

Understanding Father and Mother’s Conflicting Understandings of “Only Begotten”



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I have always wondered why we use the term “Only Begotten” given the Exposition of the Divine Principle (hereafter referred to as *EDP* or just *DP*) teaching and True Father’s (hereafter referred to as “Father”) words. When our members hear them, what do they think they mean? In Seminary I learned how this terminology developed in the councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon and, as a result, wondered why we adopted them. As most people know, Christianity affirms that Jesus did not have a human father—God was Jesus’ father.¹

Father, on the other hand, has indicated that Jesus **did** have a human father—Zachariah.² The *EDP* sections on the “Principle of Creation” and “Christology” clearly distinguish Father’s teaching from traditional Christian theology. So, I take issue with the use of the term “Only Begotten” because *EDP* and Father’s teachings clearly indicate that the Christian understanding of the words “Only” and “Begotten” are incorrect and do not correlate to Unification Theology. In our theology, Adam and Eve were meant to be the **first** perfected, true human beings—true parents—not the **only** true parents. A good analysis of the problems with Unificationists using this term was made by Dr. Franco Famularo and is cited below.³ Here is a quote from the opening statement of Dr. Famularo’s paper:

“The word “begotten” is problematic for Unification teaching both within the Unification family and in efforts of Unificationists to reach out beyond Unification circles—especially to adherents of the Religions of the Book, namely, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Use of the word begotten is as challenging for Unificationists as it was for Christians in the 1950s, when translators of more recent English versions of the Bible removed the word begotten from some key verses.

The Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek, and the founders of Unificationism speak Korean. Understanding Biblical language and how certain concepts are expressed in English and Korean is important in the ongoing quest for truth. This article seeks to clarify the linguistic challenges and theological misunderstandings. Its thesis is that what the founders of Unificationism seek to convey in their formal speeches and informal talks and posts by use of the English word “begotten” is mistaken, and will hinder efforts to effectively communicate the teachings of Unificationism. Although there are controversies in some circles about what has been referred to as “only begotten theology,” this paper does not respond to specific

¹ There are many sources for this information; here is one such example with a simple explanation: <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/101971921>

² There are multiple sources where True Father identifies Zachariah as Jesus’ biological father, here is one example: <https://www.tparents.org/moon-books/jesus/Jesus-01.htm>. I also found it in the original *Cheon Seong Gyeong* on p. 791, “Who was Jesus’ father? It was Zachariah.”

³ Dr. Franco Famularo, “Words Matter: Linguistic, Historical and Theological Issues with the term ‘Begotten’”, found at <https://www.journals.uts.edu/volume-xviii-2017/293-words-matter-linguistic-historical-and-theological-issues-with-the-term-begotten>

Understanding Father and Mother’s Conflicting Understandings of “Only Begotten”

theological issues but seeks to clarify why the word “begotten” is not helpful for any constructive discussion about Unification teachings.”

At the close of his paper, Dr. Famularo also says the following:

“Thus, when explaining the Unification message to Jews, Christians and Muslims, the word “begotten” is more of a hindrance than a help. This article does not provide a study of the reactions of representatives of the world’s religions, but surely a study of Hinduism, Sikhism and religions that honor a Deity will demonstrate that effective communication with any of the adherents is made more complicated by use of the word “begotten.”

As has been noted, “begotten” does not effectively translate the Korean text. Since it was not long ago that the term “begotten” entered the English-speaking Unification world, **it is not too late to make corrections.** The experience of Christians who translated the Bible from Hebrew and Greek texts, and not from Latin, should be a lesson for all Unificationist translators today, to look to the Korean and explore the intent of the founders when rendering their words into other languages. They should be careful not to make the same errors as those that derived from Jerome’s translation of the Bible.”

It is clear from Dr. Famularo’s research that our (Unificationists’) use of the Only Begotten Son (hereafter OBS) and Only Begotten Daughter (hereafter OBD) terms is not in alignment with our theology given our unique Christological understanding. So, why are we using them? Another person who spoke out about this issue is Mr. William Haines. He also wrote a paper on this topic that addresses some additional issues. I have included his paper in its entirety here:

I have reviewed all the slides from the Korean lecturers and couldn’t find an explanation of the phrase Original Begotten Son and Daughter. I am not surprised. Redefining the Principle in terms of 3rd and 4th century Christian theology was never a good move—original sin, only begotten son/daughter/immaculate conception/savior/salvation—and all that gnostic jazz. It is unbiblical and inauthentic and not grounded in the Principle. As to only begotten daughter, this sets off all kinds of alarm bells. I think it was very unfortunate to pick this phrase out of the toolbox of Christian theology where it has a very definite meaning. The King James Bible translates John 3:16 where the gospel writer, NOT Jesus, wrote:

“For God so love the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

But other Bibles don’t all translate the Greek in this way:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” NIV

Understanding Father and Mother’s Conflicting Understandings of “Only Begotten”

The Korean Bible though for various historical reasons is based on a translation of the King James Bible. And that is why it entered our community. The Christology of John is very ‘high’ or, as I would prefer to say, Gnostic, and the DP spends quite a bit of space deconstruction it and separating out the Word from the historical Jesus. So why have we decided to go all gnostic all of a sudden? I guess for the same reasons Christians made Jesus God—legitimizing and establishing absolute authority in this world. The Romans following the Greek tradition declared the Emperor was ‘divine’ so for Jesus to be higher than the emperor he had to be God. Thus, the Pope as the Vicar of Christ and all that goes along with that gives him unchallengeable authority—he can even excommunicate people and stop them going to heaven. The creeds pick up this single phrase from John and bases the whole of Christian theology on it:

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father [the only begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father] God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father.” First Council of Nicea, 325AD

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds (aeons), Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father.” First Council of Constantinople 381AD

The whole idea of OBS runs completely against the Principle view of Christology. Are we suddenly going to subscribe to the Nicene Creed? If so, we should have done so 60 years ago and saved ourselves so much persecution. Jesus was the ONLY begotten son because he was God the Son and the 2nd person of the Trinity. No room for anyone else. In other words, no one else can become like Jesus because Jesus is God because he was begotten by God. Is this what we believe or teach? As such, Jesus has existed since the beginning. The church teaches anathema on anyone who says there was a time when he was not. Has True Mother existed from the very beginning before the creation of the world? Also, God crudely speaking, was his Dad. His mother was a virgin and God was his Dad. A pagan idea deeply offensive to Jews and Muslims.

C.S Lewis (the leading Christian apologist of the 20th century) put it very well:

“We don’t use the words begetting or begotten much in modern English, but everyone still knows what they mean. To beget is to become the father of; to create is to make. And the difference is this. When you beget, you beget something of the same kind as yourself. A man begets human babies, a beaver begets little beavers, and a bird begets eggs which turn into little birds. But when you make, you make something of a different kind from yourself. A bird makes a nest, a beaver builds a dam, a man makes a wireless set – or he may make something more like himself than a wireless set: say, a statue. If he is a clever enough carver, he may make a statue which is very like man indeed. But, of course, it is not a real man; it only

Understanding Father and Mother’s Conflicting Understandings of “Only Begotten”

looks like one. It cannot breathe or think. It is not alive.

Now that is the first thing to get clear. What God begets is God; just as what man begets is man. What God creates is not God; just as what man makes is not man. That is why men are not Sons of God in the sense that Christ is. They may be like God in certain ways, but they are not things of the same kind. They are more like statues or pictures of God.’

