, the real problem is not the grammar or the linguistic etymology of the word. The problem is that many modern Christian teachers today have departed from this aspect of the Historic Christian Faith, and are not willing to admit such departure because it might call into question their orthodoxy before men. Instead, they are re-interpreting the Faith to support their

²⁰⁹ Gill, John, *Sermons and Tracts, Vol. III*, (Printed by H. Lyons for W. Hardcastle, London, 1815), Pg. 554-555

viewpoint, and are changing the meaning of this word in order to facilitate this transformation of the Faith. The net result is that a cloud of darkness is descending upon the minds of unsuspecting Christians, obscuring a precious truth of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen to what the Historic Christian Faith has always said about this truth of our Saviour. The Nicene Creed says this –

“We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things, visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all time, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens, and was made flesh of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became Man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate and suffered and was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended unto the heavens and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and cometh again with glory to judge the living and the dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end:

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the Life-giver, that proceeded from the Father, who with Father and Son is worshipped together.”²¹⁰

In modern times, one has the example of the Westminster Confession of Faith, which affirmed the same truth and declared it this way:

“In the unity of the Godhead there be Three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding, the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.”²¹¹

Or the well-known Baptist Confession of Faith, which stated:

“In this Divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, (I John v.7; Matt. xxviii, 19; II Cor. XI. 14) the Father, the Word (or Son), and the Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and eternity, each have the whole Divine essence, yet the (Exod. iii. 14; John xiv. 11; I Cor. vii. 6) essence undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is (John I. 14,18) eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit (John xv. 26; Gal. Iv.

²¹⁰ See *Documents of the Christian Church*, Henry Bettenson, ed. (Oxford University Press, London 1975)

²¹¹ See *The Creeds of Christendom, Vol. III*, Philip Schaff, ed. (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1983)

6) proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore, but one God.”²¹²

We could go on, but let it suffice to state that all major Protestant Confessions and Statement of Faiths have always affirmed the same truth. (e. g. Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, Augsburg Confession, Belgic Confession, etc.)

In other words, the Historic Christian Faith has always held that the Lord Jesus Christ was begotten of the Father before all time and as such was known as the Only-begotten (monogenes) Son of God.

Now let me repeat the original premise of this paper. “I believe there is absolute evidence that the translation of monogenes as Only-begotten is the correct translation, even if *–genes* comes from *genos*. But let us presuppose for the sake of argument that those who deny it are right. What does it then teach us according to Scripture?” Does it nullify the doctrine of eternal generation?

To answer that question let’s take the paragraph that I wrote two paragraphs above and substitute the new understanding of monogenes in the summarizing sentence concerning the Historic Christian Faith.

I wrote: “In other words, the Historic Christian Faith has always held that the Lord Jesus Christ was begotten of the Father before all time and as such was known as the Only-begotten (monogenes) Son of God.”

Now let’s substitute the new meaning.

“In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ was begotten of the Father before all time and as such was known as the One and Only (monogenes) Son or God.”

Or,

“In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ was begotten of the Father before all time and as such was known as the One of a Kind (monogenes) Son of God.”

Does it change the fact that the Son was begotten by the Father before all time? No! It simply changes his title from “Only-begotten Son” to “One and Only Son.”

However, many Christians do not realize this and they are not being told that this new semantic twist on the Greek word *monogenes* doesn’t really change the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son from the Father at all! Instead, they are being assured that the new understanding does change the

²¹² See, *The Philadelphia Confession of Faith*, (Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc. Grand Rapids, MI)

doctrine. But the Neo-Trinitarian teachers are forgetting some important facts.

First, they are forgetting the revelatory word “Son. The word “Son of God” is used approximately 46 times in the New Testament. You see, the idea of generation is still included in the title “one and only Son,” because of the revelatory word “Son.”

However, Neo-Trinitarians will usually tell you the word “Son” is used as a Semitic idiom that has more to do with “purpose,” “nature,” “character,” or member of a trade or class,” rather than bespeaking “generation.” They imply that the word “Son” is used in the sense of His office within the Divine economy, rather than the subsistence of nature.

For instance, this Semitic idiom is used in such phrases as “son of perfumers” in Neh. 3:8 NKJV, or “sons of the prophets” in I Kings 20:35. Now, I agree this speaks of character. For instance, the phrase “son of the prophets” would refer to one who had the character of the prophets, or was a member of the prophetic class, or took on the prophetic office, and not necessarily meaning he was a literal son of a prophet. However, one needs to notice one thing in this idiom, when it is used with this connotation, it almost always used in the plural. It is plural, “sons of the prophets,” not singular, “son of a prophet.” If it was singular and read “son of a prophet,” one would understand it was referring to a literal son of prophet.

When it is plural it can be used in an idiomatic manner, when it is singular it is normally used in its derivative manner. And so, when it comes to the usage associated with our Lord, guess what, it is always used in the singular. Scripture says “Son of God,” not that He was of the “sons of the God.” It is not being used in the above mentioned idiomatic manner when referring to our Lord.

The term “Son of God” is not telling the reader that the Son is Divine, with no derivative relationship to God, like the idiom “son of the prophets” tells the reader that one has the characteristics of the prophets, without implying such a one was literally born of a prophet. No, it is being used to tell the reader the Son is Divine because he is “of” God. He is Divine because he has a special derivative relationship to God who is Divine. He is Divine because he is eternally begotten from God the Father who is properly Divine. He is literally the Son “of” God.

Next the word “son” in the Bible is sometimes used in the sense of possessing a certain characteristic as “son of valor” (I Sam 14:52 Young’s Literal Translation). This means the person was courageous. It is true this idiom carries no idea of generation.

However, this idiom is never used of our Lord in the New Testament. It is used only a few times in the New Testament in such places as – Luke 10:6, which calls a certain one a “son of peace,” John 17:12 which calls Judas the “son of perdition,” Acts 4:36 which calls Barnabas a “son of encouragement,” etc.. It is never used of the Lord.

The term, that is used over and over for our Lord, is the term “Son of God,” and “Son of Man.” These terms are not used with the Semitic meanings above. They are used in the normal sense of derivation. Christ is the Son “of” God, meaning he is “of” God, or from God the Father. It is used in the same sense when Christ is stated to be the son “of” David, or son “of” Abraham.

When Matthew uses that terminology in his genealogy in Matt. 1:1, he is telling us that Christ was a descendent of David and of Abraham. His humanity was “derived” from them. He was humanly “generated” from them through the virgin Mary. Christ is said to be born of the seed of David (Rom. 1:3). He proceeded forth from David. When Christ posed the following question to the Pharisees, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They replied, "The Son of David." (Mat 22:42 NKJV). They understood sonship in its normal sense, as did our Lord. It carried no idiomatic meaning. Christ was using the phrase, “whose Son is He,” in a non-idiomatic manner.

And so we see the revelatory word “Son,” chosen by the Holy Spirit, bespeaks derivation, and this explains why Christ is known as the “Son of Man.” Yes, no doubt it was used as a Messianic title reminding us of the *Son of Man* in Dan. 7:13, and yes it also reminds us of Ezekiel’s title *son of man*, but those titles were titles that spoke of derivation and humiliation. Daniel was also called *son of man* (Dan. 8:17), and, of course, Ezekiel was called *son of man*, but these were titles given to men who saw great visions and mighty angels of God. They were given this title to remind them that they were simply “men,” made lower than angels (Ps. 8:4-5). They were being reminded that they were simply from Adam their father. They were not powerful angels, but humble men, who should not be lifted up by their great visions. It reminds us of Paul’s humiliation after he also saw great visions (II Cor. 12:1-7).

And so, when we come to this title of our Lord, we are reminded of His humiliation (Phil. 2:7-8) and His derivation from the first Man. He is the Son of Man because he literally was the “Son of Adam (Man).” (Remember, “Adam” is many times translated simply as “man,” for he was the first Man). Christ not only took on the “seed of Abraham” (Heb. 2:16), he, obviously, also took on the seed of Adam, for Christ was the promised “seed,” (Genesis 3:15).

Christ not only had to be “of” God, being consubstantial with God, in order to secure our salvation, he also had to be “of” Man, being consubstantial (in a limited way) with Man in order to save our souls. That is why he is the only

one who can save mankind. He is the Son of God, as to his Deity, because he proceeded from God (Jn. 8:42), and the Son of Man as to his humanity, because he proceeded from Adam (Luke 3:23-38).

If one disagrees and believes the term “Son of Man” is simply an idiom bespeaking his humanity, such a one cannot ignore that such an idiom is based upon a biblical reality. He literally took upon himself the likeness of sinful flesh by being “of” Mary, “of” David, “of” Abraham, “of” Eve, and ultimately, as Luke 3:38 says, “of” Adam (Man).

Moreover, when it comes to the word “Son” in the revelatory term “Son of God,” and some say it does carry the normal meaning of generation, in other words, being begotten of God, but is rather used in an idiomatic manner simply indicating one’s nature, they must understand that they are denying a doctrine that has always been considered orthodox and part of the Historic Christian Faith.

They do not realize that if the Son has the nature of God, ungenerate, meaning He was not begotten of God, but still considered Divine for his nature is like God, they are in reality teaching Semi-Arianism. In this case, Christ could only be of “like substance” or nature (*homoiousios*) with the Father, but not the same substance (*homousios*) of the Father, which is the orthodox viewpoint. If one has the Divine substance eternally without generation, such a one cannot have the “same” substance. They are not truly consubstantial. They only have “like substance.”

Now, truly, it may be still be a Divine substance, but it is a divided substance. In other words, the Father has a substance that is Divine, the Son has a substance that is Divine, and the Holy Spirit has a substance that is Divine – three Divine substances. That is not biblical “consubstantiality.” And if they are not consubstantial, one simply has a triad and not the Trinity. This is the danger of this new way of thinking. The ultimate result is Tritheism, the belief in three Gods.

Moreover, that fact that the above point is fallacious is shown by the fact that Christ is not simply called the “Son of God,” (meaning “Divine” according to their scenario, apart from all generation, a simple Semitic idiom not meant to convey derivation), he is also specifically called the “Son of the Father” in II John 1:3.

The phrase “Son of the Father” could never be called a Semitic idiom. John in his epistle is specifically affirming that he is “of” the Father, in the sense of derivation. He is Divine because he was begotten or eternally generated of the Father, and as such received in that eternal begetting or generation, the “same substance” of God the Father without diminution or division. He is God because he is “of” the Father. He is God because he is “of” God. This is what the phrase “very God of very God” means in the Churches earliest standardized “Statement of Faith” – the Nicene Creed.

“We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things, visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all time, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made.”

The apostle John clearly tells us that Christ is the “Son of the Father,” and the normal and plain meaning of the phrase, Son of the Father, means one who is begotten by the other.

Remember, the apostle John had his hands full with heretical teachers and Gnostics who continually distorted the true faith. I do not think that the apostle John would create more problems for himself by introducing “sloppy language” concerning the nature of Christ.

That would be all he would need! Just imagine, he would be saying to himself, “Because I was careless in my language, some people are actually thinking I meant the Son was “begotten” by the Father!” “How could I have been so careless in my language?” “If I had only been clearer in what I wrote.”²¹³

That would be absurd to think that John would make such a statement or make such a mistake and create such a mess for himself. No, John meant just what he said, Christ was the “Son of the Father,” and when one accepts that plain language of John, one has no problem with “eternal generation,” for if he was generated by the Father, when did that occur? John would not think it occurred in some distant time, for that would contradict what he said in John 1:1. So in John’s mind when did that generation occur? He would say in eternity because he would know the prophetic Scripture of Micah 5:2, which says his “goings forth” were from everlasting.

In addition, even the demons understood this meaning of derivation. The demons in Mark 5:7 specifically called him the “Son of the Most High God.” Remember, one of the first rules of hermeneutics is to follow the plain and literal sense of the text, unless the context indicates otherwise. They knew who Jesus was. The plain sense means he was the “Son,” in its normal meaning, of the Most High God. He was the eternal Son of God by eternal generation. All normal understanding of language would mean he came from God. He was generated by God. Even the demons knew this. They knew he was God for he was eternally “of” God.

This is the revelatory word that the Holy Spirit applies to the second Person of the blessed Trinity. The Holy Spirit is not trying to fool us. Revelation is for the purpose of understanding. The Second Person of the Trinity is called Son

²¹³ This is besides the fact that John’s epistle was inspired by the Holy Spirit. In reality, according to today’s thinking, it would be saying the Holy Spirit was not careful in His language and did not possess very good communicative skills! How terrible, awful and absurd to even think such a thing! The Holy Spirit meant exactly what he said.

because he was begotten from the first Person of the Trinity – the Father from all of eternity. The words “Father” and “Son” are revelatory words given to us by Holy Spirit to teach us ontological relationships within the Trinity.

They have been understood in this way from the earliest times of the Church, and it is only lately that a new connotation has been given to these two revelatory words. The word “Son” carries its normal meaning when used of our Lord, whether it is the phrase “Son of God,” “Son of the Father,” “Son of Man,” “Son of David,” “Son of Abraham,” or “Son of the Most High God.” They all bespeak derivation of a son from a father, and in these cases, the eternal derivation of the Son, from an eternal Father.

Secondly, they are forgetting the main connotation of *genos*. When they state that *–genes*, in *monogenes*, should be understood as being related to *genos* and not *gennaos*, and that, as such, *genos* means “kin,” “kind,” or “class,” they are not giving the reader all varied meanings of *genos*, let alone the underlying meaning of “kin,” as we will demonstrate later.

You see, dear reader, *genos* means more than “kind,” or “class,” it also means “offspring.” In fact, which you will never hear from those who seek to negate the meaning of only-begotten, “class” or “kind” is a minor meaning! The major meaning carries a sense of “derivation” and “birth,” (which remains even in the minor meaning). But they will never tell you this. It is wrong to suggest that *monogenes* can only be rendered as “one or only,” or “one of a kind,” it could also be rendered as “only offspring,” which brings us right back to the original meaning of “only-begotten.” If one is an “only offspring,” one must be by definition “only-begotten.”

Let me list below all the verses that contain the word *genos* as recorded in the New Testament and one will be able to see all the varied meanings. All verses are from the King James Version.

