

JESUS CHRIST'S UNIQUENESS

Jno.1:14,18; 3:14-18

Ed Dye

Monogenes (mon-og-en-ace') "only begotten"

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The term "unique" defined in our English dictionary as an adjective describing someone or something as being "the only one of its kind; being without a like or equal; single in its kind or excellence;" thus "single, sole."
2. In reality, of course, each person on earth is unique, for no two are absolutely equal or alike in every respect – not even identical twins. We are told that no two snow flakes are exactly alike.
3. But to speak of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, is an entirely different matter. Of much greater significance to us.
 - a. He is unique in a way that stands vastly apart from any other person to ever inhabit our planet, or that every will inhabit it.
 - b. And his uniqueness is of greater significance to mankind than we perhaps fully recognize.
 - c. Because of his uniqueness we can be and/or are blessed with unique blessings in a unique way.
4. To develop our study of The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ, we shall:
 - a. First consider the Greek term MONOGENES – mon-og-en-ace', a term that reflects the idea of uniqueness used in the N.T.
 - b. Secondly, we shall note the number of ways in which Jesus Christ was the only one of his kind, thus his uniqueness, as well as its significance in God's scheme of human redemption.

II. DISCUSSION

- A. **THE GREEK TERM MONOGENES – mon-og-en-ace'—REFLECTING THE IDEA OF UNIQUENESS IS FOUND SOME NINE TIMES IN THE N.T., FIVE OF WHICH ARE APPLIED TO JESUS CHRIST.**

1. With a little study, it's easily seen that "**only begotten**" (mon-og-en-ace') is used in two different senses in the N.T..
 - a. It is used of a person who is the only one "within a specific relationship."
 - (1) For example, in Heb.11:17, Isaac was referred to as Abraham's "only begotten" son.
 - (2) That was not true in a strictly literal sense, for Ishmael was Abraham's first son.
 - (3) It was true, however, in a redemptive sense, for Isaac was Abraham's only child of promise, i.e., the one of the Messianic line.
 - b. The word was also used of an only child, i.e., one who had no sibling – brother or sister –relationships.
 - (1) Lk.7:12, "Now when he came night to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carrier out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her."
 - (2) Lk.8:42, "For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying..."
 - (3) Lk.9:38, "And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child."
2. And, of course, the Apostle John uses the word MONOGENES (mon-og-en-ace'), translated "only begotten" five times with reference to Jesus Christ reflecting his own personal uniqueness, Jno.1:14,18; 3:16,18; 1Jno.4:9.
 - a. Jno.1:14: "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of (from) the Father..."
 - (1) Vine: This "indicates that as the Son of God He was the sole representative of the Being and character of the One who sent Him..."
 - (2) "The apostle's object is to demonstrate what sort of glory it was that he and his fellow-apostles had seen."
 - b. Jno.1:18, "...the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."
 - (1) Vine: This "expresses both His eternal union with the Father in the Godhead and the ineffable (in-describable) intimacy and love between them, the

Son sharing all the Father's counsels and enjoying all His affections.

- (2) "Another reading is 'monogenes Theos,' 'God only-begotten.'"
- c. Jno.3:18 speaks of "the name of the only begotten Son of God."
 - (1) Vine: This "lays stress upon the full revelation of God's character and will, his love and grace, as conveyed in the Name of One who, being in a unique relationship to Him, was provided by Him as the object of faith."
- d. 1Jno.4:9: "...that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him."
 - (1) Literally, "His Son, the only-begotten"
 - (2) Signifies the-only-one-of-its-kind, and was used to distinguish Jesus from all other sons of children of God.
 - (3) Others, by means of the new birth, became members of God's family – sons and daughters—his children.
 - (4) But Jesus, alone, is the only begotten Son of God.
 - (5) He is the Son of God in a sense characteristic of no other being in the universe; and to assign to him a position inferior to this, as modernists do, is infidelity!

B. THE NUMBER OF WAYS IN WHICH THE UNIQUENESS OF JESUS CHRIST IS EVIDENT.

1. The uniqueness of Jesus Christ is evident by his virginal conception, Mt.1:18-23; Lk.1:26-35.
 - a. Jesus of Nazareth was the only one ever conceived within the body of a virgin, one who had never known a man.
 - b. At least 700 years before his birth in Bethlehem to the virgin Mary, Isaiah, in Isa.7:14, prophesied that "the virgin" would conceive and bear a son who name would be called Immanuel.
 - c. "The definite article, 'the virgin' (both in the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek N.T. texts) points to a solitary woman, a certain woman, a virgin.