Do we really want to claim that of TM [True Mother]? I don’t think so. Didn’t she have a mum and dad? Wasn’t she born on a certain day? Did she exist before ‘all worlds? Is she literally God? The whole idea that Jesus was without original sin rests on the virgin birth. Apart from that like True Father he also had siblings. So, I guess that blows apart another piece of this teaching. So, I would dump it. But since no one apparently explained all this to TM, we are landed with this dreadful unprincipled terminology which distorts everything. IMO Jesus was not the only begotten son of God. Because God does not beget. He creates. God created Adam and Eve. Human beings are made in the image of God, but they are not God. And the beings He created beget. Only the pagan gods of Mount Olympus went around begetting and having offspring with each other and human beings. The Bible (and Qur'an) rejects all that utterly. By the same logic there is no only begotten daughter of God. Because God doesn’t beget. He creates and Jesus and all other human beings have natural parents. There are no virgin births - a doctrine which as well as sparing Mother Mary blushes supported the idea of God begetting - a la Zeus - meaning that Christians could claim Jesus was Lord and ontologically superior to the Emperor who the Romans claimed was god. God help us.”⁴

Both Mr. Haines and Dr. Famularo clearly point out the problems with our use of the OBS and OBD terminology, but they are still being used. Why? I suspect that since both Father and True Mother (hereafter referred to as “Mother”) were totally emersed in Korean Christianity, their familiarity and use of these terms was inherited. **But clearly, Father did not teach the traditional Christian doctrine, and he rarely used these terms. So why has Dr. Jin Choon Kim (hereafter referred to as “JCK”) written an entire paper defending and promoting the frequent use of the OBD term by Mother?**

In his section titled “The meaning of OBS and OBD,” JCK explains that even though he rarely used them, Father **redefined the Christian meaning of these terms and then applied his definition to both the man and woman prepared by God to fulfill these roles. In fact, he states that it was Father who first identified the Bride of Christ as the “Only Begotten Daughter.”** So, it was Father, not Mother, who first used the term OBD in reference to the woman who would become the Bride of the Messiah. **However, when Father used these terms, he did not use them**

⁴ William Haines, “A Critique of the Use of OBS and OBD terms by Unificationists”

Understanding Father and Mother’s Conflicting Understandings of “Only Begotten”

in the traditional Christian context and, does not use them the way Mother does. Father re-defined the meaning of the term “Only Begotten” to distinguish our theology from traditional Christian doctrine. Here is what JCK says about this redefinition followed by the quotes that he cites:

“True Father places more emphasis on the meaning of first, that is, of being the *firstborn* son and the *firstborn* daughter, rather than being the *one and only* son and daughter. They are the man and woman who were the first to receive God’s love, the man and woman who could receive God’s first love before anyone else, and the man and woman who could monopolize this first love. They came to possess that first love, and they are connected to it for eternity.”⁵ (p. 2)

“The only begotten Son is the person who received God’s love first.” (Cheon 2.3.2:7, 85.12.22) [*Cheon Seong Gyeong*]

“The only begotten Son is the firstborn son who can receive the first love! The only begotten Daughter is the firstborn daughter who can receive the first love! That is the only conclusion.” (Vol. 203, 90.6.27) [*Sermons*]

Notice that in these quotes, Father says nothing about **how** the OBD is restored. **He does, however, specify in the final quote cited (footnote #5 above) that the OBS comes “after the lineage was purified in the course of history.”** JCK uses this information in the opening sections of his paper to introduce the fact that Father first introduced the OBD term and that it was not the invention of Mother. Point taken. **Nonetheless, Father’s use of the term is not the same as Mother’s because Father connects lineal restoration only to the OBS and not the OBD.** So, while JCK correctly points out that Father re-defines the term “Only Begotten,” he doesn’t expand upon what this means and he doesn’t acknowledge or explain why Father rarely used it. To me it is obvious. It doesn’t fit our theology! Father redefined these terms to enable us to better understand Jesus’ identity as well as his own. Furthermore, Father’s redefinition fits the DP Christological teaching. **Father’s emphasis on “first love” implies that the Father-Son and Father-Daughter relationship is special. It emphasizes a unique and original love intended by God for His children. The Messiah and his Bride have the mission to establish that relationship, but it also indicates that they are only the first to do so. All God’s children are to follow. In other words, a growth process is involved in order to experience the original “First Love” of God,**

⁵ This footnote is from JCK’s paper, and it further clarifies how JCK sees Father’s definition of OBS as seen in this statement:

“Of course, there are speeches where the term was used to mean ‘unique’, ‘exclusive’, or ‘representative:’ “What do I mean by asserting the term, ‘only begotten Son’? It means that I am unique, that I am the sole, unique father, the one and only father. It means I am the ‘only one’.” (Vol. 192, 89.7.2) [*Sermons*]

“Who is the only begotten Son? He is the one who received the first love. It means he is the one and only person who has received love.” (Vol. 169, 87.10.4) [*Sermons*]

“It is the place where the son who can receive God’s love exclusively, His only begotten Son, can be found. It is also the place where such a daughter can be found.” (Pyeong 664) [*Pyong Hwa Gyeong*]

“I am the only begotten Son because I was born as the representative son who inherited God’s love, life and bloodline, after the lineage was purified in the course of history.” (Cheon 2.3.2:5, 91.12.15) [*Cheon Seong Gyeong*]

Understanding Father and Mother’s Conflicting Understandings of “Only Begotten”

and that process requires restoration back to God’s Purpose of Creation—the ideal that God intended for all humankind as explained in the *EDP*.⁶

Despite JCK’s attempt to establish the notion of the lineal recreation of the OBD, he grossly oversimplifies the process of restoration of both the OBS and OBD. It is clear from the biblical record and Father’s teachings that Adam and Eve, while being able to communicate with God, were certainly **not** in a perfected relationship with God from birth. Hence, being born as OBS or OBD does not in itself enable them to instantly experience the fullness of God’s original love. According to *EDP*, obtaining the fullness of the first love of God was contingent upon fulfilling the “Portion of Responsibility” in obedience to God’s Word.⁷ Simply being born sinless does not guarantee that a man or woman will fully experience God’s first love or even fulfill God’s predestined purpose for their lives. **Furthermore, being “Begotten” by God does not refer to birth but to conception.** Once conception takes place, we enter the realm *EDP* describes as the “Indirect Dominion of God” where God can only relate to us indirectly based upon our accomplishments through the Principle.⁸

As I already mentioned, the quotes from Father cited above do not specifically refer to lineage. These quotes only speak about the man and woman who “receive love first” or “first love” from God and do not clarify **how** or **when** that is achieved (see footnote #5 above). **In the final quote cited in that footnote, Father specifically connects the term OBS to his own birth from a restored lineage, but none of the quotes cited do this for the first woman to perfect the original love of God.** The fourth quote cited simply **infers** that the OBD must be “**found**,” and does not state that the OBD is restored at conception or exists in a sinless position from birth. The process of when the OBD is established is not clearly explained in these quotes, but JCK seems to imply that the fullness of God’s original love is manifested at birth for both the OBS and OBD. This implication clearly contradicts the *EDP* teaching and is not even supported by the quotes he cites!

