

APPENDIX L

The Meaning of *Monogenes*

Occurrences of μονογενής in the Old Testament and Apocrypha

• *English translation (NASV) of μονογενής is indicated by bold font in NASV translation*

• Judg. 11:34 καὶ ἦλθεν Ιεφθαε εἰς Μασσηφα εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἰδοὺ ἡ θυγάτηρ αὐτοῦ ἐξεπορεύετο εἰς ἀπάντησιν αὐτοῦ ἐν τυμπάνοις καὶ χοροῖς καὶ αὕτη μονογενής αὐτῷ ἀγαπητή καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτῷ πλὴν αὐτῆς υἱὸς ἢ θυγάτηρ

Judg. 11:34 ¶ When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, behold, his daughter was coming out to meet him with tambourines and with dancing. Now she was his **one and only** child; besides her he had no son or daughter.

• Tob. 3:15 καὶ οὐκ ἐμόλυνα τὸ ὄνομά μου οὐδὲ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρός μου ἐν τῇ γῇ τῆς αἰχμαλωσίας μου μονογενής εἰμι τῷ πατρί μου καὶ οὐχ ὑπάρχει αὐτῷ παιδίον ὃ κληρονομήσει αὐτόν οὐδὲ ἀδελφὸς ἐγγὺς οὐδὲ ὑπάρχων αὐτῷ υἱὸς ἵνα συντηρήσω ἑμαυτὴν αὐτῷ γυναῖκα ἤδη ἀπώλοντό μοι ἑπτὰ ἵνα τί μοι ζῆν καὶ εἰ μὴ δοκεῖ σοι ἀποκτεῖναί με ἐπίταξον ἐπιβλέψαι ἐπ' ἐμὲ καὶ ἔλεησαί με καὶ μηκέτι ἀκοῦσαί με ὄνειδισμόν

Tob. 3:15 and that I did not stain my name or the name of my father in the land of my captivity. I am my father's **only child**, and he has no child to be his heir, no near kinsman or kinsman's son for whom I should keep myself as wife. Already seven husbands of mine are dead. Why should I live? But if it be not pleasing to thee to take my life, command that respect be shown to me and pity be taken upon me, and that I hear reproach no more."

•**Tob. 6:11** εἶπεν ὁ ἄγγελος τῷ παιδαρίῳ ἄδελφε σήμερον
αὐλισθησόμεθα παρὰ Ραγουηλ καὶ αὐτὸς συγγενῆς σου ἔστιν
καὶ ἔστιν αὐτῷ θυγάτηρ μονογενῆς ὀνόματι Σαρρα

Tob. 6:10 the angel said to the young man, "Brother, today we shall stay
with Raguel. He is your relative, and he has an **only** daughter named Sarah. I
will suggest that she be given to you in marriage,

•**Tob. 8:17** εὐλογητὸς εἶ ὅτι ἠλέησας δύο μονογενεῖς ποιήσον
αὐτοῖς δέσποτα ἔλεος συντέλεσον τὴν ζωὴν αὐτῶν ἐν ὑγιείᾳ
μετὰ εὐφροσύνης καὶ ἐλέους

Tob. 8:17 Blessed art thou, because thou hast had compassion on two **only**
children. Show them mercy, O Lord; and bring their lives to fulfilment in
health and happiness and mercy."

•**Psa. 21:21** ῥύσαι ἀπὸ ῥομφαίας τὴν ψυχὴν μου καὶ ἐκ χειρὸς
κυνὸς τὴν μονογενὴ μου

Psa. 22:20 Deliver my soul from the sword, My **only life** from the power
of the dog.

•**Psa. 24:16** ἐπίβλεψον ἐπ' ἐμὲ καὶ ἐλέησόν με ὅτι μονογενῆς καὶ
πτωχὸς εἶμι ἐγώ

Psa. 25:16 ¶ Turn to me and be gracious to me, For I am **lonely** and
afflicted.

APPENDIX L: **The Meaning of *Monogenes***

•Psa. 34:17 κύριε πότε ἐπόψη ἀποκατάστησον τὴν ψυχὴν μου
ἀπὸ τῆς κακουργίας αὐτῶν ἀπὸ λεόντων τὴν μονογενῆ μου

Psa. 35:17 ¶ Lord, how long will You look on? Rescue my soul from
their ravages, My **only life** from the lions.

