

## Only Begotten Son

We are told in John 3:16 that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, but do we really know what those words mean. Listen again to those words that we have heard and quoted so often . . .

<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.  
(John 3:16)

These are such simple words, but at the same time, so very profound, words that do literally tell us most all that we need to know about our God, about His blessed Son, and about our eternal future. Simple, and so very precious.

But folks, though these words be simple, they still do have mysteries intertwined within their meaning. And it is God's desire that you and I not leave those mysteries veiled and obscure within our minds. Not at all! God wants you and me to step on forward and to get to know the Blessed Lord Jesus, to truly know Him, and to love Him back for all He has done for us, to love Him with all of our hearts, all of our souls, all of our minds, and all of our strength. And we should give everything within us to do exactly that!

That is why it is good and right for you and me to spend all these many hours of study and of listening and of learning. And so today, may we spend our time considering some of those blessed mysterious attributes of the Lord Jesus. How, while yes, Jesus is "like you and me" in most ways, but at the same time, and in mysterious ways, He is really very, very different from us, beginning from those first moments of His life, with the manner in which He was conceived in His mother's womb, how as John 3:16 tells us, He was "begotten of the Father".

Here in Luke chapter 2, God tells us about the very beginning days of God's "only Begotten Son" as He came to the earth. Listen again to these words, first from chapter 1,

<sup>26</sup> Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

<sup>35</sup> And the angel . . . said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:26-27, 35)

And then in chapter 2, beginning in verse 1,

<sup>1</sup>And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. <sup>3</sup>So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup>to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. <sup>6</sup>So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. <sup>7</sup>And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)

As I mentioned a moment ago, as we read and consider these words of scripture that tell us about the miraculous birth of our Lord, we can't help but note all the many differences there are between this precious Baby Jesus and all of the other babies that have been born on this earth. And there truly are many differences, more than we can ever know.

And it seems that most all of those differences have their origin within the special mystery of Mary having conceived the Baby Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit, while she was yet still a “virgin”. And at the heart of that mystery is an even deeper one, a mystery that declares that this Baby Jesus was “the only begotten of the Father”.

That word, “begotten”, is strange to our common vocabulary today, seldom ever used by us. But here, in this circumstance the word has a very special, unique and mysterious meaning. While in other portions of scripture, the Greek words referring to the birth of an ordinary child are “begat” and “begot”, this particular reference to Jesus being “begotten of the Father” does not have the exact same meaning.

Yes, Jesus was born as a baby, and at that moment in time, His human body had its beginning. But at the same time, the essence of His eternal nature and being had no real beginning. Jesus was eternal, ever and always “one with the

Father” and “one with the Holy Spirit”. And in that sense, the reference to Jesus being “begotten” speaks more fully about how His “eternal essence” was “begotten” into the womb of this ordinary woman, Mary, than it does of the simple birthing of a child.

Now, I recognize that that explanation falls woefully short of adequately explaining the unfathomable mystery of how Jesus was “begotten of the Father”, but it does give me at least some small glimpse into who Jesus is in His eternal nature.

But with all of that being said, may we go back and visit the scriptures that tell us about this mysterious and miraculous birth.

We've already spoken at length about why the virgin birth took place and why it was so absolutely necessary that Mary be a virgin, but let me repeat those words again, because this miraculous truth bears repeating over and over again so that we have its clear meaning.

Again, these scriptures tell us that as Mary conceived the Baby Jesus in her womb, it was not by ordinary human means, but rather, she conceived because God “overshadowed” her. Listen! Luke 1, verse 35,

<sup>35</sup>And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)

But what do these words mean, that God “overshadowed” Mary and she conceived this Child in her womb? The definition of these words in the Greek lexicon gives a sense of meaning of being completely engulfed in a shadow. But knowing that God is “light” beyond any understanding we might have of “light”, we know that the “overshadowing” is not darkness, but rather it is glorious power and brilliance, bringing about the purpose that God intends, the conception of His Son.

In verse 31 of Luke chapter 1, the angel said to Mary,

<sup>31</sup> . . . behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest. (Luke 1:31)

God's Holy Spirit completely enveloped the Virgin Mary and filled her heart, soul, mind and body with His Holy presence and power, and she conceived the Baby Jesus in her womb.

Here, similar to the ordinary manner in which a baby embryo is formed naturally within the womb of a woman, the embryo of the Baby Jesus was formed when part of a woman, the Virgin Mary, was combined with part of God Himself to bring about this miraculously new and different being, the Son of the Most High God, an event that had never before taken place in human history and would never take place again.

Mary's part of this embryo was a created part, but not so with the part that came from God. That part was Holy and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting. It was God "begetting" Himself in human form within the womb of Mary. And so that you and I might be able to grasp some understanding of what was taking place, God called His new human Self, Jesus, the "Son of the Most High God".