Despite the fact that the quotes cited from Father in this section talk about “love first” and “first love” from God without reference to lineage, JCK focuses his use of the terms OBS and OBD specifically on lineage manifested at birth. **The following quotes from Mother indicate that she believes that she was born in a sinless state from birth.**

“When you look into the *Bible*, Adam and Eve were able to speak with God, one-to-one. I did so too. No person taught me the Principle or anything else. Even Father did not. I made my own decisions.” Hak Ja Han, “2000 years ago God sent Jesus Christ to become the first victorious human,” July 25, 2019

“The process of changing the lineage occurred while I was in my mother’s womb...”
Hak Ja Han, “A Time to be United, Inside and Out,” July 1, 2014

⁶ Moon, *EDP*, pp. 32-45.

⁷ Ibid. pp. 42-44

⁸ Ibid. p. 43

Understanding Father and Mother’s Conflicting Understandings of “Only Begotten”

“Change of the blood lineage! I am [the OBD] from the womb. You should believe it. As to father’s history, he earned the qualification of the OBS when he met Jesus and inherited his mission. Do you understand? You should know this. The 2,000-year history until now is a history to find the OBD.” Hak Ja Han during Hoon Dok Hae at the Cheon Jeong Gung on July 1, 2014.

These and other statements from Mother indicate that her understanding of how she became the OBD differs from that of Father’s teaching. There are many quotes from Father that illustrate his understanding. Here are just a few of such quotes:

“The Divine Principle tells us that restoration starts with one man and God has been looking for one man of perfection through whom He can restore one woman of perfection. This is the concept of the Messiah and his mission.” Sun Myung Moon, “The Desire of All Things,” June 17, 1977, Manhattan Center.

“What is the root of mother? It was uprooted and brought back from the world belonging to Satan. Do you understand? In order for it to enter the Heavenly family, it needs to go through a procedure. What kind of procedure? It is the procedure of love. Therefore, even though it is inside True Mother’s womb, it is not connected to the true love and true lineage of True Father. True Mother does not have true love and true lineage. She is on the other side.” Sun Myung Moon, “True Parents and Resurrection,” December 20, 1993

“With what qualification did Jesus come? He came with the qualification of a father. He came as the True Father of humankind, in other words, as the true ancestor. However, he was not able to bring a True Mother with him. Because the True Mother was taken by Satan, the original man, even at the risk of his life, must restore the True Mother out of the satanic world... When the Lord comes in the Last Days and greets the bride, the bride is liberated... Therefore, in the providence of restoration, a being the same as Adam should reappear on earth. This is the thought of the Second Coming of the Messiah. If Adam does not appear, Eve cannot be made... To restore this [the True Adam] through indemnity is the mission of the Second Coming of the Messiah. He is the Messiah appearing for the second time. When this Messiah appears, then for the first time the Eve which God wanted, the bride, can be met.” Sun Myung Moon, *Blessed Family and the Ideal Kingdom I*, pp. 295-296

I assume the divergence illustrated in these quotes is one of the essential “sensitive” issues JCK is claiming to resolve—the differences between Father’s and Mother’s understanding of how the providential mission of the Messiah and his Bride is accomplished. **JCK deliberately attempts to equate the restoration of the OBD to the same procedure as the OBS and says that both are restored according to the original growth process.** He selectively uses Father’s words and, without regard to context, maintains that there is no difference in how they are restored, but is this true? Is this notion supported in the *EDP* and Father’s words? **No, it is not.**

Understanding Father and Mother's Conflicting Understandings of "Only Begotten"

The misuse of the OBD and OBS terms by JCK is obvious, but the continued use of these terms by FFWPU without regard to Father's definition is unacceptable because it misrepresents and contradicts his most fundamental teachings. In addition to the comments made by Famularo and Haines, Mr. Thomas Cromwell also addressed this issue and emailed me the following statement:

Hi Brian. I thought Franco's explanation for the religio-political reasons for using the OBS terminology was well done and helpful. But there is a more fundamental level, I believe, which you incorporate, which is TF's [True Father's] teaching. But the very root of this problem lies in John's gospel, since only he among the gospel-writers used the OBS terminology. I find John's gospel by far the most uncertain in its authenticity, since it seems to clearly have an agenda, that is, his agenda. For example, none of the other gospels mention the presence of Mary at the crucifixion, whereas he says the last words of Jesus on the cross were to his mother, telling her to trust John! Jesus held the last supper (without her or any of his family members), and was arrested in the same night, and executed the next day. There was no way for Mary to be informed of these developments if she was in Nazareth, let alone for her to have time to get to Jerusalem. If she was in Jerusalem for the Passover, where was she? I think by this time she was totally alienated from Jesus, and it was only after his crucifixion and ascension that she appears with the disciples to pray for Jesus.

Even so, it is John who describes the relationship between God and Jesus as that between father and son, in a very Principled way. Could it be that the Septuagint use of the Greek word *monogenēs* is wrongly translated as only begotten son, when it should be 'unique'? Look at this from Wikipedia, assisted by AI:

monogenēs translates to "one of a kind," "unique," or "only" in English. While it is traditionally translated as "only begotten," modern scholarly consensus leans toward interpretations like "unique" or "one of a kind," as *genēs* is believed to be from *genos* (kind, family, race) rather than *gennaō* (to beget).

- **"Only":** The *mono-* prefix means "only" or "alone".
- **"One of a kind":** The *genēs* part is understood to come from *genos* ("kind," "class," "type," "race").

A very good argument for this is that *monogenēs* was used for people other than Jesus:

Usage in the Septuagint: The Septuagint uses *monogenēs* to describe unique children, not as a theological term for Jesus.

Understanding Father and Mother's Conflicting Understandings of "Only Begotten"

- In [Judges 11:34](#), it refers to Jephthah's daughter as his only child.
- In [Hebrews 11:17](#), Isaac is called Abraham's *monogenēs* or "only begotten son," even though Abraham had other sons, because Isaac held a unique position as the promised child, [notes Christianity Stack Exchange](#) and [Defend the Word Ministries](#).

There is no evidence that Jesus used this term for himself, when he asked his disciples to say who he was in Matthew 16:13-17:

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."

The bottom line, however, is that the reason the DP is so precious is that it is a true revelation about the providence and clearly teaches that Jesus came as a man with parents. The implication is that we should apply this lens to theological issues and, that we have the responsibility to clarify these confusions. True Mother is simply adding to the confusion with her weird use of OBD theology. CS Lewis did not have the benefit of the DP and thus did his best to interpret scriptures based only (I believe) on the King James Version, which uses OBS, although the RSV version of the New Testament had already been published during WWII, and it does not use the OBS terminology. Even the KJV of the passage in Matthew in which Peter tells Jesus who he thinks he is does not use OBS:

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" So, they said "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven."

I agree with you that when TF used that terminology it was likely in the sense we are using, pointing to the uniqueness of Jesus and not to a CS Lewis-type of begotten understanding, since his whole teaching focuses on the importance of the Messiah restoring Adam.

Understanding Father and Mother’s Conflicting Understandings of “Only Begotten”

Mr. Cromwell identifies and explains the importance of the term *monogenēs* in this statement. He points out that in addition to John’s gospel, this word was also used in various places in the Septuagint. However, a very similar word is found in various places in the Old Testament as well, such as in the story of Abraham and Isaac. That word is “yachiyd,” which translates from the Hebrew to mean “only son.” A Christian pastor by the name of Daniel McFeeters did an interesting study on the “Only Begotten” issue and it sheds some significant light on the matter. Here is an excerpt from that study (I have bolded certain words and phrases of particular significance for our discussion):

There is an interesting word that’s used in the Old Testament to describe the relationship between Abraham and Isaac. “Then He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love’” (Genesis 22:2) The Hebrew word that’s translated “only son” is the word “yachiyd.” It means “beloved” and also “unique” or “solitary.” You might say “one-of-a-kind.” The same word is used in 22:12 and 22:16.