•Ode. 14:13 κύριε υἱὲ μονογενῆ

monogenes modifies "son"

•Wis. 7:22 ἔστιν γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ πνεῦμα νοερόν ἅγιον μονογενές
πολυμερές λεπτόν εὐκίνητον τρανόν ἀμόλυντον σαφές
ἀπήμαντον φιλάγαθον ὄξύ

Wis. 7:22 for wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me. ¶ For in her
there is a spirit that is intelligent, holy, **unique**, manifold, subtle, mobile,
clear, unpolluted, distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen, irresistible,

•Sol. 18:4 ἡ παιδεία σου ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ὡς υἱὸν πρωτότοκον μονογενῆ
ἀποστρέψαι ψυχὴν εὐήκοον ἀπὸ ἀμαθίας ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ

Your instruction is upon us, as upon a firstborn **only** son, in order to turn his
obedient soul away from the lack of learning that amounts to ignorance.

Occurrences of μονογενής in the New Testament
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• Luke 7:12 ὡς δὲ ἤγγισεν τῇ πύλῃ τῆς πόλεως, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐξεκομίζετο τεθνηκὼς μονογενῆς υἱὸς τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὴ ἦν χήρα, καὶ ὄχλος τῆς πόλεως ἱκανὸς ἦν σὺν αὐτῇ.

Luke 7:12 Now as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the **only** son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her.

• Luke 8:42 ὅτι θυγάτηρ μονογενῆς ἦν αὐτῷ ὡς ἐτῶν δώδεκα καὶ αὐτὴ ἀπέθνησκειν. Ἐν δὲ τῷ ὑπάγειν αὐτὸν οἱ ὄχλοι συνέπνιγον αὐτόν.

Luke 8:42 for he had an **only** daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying. But as He went, the crowds were pressing against Him.

• Luke 9:38 καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀνὴρ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου ἐβόησεν λέγων· διδάσκαλε, δέομαί σου ἐπιβλέψαι ἐπὶ τὸν υἱόν μου, ὅτι μονογενῆς μοί ἐστιν,

Luke 9:38 And a man from the crowd shouted, saying, "Teacher, I beg You to look at my son, for he is my **only boy**,

APPENDIX L: **The Meaning of *Monogenes***

John 1:14 ¶ Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας.

John 1:14 ¶ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the **only begotten** from the Father, full of grace and truth.

•John 1:18 Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς [υἱὸς (txt var)] ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the **only begotten** Son [God (txt var)] who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

•John 3:16 οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

John 3:16 ¶ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His **only begotten** Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

•John 3:18 ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν οὐ κρίνεται· ὁ δὲ μὴ πιστεύων ἤδη κέκριται, ὅτι μὴ πεπίστευκεν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ.

John 3:18 “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the **only begotten** Son of God.

•Heb. 11:17 ¶ Πίστει προσενήνοχεν Ἀβραὰμ τὸν Ἰσαὰκ πειραζόμενος καὶ τὸν μονογενῆ προσέφερεν, ὃ τὰς ἐπαγγελίας ἀναδεξάμενος,

Heb. 11:17 ¶ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his **only begotten son**;

•1John 4:9 ἐν τούτῳ ἐφανερώθη ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ.

1John 4:9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His **only begotten** Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

CONCLUSION

It would appear that *μονογενής* can be meaningfully translated as "only", "one and only", "alone", or "one of a kind."

The word *μονογενής* seems to describe something as the one and only member of a kind (genus).

Notice the two occasions where it refers to David's *μονογενής* life—that is, to the one and only life and identity that he has.

In all those instances in the Old and New Testaments where it could most justifiably be translated "only-begotten," it could also be translated—and more likely should be translated—"one and only." A person's *only-begotten* child is also his *one and only* child. An *only-begotten* son or daughter is a *one and only* son or daughter. So, while in each of those contexts it makes sense when it is translated "only-begotten," it is doubtful that that is what it means. More likely, it simply means "one and only."

In all the other cases, "only-begotten" makes no sense as a translation. David is not asking God to protect his "only-begotten" life; he is asking God to

protect his "one and only" life. Further, David is not complaining that he is "only-begotten" and brought low; he is complaining that he is "all alone" and "brought low."

Accordingly, the two senses of $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\nu\acute{\eta}\varsigma$ (*monogenes*) that account for every occurrence of it in the Old Testament, Septuagint, and the New Testament are

(1) "one and only", and

(2) "all alone".