Matt. 13:47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind (genos)

Matt. 17:21 Howbeit this kind (genos) goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

Mk. 7:26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation (genos) and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

Mk. 9:29 And he said unto them, This kind (genos) can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

Acts 4:6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred (genos) of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

Acts 4:36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country (genos) of Cyprus,

Acts 7:13 And at the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred (genos) was made known unto Pharaoh.

Acts 7:19 The same dealt subtilly with our kindred (genos) and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.

Acts 13:26 Men *and* brethren, children of the stock (genos) of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

Acts 17:28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring (genos).

Acts 17:29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring (genos) of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

Acts 18:2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born (genos) in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

Acts 18:24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born (genos) at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

1Cor. 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds (genos) of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

1Cor. 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities (genos) of tongues.

1Cor. 14:10 There are, it may be, so many kinds (genos) of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without signification.

2Cor. 11:26 *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen (genos), *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren;

Gal. 1:14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation (genos), being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

Phil. 3:5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock (genos) of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye *are* a chosen generation (genos), a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Rev. 22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring (genos) of David, *and* the bright and morning star.

When we read these verses we notice that it is used twenty-one times in the New Testament and is translated as follows in the KJV – *kind* 3, *offspring* 3, *kindred* 3, *kinds* 2, *nation* 2, *stock* 2, *born* 2, *diversities* 1, *country* 1, *countrymen* 1 and *generation* 1.

Notice that *genos* is understood as “offspring” in such verses as Acts 17:28; Acts 17:29; and Rev. 22:16. If –*genes*, in *monogenes*, should be understood by *genos* and not *gennao*, as we are being told, and in the above listed verses it is clear that *genos* means “offspring,” why then does not the Neo-Trinitarian translate *monogenes* as “Only Offspring?” The reason is because the etymology of *monogenes* is not the real issue. The real reason is that they reject the doctrine of eternal generation, and they are attempting to discredit the doctrine by altering the meaning of *monogenes*. As was mentioned at the beginning of this paper, there is ample evidence that *monogenes* should be translated as “only-begotten.” But, even, if we grant them their viewpoint that it should not be translated in that way, they are still not translating the word by its majority meaning.

Let me give you another example. Rev. 22:16 reads, “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring (genos) of David, *and* the bright and morning star.” How does our Lord use the word “genos?” Does he use it as “kind” with no sense of derivation? He uses it in the sense of derivation, or generation. He calls himself the “*Genos*” (Offspring) of David. Christ, according to Scripture was literally descended from David (Rom. 1:3; II Tim. 2:8).

Therefore, if Christ uses the word *genos* with a connotation of generation, why do they reject that connotation of the word when the Holy Spirit uses that same source word in *monogenes* when speaking of the Son's begottenness from God the Father (i.e. according to their claim)?

Even if we accept their presupposition regarding the source of *-genes*, in *monogenes*, the Holy Spirit is still telling the world that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the *Only Offspring* (*monogenes*) of the Father.” *Genos*, in the Lord’s mind and in the Holy Spirit’s mind, carried the sense of derivation and generation. Why does not the Neo-Trinitarian speak of this?

Let’s continue. It is understood as “born” in Acts 18:2 and Acts 18:24 (could not one say, then, he should be understood as the “Only Born Son?” For God so loved the world that he gave His “Only Born”(monogenes) Son.”

And it is understood as “stock” in Acts 13:26 and Phil. 3:5. All these uses give the idea of “begottenness,” “generation” or “derivation” and still support the doctrine of eternal generation.

Or let us take such verses as Acts 4:6; Acts 7:13, and Acts 7:19, which translate the word as “kindred.” It also carries the idea of “generation,” or “derivation.” One cannot be “of” the same kindred unless he has proceeded, been generated, or descended from a common ancestor. Why is this not brought out by Neo-Trinitarians?

The simple answer to both those questions is because the primary meaning of *genos* is not “kind” or “class,” but rather “descendant,” “nation,” or “offspring.”

Now, let us look as those few verses in the New Testament where it is translated “kind,” (which is the primary definition they adopt for *genos*). It is translated as *kind* in three verses – Matt. 13:47; Matt. 17:21; Mark 9:29. In two of the verses it is used with the sense of “kind” or “class” without any obvious sense of derivation – Matt. 17:21 and Mark 9:29. Yet one still finds the underlying sense of derivation when one understands the common Jewish concept concerning the origin of demons.

At the time of Christ the standard Jewish viewpoint concerning the origin of demons was that they were the offspring of fallen angels and women. Therefore, one could translate the phrase as “this offspring, or this stock, can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”

Merrill Unger mentions this interpretation in his book on Biblical Demonology.

“This very ancient theory, which goes back at least to the second century before Christ, if not earlier, maintains that the sons of God (*bene-ha’elohim*) of Genesis 6:2 are angels, who, cohabiting with mortal women, produced a monstrous progeny, the demons, born at once of spirits and of flesh. The locus classicus in the apocryphal Book of Enoch runs thus:

Wicked spirits came out of the body of them (i.e., of the women), for they were generated out of human beings, and from the holy watchers (angels) flows the beginning of their creation

and their primal foundation. The spirits of heaven – in the heaven is their dwelling, and the spirits begotten upon earth – in the earth shall be their dwelling. And the spirits of the gaints will devour, oppress, destroy, assault, do battle, and cast upon the earth and cause convulsions.”²¹⁴

He then continues and speaks of those who support such a view.

“But the “angel theory” is also supported by an equal, if not a more imposing list of expositors, demonstrating that difficulties of no little moment are encountered by both theories, and both have, at least some Scriptural grounds for support to enlist so many able advocates. . . . Very decidedly it is presented in the Book of Enoch, as noted, and in the so-called ‘Minor Genesis,’ also by Philo, Josephus, and most of the rabbinical writers, as well as by the oldest Church Fathers – Justin, Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, and Lactantius. Though Chrysostom, Augustine, and Theodoret contended zealously against it, and in the dark ages it fell into disfavor, it was espoused by Luther, and by a galaxy of moder exegetes – Koppen, Twesten, Dreschler, Hofmann, Baumgarten, Delitzsch, W. Kelly, A. C. Gaebelein, and others.”²¹⁵

And so we see that *genos* in this verse might still be used in its normal sense of offspring or stock, but, obviously, this sense is not readily seen in most English translations and is based upon one’s interpretation of the text.

However, in the third verse it is readily seen, because it is plainly used in the sense of species – Matt. 13:47. Amazing! Even in the verses where it is translated by the word they want to adopt for *genes* – the word “kind,” it still, carries the obvious sense of “generation” or “derivation.” But you will not hear this important point mentioned.

Let us look closely at that one verse. Matt. 13:47 speaks of every “kind” of fish being gathered in a net. Different species of fish are of the same “kind” because they have descended from the first species God created long ago, whom he told them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters (Gen. 1:21-22). God created everything after its own “kind.” Everything has “proceeded” or been “generated” from those first creatures. “Kind” in this verse refers to species, and if one is not of the same “kind,” one cannot procreate. This third use of “kind” obviously is understood through the concept of “generation.” A fish cannot be of that kind, unless it was generated!

The only other instance out of these 21 verses where it is translated as “kind,” or actually “kinds,” and the sense of derivation is not readily seen is in I Cor. 12:10, I Cor. 12:28 and I Cor. 14:10.

Of all the examples of *genos* in the New Testament these may be the only ones which actually carry the connotation of “class” or “kind.” Yet, even in these three verses some may still argue that the underlying sense of “derivation,” is found, since languages are divided according one’s birth. One speaks the

²¹⁴ Unger, Merrill F., *Biblical Demonology: A Study of the Spiritual Forces Behind the Present World Unrest*, (Van Kampen Press, Inc. Wheaton, Illinois, 1952), pg. 46-47

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 46-47

language of one's kind or kindred so that one still finds some sense of "derivation" within the word. "Kinds" of tongues would mean languages based upon one's kind. It would indicate the different languages of one's birth. Tongues are used with this idea in Rev. 7:9.

Revelation 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and **tongues**, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; KJV

As there are different nations, kindreds and peoples based upon one's birth, so there are different tongues based upon one's kind or birth. Therefore, a perfectly fine translation of these verses would as follows:

1 Corinthians 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another kindred tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, kindred tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:10 There are, it may be, so many kindred voices in the world, and none of them *is* without signification.

If true, this use *genos* with the genitive would, more than likely, fall under the category, of what Daniel Wallace calls, the attributed genitive.²¹⁶

This is all the more significant when we realize that all languages are descended from those few languages created by God at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-7). And in one sense, depending on how one defines the word "confound" or "confuse" in Gen. 11:7, they are all descended from the one common language of the earth at the beginning of our history (Gen. 11:1). In fact, the LXX uses the same word in Gen. 11:1 that is used by Paul in I Cor. 14:10, the word φωνή.

So, in these last remaining instances where *genos* is translated in English by "kinds" we may still see the connotation of derivation.

All the other references such as "nation" (Gal. 1:14), "generation" (I Pet. 2:9), or "stock" (Phil. 3:5), also carry the sense of "offspring," "generation," or "derivation."

And so out of all the usages of *genos* in the New Testament only 5 are used with no obvious sense of "offspring" or "derivation," (although that basal sense is still found in 3 of the 5 and, indeed, may be possibly found in all 5). But, let's grant the Neo-Trinitarian those 5 examples for the sake of argument. Where does that leave us? It means that out of the 21 examples, 16 are used in

²¹⁶ Wallace, Daniel B., Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1996), pg. 89

such a way that the word carries the obvious sense of “derivation” in its usage, meaning over 75% of the usages of the word carry the outward sense of “offspring” or “derivation” in the New Testament. Why then do Neo-Trinitarians say that because the *-genes* in *monogenes* is associated with *genos* and not *gennao*, it negates the sense of generation, derivation, or begottenness? Why do they claim it nullifies the doctrine of eternal generation? They are not being forthright with their listeners and/or readers for they are leaving out the important connotation of the word, and are emphasizing a minor connotation of *genos* (kind or type), over the primary connotation of *genos* (derivation).

Let’s look at one last verse that uses *genos*, because of all the verses of *genos* this verse succinctly explains the truth of John’s use of *monogenes* in John 1:14, 18, (assuming the reading “Son” as in the NKJV, and not “God” in verse 18).

Acts 13:26 Men *and* brethren, children(sons) of the stock (*genos*) of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

In this verse Paul speaks of those “descended” of Abraham. He speaks to those sons who were of the “stock” (*genos*) of Abraham, in other words, his *offspring*, his *seed*. The word speaks of “derivation” from Abraham. So even if we use the understanding of the word *genes* (from *genos*) as “stock” in *monogenes* when speaking of the Son of God, would we not be speaking of the “derivation” of the Son from his Father, as Paul he uses the word to speak of the “derivation” of the sons of Israel from their father, Abraham?

Would it not be saying that the Son was of the “stock,” of the Father? Most certainly! Indeed, He was not only of the “stock” of the Father, he was “of” the “same” “stock” of the Father. This teaches us a very important truth.

In the book of Genesis we are told God created everything “after its kind” (Gen. 1:11, 12, 21, 24 and 25). Every species is of the same kind and thus possesses the same nature. This is a revelatory picture of a precious truth within the Godhead, albeit in a limited way (please see footnote below).²¹⁷

In the Godhead, if you will, there are three of the same “kind,” or “stock” – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. As the sons of Israel are of the same

²¹⁷ Animals, who are of the same kind, reveal a common bond of nature within each specific group. The same is true of humans. Animals and men cannot be considered to be of the same species unless they have the same derived nature. However, in human and animal fecundity alike, there is a separation of substance. For example, humans have the same substance in “nature,” but not in “possession” for there is a separation of substance in the generation of their offspring. There is no separation of substance in the generation of the Son and the spiration of the Holy Spirit for they eternally coinhere in each other. Therefore, their sameness of substance is not only the same in “nature,” but is also the same in “possession.” They all possess one and the same substance together, without division, and are thus consubstantial with the Father.

stock (*genos*) as their father Abraham, so too the Son and the Holy Spirit²¹⁸ are of the same stock as the Father. No one else in the entire universe is of the “same stock” as the Father, except the Son and the Holy Spirit. In Nicene Creed this is called “homoousios” meaning of the same substance or in today’s terminology consubstantial. And since the Father eternally communicates this substance, without diminution, to the second Person of the Blessed Trinity in his eternal begetting, he is known as the “Only-begotten,” or (because we assuming, for the sake of argument, the association of *-genes* with *genos*) the “Only Offspring Son,” “Only Born Son,” “Only Stock Son” of the Father’s begetting.

Consequently, one can clearly see, that the word *monogenes* still is understood by a sense of begottenness, derivation, or stock, whether you translate it as “Only-begotten,” or “Only Stock!”

How precious is this truth! He is the “Only-begotten,” the “Only Offspring” of God, the “Only Born,” the “Only Stock” of God. If Neo-Trinitarians want to assert that *-genes* is related to *genos* and not *gennaos*, so be it. But do not let them tell you it changes the meaning of Only-begotten or it negates the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son of God. It does not change the fact at all. He still is very God “of” very God. He still eternally proceeds from the Father (Jn. 8:42; 16:28-30; 17:8). He is the “Only-begotten” or “Only Born” of God, not in the sense that there was a time when He was not, and then there was a time when He was. He never had a beginning because His was an eternal begetting, an eternal coming forth.²¹⁹

And so, dear brethren, do not be misled by the new teaching concerning the Son that is being quietly being foisted upon unsuspecting Christians. Do not accept the grievous error of Neo-Trinitarians. The Son is still the “Only-begotten” of the Father, begotten before all ages, as the Historic Christian Faith has always affirmed, whether you believe *-genes* is derived from *gennaos* or from *genos*.

This now brings us to our next chapter. This chapter was based upon the assumption that since the stem *-genes* was related to *genos*, and *genos* meant “class” or “kind,” *monogenes* must mean *one of a kind*. I hope most can now see that is not true. But what of the rest of that assumption – that *-genes* is not related to the word *gennaos*? Is that also a groundless assumption? We would like to now look at this common assertion made by Neo-Trinitarians, and see what word explains the stem *-genes*?