It’s clear from the story of Abraham that Isaac was not Abraham’s only son. In fact, Isaac wasn’t even Abraham’s first-born son—Ishmael was. Clearly Isaac was Abraham’s only “legitimate” son, but if you go by that, most of Jacob’s children weren’t born to his first wife, either. Whatever this word “yachiyd” means, it can’t be referring to Isaac as Abraham’s “only son.” It must have something to do with describing the **special relationship** between Abraham and Isaac—or perhaps something to do with the fulfillment of a promise. A promise made to Abraham, and a promise made to the human race as far back as the garden of Eden.

As far as historical accounts go, “yachiyd” is used only one other time in the Old Testament, in Judges 11:34, to describe the only daughter of Jephthah. That’s a very odd and interesting story, as well, involving a vow that resulted in offering the “only child” as a sacrifice. That’s probably a message for another time...

What about the other references to “yachiyd” in the Old Testament? There are four references in the Psalms, three references in the major and minor prophets (mourning for an only son), and one reference in Proverbs 4:3. It is interesting to notice how this word is translated in the ancient Greek Septuagint—an Old Testament that the apostles and New Testament writers were certainly familiar with.

The Septuagint uses the term “Agapetos” (“Beloved”) to translate “yachiyd” in Genesis 22. Why? As we already noted, Isaac was not Abraham’s only son, so the translators chose to emphasize the relational aspect of “yachiyd.” One reference in Psalms, the verse in Proverbs, and the three references in the prophets are also translated as Agapetos.

But three references in the Psalms, and interestingly Judges 11:34 are translated with a different Greek equivalent: “Monogenes.” This same Greek word is used by the writer of Hebrews to describe Isaac in Hebrews 11:17. And this term,

Understanding Father and Mother’s Conflicting Understandings of “Only Begotten”

“Monogenes,” is the term that is translated in our KJV English Bibles into the term “Only Begotten.”

*“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his **only begotten son.**” (Hebrews 11:17)*

So, Isaac was Abraham’s “only begotten son” in a similar way to how Jesus was God’s “only-begotten.” Not necessarily in the sense of being “only born,” so much as in a description of the **close and intimate relationship—the unique and special union—that exists between the father and the son.** Notice how both Greek words that come from the Hebrew “yachiyd” are used to describe Jesus: John 3:16 describes Jesus as God’s “only begotten son” (Monogenes), while the synoptic gospels record the voice of God proclaiming from heaven, “This is My beloved Son” (Agapetos). Two powerful descriptions of one being—the Son of God, or “Seed” who came in ultimate fulfillment of all God’s promises to Abraham and all the patriarchs before him.”⁹

This study reveals that John’s gospel uses the “monogenes” translation from the Hebrew word “yachiyd” to describe Jesus’ **relationship** with God. Why? Because John, like the earlier Hebrew writers of the Septuagint, wanted to emphasize the **special relationship that existed between God the Father and His Son, Jesus. So, the biblical OBS term refers to a beautiful, love-filled special relationship and not to the manner in which Jesus was conceived or to a sinless lineage.** That theology came hundreds of years later (thanks to Saint Augustine), and for reasons sometimes beyond what is expressed in scripture (see Haines above). I mean, why would the Jewish writer John, **NOT** use the terminology from the Old Testament (with which he was clearly familiar) to describe the totally unique, profound and beautiful love relationship with God that he personally witnessed in Jesus? **Furthermore, wasn’t this the same idea Father expressed when he redefined the meaning of the OBS and OBD terms? Didn’t Father also emphasize that these terms refer to a special relationship?** Father said that the OBS and OBD are the people who attain the original “First Love” or “Love First” from God. So, it seems to me that Father’s definition is most closely related to what John’s gospel states while Mother’s is more dependent upon the 4th century councils. Father’s definition of OBS and OBD is truly orthodox and aligned with the original meaning intended by John’s gospel, but the *EDP* also includes aspects of the 4th century councils because it explains how Jesus was born as the sinless Messiah, restored True Adam, and Son of God. Father’s revelations reveal for the first time in human history God’s formula of salvation and restoration! It is this revelation that JCK uses to explain Mother’s new identity and status as OBD.

As stated earlier, after Father’s passing I couldn’t understand why Mother decided to use the OBD term so frequently. JCK refers to this fact in his opening statements, but he doesn’t disclose **why** this happened or **how** this change came about. Well, in a conversation I had with my friend and

⁹ The entire article can be found here - <https://www.pastordaniel.net/the-only-begotten-son/#:~:text=Pastor%20Daniel%20Posted%20on%20April,can't%20play%20this%20video>.

Understanding Father and Mother’s Conflicting Understandings of “Only Begotten”

former New Jersey State Leader, Rev. Manoj Jacobs, I was told an interesting story.¹⁰ It seems that when JCK visited America in May 2019 to conduct one of his OBD workshops, Rev. Jacobs traveled to the New Yorker Hotel to pick him up and bring him to the New Jersey church. On their return trip, they became stuck in typical rush hour traffic. Given the intimate circumstances, Rev. Jacobs decided to ask him why Mother was using the term OBD since he had never heard Father use this term? **JCK then told him that he and other theologians had recommended it to her. He said that he and the other theologians had discussed the use of the term and reached consensus over its appropriateness.** They told Mother that she could adopt this term to help clarify and proclaim her true identity. When I asked Rev. Jacobs if JCK shared **when** he and the other theologians did this, he said he hadn’t asked that question, but since Mother first announced herself as the OBD in 2014, I assumed it must have been around or slightly before that time.

Hearing this story from Rev. Jacobs shocked me! I couldn’t understand why our Unificationist theologians would recommend such a thing! At least now I knew why and how Mother’s use of the term began, but I don’t know if Mother’s use of this term was solely the idea of the theologians. Is it possible that she always had this self-understanding and simply wanted to make sure she had the support of the theologians before announcing it, or did they convince her to use it knowing full well its doctrinal problems? Nevertheless, given the controversy, confusion, and factions that have formed in opposition to this teaching (as well as other reasons), I question whether it has helped Mother’s public image and historical identity. Wasn’t Mother already regarded and respected as the True Mother of Heaven, Earth, and Humankind?

Summary:

In summary, I feel it should be obvious to everyone that Father did not often use the OBS and OBD terms because he knew that the Christian understanding of these terms was incorrect. That is probably why he redefined these terms, making them compatible with the revelations he received. He then applied his definition to the woman to be chosen by the Messiah to become the Bride of Christ who, by fulfilling her mission, receives the original “First Love” of God as the True Woman of God’s original intent. In Father’s teaching, however, this is not accomplished at birth.

JCK misinterprets Father’s teachings on the importance of the portion of responsibility and the process of restoration. He doesn’t acknowledge the indirectness of the relationship with God that both the Messiah and his Bride experience as children in the realm of indirect dominion. He implies that being born sinless in accordance with the original growth process is the way in which both the OBS and OBD manifest and come into the first love of God. Well, if that were true, how does one explain what happened to Adam and Eve? JCK does not recognize the fact that the OBS and OBD do not manifest the fullness of God’s love at birth because they have portions of responsibility to fulfill in order to achieve the fullness of the God’s love. **JCK has** provided concrete evidence for Father’s introduction of the term “OBD,” but he has not provided sufficient evidence in support of his theory of OBD lineal restoration in accordance with the original growth process—an idea that clearly contradicts Father’s teachings.

