MONOGENES (μονογενής)

Dear reader

It is more than likely that you are reading this because you have an interest in what the Bible says about Jesus. In particular, you are probably interested in what the Greek word *monogenes* (μονογενής) means, which, when applied to Jesus, is translated in many versions of the Bible as *only begotten*. John the gospel writer is the only Bible writer who applied this word to Jesus (John 1:14. 1:18. 3:16. 3:18 and 1 John 4:9).

Luke, in his gospel, used *monogenes* three times. In the KJV, it is translated as “only” (son), “one only” (daughter), and “only child” (see Luke 7:12, 8:42, 9:38). In every translation I have read, these verses have been translated in the very same way. Each version describes the individual concerned as someone without siblings (an only-born into a family).

For many years, the meaning of the word *monogenes* has been debated. Just a quick browse on the Internet shows this to be true. Even on YouTube can be found much discussion about it.

Some say that when *monogenes* is applied to an individual, it means that this person is the only-born of his or her parents (someone without siblings). Others say that this word does not contain this meaning but only means *unique* or *one of a kind*. It must be remembered though, very importantly, that if something is said to be unique (one of a kind), there must be a reason for it. Something cannot be unique without a reason; neither, really, should something be referred to as unique without giving a reason.

Look at it this way: Without giving a reason, the observation could be made that a vase is very colourful, and without giving a reason, the observation could be made that a vase is cracked. On the other hand, if a vase is said to be unique, a reason must be given for saying it is unique. This is because the reason for it being unique would not be evident. In itself, the word *unique* does not convey the reason for something being unique. It therefore, needs qualification. To refer to something as unique, without giving a reason for it being unique, would be meaningless.

Jesus – monogenes

Two thousand years ago, John the gospel writer described Jesus as the *monogenes* Son of God, but what did he mean by the use of this terminology – and how do we go about discovering the answer to this very important question? I would say the answer would be to discover what *monogenes* meant to Greek people living at that time. That appears to be the obvious thing to do. We have already seen how it is translated in Luke’s gospel. It is translated to mean someone without siblings – an only-born into a family.

Earlier this year, in a group on Facebook, I voiced the belief that John used *monogenes* to mean that Christ was the only begotten (the only one brought

forth) of God. I presented Christ therefore as truly (really) the only begotten Son of God. One person in this group though, a Seventh-day Adventist minister, objected to my reasoning. In an effort to prove me wrong, he published an article in which he endeavoured to explain, mainly by his personal understanding of Greek and Latin, that originally, *monogenes* did not mean *only begotten* but *unique*. He claimed its meaning changed from *unique* to *only-begotten* during the 4th century controversy over the trinity doctrine.

As my understanding of Greek and Latin is almost nil, I passed this minister's response to a man, who, over the years, has helped me to understand the Greek of the New Testament. His name is Harry Foundalis. Without me asking him, he said he would respond to this minister's understanding of *monogenes*. To this end, he kindly produced an article pointing out the inaccuracies in this minister's reasoning.

So that you may have the benefit of what Mr Foundalis explained to this minister, I am providing you with his reply. It is yours to freely share with all those whom you believe would be interested. To preserve the anonymity of this minister, he is referred to, in the letter, as Pastor X.

To read the reply of Mr Foundalis to Pastor X, please click on this link or copy and paste it into your browser

https://theprophetstillspeaks.co.uk/Articles_pdf/Monogenes.pdf

If you wish to contact Mr Foundalis, whether it is with reference to *monogenes* or the meaning of any Greek words or phrases, his email address, also his terms and conditions of providing this service, can be found here

https://www.foundalis.com/lan/grkask.htm

If you have any queries pertaining to that which I have written above, please feel free to contact me (note the underscore in my email address)

Terry Hill

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