²¹⁸ The Holy Spirit was not begotten but spirated. The term *monogenes* can only refer to one who is generated or begotten. That is why the term is never used of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit is of the same kind as the Father through his “eternal procession” or “spiration” and so is also homoousios, or consubstantial.

²¹⁹ For more information on this precious doctrine, see *Understanding the Trinity, An Encouragement to Abide in the Doctrine in both Faith and Practice*, by B.P. Harris, (Assembly Bookshelf, Sacramento, 2006).

The –Genes Stem as Found in Scripture

Christians have been really misled by the assertion that because the stem –genes in *monogenes* is from *genos* (kind or class), and not from *gennao* (born or begotten), therefore, the meaning of *monogenes* cannot be *only-begotten*. Why? Because, as we just demonstrated in the last chapter, it makes no difference whether the stem –genes is from *genos* or *gennao* because *genos* also carries the sense of born or begotten. The major connotation of *genos* is derivation, not class or kind.

Neo Trinitarians have really misled Christians regarding this issue. If I may borrow a phrase, “They are majoring on the minors.” They are pretending that a minority meaning for *genos* is actually the majority meaning.

In fact, when we examine the other instances of the actual stem –genes in the Bible we find those words, like *monogenes*, also carry the sense begat or born. They all contain a derivative sense and not the sense of “kind” or “class.”

As we have found with the rest of this study, once one examines the evidence the assertions of Neo-Trinitarians are found wanting. They are perpetrating and error. When we examine the words ending with the stem –genes in the Greek New Testament and the LXX what we find is that they all carry the sense of born or begotteness. Let’s now look at each one.

Hermogenes – Ἑρμο-γένης

The first example is a name – Ἑρμογένης. It simply means born of Hermes as Thayer declares. It is found in II Tim. 1:15.

“Ἑρμογένης (i. e. born of Hermes; Tdf. Ἑρμογένης), ἑρμογενους, ὁ, *Hermogenes*, a certain Christian: 2 Tim. 1:15.”²²⁰

I do not think there would be much argument with this understanding.

Allogenes – Ἄλλο-γενής

The next compound word that ends with the same stem as *monogenes* is ἄλλογενής. It is used in such verses as Ex. 12:43.

²²⁰ Thayer, Joseph Henry, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI 1977), Pg. 250

Exodus 12:43 And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the ordinance of the Passover: no foreigner is to eat of it; (Exo 12:43 NAS)

The word means foreigner and literally would mean “born of another.” Thayer defines it as follows.

“**ἀλλογενής**, -ες (ἄλλος and γένος), *sprung from another race, a foreigner, alien*: Luke 17:18. (In the Septuagint (Gen. 17:27; Exo. 12:43, etc.), but nowhere in secular writings.)”²²¹

One can see that the idea that says, “Since the stem *-genes* is from *genos*, *-genes* it must mean “kind,” simply will not work in this case. The meaning “another kind” would not work because according to Genesis all humans are of the “same kind.” The stem *-genes* simply cannot mean kind.

Now, I am sure the Neo-Trinitarians would then say that it must mean race. Therefore, one would have to say, “It means of another race.” That is fine, but how is one of another race? One is of another race by birth. No matter what way you look at it the stem *-genes* is not being used with the meaning “kind.” The word literally means “born of another,” in other words, it means born of another race.

Suggenes – Συγγενής

Next we find the word συγγενής which means “born with.” Friberg defines it as:

συγγενής, ἐς (also συγγενεύς) (1) literally *of common origin, related (by blood), akin to*; substantivally in the NT *relative* (JN 18.26); plural **οἱ συγγενεῖς** *relatives, kinsfolk* (LU 1.58); (2) in a broader sense of the same race or people *fellow countryman, fellow citizen* (RO 9.3; probably 16.21); (3) passive, of close relationship in Christ *close companion, intimate friend, (spiritual) kinsman* (perhaps RO 16.21)²²²

And Liddell & Scott define it thus:

συγγενής, ἐς, (γενέσθαι) *born with, congenital, natural, in-born, ἦθος* Pind. O. 13.16...
II. *of the same kin, descent or family, akin to*, τινι Hdt. I.109., 3. 2., Att.:-absol. *akin, cognate*, ... τὸ συγγενές, = συγγένεια, Aesch. Pr. 289, Soph. El. 1469...²²³

This, perhaps, would be the main word chosen by Neo-Trinitarians to demonstrate the meaning of “kind” for the stem *-genes*. We would have no

²²¹ Ibid., pg. 28

²²² Friberg, Timothy, Friberg, Barbara, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, (Trafford Publishing, Victoria, BC 2005), pg. 358-59

²²³ Liddell, Henry George, Scott, Robert, *Greek-English Lexicon, Seventh Edition* (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1883), pg. 1443

argument with this. We have already indicated in a previous chapter the following:

“In Liddell and Scott, the stem “—*genes*” occurs 168 times in various Greek words. In all these occurrences, the *overwhelming majority* carry the sense of “derivation.” Of the 168 occurrences, 109 times it is used with the sense of “derivation” or “born,” and only 19 times is it used with the sense of “class” or “kind!” Of the remaining uses, 28 times the definition is unavailable and the other 12 times miscellaneous meanings are assigned to the word.”²²⁴

And we also stated:

“Between the two usages, it favors the connotation of born or derivation by a ratio of almost 6 to 1. It occurs a little more than 11% of the time with a connotation of class or kind, yet it occurs almost 65% of the time with the connotation of born or derivation!”

And so, since we find six compound words in the Bible with the stem —*genes*, it should not surprise us that one of the six would fall into this category.

However, we also made this observation regarding *genos*.

“Now, let us look at those few verses in the New Testament where it is translated “kind,” (which is the primary definition they adopt for *genos*). It is translated as kind in three verses – Matt. 13:47; Matt. 17:21; Mark 9:29. Two of the verses it is used, as they correctly state, in the sense of “class” without any obvious sense of derivation – Matt. 17:21 and Mark 9:29. But in one of those three verses it is used in the sense of species – Matt. 13:47. Amazing! Even in the verses where it is translated by the word they want to adopt for *genes* – the word “kind,” it still, in one of the verses, carries the obvious sense of ‘generation’ or ‘derivation.’”

Such is also the case with the stem —*genes* in this word. The basal meaning of this word is “born with.” It is made of *sun* (with), and the stem —*genes* (born), meaning “born with.” It is used in the sense that “kin” are born of common ancestor.” But which ancestor would it be? Well, it depends on the context.

In one real sense every human being is related because we all have one common ancestor, that being, of course, Adam. But usually this word is used in a narrower sense. For example, in Rom. 9:3 it is used of those who have a common ancestor in Abraham, i.e. the nation of Israel. But it is still used in even a narrower sense. In Mark 6:4 we find the following distinction.

Mark 6:4 καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν προφήτης ἄτιμος εἰ μὴ ἐν τῇ πατρίδι αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν τοῖς συγγενεῦσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ.

²²⁴ A tally gleaned from Perseus Digital Library Project. Ed. Gregory R. Crane. Updated Mar. 31, 2009. Tufts University. Accessed Oct. 1, 2009 <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>

Mark 6:4 But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” NKJV

The word in this verse is used in a narrower sense than the nation of Israel, but in a broader sense than an immediate family. It is used of those who are in between, who are “born with” common ancestor, further removed than the father or mother of an immediate family, more than likely like a grandfather or great grandfather. Thus the word would be used of one’s aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. It is used this way in the LXX in such verses as Lev. 18:14.

Thus the meaning “born with” must be defined by the context. The context will tell us if the other person who was “born with” you, should be seen as one “born with” the same father, or mother, or “born with” the same grandfather, or great, great grandfather, or, indeed, “born with” a common ancestor like a patriarch, like Abraham, Isaac or Jacob.

Therefore, once again we see the stem *-genes* still carries the idea of born or begotten, even when it is defined as “kind” or “kin.” One could just as well say “begat with” a common ancestor.

One cannot be of the same kind or kin unless one is “born with” a common ancestor, so the stem *-genes* still retains the connotation of begot or born even though it is assigned a different nomenclature in the English language.

The stem does not mean kind or kin, without the underlying meaning of born or begotten. Kin means what it means because of its underlying meaning of *born with* a common ancestor. In fact, observe how English the word “kin” is defined:

“**Kin** (kĭn), n. [AS. *cynn* kin, kind, race, people; akin to *cennan* to beget, G. & D. *kind* a child, L. *genus* kind, race, *gignere* to beget, Gr. γίγνεσθαι to be born.] 1. Relationship; connection by birth or marriage. 2. Relatives; persons of the same race. – a. Kindred.²²⁵

So we see English word *kin* comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *cynn*, which was akin to *cennan*, which meant to beget! Any way you look at this word, whether as *born with*, or as *kin*, the stem *-genes* still carries the meaning of *born* or *beget*, just as it does in the word *mono-genes*.

Oikogenes – Οικο-γενής

The next word is οικογενής and simply means “house born.” Liddell and Scott define it thus:

²²⁵ Webster, Noah, Webster's Academic Dictionary: A Dictionary of the English Language, (American Book Company, New York, 1895), pg. 316

“οικο-γενής, ἕς, (γίγνομαι) born in the house, homebred, of slaves, Lat. Verna as opp. to emptus, Plat. Meno 82 B; Polyb 40. 2.3...”²²⁶

Again, we see the stem means born, but the Neo-Trinitarians would have us dispute this meaning and say, it must mean “household kind,” since the stem –*genes* is from *genos*, not *gennao*. But, as we have already seen this makes no difference, for it still carries a connotation of beget and here is another example where the stem –*genes* carries this nuance. The fact that the stem cannot mean “kind” as in “household kind,” but rather must mean born as in “household born,” is demonstrated in Gen. 17:6. I will provide the *New English Translation of the Septuagint*, as it brings out this more fully.

Genesis 17:12 καὶ παιδίον ὀκτῶ ἡμερῶν περιμηθήσεται ὑμῖν πᾶν ἀρσενικὸν εἰς τὰς γενεὰς ὑμῶν ὁ οἰκογενής τῆς οἰκίας σου καὶ ὁ ἀργυρώνητος ἀπὸ παντὸς υἱοῦ ἀλλοτρίου ὃς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματός σου.

“And a youngster of eight days shall be circumcised among you – every male – throughout your generations, the homebred of you household and the one bought with money from any son of a foreigner, who is not of your offspring.” Genesis 17:12²²⁷

If οἰκογενής simply meant “household kind” there would be no need of the entire last half of the verse. If the word meant “household kind” anyone living or belonging to the household would have to submit to circumcision. It would not matter how they became a part of that household; consequently, there would have been no need to include the last part of this verse.

But because the stem does not mean *kind*, as in household kind, but rather means *born*, as in “one born in the household,” it was necessary to stipulate that even those who are of the household, but were not necessarily born in the household, but were rather purchased from somewhere else, would still have to be circumcised.

Therefore, we see that this word, indeed, could only mean “household born” and that the stem –*genes* in *oikogenes* means the same thing as the stem in *monogenes*, that which is born, whether it be *household born* or *only born*.

Eugenes – Εὐ-γενής

The next word that ends with –*genes* is εὐγενής. It is used in such verses as I Cor. 1:26.

²²⁶ Liddell, Henry George, Scott, Robert, Greek-English Lexicon, Seventh Edition (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1883), pg. 1030

²²⁷ Sourced from: <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/>

1 Corinthians 1:26 For consider your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many wise according to flesh, not many powerful, not many high-born. (Darby's Version)

The word literally means “well born.” Net translates it “born to a privileged position,” with Darby translating it “high born.”

Liddell and Scott define it as follows.

“εὐγενής, ἕξ, in Hom. εὐηγενής (q.v.), and in h. Hom. Ven. 94 (γένος) *well-born, of noble race, of high descent*, Lat. generosus, Aesch. Pers. 704. Soph. O.C. 728, etc...”²²⁸

In other words, the word means “born of nobility.”

Now according to Neo-Trinitarians, since the stem *-genes* means “kind” and has nothing to do with *gennao*, indicating birth, or begottenness, they would insist the word would mean a “good kind.” But, of course, for those who believe in the Bible, this could not be, for Jesus says in Luke 18:19, there is “none good, but one, God!” How could there be a few of a “good kind” in Corinth. As Paul says, “there is none righteous, no not one” (Rom. 3:10). But, obviously, there could be some who were born of nobility.

But someone will then say, “But your mixing metaphors, “You should use the same word and say it would then mean “born of good,” rather than “born of nobility,” for when you say “born of good,” you have the same dilemma we have; there are none good but God. To be fair, they would be right in this assertion. So one could not, seemingly, prove either way, at least, according to this verse, whether the stem *-genes* should be understood by *kind* or by being *born*. But that is not so because we have an example of the word being used by Josephus in his writings.

In War of the Jews he says the following.

“Now a little afterward there came into Judea a man that was much superior to Archelaus's stratagems, who did not only overturn that reconciliation that had been so wisely made with Alexander, but proved the occasion of his ruin. He was a Lacedemonian, and his name was Eurycles. He was so corrupt a man, that out of the desire of getting money, he chose to live under a king, for Greece could not suffice his luxury. (War of the Jews, Bk. I, ch. XXVI, v.1)
²²⁹

“Now as soon as this fellow perceived the rotten parts of the family, and what quarrels the brothers had one with another, and in what disposition the father was towards each of them, he chose to take his lodging at the first in the house of Antipater, but deluded Alexander with a pretence of friendship to him, and falsely claimed to be an old acquaintance of Archelaus; for which reason he was presently admitted into Alexander's familiarity as a faithful friend. He also soon recommended himself to his brother Aristobulus: and when he had thus made trial of these several persons, he imposed upon one of them by one method,

²²⁸ Liddell, Henry George, Scott, Robert, Greek-English Lexicon, Seventh Edition (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1883), pg. 596

²²⁹ Josephus, Flavius, Whiston, William, tr. The Works of Flavius Josephus, (Simms and M/Intyre, Belfast, 1841),Pg. 590

and upon another by another; but he was principally hired by Antipater, and so betrayed Alexander, and this by reproaching Antipater, because, while he was the eldest son, he overlooked the intrigues of those who stood in the way of his expectations; and by reproaching Alexander, because he who was born of a queen, and was married to a kind's daughter, permitted one that was born of a mean woman to lay claim to the succession, and this when he had Archelaus to support him in the most complete manner. (War of the Jews, Bk. I, ch. XXVI, v.2)²³⁰

In this story of Josephus we find a con-artist, by the name of Eurycles, caused problems in the household of Herod. Herod's oldest son was Antipater by his first wife named Doris. She was not of noble birth but was called by Josephus a "mean woman." In other words, she was considered a common woman. The word used by Josephus regarding this lineage is ἰδιώτιδος which is defined as "low family." Herod's other two sons, on the other hand were Alexander and Aristobulus by Herod's second wife Mariamme, who was of noble birth. She was the daughter of Alexander, being of Hasmonean descent. The Hasmoneans were rulers that came forth from the Maccabean revolt.