¹⁰ This short story is shared with the permission of Rev. Manoj Jacobs. I have greatly shortened the story to adapt and include it in this document.

Understanding Father and Mother’s Conflicting Understandings of “Only Begotten”

JCK appears to be deliberately misinterpreting and manipulating Father’s words for the purpose of developing justification for Mother’s OBD claim. His association of the term “Only Begotten” with lineal restoration in the womb despite the fact that Father’s definition clearly does not state this is just one example of this strategy. Father’s definition points out something of far greater significance—a profound and beautiful love relationship with God! Father’s definition of the OBS and OBD as the first man and woman to know/experience the “first love” or “love first” from God is biblically sound and in total agreement with his revelations. JCK is **deliberately** misinterpreting and manipulating Father’s words because Father’s teachings clearly do not affirm the lineal appearance of the OBD but emphasize a process of restoration to reverse the pattern of Eve’s mistake. **According to the Father, only the OBS is conceived and born from a fully restored lineage.**

Like Haines, Famularo, and Cromwell, I question the accuracy of Mother’s use of the OBD term. She emphasizes the 4th century understanding of the term that involves the sinlessness of the OBS and applies Father’s *EDP* teaching about restoration in the womb to claim that sinless status for herself. With the help of JCK, she has taken Father’s teachings that were discovered through years of intense suffering, study, prayer and revelation from God and the spirit world, and applied them to herself. However, Father’s teachings (and the Biblical record) only claim that status for the OBS. The *EDP* chapter on the Principle of Restoration identifies Jesus as the first OBS, but due to his crucifixion, the need for the OBS to reappear as the sinless Third Adam became necessary. However, in representing Mother’s self-understanding, JCK asserts that while Father **did** inherit the **mission of the Messiah** from Jesus at the time of the Second Coming and **is** the Lord of the Second Advent (hereafter LSA), **he was not born from a restored, sinless lineage; only Mother was born that way. This is perhaps the most serious and earth-shattering claim contained within Mother’s self-understanding as the OBD!**

In his section titled “True Father as the Only Begotten Son,” JCK goes to great lengths to support this earth-shattering claim from JCK on behalf of Mother. **To defend and promote this idea, he confidently claims that Father has issued contradictory statements about his own sinlessness and that the LSA is not born from a restored lineage but inherits a restored position and status from Jesus; only the OBD is restored lineally.** In my opinion, this is the most serious, shocking and defamatory argument of his entire paper! Furthermore, it established the foundation and justification for everything FamilyFed is currently teaching. It therefore requires an extremely thorough analysis in order to expose its very serious flaws and contradictions with both the biblical record and Father’s teachings! That is the purpose of my next chapter.

In closing my summary, it has become clear to me that JCK’s attempt to enlighten our understanding of the OBS and OBD terms, and his claim of objectivity and open-mindedness, is a complete and total lie! He is not trying to resolve the doctrinal issues between Father and Mother. He is really only attempting to sway the reader to accept and agree with Mother’s claims. So, instead of solving the key doctrinal problems, he has expanded the disagreements between Father and Mother to their children and the entire Unification Movement! That is why I maintain and advocate for a return to the orthodoxy of the original and unaltered teachings of Sun Myung Moon.

Understanding Father and Mother’s Conflicting Understandings of “Only Begotten”

I believe that Family Fed and all Unificationists must do this. Only by returning to the authority of Father himself as Messiah and Christ, as well as the orthodoxy of Father’s teachings, can the rift within the Moon family itself be mended and, in so doing, restore the unity of the Unification Movement.

In further proof of the incorrectness of JCK’s narrative, I want to share the following series of quotes from Father on the OBS/OBD issue.

“Who is the Messiah? What kind of person is he? The Messiah is the first son of God. The term ‘the only begotten son of God’ originates here. You speak of Jesus Christ as the ‘only begotten son of God’ without knowing this historical background. The ‘only begotten son’ means the one who receives God’s first love. He has the right to be called the ‘only begotten son’ because the tainted blood of the fall has been cleansed; he stands in the position to love and receive love from God directly; and he comes in the position to pay all the indemnity to clean away the stains left by Satan. That’s why we call him God’s only begotten son. No one in the 2000 years of Christianity has understood this.”¹¹

“Of course we are born from our mother’s womb, but when we look beyond that, the origin of our life is from our father. We can change and restore our lineage by going back to our mother’s womb, but we still have not received our father. Until today, with the power of the mother—the Holy Spirit—Christians have awaited the father, the origin of life, and hoped to return to Jesus. Before the fall, the lives of his sons and daughters already existed as seed in Adam’s body. The seed which will become a son or daughter exists in the father’s body... From the fundamental point of view, spirit and body must be born together. So, to start again, our spirit and body must return to the position of the seed. To complete this providence, Christ must come as a parent. We must be reborn as restored life through the Lord of the Second Advent...

In Christianity, the resurrection and new life refer to this. Blood lineage is restored through the mother. Original sin must be cleansed and tainted blood restored to God’s lineage through the mother... Yet to be re-created as a pure new life and born again is only possible through the True Father’s body. Only through the True Father can complete salvation of spirit and body occur.”¹²

¹¹ Sun Myung Moon, *The Way of Unification in God’s Providence – The Theoretical Foundation for the Unification of East and West and of North and South*, Chapter One, “The Essentials of God’s Providential History,” p. 22

¹² IBID, pp. 26-27



Did Jesus Have a Human Father?

Awake!—1971

Subheadings Similar Material

[The Testimony of the Gospels](#)

[The Testimony of Jesus and Paul](#)

[Why Not a Human Father?](#)

[Supposed Objections Considered](#)

Did Jesus Have a Human Father?

5

AT THIS season of the year the attention of many people is focused on Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Without a doubt that man affected the human race for good more than any other. His remarkable life has intrigued many authors to write about him. However, many of these writers take issue with what the Bible says about Jesus' being born of a virgin and having the Creator, Jehovah God, as his Father, and insist that he had a human father.

In fact, today more and more religious leaders, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, are of this opinion. For example, in *Theology Today*, July 1971, a professor of religion purports to show that the father of Jesus was either a paramour of Mary or was her husband Joseph. A professor at Cambridge, England, writing in *The Expository Times*, February 1969, insists that "from the strictly historical point of view, there is very little reliable data to which appeal may be made for the virginal conception of Jesus." He discredits the accounts in the first two chapters of Matthew and Luke and then says "there is no other reference in the New Testament which any historian . . . would think asserted that Jesus was conceived of a Virgin without human father." And a writer in *Continuum*, a Roman Catholic periodical (Winter-Spring 1969), states: "The virgin birth is a mythological or pictorial way of getting at [the] theological mystery of the gratuitous nature of salvation. . . . Those who originated the story . . . used the picture images . . . to represent their sense of the Messianic event."

Let us consider this question in greater detail. What does the Bible really show to be the case? Did Jesus have a human father or was the Creator, Jehovah God, in truth and in fact his Father?

