



Steven Ritchie · Oct 24, 2016 · 5 min read

## The Meaning of Monogenes in John 1:18

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- John 1:18

# THE MEANING OF MONOGENES IN JOHN 1:18

"No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him." John 1:18

I have already proved in my article and video, "Only Begotten Son or Only Begotten God" that the earliest Christians cited John 1:18 as "Monogenes Huios (only begotten Son)" well before the later Alexandrian manuscripts appeared with "Monogenes Theos (only begotten God)." The majority of extant Greek manuscripts throughout the known world read, "monogones huios" rather than "mongenes theos." Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that the apostle John would write "only begotten God" when elsewhere in his writings he always wrote, "only begotten Son" (*monogenes huios* – John 3:16; John 3:18; 1 John 4:9).

Trinitarian apologists often allege that "monogenes huios" in John 1:18 "has nothing whatsoever to do with origin and derivation (*Dalcour, Pg. 148 – below*) ..." Thus, according to Trinitarian author Edward Dalcour, "monogenēs huios" simply means "one and only Son," "unique Son," or "one of a kind Son," which lacks "any notion of origin or beginning" (*A Distinctive Look At Oneness Theology, Pg. 148, Edward Dalcour*). Therefore Edward Dalcour claims, "...contextual evidence shows that the term does not carry the idea of 'beget,' 'to give birth,' 'origin,' etc., as Oneness teachers claim (*Bernard, 1983: 103-4*)" (*A Definitive Look At Oneness Theology, Pg. 149, Edward Dalcour – with reference to David Bernard's book, The Oneness of God, Pg. 103-104*).

It is hard to believe that any intelligent Trinitarian scholar such as Edward Dalcour would make such a ridiculous claim. Monogenes (*mon-og-en-ace*) in John 1:18 simply means (and I'm quoting from Strong's) "only" "only begotten" or "unique." While monogenes can mean, "only" or "unique," it also carries the connotation of being "only born" with a time of origin.

Scholars Kenneth Barker and Edwin Palmer have pointed out that monogenes in Koine Greek does carry some meaning related to begetting.

"Alternatively, in favour that the word monogenēs does carry some meaning related to begetting is the etymological origin mono- (only) + genes (born, begotten)" (*Kenneth L. Barker, Edwin H. Palmer The NIV: the making of a contemporary translation 1986 p121*).

Ancient Greek literature shows that monogenes can mean “only born” or “only begotten.”

Herodotus 2.79.3 – “Maneros was the only-born (monogenes) of their first king, who died prematurely.”

Herodotus 7.221.1 – “Megistias sent to safety his only-born (o monogenes, as noun) who was also with the army.”

Plato, Critias 113d, The Story of Atlantis: “Evenor with his wife Leucippe; and they had for offspring an only-begotten (monogene) daughter, Cleito.”

Plato, Timaeus 31b – “one only-begotten Heaven (monogenes ouranos) created.”

Plato, Timaeus 92c – “the one only-begotten Heaven (monogenes ouranos).”

Apollonius of Rhodes, Argonautica 3:1007: “And propitiate only-begotten Hecate, daughter of Perses.”

Moreover, like monogenes is sometimes used for only begotten sons and daughters in scripture (as well as in Greek literature), Mr. Dalcour fails to recognize that other Hebrew and Greek words are utilized in scripture for both Jesus and other men being born at specific points in time. For example, Psalm 2:7 utilizes the Hebrew word “yalad” when God prophetically said to the Messiah, “You are My Son, this day have I begotten (yalad) you.” Yet this same word “yalad” is used throughout the Hebrew Scriptures for the births of men like Cain and Abel (*Genesis 4:1-2*). Therefore the use of “monogenes” in John 1:18 does not support the Trinitarian idea of an alleged timeless Son with no begetting in time, as there is no Biblical precedent anywhere else in sacred scripture.

There is no evidence in Greek literature to back up the Trinitarian claim that the Greek word “monogenes” does not have the connotation of a birth with a time of origin. To speculate that the word “monogenes” somehow implies a timeless unique Son goes beyond the plain meaning of “monogenes” in Greek literature and in the Greek Scriptures. For no verse in the Bible or in Greek literature ever demonstrates that the Greek word “Monogenes” (meaning “only”, “only begotten”, or “unique”) can be transformed to mean a timeless or eternal only-ness or uniqueness, as the Greek word “monogenes” never means a timeless eternal son or daughter.

The Greek word “monogenes” is used in Luke 7:12 for the widow’s “only” born son who Jesus raised from the dead in the town of Nain. Luke 7:12 (NASB) says, “... a dead man was being carried out, the only (monogenes) son of his mother, and she was a widow ...” Just as John 1:18 speaks of Christ as the Father’s only Son, so monogenes is used for the widow’s only son who Jesus raised from the dead.

Monogenes is also used in Luke 8:42 for “Jairus” “only daughter.” Luke 8:42 (NASB) reads, “And there came a man named Jairus ... for he had an only (monogenes) daughter ...” Since monogenes is never used for timeless sons and daughters with no time of origin, it is ridiculous to think that monogenes references Christ in John 1:18 with no time of origin. Wherefore, many Trinitarian scholars have twisted the clear meaning of the word “monogenes” to try to make it fit into a Trinitarian idea of an alleged timeless God the Son rather than an only begotten Son who was born at a specific point in time (*Psalm 2:7; Luke 2:1-7*). Since “monogenes” has nothing to do with an alleged eternal or timeless existence before one’s birth, Trinitarians have no right to pervert the literal meaning of “monogenes” to try to fit it into their pre-conceived speculative ideas outside of the plain text of inspired scripture.

Although Mr. Dalcour shows that “monogenes” can mean an only unique Son in the sense of being the seed of promise (*Genesis 21:11; Heb. 11:18*), nowhere in the Bible do we find that “monogenes” can be reinterpreted to mean “only” and “unique” without “any notion of origin or beginning,” as Dalcour claims (*A Distinctive Look At Oneness Theology, Pg. 148, Edward Dalcour*). On page 149 of the same book, Dalcour claimed, “For God’s covenant was with Abraham’s monogenēs son Isaac, not with his first son Ishmael. Therefore, the lexical and contextual evidence shows that the term does not carry the idea of ‘beget,’ ‘to give birth,’ ‘origin,’ etc., as Oneness teachers claim” (*Dalcour then referenced David Bernard, The Oneness of God Pg. 103-4 / A Distinctive Look At Oneness Theology, Pg. 149, Edward Dalcour*). Yet Mr. Dalcour fails to notice that Abraham’s Son Isaac was indeed a begotten son with an actual time of origin. Thus, Edward Dalcour himself completely repudiates his own argument by citing Heb. 11:18. Since Isaac is identified as the seed of promise in Genesis 21:12 and Heb. 11:18, Isaac is called the only legitimate son “monogenes” of Abraham because he was born in time as his true heir. Therefore the evidence of scripture and Greek literature proves that the linguistic definition of the word ‘monogenes’ must be understood as a unique son or daughter with a real birth that points to a time of origin.

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## Oneness vs Unitarianism, Part 5 ‘Gnosticism’

Unitarian Socinian author Tom Raddatz recently posted a scathing polemic attacking Oneness Theology and personally attacking Oneness Apologi