In his history on Herod, Peter Richardson says this regarding this account.

"Josephus's information allows the conclusion that the Herodian family was not bound completely by traditional notions of patrilineal descent. Apparently the family also used cognatic descent (i.e., links based on female relationships, often in combination with male relationships). Josephus shows that descent from female members of the family, especially from Mariamme I, was important" "Aristobulus and Alexander would have no more ascribed honor than Antipater due to their mother's family's lineage, since the father of all three was Herod. But Mariamme's sons, thought younger than Antipater, claimed greater honor on account of their Hasmonean descent, and ridiculed Antipater as being born of a non-royal mother, Doris."²³¹

Then in War of Jews 1:522 Josephus says the following.

"Wars of the Jews 1:522 πολλὰ δ' εἶναι τὰ παροξύνοντα καθ' ἡμέραν ὥστε μηδὲ λαλιᾶς τινα τρόπον ἀσυκοφάντητον καταλελειφθαι περὶ μὲν γὰρ εὐγενείας ἐτέρων μνείας γενομένης αὐτὸς ἀλόγως ὑβρίζεσθαι τοῦ πατρὸς λέγοντος ὁ μόνος εὐγενῆς Ἀλέξανδρος καὶ τὸν πατέρα δι' ἀγένειαν ἀδοξῶν κατὰ δὲ τὰς θήρας προσκρούειν μὲν σιωπῶν ἐπαινέσας δὲ προσακοῦειν εἴρων

"Wars of the Jews 1:522 that many things happen every day to provoke him so to do, insomuch that he can say nothing at all, but it affords occasion for calumny against him; for that, if any mention be made of nobility of birth even in other cases, he is abused unjustly, while his father would say that no one, to be sure, is of noble birth but Alexander, and that his father was inglorious for want of such nobility. If they are at any time hunting, and he says nothing, he gives offence; and if he commends anyone, they take it in way of jest."²³²

²³⁰ Ibid., pg. 590-591

²³¹ Richardson, Peter, Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans, (University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, 1996), pg. 41

²³² Sourced from Bibleworks: The Works of Flavius Josephus - This addition includes the complete works of Josephus, fully parsed and lemmatized, as well as the 1828 Whiston English Translation. The Greek text is based on the 1890 Niese edition which is public domain.

He says that only Alexander is of noble birth. And the word he uses is this word εὐγενής.

So we see that εὐγενής cannot mean one of “noble kind” or one of “noble class,” i.e. the upper class, because all of Herod’s household would be considered to be in the upper class, yet while Antipater was of the “upper class,” he was not εὐγενής! Antipater was viewed as one of “low birth,” born from a common woman who was named Doris, Herod’s first wife. Only Alexander, by Herod’s second wife, Mariamme, who was of Hasmonean descent, and was considered to be of noble birth (εὐγενής). Only Alexander had the proper pedigree to be εὐγενής, only he was considered to be “noble born.”

So we see the stem –genes in the word εὐγενής does not mean “kind” or “class” as the Neo Trinitarians claim, even, though, they claim the stem is from *genos*. It still has the meaning of *born* or *begotten*, the same meaning in carries in *monogenes*. The Neo-Trinitarians are simply wrong. It makes no difference if one wants to assert that the stem comes from *genos* or *gennao*. It still carries the connotation of begotten or born.

Protogenes – Πρωτο-γενής

The last example is found in the word πρωτογενής. The word is defined by Liddell and Scott as follows.

“πρωτο-γενής, -ές; *first-born, primeval*, εἶδος, κτήμα Plat. Polit. 288 E.m 289A; of persons, Orph. II 23 (25). 2, etc.”²³³

The word is used in two places in the Bible. Both are found in the LXX.

Exodus 13:2 ἀγιάσον μοι πᾶν πρωτότοκον πρωτογενές διανοίγον πᾶσαν μήτραν ἐν τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπου ἕως κτήνους ἐμοὶ ἐστιν

Exodus 13:2 Sanctify to me every first-born, first produced, opening every womb among the children of Israel both of man and beast: it is mine. (Brenton’s LXX translation)

Proverbs 31:2 τί τέκνον τηρήσεις τί ῥήσεις θεοῦ πρωτογενές σοὶ λέγω υἱέ τί τέκνον ἐμῆς κοιλίας τί τέκνον ἐμῶν εὐχῶν

Proverbs 31:2 What wilt thou keep, my son, what? the words of God. My firstborn son, I speak to thee: what? son of my womb? what? son of my vows? (Brenton’s LXX translation)

²³³ Liddell, Henry George, Scott, Robert, Greek-English Lexicon, Seventh Edition (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1883), pg. 1337

What we find in this word is that its stem *-genes* means *begotten*, just as it does in *mono-genes*. As *μονογενής* means *only-begotten*, so *πρωτογενής* means *first-begotten*. It is made up of two words *proto* (first) and *genes* (begotten). It is an equivalent to first born, but first born is understood from the perspective of the mother and first begotten is understood from the perspective of the father.

We see this distinction from the writings of Philo. In one of his fragments on Question and Answers from Exodus, he states the following.

“Q & A on Exodus - Fragments (Pet. 1:22 τὸ μὲν "πρωτότοκον" πρὸς τὸ μητρῶον γένος, τίκτει γὰρ γυνή· τὸ δὲ "πρωτογενές" πρὸς τὸ πατρῶον, γεννᾷ γὰρ ἄρρεν. τὸ δὲ "διανοίγον πᾶσαν μήτραν" ἵνα μή, γενομένης πρωτοτόκου θυγατρὸς, εἴθ' ὕστερον ἐπιγενομένου υἱοῦ, τὸν υἱὸν ἐν πρωτοτόκοις καταριθμήσῃ τις, ὡς τῆς ἄρρενος ἄρχοντα γενεᾶς. ὁ γὰρ νόμος φησὶν· οὐ διοίγνυσι τὴν μήτραν ὁ τοιοῦτος τὴν εὐθὺς ἐκ παρθενίας.²³⁴

I would translate it as follows:

“So, on the one hand the firstborn *refers* to the mother’s offspring, for a woman gives birth, and the first begotten *refers* to the paternal, for a male begets, and *it refers* to the *first* one opening every womb. So that it is not about a first born daughter being born, if *it is about* the second, of a son being born; *it is* the son, he is counted among the firstborns, thus *he is* the first of the male offspring. For the Law says, it is not such that straightaway opens the womb from virginity.”

Now, a few points need to be made before we look at the text. First, this is just a fragment so we do not have the greater context in which fully understand the text. But since this fragment is entitled, *Questions and Answers on Exodus*, more than likely it is an answer given to a question concerning Exodus 13:2, especially since it is the only place in Exodus where *πρωτογενές* occurs.

Secondly, since it is a fragment, and we do not have the greater context, it is hard to decide if we have an ellipsis in the text; this must be taken into account when deciding upon the appropriate translation.

And, finally, even if the rest of the text might be understood in a different way, one thing that cannot be understood differently is the use of the explanatory conjunction *γὰρ* in the first part of the fragment. It explains the meaning of *πρωτότοκον* and *πρωτογενές*, as we will now presently see.

It seems that Philo, in this fragment, is answering a question about Ex. 13:2, regarding who qualifies as a “firstborn,” thus needing to be sanctified to God.

²³⁴ Sourced from: The Philo concordance Datatbase. in Greek, with lemmatization and partial morphological tagging. Copyright © 2005 by Peder Borgen, Kåre Fuglseth and Roald Skarsten, att. Kåre Fuglseth, Institute of Education and Culture, School of Professional Studies, Bodø University College, N-8049 Bodø, Norway. Modifications to the original morphology are Copyright © 2006 BibleWorks,LLC.

Exodus 13:2 Sanctify to me every first-born, the first begotten opening every womb among the children of Israel, from man unto beast: it is mine.”

Exodus 13:2 ἀγιάσον μοι πᾶν πρωτότοκον πρωτογενές διανοῖγον πᾶσαν μήτραν ἐν τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραηλ ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπου ἕως κτήνους ἐμοὶ ἐστίν

As one can see, Ex. 13:2 does not specify the gender of the child, but Philo intimates that it is the male that qualifies as a first born. He states that if a daughter is the first born, she is not sanctified, because the Law only refers to a first born son. In other words, he interprets the verse to mean only the first of male offspring are to be sanctified. The reason he says so is because the Law says, “it is not such that straightaway opens the womb from virginity.”

Now, there is no verse that says this in the Law, but, more than likely, he is referring to Exodus 13:12 which specifically indicates it is the first born male that is sanctified. (This is the difficulty of translating a fragment. We do not fully know the context of his answer or what dialogue has already taken place).

Exodus 13:12 that thou shalt set apart every *offspring* opening the womb, the males to the Lord, every one that opens the womb out of the herds or among thy cattle, as many as thou shalt have: thou shalt sanctify the males to the Lord. (Brenton’s LXX Version)

If we take it this way, then the text would seem to be saying the following.

“So, on the one hand the firstborn *refers* to the mother’s offspring, for a woman gives birth, and the first begotten *refers* to the paternal, for a male begets, and *it refers* to the *first* one opening every womb. So that it is not about a first born daughter being born, if *it is about* the second, of a son being born; *it is* the son, he is counted as the firstborn, thus, *he is* the first of the male offspring. For the Law says, it is not such that straightaway opens the womb from virginity.”

If this is so, then it seems the latter half would mean this.

“So that it is not about a first born daughter being born” – In other words, Philo may be answering the question as to what the first part of Ex. 13: 2 is speaking about. He is saying the phrase, “Sanctify to me every first born,” in Ex. 13:2 does not refer to a first born daughter.

“If it is about the second, of a son being born” – In other words, the πρωτότοκον (first born) in Ex. 13:2 cannot refer to a first born daughter, if the “second reference” in Ex. 13: 2, i.e. πρωτογενές (the first begotten), is a reference to a son being born.

“It is the son, he is counted as the firstborn, thus he is the first of the male offspring” – In other words, since the second reference, πρωτογενές, the first

begotten, is referring to a male, then only a first born male can be considered to be the first born that is sanctified in the phrase, “Sanctify to me every first born” in Ex. 13:2.

“For the Law says, it is not such that straightaway opens the womb from virginity” – In other words, in other verses it says it is not the first born child that is sanctified, but only the first born male child. A first born daughter, even though it is the first one to open the womb, is not one that is sanctified to the Lord or redeemed.

This seems to be Philo’s argument. However, if we translate it this way, with ὕστερον (later) regarded as an adverb and not an adjective, it seems this must be the sense.

“So, on the one hand the firstborn *refers* to the mother’s offspring, for a woman gives birth, and the first begotten *refers* to the paternal, for a male begets, and *it refers* to the *first* one opening every womb. So that it cannot be about a first born daughter being born, if it is later about a son being born. *It is* the son, he is counted as the firstborn; thus *he is* the first of the male offspring. For the Law says, it is not such that straightaway opens the womb from virginity.”

In this translation the sense of the first part remains the same, but the other part of the text might then mean this:

“So that it is not about a first born daughter being born, if it is later about a son being born” – In other words, Philo may have already told his enquirer that Exodus 13:12 states that a first born male needs to be sanctified. Perhaps, the enquirer, then, asks Philo, “But if the previous reference, (Ex. 13:2), does not specify only the male gender, why does not a firstborn daughter also need to be sanctified?” Philo then answers him that if the text written later, (Ex. 13:12), refers only to firstborn males who open the womb, then the previous reference, (Ex. 13:2), cannot be about a firstborn daughter being born.

The problem in properly understanding this fragment is that we do not have the greater context and we do not know what questions had already been asked and what dialogue had already occurred. So it is difficult to properly understand the rest of the fragment but the first part of the fragment is pretty straightforward. We have a statement and we have an explanation. This part remains the same in either translation and it is this part which pertains to the question before us.

So let us look at this portion that addresses the fundamental question, “How should we understand the stem –*genes* in *protogenes*?”

This is what we have.

Πρωτότοκον	Statement	Reason
Greek Text	τό μὲν <u>πρωτότοκον</u> πρὸς τὸ μητρῶον γένος	τίκτει γὰρ γυνή
English Translation	So, on the one hand the <u>firstborn</u> <i>refers</i> to the mother's offspring	for a woman gives birth

Πρωτογενές	Statement	Reason
Greek Text	τὸ δὲ <u>πρωτογενές</u> πρὸς τὸ πατρῶον	γεννᾷ γὰρ ἄρρεν
English Translation	And the <u>first-begotten</u> <i>refers</i> to the paternal	for a male begets

We have two main words brought to the forefront in this fragment – πρωτότοκον and πρωτογενές. Apparently, the question was about the meaning of these two words. What do they mean? How do they influence the meaning of Exodus 13:2?

Let me give the text again with an English translation, and a chart on the words in question.

“Q & A on Exodus - Fragments Pet. 1:22 τό μὲν "πρωτότοκον" πρὸς τὸ μητρῶον γένος, τίκτει γὰρ γυνή· τὸ δὲ "πρωτογενές" πρὸς τὸ πατρῶον, γεννᾷ γὰρ ἄρρεν. τό δὲ "διανοιῶν πᾶσαν μήτραν" ἵνα μή, γενομένης πρωτοτόκου θυγατρὸς, εἴθ' ὕστερον ἐπιγενομένου υἱοῦ, τὸν υἱὸν ἐν πρωτοτόκοις καταριθμήσῃ τις, ὡς τῆς ἄρρενος ἄρχοντα γενεᾶς. ὁ γὰρ νόμος φησὶν· οὐ διοίγνυσι τὴν μήτραν ὁ τοιοῦτος τὴν εὐθὺς ἐκ παρθενίας.²³⁵

“So, on the one hand the first-born *refers* to the mother's offspring, for a woman gives birth, and the first-begotten *refers* to the paternal, for a male begets, and *it refers to the first* one opening every womb. So that it is not about a first born daughter being born, if *it is about* the second, of a son being born; *it is* the son, he is counted among the first-borns, thus *he is* the first of the male offspring. For the Law says, it is not such that straightaway opens the womb from virginity.”