- (1) “That this birth was to be of a virgin excludes any sexual union prior to the conception.
 - (2) “This eliminates any woman of Isaiah’s day, contrary to the popular view that contends for a ‘double fulfillment,’ i.e., a conception by a married, *non-virgin* in the prophet’s era, and later, the miraculous conception of the virgin, Mary.” – Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier, Jan., 2007, Vol. XLII, Number 9, p.33.
2. By the deity of Jesus Christ.
- a. The concept of the virgin birth is important in that:
 - (1) It establishes the deity of Jesus Christ as the “Son of God.” Cf. Mt.22:41-45; Heb.1:5-13; Psa.110:1; Ac.2:29-35.
 - (2) It underscores the authority of Jesus as one greater even than Moses and Elijah; he is the one whom all men (both Jesus and Gentile) must “hear,” Mt.17:1-5; Deut.18:18,19; Ac.3:19-26; Jno.17:7,8, 20,21; Mt.28:18-20; Rom.1:16,17; Eph.3:1-11; Heb.3:1-6.
 - (3) It argues that salvation is tied exclusively to Jesus; the virgin’s son is the only avenue to heaven, Mt.1:21; Lk.19:10; Jno.8:24; Ac.4:12; Rom.3:19-26; Heb.5:8,9; Heb.1:1-3; 2:1-4; 12:25.
3. By his eternal existence.
- a. He is unique in that he was and is the only one to exist before he was conceived in the virgin birth.
 - b. Though born as a child, a male being, and therefore having a beginning of days on earth, he was timeless in his existence as deity.
 - c. The prophet Micah declared that his “goings forth are from old, from everlasting,” Mic.5:2 (marg. “the days of eternity”)
 - d. The Apostle John in Jno.1:1,2,14 affirmed his “continuous timeless existence” when he wrote:
 - (1) “In the beginning was the Word,”
 - (2) “And the Word was with God,”
 - (3) “And the Word was God,”
 - (4) “The same was in the beginning with God.”

- (5) “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...”
- e. Jesus himself declared to the hostile, unbelieving Jews: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am,” thus claiming eternal existence for himself.
 - (1) There was a point in history when Abraham came into being, into existence; before this, he was not.
 - (2) But of Christ, it is here affirmed that he always existed, with the absolute phrase used of God.
 - (3) The tense is timeless present and conveys the same notion as that used of Jehovah God in Exo.3:14 when He said to Moses, “**I AM THAT I AM**: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **I AM** hath sent me unto you.”
- f. Note this about Jno.1:1,2,14.
 - (1) He who was eternal (“the Word,” Vv.1,2) became flesh in the incarnation, not “the flesh became the Word,” as per the “Jehovah’s Witness” doctrine, who deny his eternal existence!
 - (2) He who was of the very nature of God became man in the flesh without divesting himself of his deity. Cf. Phil.2:5-11.
- g. He is a being of “time” and “eternity.” Cf. Jno.17:4,5.
- 4. By his being Emmanuel, or God with us, the God-man, Mt.1:21-23; Jno.1:1,2,14.
 - a. Jesus Christ is unique in that he is the only being of all history ever to be at the same time both God and man.
 - b. Christ as God as to his eternal essence, and yet he became “flesh” to identify with humanity, that through his sacrificial death as a man for the sins of man, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, Cf. Isa.53:1-12; Phil.2:5-8; Heb.2:9,11-14.
 - c. Thus he, as the Son of man and of God, when he was fully qualified as a man, by his own obedience in the flesh, became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him, as the one Mediator between God and man, Heb.5:8,9; 1Tim.2:5.
- 5. By his being the one and only sinless adult person to ever live.
 - a. Jesus Christ is unique in that he was the only person capable of moral awareness “who did not sin, neither was

guile found in his mouth,” 1Pet.2:22. Cf. Isa.53:9; Lk.23:39-41; See Heb.4:14,15; Mt.4:1-10.