Yes, other miraculous births had taken place, and still do, births by which God "opens the womb" of a woman to enable her to become pregnant by natural means. That had taken place earlier with Mary's relative, Elizabeth so that she could bear the baby John. And that was truly a miracle of sorts, but not like this one with the Baby Jesus.

Elizabeth's son, John, was conceived and would be born, filled with all of the same genetic blessings and curses that are passed along naturally through every other human conception and birth. Zachariah passing along all of his genetic predispositions, including that special genetic flaw that is present within all men, a carnal "sin nature".

But that was not so with this Baby Jesus, He was different. He was not conceived by men, but by the Holy Spirit. And He was conceived in the womb of a virgin who had never before had any relations with a man. And because of that, Jesus would have none of the genetic flaws of a "sin nature" passed along to Him.

Folks, let me say again, that we men have within the core of our being a devastatingly corrupt genetic predisposition towards sin, and we pass that genetic predisposition along to every child we bring forth. And all of the dear little babies born to us receive a full measure of our corrupt "sin nature".

Yes, our little babies start off very innocent. But innocence does not mean freedom from that hidden genetic defect of a "sin nature". It is simply there! And it will later grow into its full-blown condition. And it will ultimately take control over every child's personality and behavior. It is absolutely inevitable!

We don't like to think such things, especially as we look into the face of our innocent little babies. And most of the world does not accept such truths, especially the world of liberal psychology. They most often believe that every person is basically "good" and that we need only to release that "good" and everything will be wonderful.

They believe that bad behavior is simply a learned personality disorder that can be corrected with some behavior modification. They do not believe that there is a force of evil present within us that brings about our bad behavior and that our "sin nature" is a corrupt part of that presence of evil.

But folks, no matter how much we might want to believe all of those things that the world teaches, we must not! For the sake of our little babies, we dare not believe it! We must instead believe and accept God's truth about such things, that each and every person is born with a "sin nature", and if that "sin nature" is left unchanged, we will surely die, eternally.

. . . . But again, the baby Jesus was not conceived in the same manner that John the Baptist or our own babies are conceived. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and because of that was not endowed with a destructive "sin nature". And how do we know that? Just listen to the simple words given to us in this text. Again, from Luke 1, verse 35,

<sup>35</sup>And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)

These simple words, "that Holy One who is to be born", bespeaks having no sin within Him. Folks, perfect holiness and sin cannot coexist together.

Jesus was conceived and was born completely Holy, without a sin nature. And He went on to live a sinless life. And because sin never entered into His being, Jesus was able to later become the perfect sacrifice for our sins, the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world".

. . . Before we conclude these thoughts on the virgin birth, I would like for us to go back and even repeat a few of the thoughts that I mentioned at the beginning, about this special word "begotten".

God uses the word "begotten" in a very special and intentional way so that we might clearly understand that the Baby Jesus was truly not conceived within Mary's womb in the natural way, but that He was "begotten" of God, "begotten", not "developed" as a regular embryo develops, "begotten" not created, and "begotten", not made.

Yes, His "flesh", His body mechanism was made in the same manner as ours, but the essence of who Jesus was, was different, a new and human flesh, but with a mysteriously eternal Spirit, with no beginning and no end.

As the Holy Spirit entered into Mary's body and combined the person of God with the flesh of Mary to "beget" the Baby Jesus, something completely new and unique was formed. There in Mary's womb God combined the nature of limited human flesh with the timeless and boundless nature of the infinite God. And the two together became the eternal Savior of all mankind.

All of the other men born on this earth had a moment of beginning. Adam, in the Garden of Eden, had a moment of beginning when God first breathed life into his nostrils and he became a living soul. But not so, the Lord Jesus. His being existed from all eternity past. He had no beginning, and He has no end. John 1,

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God.

<sup>14</sup> 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. (John 1:1-2, 14)

The person of Jesus was eternal, from the beginning, co-existent with God the Father and with the Holy Spirit, forever and ever.

And it was only as He co-mingled His eternal being with our "finite" flesh, and lived among us, and then shed His blood that we might live, that the full extent of the meaning of this mysterious word "begotten" is revealed to us.

No human being, in themselves, could be pure and holy enough to become the “Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world”. It took God Himself, joining with human flesh to become “the Holy One”, that perfect Lamb, “begotten of the Father”. No person before and no person afterward could make such a claim.

Listen to those words again in John 3:16 . . .

<sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

(John 3:16)

And He make this testimony to us,

<sup>11</sup> . . . that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. <sup>12</sup> He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1 John 5:11-12)

Folks, these words are the most important words we will ever hear. And oh, how thankful we should be for the blessed gift of eternal life that can only come to us through the “only Begotten Son of God”.

<sup>12</sup> He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1 John 5:12)

May we pray!