²³⁵ Sourced from: The Philo concordance Datatbase. in Greek, with lemmatization and partial morphological tagging. Copyright © 2005 by Peder Borgen, Kåre Fuglseth and Roald Skarsten, att. Kåre Fuglseth, Institute of Education and Culture, School of Professional Studies, Bodø University College, N-8049 Bodø, Norway. Modifications to the original morphology are Copyright © 2006 BibleWorks,LLC.

Word	Compound	Stem	Explanatory verb
πρωτότοκος	πρωτό – τοκος	– τοκος	τίκτει (τίκτω)
πρωτογενής	πρωτο – γενής	– γενής	γεννᾷ (γεννάω)

Philo tries to explain the verse by explaining the meaning of each word. The meaning of *prototokos* is identified by the use of τίκτει which is the present indicative 3rd person singular active verb of τίκτω. This verb simply means “give birth or bear.” Thus Philo is telling us the stem – τοκος should be understood by the verb τίκτω. Thus, the compound word *prototokos* should be understood as “*first-born*.”

Next he tells us that the meaning of *protogenes* is understood by the use of γεννᾷ which is the present indicative 3rd person singular active verb of γεννάω. This verb simply means “begat or bear.” Thus Philo is telling us the stem – γενής should be understood by the verb γεννάω. Thus, the compound word, *protogenes*, should be understood as “*first-begotten*.”

What does this tell us about Philo’s understanding of the stem –*genes* in *protogenes*?

For this entire paper we have been affirming the meaning of *only-begotten* for the Greek word *monogenes*. Neo-Trinitarians have been telling the Christian world that *only-begotten* cannot be the true meaning because the stem –*genes* is from *genos*, which means *kind*, and not *gennao* which means *beget*. We accepted their assumption that it was from *genos* and traveled down that rabbit trail with them. However, we have found and demonstrated, over and over, that even if such is the case, it does not preclude the meaning of *begotten* because *genos* still carries the meaning of *derivation* and *begottenness*. And now that we have reached this point in our study what do we find out after all? We find that a Greek speaking Jew, from the days of our Lord, disagreeing with modern day Greek scholars. Who should we believe? One who wrote in the language of his birth, or one who learned Greek as a second language?

Philo explains the meaning of the stem –*genes*, not by *genos* but by *gennao*! He declares that in the compound word *protogenes*, the stem –*genes* is understood by *beget*. *Gennao* means *beget*. Therefore, in the compound word *monogenes*, which has the same stem –*genes*, how do you suppose we should understand the stem –*genes*?

Dear brethren, we have come full circle. This final example clearly demonstrates how the assertion that the stem –*genes* cannot mean “begotten” or “born” is simply unfounded and false! It is a hoax perpetrated upon the minds of unsuspecting Christians. It is a myth that has become widespread, gaining a life of its own because of the strength of the internet. This example clearly demonstrates why the assertion made by Greek scholars today – that that the Greek speaking Christians of yesterday have been wrong for two

thousand years regarding the meaning of the stem *-genes* – is so ridiculous and without foundation.

The Greek scholars of yesterday have not been wrong; they have been correct! They have correctly understood the stem *-genes* as born or begotten. It is the Greek scholars of today that have been wrong.

All those early Christians, whose mother tongue was Greek, were the ones who were right, and all those modern scholars, whose mother tongue is English and not Greek, are the ones who are wrong.

Additionally, we also find that the stem *-genes* is, indeed, related to *gennaō*, and not just to *genos*. Stated plainly, Neo-Trinitarians have misled a whole generation of Christians regarding this matter. They have wrongly asserted that *monogenes* cannot mean *only-begotten*. The stem in *μονογενής* clearly is understood as *born* or *begotten* as it is also understood in *πρωτογενής*, which means *first begotten*!

You would think, at the minimum, the Modern Greek Neo-Trinitarian scholar would let the Christian reader know the stem *-genes*, indeed, can mean “born” or “begotten” in the compound word *monogenes*, even though they might not agree. Liddell and Scott admitted as much in the late 1800’s. Why is it so hard for Neo-Trinitarians to admit it?

This spiritual battle over *monogenes* is getting worse and worse as time goes on. In the late 19th century those who introduced the meaning of “one of a kind” for *monogenes* could still admit that *only-begotten* was also a possible meaning. By the 1930’s they still had some objectivity and could still admit as much, as Francis Warden did, although he tried hard to disprove it. But by the 1950’s men begin to lose that objectivity, as seen with the example of Dale Moody, who outright denied the possibility of *only-begotten* and labeled the Church deceived for fifteen hundred years.

And now that we have reached the 21st century, not only do men deny the possibility of *only-begotten*, they also deny the doctrine behind the word *monogenes*, the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son from the Father. They have left the Historic Christian Faith, and they continue to pass on false and misleading information regarding the meaning of *monogenes* and the stem *-genes*, without the blink of an eye. Almost every modern Bible translation, since the introduction of the RSV in middle of the 20th century, now substitutes a different meaning for *monogenes*.

Dear brethren, the fact of the matter is, such men are deceived, whether they know it or not. They have departed from the Faith, whether they will admit it or not. I do not make that judgment by myself, for who am I? It is the millions of godly Christians down through the ages who have made that judgment. I am just a part of them.

Neo-Trinitarians are the ones who are introducing a new doctrine. I am not! They are the ones departing from the Historic Christian Faith. I will not. Each Christian will have to decide for themselves. Will you remain in the Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints or will you follow their new doctrine, that our precious Lord Jesus Christ was not the Only-begotten Son of God eternally begotten of the Father before all time – Very God of Very God, equal in all ways with the Father, being co-eternal, co-essential, and co-eternal not only with the Father but also with the Holy Spirit – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. Amen.

The Testimony of Old Latin Versions, Jerome and the Latin Vulgate²³⁶

We mentioned before that when the writings of Irenaeus were translated into Latin, they translated the Greek word “monogenes” by the Latin word “unigenitus.” The same thing occurred when the Greek Scriptures were translated into Latin. In the majority of cases where the Greek word “monogenes” was applied to Christ, it was translated by the Latin word “unigenitus,” demonstrating that the early Latin Christians understood “monogenes” as “unigenitus.”

As was mentioned before, the word “unigenitus” is made up from two words, “*unicus*” which means “only” or “unique” and “*genitum*” which means to beget or bear. The word clearly means “only” or “uniquely” begotten, and it is this word which is used in the majority of cases to translate “monogenes” when speaking of Christ.

Below is a chart showing which word was used in the Old Latin Texts in those places where Christ is the subject matter.

Old Latin Texts of John 1:14; 1:18 & 3:16, 18

✓ = unigenitus for the Greek word Μονογενής

0 = unicus for the Greek word Μονογενής

Old Latin Manuscript	Jn 1:14	Jn 1:18	Jn 3:16	Jn 3:18
Codex Auren 8 th Century	✓	✓	✓	✓
Codex Bezae 5 th Century 400A.D.	missing	missing	0	0
Codex Brixianus 6 th Century	✓	✓	✓	✓
Codex Carnotensis 6 th Century	✓	✓	✓	✓
Codex Colbertinus 12 th Century	✓	✓	✓	✓
Codex Corbeiensis 5 th Century	✓	✓	✓	✓
Codex Gatianus 9 th Century 800 A.D.	✓	✓	?	✓
Codex Monacensis 6 th or 7 th Century	0	✓	✓	✓
Codex Palatinus 5 th Century	✓	0	0	0
Codex Rehdigeranus	missing	✓	✓	✓

²³⁶ An excerpt from *Understanding the Trinity, An Encouragement to Abide in the Doctrine in both Faith and Practice*, by B.P. Harris, (Assembly Bookshelf, Sacramento, 2006), pgs. 374-387

8 th Century				
Old Latin Manuscript	Jn 1:14	Jn 1:18	Jn 3:16	Jn 3:18
Codex Sangallensis 48 5 th Century	✓	✓	✓	✓
Codex Sangallensis 60p4 9 th Century	✓	✓	?	✓
Codex Sangermanensis Secundus 8 th Cent.	✓	✓	0	✓
Codex Usserianus Primus 7 th Cent.700 A.D.	missing	✓	0	✓
Codex Vercellensis 4 th Century	0	0	0	0
Codex Veronensis 5 th Century	✓	✓	0	✓
Codex Wurzburg/univ Mpthf67 9 th Century	✓	✓	✓	✓

Some dismiss the assertion of this chart because they say that these Old Latin Texts were corrupted by Jerome's Vulgate translation. They claim that Jerome's use of *unigenitus* was influenced by a series of lectures by Gregory of Nazianzus. They assert that before Jerome studied with Gregory, he understood *monogenes* by *unicus*, but because of Gregory's influence, he changed his mind, and thus introduced the concept of *unigenitus*, "only-begotten," into his own Latin translation, which, they then claim, corrupted the Old Latin Texts.

This story of Jerome and Gregory has been repeated over and over by many different people, but dear reader, there is not one shred of evidence to support such a conclusion. In fact, the whole assertion is mistaken. The statement is not true. Jerome believed the Lord Jesus to be the *Only-Begotten Son* before he ever studied with Gregory. Jerome didn't need Gregory to teach him the Faith concerning the nature of Christ, for he was ordained a priest before he ever studied under Gregory and, as such, he would have already agreed with one of the first Statements of Faith of the Church, the Nicene Creed, which declared 54 years before that Christ was "*monogenes*," or "*unigenitus*."

This is all the more confirmed for us because during that time, when he was ordained a priest, the church in Antioch was undergoing the Meletian Schism, and it was with the Eustathian group that Jerome finally allied himself and whose bishop, Paulinus, ordained him as priest. The Eustathian group was the group who adhered minutely to the Nicene Creed, and which believed the Lord was *monogenes*, in other words, *unigenitus*.

Well some may say, "But you are back reading the meaning only-begotten into the Creed. But in all candidness, such a claim is totally misguided and is made by one desperate to change the meaning of *monogenes* from only-begotten to only. There is not one shred of evidence to support such an

assertion. Even, Wayne Grudem admits the fathers of that day understood *monogenes* to mean “only-begotten.” He says in his Systematic Theology,

“The controversy over the term “only-begotten” was unnecessary because it was based on a misunderstanding of the meaning of the Greek word *monogenes* (used of Jesus in John 1:14, 18; 3:16,18; and I John 4:9). For many years it was thought to be derived from two Greek terms: *mono*, meaning “only,” and *gennao*, meaning “beget” or “bear.” Even the received version of the Nicene Creed understand it that way, since the explanatory phrases “begotten of the Father before all worlds” and “begotten, not made” both use the verb *gennao* (beget) to explain *monogenes*.”²³⁷

So we see that Jerome understood *monogenes* to mean *only-begotten*, and that the Son was eternally begotten of the Father before he ever studied with Gregory. Gregory did not introduce some new doctrine to Jerome, nor did he change his mind.

The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia gives us the following chronology.

“Returning to Antioch, in 378 or 379, he was ordained by Bishop Paulinus, apparently with some unwillingness and on condition that he still continue his ascetic life. Soon afterward he went to Constantinople to pursue his study of Scripture under the instruction of Gregory Nazianzen. There he seems to have spent two years; the next three (382-385) he was in Rome again, in close intercourse with Pope Damasus and the leading Roman Christians.”²³⁸

Therefore, one sees that the assertion made by Dale Moody and others, that Jerome came to understand that *monogenes* meant *unigenitus* and that the Lord was the Only-begotten of the Father, was all because of his studies with Gregory, is unfounded and misleading. His time with Gregory came after he had already asserted his belief in the eternal generation of the Son.

This is also easily demonstrated by reading Jerome’s writings. Before he ever joined Gregory, Jerome wrote his *Dialogue against the Luciferians*. It was written around 379 A.D. The Introduction to this work in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Edition*, says the following about this treatise.

“This Dialogue was written about 379, seven years after the death of Lucifer, and very soon after Jerome’s return from his hermit life in the desert of Chalcis. Though he received ordination from Paulinus, who had been consecrated by Lucifer, he had no sympathy with Lucifer’s narrower views, as he shows plainly in this Dialogue.”²³⁹

²³⁷ Grudem, Wayne, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2009), pg. 1233

²³⁸ Jackson, Samuel Macauley, D.D., LL.D, Editor-in-Chief, *The new Schaff-Herzog encyclopedia of religious knowledge: embracing Biblical, historical, doctrinal, and practical theology and Biblical, theological, and ecclesiastical biography from the earliest times to the present day Volume 6* (Funk and Wagnalls Co. New York and London, 1910) Pg. 126

²³⁹ Schaff, Philip, Ed. Wace, Henry, Ed. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series Vol. VI*, (T&T Clark, Edinburgh; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI 1993), page 319

As we will see it is totally misleading to say Jerome did not adhere to the doctrine of the Only-begotten until after he studied with Gregory, as this treatise will clearly show.

“And all the more because the current profession of faith no longer exhibited on the face of it anything profane. “We believe,” said they, “in one true God, the Father Almighty. This we also confess: We believe in the only-begotten Son of God, who, before all worlds, and before all their origins, was born of God. The only-begotten Son, moreover, we believe to be born alone of the Father alone, God of God, like to his Father who begot Him, according to the Scriptures: whose birth no one knows, but the Father alone who begot Him.” Do we find any such words inserted here as “There was a time, when he was not?” Or, “The Son of God is a creature though not made of things which exist.” No. This is surely the perfection of faith to say we believe Him to be God of God. Moreover, they called Him the only-begotten, “born alone of the Father.” What is the meaning of born? Surely, not made. His birth removed all suspicion of His being a creature. They added further, “Who came down from heaven, was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified by Pontius Pilate, rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of the Father, who will come to judge the quick and the dead.” There was the ring of piety in the words, and no one thought that poison was mingled with the honey of such a proclamation...”