First of all, let us note that such a thing as Jesus' not having a human as his father would not be beyond the power of God. As has well been noted: "If God made the first man—Adam—without a human mother, then could not the same God bring into being the second Adam—Christ—without a human father?" Surely! But those who object to the virgin birth of Jesus usually also object to the Bible's account of creation. As one of these critics put it: "I for one am not willing to grant that God made Adam without a mother."

But those who do accept the Bible as God's inspired Word have no difficulty in believing that He, who created Adam with sperm cells in the first place and who endowed womankind with the power to conceive and bear children, could also produce a sperm cell apart from any human and could place it in a virgin and so cause her to conceive without the aid of a male human. If we at all believe in God, we must grant him these powers, must we not? It is indeed noteworthy that the angel made this very point in reply to the virgin Mary's question as to how she was to conceive since she was having no relations with any man. Said the angel, "because with God no declaration will be an impossibility."—Luke 1:36, 37.

6

The Testimony of the Gospels

The complaint is made that the only records we have of Jesus' birth are those of Matthew and Luke, but then those two are the only ones that tell us of Jesus' infancy and early life. Mark doubtless left out the facts of Jesus' birth and infancy in the interest of brevity, and the apostle John did so since he was chiefly concerned with supplementary matters not covered by the other Gospel writers.

Matthew tells us that Mary became pregnant by the spirit of God before she had intercourse with Joseph, to whom she was engaged. He also records how Joseph reacted to Mary's being pregnant and how God's angel assured him of how it came about. Moreover, the

account makes the point that Joseph did not have intercourse with her until she had given birth to Jesus. (Matt. 1:18-25) Luke informs us of the very same facts, but all from Mary's viewpoint or aspect. Luke and Matthew have about a dozen points in common. (Luke 1:26-35) Clearly, as far as Matthew and Luke are concerned, God, not some human, was Jesus' Father. Even Mark might be said to testify indirectly to this fact. How so? In that, instead of recording that the people were asking, "Is this not the carpenter's son?" he reports them as asking, "This is the carpenter the son of Mary . . . is it not?" —Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3.

Further testifying to Jesus' having God, not some human, as his Father were the voices heard from heaven at the time of Jesus' baptism and at the time of his transfiguration, saying: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved." What stronger evidence could we want that Jesus had God, not some human, as his Father? —Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:10, 11; 9:7; Luke 3:21, 22; 9:35.

The apostle John in his Gospel testifies to the same effect. How so? In that he tells that Jesus had a prehuman existence, was used by God in the creation and was the "only-begotten son" of God. So how could any human have been his father?—John 1:1-3, 14.

The Testimony of Jesus and Paul

As for Jesus himself, it appears that, even as a child of twelve years, he knew that God was his Father. For at the time that Joseph and Mary, after looking for him for three days, found him in the temple, he said to them: "Why did you have to go looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in the house of my Father?" (Luke 2:41-50) That temple was not Joseph's house but God's!

More than that, throughout his ministry Jesus time and again testified that he had God as his Father, and therefore no human. He told of his having a prehuman existence ("Before Abraham came into existence, I have been"), and he told of his coming down from heaven, and of his future return to heaven. How could Jesus have had a prehuman existence and have come to earth if Joseph had been the one that had given him life?—John 3:13; 6:41, 62; 8:23, 56-58; 17:5.

The apostle Paul witnesses to these very same truths. Repeatedly he refers to Jesus' prehuman existence, and he tells how Jesus came to earth and that upon his resurrection he returned to heaven. True, Paul does not testify to the virgin birth of Jesus in so many words, but that God, not some human, was Jesus' Father is implicit in what Paul wrote.—Rom. 8:3; 1 Cor. 15:47; Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:7, 8; Col. 1:15-17; Hebrews, chapters 1 and 2.

Why Not a Human Father?

Had Jesus had some imperfect human instead of God as his Father he could not have fulfilled the purposes for which he came to earth. It was imperative that God, not Joseph or some other human, be Jesus' Father because Jesus had to be sinless in order to be the "Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) All mankind are sinners due to the transgression of Adam. (Rom. 5:12, 19) This being so, none could give to God a ransom for his brother, even as noted at Psalm 49:7-9. As Job observed: "Who can produce someone clean out of someone unclean?" It has been true of all, aside from Jesus, that 'in sin their mothers conceived them and with error they were brought forth with birth pains,' even as King David confessed when pleading for mercy.—Job 14:4; Ps. 51:5.

Due to Jesus' having God, not some human, as his Father, he was "guileless, undefiled, separated from the sinners." Well could he challenge his opposers to convict him of any sin. (Heb. 7:26; John 8:46) Being perfect he could "give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." And having given his life as a ransom, he became the "mediator between God and men," able to offer a "propitiatory

sacrifice for our sins" as well as "for the whole world's."—[Matt. 20:28](#); [1 Tim. 2:5, 6](#); [1 John 2:2](#).

Further, God purposed that his Son Jesus furnish the supreme example of a perfect human creature keeping integrity in spite of all that the Devil could do, and the Devil did try his worst to cause Jesus to break his integrity, both by temptations and by persecutions. ([Matt. 4:1-10](#); [John 19:1-18](#)) That it had been the Devil's purpose to turn all men away from God is seen from his turning aside Adam and Eve and from his boasts and efforts to turn Job away from God. —[Gen. 3:1-19](#); [Job, chapters 1 and 2](#).

Supposed Objections Considered

Despite all the foregoing testimony, there are many who raise objections. For example, they note that time and again Jesus is referred to as the son of Joseph. True, but since Joseph, by taking Mary as his wife when she was pregnant, in effect adopted Jesus as his son, Jesus could be spoken of as his son. Generally, adopted sons are spoken of as the sons of the fathers who adopted them, are they not? More than that, we find that usually it was those most likely not familiar with the facts that referred to Jesus as Joseph's son. The fact that Jesus' enemies sneered that they were not born of fornication would not necessarily mean that they had information about Jesus as not being Joseph's son. Why not? Because in the very same connection they slurred Jesus as being a Samaritan and having a demon, which they obviously knew was not the truth.—[John 8:41, 48](#).

Then again, many attack the virgin birth of Jesus on the basis that the first two chapters of Matthew and of Luke were added at a later time, and by some other hand. But there is absolutely no basis for this claim. For one thing, the writing style of the chapters in question is exactly the same as that of subsequent chapters. Note, for example, Matthew's many references to the Hebrew Scriptures, a characteristic of his, and Luke's medical language in these two chapters, a characteristic of his. Nor is there any manuscript evidence to support such claims. For example, there is evidence that Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11 were added by a later hand; but there just is no manuscript testimony for impugning the authenticity of the first two chapters of Matthew and Luke. Neither the oldest Greek-manuscripts nor the versions or translations hint of such a thing. This is further supported by the fact that the early postapostolic writers, such as Irenaeus, Tertullian, Ignatius, Aristides, Justin Martyr, Origen and others, all accepted the Gospel accounts of Jesus' birth from a virgin. As one authority puts it: "The witness of the Fathers to the virginal conception is unanimous and unquestioned." *

8

The fact that the most noted *vellum* manuscripts of the Christian Greek Scriptures go back only to the early fourth century has been used as an argument by some that the chapters in question might not have appeared in the original writings. But, in view of the other even older manuscripts extant, Sir Frederic Kenyon, in his book *The Bible and Archaeology*, said: "The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible. . . . Both the *authenticity* and the *general integrity* of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established."