- b. He never experienced any personal guilt because of sin. There was never any thought, word or deed on his part that required personal repentance.
 - c. He honestly could and did make the statement as he taught in the Jewish temple, as he was being questioned by the Jews, “...I do always those things that please him,” Jno.8:29 (referring to the Father).
 - d. In that same context and under the same circumstances, he challenged his Jewish enemies with the bold, daring words: “which of you convicteth me of sin?” Jno.8:46.
 - (1) Goodspeed: “Who among you can prove me guilty of sin?”
 - (2) Williams: “Who of you can prove (convict) me guilty of sin?”
 - e. Jesus is the only person of whom it can be said, “the better we get to know him, the more self-conscious we become of our own flaws.”
 - f. Professor Stephen Neill once expressed it like this: “The more clearly we see him, the more clearly we see ourselves, and the sight is not pleasant.” – “The Truth of God Incarnate, p.79, Michael Green, editor (1977).
6. The uniqueness of Jesus Christ is evident by his unique teaching ability.
- a. Even his enemies were forced to concede: “Never man spake like this man,” Jno.7:46 (or, “never man so spake”)
 - b. Cf. Mt.5:28,29.
 - c. His method of teaching by the use of parables is unparalleled. No man has ever been able to equal him. He is the master teacher.
7. The uniqueness of Jesus Christ is evident by his being raised to die no more.
- a. Jesus Christ was the only one ever to be raised from the dead, never to die again; not the first one to be raised from the dead; but the first to be raised from the dead never to die again.
 - b. This is the meaning the following expressions in:

- (1) Col.1:18: “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead...”
 - (2) Rev.1:5: “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead...”
 - (3) Of course, the “firstborn” expression denotes “priority in the resurrection to be followed by others.” Cf. 1Cor.15:20-26; Rom.5:16-19.
 - c. Rom.6:8,9: “Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.”
 - d. Heb.7:24,25: “But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”
8. By his relationship with the Father.
- a. The writings of the Apostle John, as no other N.T. writer, reveal the special, unique relationship Jesus Christ had with his heavenly Father in his use of two different Gr. terms.
 - b. For instance:
 - (1) The Apostle John often employs the term “children,” from the Gr. term “tekna” for the Lord’s disciples as the children or sons of God, Jno.1:12; 11:52; 1Jno.3:1,2,10; 5:2.
 - (2) But John reserved the word “son,” from the Gr. term “huios,” for Jesus Christ, Jno.1:18,34; 3:16,17,18; 5:19,25; 9:35; 11:4; 20:31; 1Jno.1:3,7; 2:22,23; 5:5,12,13,20.
 - c. Jesus Christ himself, by the use of the first person singular pronoun; such as: “my Father,” as he often does in Mt., Lk., and Jno, establishes a distinction between his relationship to the Father, and that of all others.
 - (1) See Jno.5:17 as an example.
 - (2) According to V.18,the unbelieving Jews understood perfectly the significance of V.17.
 - d. Jno.1:18 helps us understand the uniqueness of his relationship with the Father.

- (1) In Vv.1-18 it is revealed that the Word became flesh and brought down to earth a demonstration of not only **WHO** God is but **WHAT** God is.
- (2) Three grand divisions of Jno.1:1-18 characterize it:
 - (a) Vv.1-3, The eternity of the Word and his creative activity in the beginning.
 - (b) Vv.4-13, The light in him in conflict with the darkness of the sinful and unbelieving world.
 - © Vv.14-18, His revelation of God to man in his coming into the world.
- (3) Here then we have an unparalleled account, a precious and profound picture, of the nature and eternal relationship of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ with the Father.

III. CONCLUSION

1. By this study of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ reflected in such familiar passages as Jno.1:14,18; 3:14-18, and the Gr. term MONOGENES – mon-og-en-ace’ – rendered in the KJV and ASV as “only begotten”-- perhaps we will appreciate more fully the richness and great spiritual significance of it.
2. The more we study and learn about the Lord Jesus Christ, the more we are awed by his true nature, his work as the Messiah, and his love that motivated him to do what he has done for us as the Savior, not only as sinners in need of his saving blood, but as his servants in need of his position at God’s right hand making intercession for us as King of kings and Lord of lords and as our High Priest.

-credit to Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier, Jan.,2007, Vol. XLII, No.9.