“...Lastly, at the very time when rumour was rife that there had been some insincerity in the statement of the faith, Valens, bishop of Mursa, who had drawn it up, in the presence of Taurus the praetorian prefect who attended the Synod by imperial command, declared that he was not an Arian, and that he utterly abhorred their blasphemies. However, the thing had been done in secret, and it had not extinguished the general feeling. So on another day, when crowds of bishops and laymen came together in the Church at Ariminum, Muzonius, bishop of the province of Byzacena, to whom by reason of seniority the first rank was assigned by all, spoke as follows: “One of our number has been authorized to read to you, reverend fathers, what reports are being spread and have reached us, so that the evil opinions which ought to grate upon our ears and be banished from our hearts may be condemned with one voice by us all.” The whole body of bishops replied, Agreed. “And so when Claudius, bishop of the province of Picenum, at the request of all present, began to read the blasphemies attributed to Valens, Valens denied they were his and cried aloud, “If anyone denies Christ our Lord, the Son of God, begotten of the Father before the worlds, let him be anathema.” There was a general chorus of approval, “Let him be anathema...”

“...After these proceedings the Council was dissolved. All returned in gladness to their own provinces. For the Emperor and all good men had one and the same aim, that the East and West should be knit together by the bond of fellowship. But wickedness does not long lie hid, and the sore that is healed superficially before the bad humour has been worked off breaks out again. Valens and Ursacius and others associated with them in their wickedness, eminent Christian bishops of course, began to wave their palms, and to say they had not denied that He was a creature, but that He was like other creatures. At that moment...the Nicene Faith stood condemned by acclamation. The whole world groaned, and was astonished to find itself Arian.”²⁴⁰

From his own writings we see that Jerome understood the Lord to be *only-begotten*, or *unigenitus*, before he ever joined Gregory. He said that the common Faith declared that he was “the only-begotten, ‘born alone of the Father.’” What could be more succinct as to the meaning of monogenes?

²⁴⁰ Ibid., pg. 328-329

So this assertion that Jerome was swayed by Gregory to understand *monogenes* as *unigenitus*, and not as *unicus*, is completely false and without standing!

Now how about the other assertion that is made that it was Jerome's insertion of including *unigenitus* in his Latin translation – the Vulgate – he caused the corruption of the Old Latin texts. This too, is without foundation.

More than likely, the corruption went the other way around! Most Vulgate texts were corrupted by the Old Latin Texts. Why? – Because there was such a resistance to the Vulgate that many Christians preferred to use their Old Latin Texts. In fact, many times the scribes would insert Old Latin phrases into the Vulgate!

Now, no doubt, over time, there would have also been corruption in the Old Latin texts, but until the Vulgate was accepted, most of the contamination went the other way. Sir Frederic Kenyon refers to this phenomenon.

He says,

“Then came the Vulgate, the revised Latin Bible of St. Jerome. Undertaken as it was at the express request of the Pope, it, yet, did not win immediate acceptance. Even so great an authority as St. Augustine objected to the extensive departures from the current version which Jerome had made in his Old Testament. For some centuries the Vulgate and the Old Latin existed side by side. Complete Bibles were then rare. More commonly, a volume would contain only one group of books, such as the Pentateuch or the Prophets, the Gospels or the Pauline Epistles; and it would very easily happen that the library of any one individual would have some of these groups according to the older version, and others according to the Vulgate, Hence we find Christian writers in the fifth and sixth centuries using sometimes one version and sometimes the other; and when complete copies of the Bible came to be written, some books might be copied from manuscripts of the one type, and others from those of the other. Special familiarity with particular books was a strong bar to the acceptance of the new text. Thus the Gospels continued to circulate in the Old Latin much later than the Prophets, and the old version of the Psalms was never superseded by Jerome's translation at all, but continues to this day to hold its place in the received Bible of the Roman Church.”²⁴¹

“Scribes engaged in copying the Vulgate would, from sheer familiarity with the older version, write down its words instead of those of St. Jerome; and on the other hand a copyist of the Old Latin would introduce into its text some of the improvements of the Vulgate.”²⁴²

And so we see that there was quite a resistance to Jerome's Vulgate. In fact, it was the Gospels in the Old Latin that continued to circulate longer than other books in the Old Latin and so would have been more resistant to any changes from Jerome's Vulgate. So the chances that scribes would alter “unicus” to “unigenitus” in the Gospel of John are greatly exaggerated.

²⁴¹ Kenyon, Sir Frederic George, *Our Bible and the ancient manuscripts: being a history of the text and its translations* (Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1898) pg. 175

²⁴² *Ibid.*, Pg. 176

There is no doubt that some changes had to have occurred over time to the Old Latin text, as changes had to have occurred to the Vulgate, but there is no sound reason to conclude that all Old Latin Texts that have *unigenitus* were corrupted by the Vulgate and that is why they have *unigenitus* rather than *unicus*. There is no evidence to even suggest that assertion, absolutely none!

Now some will say, well some of the earlier Old Latin versions have *unicus* and some of the later Old Latin versions have *unigenitus*, therefore the later ones must have been changed from *unicus* to *unigenitus*.

One needs to realize that there is not a direct lineal descent from the earliest Old Latin Texts to the later Old Latin Texts, as if there was one parent Old Latin Text that originally had *unicus* and, when that pure Old Latin text was recopied by scribes, they changed the word into *unigenitus* because of the influence of the Vulgate. That is simply not true. The Old Latin texts were written from different parts of the Roman Empire and were not all related to a common source. Different Latin scribes in different parts of the empire would translate the Scriptures out of the Greek and into Latin for those Christians in their area. The accuracy of the translation would depend on the ability of the translator, and, just as today, some translators have a better grasp of the language than others. Not every Latin scribe or translator was equal in their ability or in their intellect. As Augustine said in *De Doctrina Christiana*, ii.11 when he was talking about the Old Latin texts—

"For the translations of the Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek can be counted, but Latin translators are out of all numbers. For in the early days of the faith every man who happened to get his hands upon a Greek manuscript, and who thought he had any knowledge, were it ever so little, of the two languages, ventured upon the work of translation."²⁴³

In other words, the reason why some Old Latin texts had either *unicus* or *unigenitus* was because that particular translator chose those words to translate *monogenes*. It doesn't mean a corruption was involved. We do not know why he chose one word over the other or why in some cases both words are used in the same Gospel as the chart shows.

For example, Codex Monacensis translates *monogenes* by *unicus* in John 1:14, but then four verses later, in verse 18, it uses *unigenitus* for *monogenes*, which it also does in the remaining verses in John. Or conversely, in Codex Palatinus, *monogenes* is translated by *unigenitus* in Jn. 1:14, but then four verses later and in the remaining verses of John it translates *monogenes* by *unicus*!

Obviously, if words were being altered in these particular verses in later copies of these codices, one would expect to find that if one word was altered in one verse, the same word would be also altered in the remaining verses.

²⁴³ Schaff, Philip, Ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Vol. 2, (T&T Clark, Edinburgh, WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1993),Pg. 540

But, as that is not the case, it implies there was no corruption or alteration at all.

So the fact remains, when we consider all the Old Latin texts, we find that while some translated *monogenes* by *unicus*, the vast majority of Old Latin translators translated *monogenes* as *unigenitus*. *Unicus* was the minority translation, and not the majority translation as many claim today.

Moreover, remember – the fact that Latin Christians understood *monogenes* to mean *unigenitus* is not only dependent on Old Latin Texts of the Greek Scriptures. As was mentioned before, *monogenes* in the writings of Irenaeus was translated by *unigenitus*, and the Latin Christian, Tertullian, who wrote 150-200 years before Jerome, (when many of the Old Latin texts were being written), certainly understood *monogenes* as *unigenitus*.

As we mentioned before he writes in *Against Praxeas*, Chapter VII,

“Thus does He make Him equal to Him: for by proceeding from Himself He became His first-begotten Son, because begotten before all things; and His only-begotten also, because alone begotten of God, in a way peculiar to Himself, from the womb of His own heart—even as the Father Himself testifies: “My heart,” says He, “hath emitted my most excellent Word.”²⁴⁴

And in the Latin it reads,

“...exinde eum patrem sibi faciens de quo procedendo filius factus est primogenitus, ut ante omnia genitus, et **unigenitus**, ut solus ex deo genitus, proprie de vulva cordis ipsius secundum quod et pater ipse testatur, Eructavit cor meum sermonem optimum...”²⁴⁵

Therefore, it is not accurate to say that if a later Old Latin text has *unigenitus* is must be a corruption by Jerome’s Vulgate. Latin speaking Christians understood *monogenes* to mean *unigenitus* (only-begotten) long before Jerome was even born. As such, they commonly used that word in their Old Latin translations.

In addition, one must realize that an earlier text does not necessarily mean a better text. In other words, just because one might have an earlier Old Latin text from the 4th century, that must be a better and more accurate than a later Old Latin text from the 5th or 6th century. This is a misleading assumption. That would be like saying that some of our Greek manuscripts of a later date cannot be as good as an earlier Greek manuscript, or, if it is later, it is less likely to reflect the true reading of the original autographs.

²⁴⁴ Roberts, Alexander; Donaldson, James, ed., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. III (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI 1985), pg. 601

²⁴⁵ Sourced from *Against Praxeas*, chapter VII at:

http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/04z/z_0160-0220__Tertullianus__Adversus_Praxean_Liber__LT.doc.html

A trusted friend once reminded me that Greek professor, Edward Goodrick, from Multnomah School of the Bible, once said, something to the effect, “Earlier manuscripts are not necessarily the better manuscripts. Sometimes an earlier manuscript may have been an inferior manuscript that was set aside from use and so, because of lack of use, was preserved, whereas the better manuscript was worn out through continual use and so had to be recopied and so was of a later date.” In other words, it is untrue that the earlier Old Latin Texts are better and less likely to be corrupted.

It is a false premise to claim that later Old Latin texts are inferior, and earlier Old Latin texts are better. Indeed, the later Old Latin texts may be the better one because it reflects a text that was well respected and continually used and so was a text that had to be continually recopied because its earlier copy wore out through its continual use.

Nevertheless, some people may still say if an Old Latin text has *unigenitus* it must be a corruption by Jerome’s Vulgate. If someone still claims such a corruption, one need only ask,

“How do you know it was corrupted precisely in John 1:14, 18; 3:16 or 3:18? It may have been corrupted, let’s say, in Matt. 5:8, or Rom 1:9, or in any number of other verses.”

If you ask that question, they will not be able to answer, because there is no evidence that shows those specific verses were corrupted. It is all conjecture! If someone produces evidence to the contrary, I will bow to the obvious.

No – the reason later Old Latin texts have *unigenitus* in the Gospel of John is because it was a copy of an earlier Old Latin text which, more than likely, also had *unigenitus* in the Gospel of John. *Monogenes* was commonly understood by Latin Christians to mean *unigenitus*.

In the same way, one would also have to say, the reason some later Old Latin texts had *unicus* in the Gospel of John is because, more than likely, the earlier Old Latin text had *unicus* in the Gospel of John.

Now, could a scribe, when coming to a place where the original Old Latin text had *unigenitus* decide, because of his supposed skill in language, that *unicus* would be a better translation than *unigenitus*, and so change it in his new copy? Certainly! That could explain why some “later” Old Latin texts, like Codex Palatinus, have *unicus* rather than *unigenitus*. Anything is possible. But more than likely, unless there is evidence to prove otherwise, the reason some later Old Latin texts have *unicus*, is because the earlier Old Latin texts they were copying had *unicus*. And the reason later Old Latin texts have *unigenitus*, is because the earlier Old Latin texts they were copying had *unigenitus*.

It would be convenient to ignore those Old Latin Texts that have *unigenitus*, and simply declare that they must be corruptions, but to do so is to create a “straw man argument.”

There is no doubt that for a period of centuries the two translations were intermixed, as was mentioned above, but one does not know where, when, or if any cross contamination occurred. There is no evidence that the Old Latin verses in John were corrupted by the Vulgate, and so, without such evidence, what we are left with is the undeniable fact that most Old Latin texts use *unigenitus* in regard to Christ, because that was the most common understanding of the word.

But let’s assume, for the sake of argument, some Old Latin texts were corrupted by Jerome’s Vulgate and in those texts the word *unicus* was changed to *unigenitus*. And let’s assume that those Old Latin texts before Jerome were uncorrupt and reflected the original word the translator chose for *monogenes*. Would it change the results? Let’s examine the evidence.

Henry Alford lists the following Codices as being what some like to call “pure,” (i.e. being before Jerome). He states, “The ancient Latin versions before Jerome are known to us by the following mss.”²⁴⁶ He then lists the codices considered before Jerome, which are included in the chart below. I have even included Codex Bezae, even though Alford did not include it. He does not list *j*. The mss. *h* and *k* do not include John. The chart only deals with those Old Latin texts which include those verses in John’s gospel, as those verses are the verses in question.

**Old Latin Texts Before Jerome Including
John 1:14; 1:18 & 3:16,18**

- ✓ = unigenitus for the Greek word μονογενής
0 = unicus for the Greek word μονογενής

Old Latin Manuscript	Jn 1:14	Jn 1:18	Jn 3:16	Jn 3:18
Codex Bezae 5 th Century 400 A.D.	missing	missing	0	0
Codex Brixianus 6 th Century	✓	✓	✓	✓
Codex Colbertinus 12 th Century	✓	✓	✓	✓
Codex Corbeiensis 5 th Century	✓	✓	✓	✓

²⁴⁶ Alford, Henry, *The Greek New Testament Vol. 1*(Moody Press, Chicago, 1958), pg. 140. This is found in his Prolegomena.

Old Latin Manuscript	Jn 1:14	Jn 1:18	Jn 3:16	Jn 3:18
Codex Monacensis 6 th or 7 th Century	0	✓	✓	✓
Codex Palatinus 5 th Century	✓	0	0	0
Codex Rehdigeranus 8 th Century	missing	✓	✓	✓
Codex Sangallensis 48 5 th Century	✓	✓	✓	✓
Codex Sangallensis 60p4 9 th Century	✓	✓	?	✓
Codex Sangermanensis Secundus 8 th Cent.	✓	✓	0	✓
Codex Vercellensis 4 th Century	0	0	0	0
Codex Veronensis 5 th Century	✓	✓	0	✓

In these Old Latin versions before Jerome, as Alford calls them, (which I assume he means genuine Old Latin texts, not influenced by Jerome, because some are from later centuries) there is a total 44 recorded occurrences of the Greek word *monogenes*. In 32 cases it is rendered *unigenitus* and in 12 cases it is rendered *unicus*.