Another objection raised is that the two accounts of Matthew and Luke do not agree. True, they are not identical, but there is no conflict between them. In fact, in quite a number of the most important points they verify each other—such as that Jesus was born at a time when Herod (the Great) ruled Palestine; that Jesus was conceived by God's holy spirit and was born of a virgin; that Mary was betrothed to Joseph who was of the line of David; that by divine direction the son was to be called Jesus; that he was to be a savior and deliverer, and so forth.

That a virgin birth is contrary to science is another objection raised. But, as one scientist observed, today one no longer can say something is impossible. All that can be said is that something is improbable on the basis of present knowledge. And the fact remains that in creation there are ever so many examples of parthenogenesis, that is, of females giving birth without benefit of the male sperm.

Others have objected on the ground that pagan myths tell of virgin births. But they do not. They tell of demons or animals cohabiting with "virgins" so that these were no longer virgins; a far cry from what the Bible records regarding Jesus' birth. The fact is that instead of virgins being limited to women who never had intercourse, in ancient times prostitutes as well as unmarried women who gave birth to children were also included in the term. Nor can Matthew and Luke be accused of incorporating myths or legends in their Gospels. It is almost meaningless to talk about legends when dealing with eyewitnesses.

The writers Matthew and Luke were not simpletons. One was a tax collector and the other a physician. Their writings are stamped with the same honesty, sincerity and candor that mark all the other books of the Bible. And since the testimony of the rest of the Scriptures is in keeping with their Gospels, and since we see reasons why Jesus simply had to have the Creator rather than some human as his Father, lovers of truth answer "No," to the question, "Did Jesus have a human father?"

[Footnotes]

* *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1966, Vol. 14, p. 693.

The Only Begotten Son

 PASTOR DANIEL - POSTED ON  APRIL 4, 2020 -  POSTED IN SERMONS -  NO COMMENTS

In my last post, I asked the question, "What is real?" We delved into the nature of reality, and I postulated to you that, for the Christian, the very ultimate reality is the reality of God's love, as described in John 3:16:

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.

We explored this concept of God—how the very essence of His nature is love. We talked about His Son, Jesus Christ, and how Jesus wants to have that very real and intimate relationship with us. But what does this verse mean, when it describes Jesus as the Father's "Only-Begotten Son"?

Come with me on a journey through the Old Testament. We'll be looking at an old but well-known story. As we explore this beautiful story, and it's profound message, I believe we will get a bit closer to understanding Jesus' own words in John 3:16, as He describes Himself as God's "Only-Begotten Son."



Abraham was an old man. He had spent his life following God—following a promise that God had made to him many years before, when he had lived with his family in the distant land of Ur, of the Chaldees.

Genesis 12:1-3:

Now the Lord had said to Abram:

"Get out of your country,

From your family

And from your father's house,

To a land that I will show you.

2 I will make you a great nation;

I will bless you

And make your name great;

And you shall be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you,

And I will curse him who curses you;

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

At this promise, Abraham had set out. He followed, trusting the promise of God. But as he was growing older, it became obvious

that there was a problem: Abraham had no son. His wife, Sarah, was barren, and it seemed that there was no way for God to fulfill His promise in making Abraham's children into a great nation.

Sarah, knowing her husband's sorrow at not having a son, suggested that he should take her servant, Hagar, as a second wife. It was a customary practice in those days, and Abraham agreed to the idea. Soon, Hagar bore Abraham a son, and named him Ishmael. But this had never been God's plan.

One day, while Abraham was resting under the terebinth trees of Mamre, God appeared to Abraham again, dressed as a traveler on a journey. Abraham offered his hospitality, and while they rested and talked together, God told Abraham that his wife would indeed have a son—the son whom He had promised. Sarah laughed at the thought that she, a 90-year-old woman, would have a child! But, sure enough, she got pregnant and bore a son, whom they named Isaac.

Isaac grew to become a strong young man. For Abraham, life was good. He had trusted God, and God had fulfilled His promise. Now, he could relax, seeing that God was surely fulfilling His promise through his beloved son, Isaac.

Or so he thought. Until that dreadful night, when God appeared to him, and gave him the most terrible instructions that he had ever received...

Genesis 22:1-2

Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!"

And he said, "Here I am."

Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

What? The command was almost too terrible for words. Could it be real? Perhaps he was dreaming. Perhaps he was mistaken. Perhaps the devil was harassing him. But no. He knew that voice. He was fully awake. He knew what he had to do.

He stood up. He looked through the dim light at his beloved son, so strong, so handsome! He was sleeping peacefully—the picture of health, joy, and contentment.

He glanced over at the boy's mother. Should he wake her up? Should he tell her about God's command? Let her give her son one last, loving embrace? No. He wouldn't dare. She would surely prevent him from carrying out God's command.

Genesis 22:3-5

3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."

I love the faith that Abraham demonstrates in his words to the servants: "we will come back to you." He doesn't reveal God's command. But somehow, in his heart, he still trusts God's promise. God was still going to make him the father of a great nation—and he would do it through Isaac. Even if God needed to bring Isaac back from the dead!

Genesis 22:6-7

So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!"

Oh, how those words must have pierced the heart of Abraham: "My Father." The innocent voice of his trusting son. He loved his son more than anything else in the world. He could hear the question already in Isaac's voice. The moment he had been dreading had come. But even now, Abraham isn't ready to tell Isaac the full purpose of his mission.

Genesis 22:7-8

And he said, "Here I am, my son."

Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

In these words, Abraham described with prophetic insight the event that would take place that day on the mountain. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Abraham was speaking words that even he, himself, didn't fully understand. For on this same mountain the God of heaven would offer His Only-Begotten Son. God Himself would provide the Lamb so that "whosoever

mountain, the God of heaven would offer the Only Begotten Son. God himself would provide the Lamb, so that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

But Abraham doesn't see all of this. No, he simply trusts God—that God will provide the lamb.

The New Testament records, "*Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God.*" James 2:23

They reach the mountain top, and there Abraham shares with his beloved son, Isaac, what God has commanded him to do. Isaac is a strong young man. He could easily resist his father. He could have easily run away, but Isaac is also a believer in God. He trusts his father, and he realizes that this death—this sacrifice—is to be his fate. He willingly submits to his father, and even encourages his father as Abraham binds his hands to the altar.

Genesis 22:9-13

Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

11 But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"

So he said, "Here I am."

12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided."



In this simple, profound story we find a miniature picture of the gospel. We get a glimpse into the heart of our Heavenly Father, and the struggle within the Godhead that must have taken place—the struggle between God's perfect love for His Only-Begotten Son, and the love for his wayward, erring creatures. Picture Abraham and Isaac, the father and son—in perfect unity, walking up the mountain of sacrifice. Picture Isaac, the willing sacrifice. Picture the triumphant reunion as the angel stays the hand, and a ram is offered in Isaac's place. Yet for the Son of God, no angel was there to stay the hands that nailed his bleeding body to the cross. His Father could not comfort him in his dying moments. He experienced the penalty of sin—he took our place—he was that lamb, whom God provided, who bled and died so that you and I could go free!

