

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XXV

November 8, 2015

No. 45

## Jesus: the “Only Begotten”

(Jerry Fite)

A cherished passage of Scripture which also contains a mystery is John 3:16. *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”* Was Jesus “begotten”? Was there a time when He did not exist?

When we hear of “begetting”, we think of the birth process. When we hear of “only begotten” we think of one child. These concepts are accurate when understanding what a man communicated when he came to Jesus and said, *“Teacher, I beseech thee to look upon my son for he is mine only child”* (Luke 9:38). The same is true when Jarius invites Jesus to come to his house for *“...he had an only daughter”* that was dying (Luke 8:42).

The Greek word in these two passages is the same when referring to the “son” or the “daughter”. It is *“monogenees”*. We interpret “only” from “mono”; and we see something “generated” in “genees”. In one case it is a girl, in the other it is a boy.

But Jesus was not an only begotten son like an only begotten daughter. The only son and only daughter of these passages in Luke had a beginning when begotten, while the Son of God has never had a beginning, but is still begotten of God.

We know Jesus taking on flesh and blood, while being born of Mary in Bethlehem was not when Jesus became God’s begotten Son. Jesus was already the begotten Son of God because *“...God sent His only begotten Son into the world”* (1 John 4:10).

Before Jesus became flesh (John 1:14), He was *“the Word”* (Jn. 1:1). Notice “equality” and “distinction” when John writes of “the Word” and “God”. In the beginning... *“the Word was with God* (denoting a distinction between “The Word” and “God”), and *“The Word was God”* denoting equality. As we generate words from our being, which can be distinguishable from our person through hearing or reading, we are still the one who is speaking these words.

Jesus as “The Word” is communicating and manifesting the character and will of God. As the “only begotten”, He manifests God’s “grace” and “truth” just as one would see the characteristics of a father in a son (John 1:14). Jesus could say *“...he that hath seen me, has seen the father”* (Jn. 14:9); not because Jesus and the Father are not distinguishable, but because Jesus manifested in Himself God’s true character. *“No man has seen God at any time...”* John writes, but *“...the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him”* (John 1:18). Jesus is uniquely God declaring God to man. Through fatherhood and sonship, Jesus is manifesting the loving relationship we should have as children with God, our Father.

The unique Son was not “begotten” in time. Being eternally generated from God as “the Word” and “the Son”, Jesus came to make known the character of God, and the proper relationship we should have with our loving Father.