So, even if one wants to change the parameters from Old Latin texts, to Old Latin texts before Jerome, (i.e. not be open to corruption), the majority still favour the translation of *monogenes* by *unigenitus* by a margin of almost 3 to 1!

Therefore, one can see by the evidence, that the claim that the Old Latin texts routinely translate *monogenes* by *unicus* and not by *unigenitus* is unfounded and, actually, the opposite is the truth. The Old Latin texts show that that *monogenes* was routinely translated by *unigenitus*, meaning “only-begotten,” and that *unigenitus* was the common understanding of *monogenes* by many early Latin Christians. What is continually repeated over and over on the web regarding this is a falsehood that is undermining the faith of many Christians. Anything that one reads on the web should be checked for accuracy, for much that is purported to be true is false. And if anyone is reading this book online, I would encourage you to check my facts for accuracy. It will strengthen your faith for we are all commanded by God to “test the spirits.”

THE APOSTLES' CREED²⁴⁷

I believe in God the Father almighty;
And in Christ Jesus His only (unicus) Son, our Lord,
Who was born from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
Who under Pontius Pilate was crucified and buried,
On the third day rose again from the dead,
Ascended to heaven,
Sits at the right hand of the Father,
Whence He will come to judge the living and the dead;
And in the Holy Spirit,
The holy Church,
The remission of sins,
The resurrection of the flesh

When one reads the various Latin Creeds from the churches in the West, one realizes that many include the word *unicus* (only), rather than *unigenitus* (only-begotten) in the Second Article. Why did the Latin Christians utilize this word in their Creeds, when many in the East utilized *monogenes* in their Greek Creeds? In other words, why did they say “only” Son, rather than “only-begotten” Son?

The answer is simple, but first let me say the use of the one does not nullify the other. Both statements are true! Why do we assume the one negates the other? That would be as if someone said, “I believe in God the Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ,” rather than saying in His only Son, Jesus Christ, that it must mean such a person did not believe Jesus Christ was God’s only Son. Obviously, someone would say, “That’s a silly conclusion.” Well, is it not just as silly to assume that because one “I believe in His only Son,” rather than “I believe in His Only-Begotten Son,” that such a person must not believe the Son was the only-begotten of God His Father?

The fact of the matter is that Latin Christians who used “only” in their Creeds also believed Christ was also the only-begotten of the Father before all time. It simply was not stated so succinctly in their Creed, but that does not mean they did not believe it.

Secondly, many wrongly assume that the Apostles’ Creed was a translation of an earlier Apostles’ Creed in Greek, and, as such, the use of *unicus* becomes significant because they assume it is a translation of the Greek word

²⁴⁷ An excerpt from *Understanding the Trinity, An Encouragement to Abide in the Doctrine in both Faith and Practice*, by B.P. Harris, (Assembly Bookshelf, Sacramento, 2006), pgs. 388-403

monogenes used in the Greek version. This simply is not true. Now, no doubt, some of the Creeds may have been translated from a Greek Version, and vice versa, but generally speaking, the Latin Creeds were not derived from earlier Greek versions, but were Creeds originally created by certain Latin churches out of their own baptismal confessions.

For example, some believe the Creeds found in the *Psalterium Graecum ET Romanum*, where one column is in Latin and the second column is in Greek, are translations of each other.

Consequently, they assume *unicus* in the Latin Creed is a translation of the *monogenes* in the Greek Creed. But this is not true. They are not translations of each other, but are Creeds derived from different sources which were simply put side by side. In fact, the Latin does not exactly correspond to the Greek.

For example, in the fifth line the Latin Creed says Christ was conceived “de,” “down from,” or “away from” the Holy Spirit. The Greek says Christ was conceived “ek” “out of,” or “from” the Holy Spirit. The Latin preposition does not correspond to the Greek preposition. It could not simply be that the Latin “de” was considered an equivalent to the Greek “ek,” (which, of course, it does not), because, later in line six when the Greek says Christ was born “ek” out of the Virgin Mary, the Latin agrees with the Greek and says Christ was born “ex Maria virgine.” If the one was a translation of the other, why would “ek” or “de” be translated “de” or “ek” respectively, (depending if the Latin was a translation of the Greek, or the Greek was a translation of the Latin), and then a few words later translate “ek,” not by “de,” but by “ex,” or vice versa. Therefore we see the one is not a precise translation of the other.

The whole conclusion that the use of *unicus* in the Latin Creeds gives sure proof that *monogenes* was originally understood as *unicus* and not as *unigenitus* is simply a fabrication out of thin air.

Philip Schaff gives a concise statement about the nature and origin of the Creeds in his book *The Creeds of Christendom*.

“Faith, like all strong conviction, has a desire to utter itself before others—' Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;' ' I believe, therefore I confess...' There is also an express duty, when we are received into the membership of the Christian Church, and on every proper occasion, to profess the faith within us, to make ourselves known as followers of Christ, and to lead others to him by the influence of our testimony.”

“This is the origin of Christian symbols or creeds. They never precede faith, but presuppose it. They emanate from the inner life of the Church, independently of external occasion. There would have been creeds even if there had been no doctrinal controversies. In a certain sense it may be said that the Christian Church has never been without a creed. The baptismal formula and the words of institution of the Lord's Supper are creeds; these and the confession of Peter antedate even the birth of the Christian Church on the day of Pentecost. The Church is, indeed, not founded on symbols, but on Christ; not on any words of man, but on the word of God; yet it is founded on Christ as confessed by men, and a creed is man's answer to Christ's question, man's acceptance and interpretation of God's word. Hence it is after the memorable confession of Peter that Christ said.' Thou art Rock, and upon this rock I shall build my

Church,' as if to say,' Thou art the Confessor of Christ, and on this Confession, as an immovable rock, I shall build my Church.' Where there is faith, there is also profession of faith. As ' faith without works is dead,' so it may be said also that faith without confession is dead."

"But this confession need not always be written, much less reduced to a logical formula. If a man can say from his heart, ' I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,' it is sufficient for his salvation (Acts xvi. 31). The word of God, apprehended by a living faith, which founded the Christian Church, was at first orally preached and transmitted by the apostles, then laid down in the New Testament Scriptures, as a pure and unerring record for all time to come. So the confession of faith, or the creed, was orally taught and transmitted to the catechumens, and professed by them at baptism, long before it was committed to writing...When controversies arose concerning the true meaning of the Scriptures, it became necessary to give formal expression of their true sense, to regulate the public teaching of the Church, and to guard it against error. In this way the creeds were gradually enlarged and multiplied..."

"The first Christian confession or creed is that of Peter, when Christ asked the apostles, ' Who say ye that I am?' and Peter, in the name of all the rest, exclaimed, as by divine inspiration, ' Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God' (Matt. xvi. 16).' This became naturally the substance of the baptismal confession, since Christ is the chief object of the Christian faith. Philip required the eunuch simply to profess the belief that 'Jesus was the Son of God.' In conformity with the baptismal formula, however, it soon took a Trinitarian shape, probably in some such simple form as ' I believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.' Gradually it was expanded, by the addition of other articles, into the various rules of faith, of which the Roman form under the title ' the Apostles' Creed' became the prevailing one, after the fourth century, in the West, and the Nicene Creed in the East."²⁴⁸

We now can begin to understand why the Apostles' Creed has "only" (unicus) Son," and others have "Only-begotten" (unigenitus) Son. As we saw above, the Creed was the outgrowth of baptismal formulas. There was not one standardized Creed in the West that all others were copied or translated from. Certain individual churches would create a confession as to what they believed the Apostles revealed to them was the truth concerning the Faith, and they would use that in their baptismal formulas.

Remember, the Apostles and their fellow workers were always concerned that the truth of the Faith remained inviolate. For example, Paul admonished Timothy to commit to faithful teachers, within the assembly, the truth of what he taught concerning the Faith (II Tim. 1:13; 2:2). John admonished Christians to hold fast to what they had been taught in the beginning (I John 2:24). And Jude exhorted the saints to contend for the Faith which had once been delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3). And so we see that at the baptism of believers, affirmations of faith were asked of the baptismal candidate in order to ascertain that they truly believed and understood the true Faith.

For example, the Ethiopian eunuch was told by Philip he could be baptized only if he believed with all his heart that "Jesus was the Son of God" (Acts 8: 35-37). This is the first example of such a baptismal question in Scripture.

²⁴⁸ Schaff, Philip, *The Creeds of Christendom, Vol. 1*, (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI 1993), Pg. 4-6

This was the basis of the origin of the Creeds. As such, we notice that the central tenet of the baptismal question was whether the person believed that Jesus was the Son of God.

The significance of this is evidenced when we recall, originally, the Gospel went forth first to Jerusalem, then to Judea and then Samaria (Acts 1:8). This is important to remember when we realize the required confession of faith required of the Ethiopian eunuch did not contain the word “only.” He was simply asked to confess that “Jesus was the Son of God”. Why is that? Well, because the nation of Israel and of the Samaritans did not believe that the God of Israel was like the heathen gods who begat many sons. No, they believed according to the Scripture, that God had only one unique Son, the Messiah (Ps. 2:7). Therefore, the baptismal candidate only had to be asked if he or she believed that Jesus was that Son of God, not if they believed Jesus was His “only” Son.

However, when the Gospel came to Gentile, there was a different set of religious beliefs. Gentiles were raised to believe that God had many sons. For example, Zeus had multiple sons such as Hermes, Apollo and Ares. He also had mortal sons such as Hercules of a mortal woman named Alcmena. In the Roman religion, the Romans were brought up to believe that the foremost God, Jupiter, also had many sons, such as Vulcan, Mercury and Mars.

Therefore, it was not enough to question a Gentile baptismal candidate whether he believed Jesus was the Son of God. They needed to ask them if they believed Jesus was the “only” (*unicus*) Son of God. They needed to ascertain whether the new believer really understood the truth of the Gospel. And so, we see a reason why the little word “only” (*unicus*) may have been added.

The Jew did not need to be asked whether Jesus was the *only* Son of God; they needed to be asked simply if Jesus was the Son of God. But the Gentile needed to be asked if Jesus was the “only” Son of God.

But then someone may ask, “Why did they add “*unicus*” (only), rather than “*unigenitus*” (only-begotten) before the word Son?” The reason was the other apostles did not utilize, as far as we know, the title *only-begotten* for Christ, at least, not in Scripture. Paul never spoke of Christ as the “only-begotten.” None of the other Gospels that circulated in the later part of the first century utilized the word “*monogenes*” (Only-Begotten). It was not even revealed in Scripture as a specific title of Christ until John wrote his Gospel near the end of the first century.

And so we see that the Gentile Christians for many years were limited to only a part of the Canon of Scripture. We forget that the early Christians did not have the entire Canon of Scripture as we do today. At first, the only New Testament Scriptures many Gentile churches would have possessed would

have been the epistles of Paul. The churches would share his epistles with each other (cf. Col. 4:16). Remember, in those early days of the Gentile churches the Gospels were not yet written, especially the Gospel of John.

And so, if individual churches began putting together baptismal questions for the baptismal candidate, *for the most part*, they would have been restricted to Paul's epistles, that is, until the latter part of the first century.²⁴⁹

F. F. Bruce tells us that even after the Gospels were penned they were not grouped together as a whole until some years after the last Gospel was written, which traditionally is assigned a date late into the first century.

He states,

“Until about the sixties of the first century A.D. the need for written Gospels does not appear to have arisen. So long as the eye-witnesses of the great salvation-bringing events were alive to tell the tale, it was not so necessary to have a formal written record. But the apostles were not going to live on earth forever, and it was obviously desirable that their message should be preserved after they had gone. So we find Mark, the companion and interpreter of Peter, committing to writing in Rome the Gospel as Peter habitually proclaimed it; shortly afterward we have Matthew's Gospel appearing in the East...and Luke, the companion of Paul, writes in two books for Gentile readers a narrative of the beginnings of Christianity...Towards the end of the century, John, perhaps the last surviving companion of Jesus in the days of His flesh, records his reminiscences of his Master's life and teaching...The Gospels are not simple biographies – they are rather written transcripts of the Gospel preached by the apostles.”

“But we have not yet a canon in the sense of a collection of these writings. Towards the end of the first century, however, we find the beginnings of a movement in this direction. Not long after the writing of the fourth Gospel, the four Gospels appear to have been brought together in one collection. Thus, whereas previously Rome had Mark's Gospel, and Syria had Matthew's, and a Gentile group had Luke's, and Ephesus John's, now each church had all four in a corpus which is called The Gospel (each of the components being distinguished by the additional words, According to Matthew, According to Mark, and so on).”²⁵⁰

More than likely this collection of all the Gospels together began sometime at the beginning of the second century. Until that time, some churches would have copies of some of the Gospels and others would have copies of other Gospels. Those were not the days of instant publishing and mass market distribution. It was a long painstaking process to produce a copy and so it should not surprise us that this process took time.

Consequently, for the decades shortly following the death of Paul, the only New Testament Scriptures the churches in the West may have had was some of Paul's epistles, and perhaps, Peter's epistles, along with the Gospel of

²⁴⁹ If Peter was in Rome, then, perhaps, in those later decades of the first century some western churches may have also had the Gospel of Mark, the epistles of Peter, and perhaps, Luke's writings.

²⁵⁰ Bruce, F. F., *The Books and the Parchments*, (Fleming H. Revell Co., Westwood, New Jersey 1963) pg. 106-7

Mark, and possibly the writings of Luke. It would have been from those writings that their confessions of faith would have arisen. In any case, they would not have possessed the Gospel of John, for it would not be written until the end of the first century.