AS ABRAHAM CAME DOWN THAT MOUNTAIN, HE REJOICED WITH HIS SON, AS IT WERE, BROUGHT BACK FROM THE GRAVE. JESUS' IMMORTAL BODY—THE SON OF GOD—WAS LOWERED FROM THAT CROSS, AND PLACED IN THE GARDEN TOMB. YET THE GRAVE COULD NOT HOLD HIM, AND ON THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN! IN A FUTURE MESSAGE WE WILL DIG DEEP INTO THIS MYSTERY OF THE RESURRECTION, BUT TODAY, I WANT TO GO BACK AND EXPLORE THIS MYSTERY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE “FATHER” AND THE “SON.”

There is an interesting word that's used in the Old Testament to describe the relationship between Abraham and Isaac. "Then He said, 'Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love'" (Genesis 22:2) The Hebrew word that's translated "only son" is the word "yachiyd." It means "beloved" and also "unique" or "solitary." You might say "one-of-a-kind." The same word is used in 22:12 and 22:16.

It's clear from the story of Abraham that Isaac was not Abraham's only son. In fact, Isaac wasn't even Abraham's first-born son—Ishmael was. Clearly Isaac was Abraham's only "legitimate" son, but if you go by that, most of Jacob's children weren't born to his first wife, either. Whatever this word "yachiyd" means, it can't be referring to Isaac as Abraham's "only son." It must have something to do with describing the special relationship between Abraham and Isaac—or perhaps something to do with the fulfillment of a promise. A promise made to Abraham, and a promise made to the human race as far back as the garden of Eden.

As far as historical accounts go, "yachiyd" is used only one other time in the Old Testament, in Judges 11:34, to describe the only daughter of Jephthah. That's a very odd and interesting story, as well, involving a vow that resulted in offering the "only child" as a sacrifice. That's probably a message for another time...

What about the other references to "yachiyd" in the Old Testament? There are four references in the Psalms, three references in the major and minor prophets (mourning for an only son), and one reference in Proverbs 4:3.

It is interesting to notice how this word is translated in the ancient Greek Septuagint—an Old Testament that the apostles and New Testament writers were certainly familiar with.

The Septuagint uses the term "Agapetos" ("Beloved") to translate "yachiyd" in Genesis 22. Why? As we already noted, Isaac was not Abraham's only son, so the translators choose to emphasize the relational aspect of "yachiyd." One reference in Psalms, the verse in Proverbs, and the three references in the prophets are also translated as Agapetos.

But three references in the Psalms, and interestingly Judges 11:34 are translated with a different Greek equivalent: "Monogenes." This same Greek word is used by the writer of Hebrews to describe Isaac in Hebrews 11:17. And this term, "Monogenes," is the term that is translated in our KJV English Bibles into the term "Only Begotten." *(see note at end)

"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son." (Hebrews 11:17)

So Isaac was Abraham's "only begotten son" in a similar way to how Jesus was God's "only-begotten." Not necessarily in the sense of being "only born," so much as in a description of the close and intimate relationship—the unique and special union—that exists between the father and the son. Notice how both Greek words that come from the Hebrew "yachiyd" are used to describe Jesus: John 3:16 describes Jesus as God's "only begotten son" (Monogenes), while the synoptic gospels record the voice of God proclaiming from heaven, "This is My beloved Son" (Agapetos). Two powerful descriptions of one being—the Son of God, or "Seed" who came in ultimate fulfillment of all God's promises to Abraham and all the patriarchs before him.

John 3:16 "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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

Nowhere do we find a more powerful picture of Jesus, or a more succinct picture of His mission, than in this one verse. Jesus—the Son of God. Who is He? Where did He come from? Was he "birthed" or "created" at some distant time in the past, as some people suppose from this verse?

No. John, more than any other gospel writer, emphasizes Jesus' divine and eternal existence.

John 1:1-4, 14

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. ... 14 And the Word became 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."

Of course, vs. 12-13 refer to all of God's children—his created beings on this earth. But in verse 14, "Monogenes" refers to Jesus' uniqueness. His special, other-worldliness. That is, I believe, his full divinity.

Jesus Himself proclaimed his divinity in John 8:58, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." In saying "I AM," He proclaimed the same truth that John declared in chapter 1: that he is not created, but exists by Himself, without source or cause—and yet in intimate relationship with another, whom He calls His "Father."

John points this out explicitly. In the language that Jesus used to describe his relationship with His Father, no one could mistake His claims:

"Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God." (John 5:18)

But how, with all these references to Jesus Divinity, can we understand Jesus constant and continual submission to His Heavenly Father? How can He say in John 5:19, "*the Son can do nothing of Himself*?" How can He willingly submit, in such humility, and become dependent of His Father for everything? I believe the answer is found in understanding the meaning of God's love. Selfless love. A love so deep, that the King of the Universe should be willing to empty himself of everything, in order to demonstrate that love.

The Apostle Paul describes it this way in Philippians 2:5-11:

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

With this view of who Jesus is, and with the backdrop of the story of Abraham's sacrifice and Isaac's willing submission, I want you now to picture Jesus. Picture Jesus—not just as a man, but as the beloved Son of God. Picture the Father watching and listening, as He cries out in the Garden "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." (Matthew 26:42) Picture him, with the wood for the sacrifice—a rugged cross—lying across his bleeding back. But this time, there is no ram caught in the thicket. This time, there is no angel to stay the hand. He—the majesty of heaven—willingly gives his life. Why? Because of an arbitrary decree from Heaven? Because he was overpowered by men? No—he lays it down for you and for me—in love.

Acts 4:10-12

"Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. 11 This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation" (Hebrews 2:3)



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Note: here is a shorter version of the word study I did on Monogenes. I am not a Greek scholar by any means, so I'm relying solely on concordances and lexicons. Others have written much more extensively on this subject, but I'll share my brief study in the hopes that it will be helpful. It basically references the same verses I mentioned above, but in more detail. This is the line of study I used to build the study written into the main post:

The term “monogenes” is an uncommon word that means “single of its kind,” “only” or “unique.” It’s used to refer to only sons or daughters, and it’s a term used to refer to Jesus’ special relationship with His Father. It is used by only three New-Testament writers and appears only nine times in the New Testament. It also appears four times in the Septuagint—the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. Every time it’s used in the Septuagint it’s translated from the Hebrew word “yachiyd.” So if we want to know what John meant by calling Jesus the “monogenes” of the Father, it would be helpful to study this word as well. Where do we find this word in the Old Testament? In Genesis 22—the story of Abraham and Isaac.

New Testament verses that use “Monogenes”:

- Luke 7:12 “only son of his mother”
- Luke 8:42 “only daughter”
- Luke 9:38 “only child”
- John 1:14, 1:18, 3:16, 3:18, 1 John 4:9 “Only-begotten” (Jesus)
- Hebrews 11:17 “Only-begotten” (Isaac)

Old Testament (LXX) references to “Monogenes”:

- Judges 11:34 (Jephthah’s only daughter, from H3173 yachiyd)
- Psalm 22:20 (only Child, KJV “Darling” from H3173 yachiyd)
- Psalm 25:16 (KJV “Desolate” from H3173 yachiyd)
- Psalm 35:17 (KJV “Darkling” from H3173 yachiyd)

Other Old Testament (Hebrew) use of yachiyd:

- Genesis 22:2, 12, 16 (Isaac, translated “agapetos” or “beloved” in LXX)
- (4 references listed above, translated “Monogenes” in LXX)
- Psalm 68:6 “solitary”
- Proverbs 4:3 “son...only beloved” (personification of Wisdom, by metaphor Christ)
- Jeremiah 6:26, Amos 8:10, Zechariah 12:10 (mourning for an “only son”)

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