When we understand this we can understand why the Latin Churches picked the term *unicus* rather than *unigenitus*. For many years the churches may not have even known Christ by the title *monogenes*, or “Only-begotten.” There is no evidence that Paul knew this title was used by our Lord. Peter did not use it in his writings, nor did Luke in reference to Christ. Remember, more than likely, Paul’s knowledge of the earthly ministry of our Lord was limited to what he learned from the Apostles and those with firsthand knowledge. If John or one of the others had not spoken to Paul about our Lord’s conversation with Nicodemus that night so long ago, he might not have known that the Lord’s name included that title, and since John’s Gospel would not be written for perhaps another 40-50 years, the churches in the West may not have been familiar with that title – although, they would have been familiar with the doctrine behind the title.

So when they were looking for a phrase to describe Christ’s unique relationship with God the Father they, more than likely, would have looked at such verses as Rom. 8:3 and Rom. 8:32.

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his **own Son** in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” Rom. 8:3

He that spared not his **own Son**, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Rom. 8:32

Here (vs. 32) we see Paul calling Christ God’s own Son, using the word “own” (idion), which means “something privately belonging to one’s own self,” “something not common to all.” This would be an approximation of saying what the Creed declares, that they believed “in Jesus Christ, His *only Son*.”

Therefore the reason why some first century Latin Christians have *unicus* in their Creed, and not *unigenitus*, may be because they were not yet familiar with Christ’s title, *monogenes*, when they were composing their baptismal questions in those first few decades after the death of the Apostle Paul.²⁵¹ As such, the title “*unicus*” was a perfectly appropriate title based upon the New

²⁵¹ This is not to say that they did not understand the meaning of *monogenes* until John wrote his Gospel. Obviously, the Gentiles understood the meaning of *monogenes*, as was seen in First Clement, because Clement uses the word in his Epistle to the Corinthians in the last decade of the first century. What we are suggesting is that until John wrote his Gospel, they may not have known that *monogenes* was a “title” used by Christ himself.

Testament Scriptures they possessed, and so they used it in their baptismal question. And when these baptismal questions were eventually put to writing in creedal form, it would not be abnormal for them to utilize the very same words they used in their verbal confessions. They based their early Creed on their baptismal questions which in turn were based upon the New Testament Scriptures in their possession.

However, even though they had *unicus* and not *unigenitus* in their Creeds, it would be wrong to assume that they had no understanding of the truth contained in the word “*unigenitus*.” They did not have to contend with such a teaching that says Christ was not begotten of God as we do today. For them, the word “Son” was sufficient to show them that the Christ of the Blessed Trinity was begotten of the Father. To them the word “Son” was a revelatory term. They had no concept that it did not mean derivation. They had no concept of it meaning just Son in “purpose or character.” To believe such a concept to them would be contrary to Scripture and the teaching of the Apostles. Their use of *unicus* in no way diminished their understanding of the eternal begottenness of the Son from the Father.

As was said before, to the Latin Christian the word “Son” was a revelatory word sufficient to teach the doctrine of the generation of the Son from the Father. When they used *unicus*, rather than *unigenitus* in the Apostle’s Creed they were emphasizing the “uniqueness” of this begetting, not denying it. To prove this point listen to a *Commentary on the Apostle’s Creed*, written approximately in the year 307 A.D. by Rufinus.

He states the following regarding the use of *unicus* in the Apostle’s Creed:

“Having shown them what Jesus is, Who saves His people, and what Christ is, Who is made a High Priest forever, let us now see in what follows, of Whom these things are said, His only (*unicus*) Son, our Lord. Here we are taught that this Jesus, of whom we have spoken, and this Christ, the meaning of whose name we have expounded, is the only Son of God and our Lord. Lest, perchance, you should think that these human names have an earthly significance, therefore it is added that He is the ‘only’ Son of God, our Lord. For He is ‘born’ ‘One of One,’ because there is one brightness of light, and there is one word of the understanding. Neither does an incorporeal ‘generation’ degenerate into the plural number, or suffer division, where He Who is ‘born’ is in no wise separated from Him Who ‘begets.’”²⁵²

Also Augustine states:

“Since this is the case, I repeat, we believe also in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten [*unigenitum*] of the Father, that is to say, His only [*unicum*] Son, our Lord.”²⁵³

²⁵² Schaff, Philip, Wace, Henry, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. III*, (T&T Clark: Edinburgh, Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, MI 1989) Pg. 545-46

²⁵³ Schaff, Philip, Ed. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series Vol. III*, (T&T Clark, Edinburgh; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI 1993), page 323

And so we see why the Creeds differed in some particulars from church to church. Each church adapted the Creed for their own local baptismal questions that were formulated according to the particular circumstances of their church, and, more than likely, also according to those portions of the New Testament Scriptures they possessed.

Another example which demonstrates this local variety is the fact that some Creeds would read that they believe “in Jesus Christ,” yet in other Creeds it would read “in one Jesus Christ” adding the little word “one.” Why would some churches add this word? Because in some churches Gnosticism was a real threat because Gnostics taught that Jesus was separate from Christ. They believed the Christ descended on Jesus at his baptism, who then left him before his death on the cross, so that Jesus and Christ were two separate persons. In order to ascertain that the baptismal candidate did not hold to this understanding they inserted the little word “one,” in order to affirm that Jesus and Christ were one and the same – “one Jesus Christ.”

Sir Peter King in his book on the Apostles’ Creed mentions this fact,

“But, though the Eastern Creeds did read in One Jesus Christ, yet in the west where the Churches were not so much invested and ravaged by the Gnostics, the Creed, as our present one doth, expressed this Article without the addition of the term One, saying, And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord.”²⁵⁴

And in another place he states:

“Not long after the apostles days, and even in the apostolic age itself, several heresies sprung up in the church, subversive of the fundamentals of Christianity ; to prevent the malignant effects whereof, and to hinder such heretics from an undiscernible mixing themselves with the orthodox Christians, as also to establish and strengthen the true believers in the necessary truths of the Christian religion, the Christian verities [truths] opposite [opposed] to those heresies, were inserted in the creed.”²⁵⁵

And finally,

“I would not be here mistaken, as if I did, mean, that none of those articles which were introduced into the creed, and settled there in opposition to heresies were ever used before, or demanded at baptism by the administerer thereof: but my meaning is, that every church [was]...at liberty to express the fundamental articles of the Christian faith in that way and manner, which she saw fit...”²⁵⁶

And so we see why some Creeds would read one way and the others would read a little bit different. Each church would adopt the Creed to its own particular needs and dangers present from heresies. But now let us return to

²⁵⁴ King, Sir Peter, *The History of the Apostles Creed*, (Printed and Published by John Woods, Elizabeth-town, New Jersey, 1804), pg. 102

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 37

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 38

the main question in hand, why do some Creeds read *unicus* and some read *unigenitus*?

First, we have seen that in the first few decades after the death of the apostle Paul there was a gradual development of the Creeds in the West from baptismal questions which were formulated from whatever New Testament writings each church possessed, and were formulated in opposition to the prevailing heresies of the day. This would explain the prevailing use of *unicus* in the churches in the West.

Secondly, based upon this liberty of each church to formulate their baptismal questions, we have seen that the written Creeds of the churches differed from place to place in small particulars. As such, it would not be surprising that the Eastern churches, who would have greater access to John's Gospel in the latter decade of the first century, would have been more likely to utilize John's use of *monogenes* (*unigenitus*) in their baptismal questions before the churches in the West.

This would explain why eastern churches would sometimes have *unigenitus* and western churches would still have *unicus*. It was not because Latin Christians were translating the word *monogenes* as *unicus* from a standardized Greek Creed. There was no standardized Creed at that time, and the western churches use of *unicus*, more than likely, preceded the eastern churches use of *unigenitus*. Although, it should also be mentioned, that in many churches in the West, in those early days, many churches may not have even had a Latin Creed. Many of them still utilized a Greek Creed.

However, as time passed we find that, (more than likely by the end of the second decade of the second century), most Western churches would also have copies of John's Gospel, as well all the other three Gospels.

Therefore, it should not surprise us that *unigenitus* began to show up in some western Creeds, although most of them continued to use the word they were most familiar with, the word *unicus*. Either word was appropriate, for both words were rooted in the revelation of Scripture, and it must be remembered that to the Latin Christian, the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son was not based upon, nor negated by, the word *unicus*. It was a doctrine attested to by many portions of God's word and was not limited to the understanding of the word *monogenes* that they gained when they obtained a copy of John's Gospel (assuming there was not an oral tradition of the title *monogenes*).

But if the tradition of the earlier forms of the Apostles' Creed held fast among the Latin Christians, why did some adopt the word *unigenitus* in place of the word *unicus* to which they were so familiar? The answer is to remember that in those early days there never was a standardized Creed from which they copied. Each church adapted their Creeds to their particular needs. When we

recognize this we can understand why *unigenitus* began to appear in a few western Creeds.

H. B. Swete says:

“St John's phrase [*monogenes*] finds indeed no place in sub apostolic writers: though Ignatius approaches to it when he calls our Lord the Only Son... It seems to have been first seized upon by the Valentinians, who gave the name Monogenes to the Aeon Nous. The Catholic writers began, although slowly, to reclaim it; Justin uses it sparingly; it occurs once in the Smyranean circular on the martyrdom of Polycarp; in Irenaeus at length it becomes frequent. Thus it is not unlikely that the word took its place in the vocabulary of the Church by way of protest against the Valentinian misuse of St John; and the same cause may have gained for it admission to the Creed. Valentinus taught at Rome during the episcopates of Hyginus, Pius, and Anicetus, i.e. between 140 and 160 A.D.—the very epoch to which the making of the Creed is assumed to belong. The Valentinians, or at least the Anatolic School, distinguished Monogenes from the historical manifestation, remarking that St John guards himself by writing " we " beheld His glory, glory as of the only-begotten," where the qualifying word "as" bars out complete identification. If the Church of Rome admitted the word under these circumstances, it can hardly have done so except by way of protest against the Valentinian interpretation. To confess faith in Jesus Christ as the Only-begotten Son, was to identify the Only-begotten with the historical Person who was born, and died, and rose again.”²⁵⁷

During the time John composed his Gospel, Gnostics were teaching that a Pleroma of thirty Aeons proceeded from God. They believed the purpose of those aeons, or offspring, was to make known the true God. In order to combat this heresy, John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, declared in a clear and emphatic manner, Christ was not just His only (*unicus*) Son, He was also the *monogenes*, only-begotten (*unigenitus*) Son of God, who dwelt in the bosom of the Father from all of eternity, and, as such, was the only one who knew the Father and who could properly reveal or declare the Father (Jn. 1:18).

When Valentinus arose years later, he taught that Monogenes was one of God's offspring whose purpose was to reveal God; however, he did not believe Monogenes and Jesus were one and the same person. Apparently, although we could never say for sure, *unigenitus* may have replaced *unicus* in some areas of the West in order to combat this Valentinian heresy.

John's Gospel clearly declares that the "Only-begotten" (*monogenes*) was the Lord Jesus Christ, who resided in the bosom of the Father from all eternity. If that is held as true, then, obviously, the Gnostic system was in error.

What could Valentinus do, since he believed in the Gnostic system and, indeed, desired to propagate it? An apostle, who knew the Lord Jesus, declared that Christ was the Only-Begotten from all of eternity. As such, he was affirming that there were no other offspring, (as the Gnostics called them), who emanated from God the Father to produce a Pleroma. There were

²⁵⁷ Swete, H.B., *The Apostle Creed: Its relation to primitive Christianity* (C. J. Clay and Sons, London, 1894), pg. 25-26

no others who were begotten. There were no other beings in a Pleroma. What could Valentinus do? Well, change the meaning of *monogenes*! Redefine the word! And this is apparently exactly what he did.

He changed the meaning of the title that described the nature of the Son, into a simple proper name that was not to be understood as a simple adjective. Monogenes was just the name of one of many emanations from God. He was the Monogenes, the Only-begotten, the only one so named, not because He was the only one “begotten” by God, but because that was His given name. In other words, he was not given the title “only-begotten” because of the relationship of His nature with God the Father. It was simply a name. Valentinus taught he should not literally be considered the “only-begotten,” meaning “only offspring,” for God had many other offspring in his Pleroma.

By changing the meaning of *monogenes* from “only-begotten,” or “only born,” to a word that was simply used as a proper name, Valentinus was able to claim John did not mean to say, by using the title “*monogenes*,” that Christ was the “Only-begotten one of God. It was simply a proper name, and was not meant to be taken literally.

Indeed, Valentinus may have been the first person in the history of the Church to try to change the meaning of *monogenes* as it was understood by the Christian of the day. The enemy of our souls knows the importance of every revelatory word of Scripture, and if he cannot change ones acceptance of Scripture as inspired, and thus authoritarian, then he will just change the meaning of the “words” in Scripture. He has no problem allowing Christians to have their Scriptures, if he can change the meaning of the “words” in the Scriptures to his own liking, thereby, changing the true meaning of the revelation.

And so we can understand why some churches wanted to expand the meaning of *unicus* to *unigenitus*, because the Valentinian heresy may have been rampant in their area. They wanted to retain the word *monogenes* with its proper meaning. They refused to let Valentinus rob the Church of that revelatory word.

Consequently, we can now understand the varied reasons why some Latin Creeds utilized *unicus*, while the Creeds in the East utilized *unigenitus*. It had nothing to do with translations of Greek Creeds into Latin, nor was it the result of a translation of the Greek word *monogenes* into the Latin word *unicus*. Most early Latin Creeds were not translations but were declarations of faith developed from early baptismal confessions that were put together autonomously by different local assemblies in accordance with their own local situations, and in accordance with the New Testament Writings each church possessed.

Nevertheless, if someone still disagrees with this viewpoint, as to why *unicus* was utilized in those early Latin Creeds, one cannot disagree with the fact that those Christians, who confessed Christ to be His only (*unicus*) Son, believed he was the only one who was *begotten* by the Father before all time. Their understanding of this doctrine did not simply depend on the word *unicus* or *unigenitus*, but on the word *Son*. They understood it in the normal and plain sense. The word *Son* was the basis for their understanding of the doctrine of eternal generation, not the word *unicus*. *Unicus*, simply meant he was the only Son of God who was begotten of the Father before all time, as opposed to all other sons, whether referring to angels who were created (Job 1:6), or to Christians, who were begotten by regeneration in time (Rom. 8:14).

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