

The Begetting, Coming into Existence, of the Son of God

by **Anthony Buzzard**

What does the word “beget” mean? Definitions are easy to come by. Just type the word into a search engine, or consult a dictionary anywhere. To beget is “to sire, to father, to bring into existence, to procreate, to generate.”

This word is crucial to our understanding of who Jesus, the Son of God, is. For centuries churches bearing the name of Christ argued over whether the Son had a beginning of existence or not. Of course there is a vast difference between a person who has no beginning and one who comes into existence, that is, has a *beginning* of existence.

So what does the Bible say about Jesus, the Son of God? The answer is very easy as long as one is able to process simple information and begin at the right place.

The place to start is in Matthew and Luke. Both these biblical writers major on the story of the begetting of Jesus. They thus inform us in detail of how and when the Son of God began to exist, was begotten, that is procreated.

Matthew 1:1 uses a noun related to begetting. It is the word “genesis.” It means of course beginning. Jesus’ family history is to be announced by Matthew. Jesus is introduced as being the descendant (son) of Abraham and the descendant of David. Is that clear? In Matthew 1:18 Matthew picks up the same word “genesis”: “The beginning, genesis, of Jesus was as follows...” Matthew focuses in on the beginning, procreation, begetting, coming into existence, origin of Jesus as the Son of God.

There is no possible doubt or ambiguity in these accounts of who Jesus is and how he began. The language is un-complex and of course was written to be understood! Matthew 1:20, two verses later, tells us more about this begetting of Jesus. Please note the slight “fudging” of the original Greek in some translations here. Your translation probably tells you that Joseph was reassured to learn that what Mary “conceived” in her womb was from the spirit of God. Actually the Greek is more specific. It reads “what is begotten,” i.e., fathered, brought into existence, is from the spirit. Begetting is the work of a father.

In this crucial verse God had a Son, using His operational presence and power, His spirit, to procreate that Son. God in other words brought the Son into existence, caused him to exist — begat him.

Language has no clearer way of telling you that the Son of God was brought into existence by miracle in Mary. The Son was caused to be, generated, fathered, sired. Yes, of course Mary conceived a baby but the text (Matt. 1:20) tells us of the *Father's* miraculous activity in begetting a Son.

Is this clear, and do you believe it? This account defines who the Son of God is. He is a procreated, generated, fathered person. God was his Father and this happened when a biological miracle was wrought in the womb of a young Jewess, probably about 16 years old.

None of this is the slightest bit difficult — until of course we listen to the words of the churches which make this matchlessly simple account into something quite different!

But before explaining what the church has done to make a simple account impossibly complex, let us see how beautifully Luke reinforces what we just learned from Matthew. In Luke Mary is visited by Gabriel, when Elizabeth was six months pregnant with John the Baptist. Once again the account is not complex. It was written by the historian and Bible expert Luke, and designed to convey unambiguous information to promote and confirm the Christian faith.

The angel is addressing a sixteen-year-old. He intends to be understood! The angel begins with these words: “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus” (Luke 1:30-31). Nothing difficult about this information. Then this: “He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father” (1:32). The baby to be conceived will be God’s Son. Now information about the destiny of this Son of God: “And he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (1:33). Next Mary’s very reasonable question: “But Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?’” (1:34). The reply of Gabriel, God’s messenger: “The holy spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God” (1:35).

The original Greek here gives us this: The child to be begotten, brought into existence, generated will be the Son of God. This repeats the information we found in Matthew 1:1, 18, 20.

We are at a crucial and defining moment with this easy explanation from Gabriel. The angel actually provides an *exact definition* of the title Son of God. It is rare that a Bible verse comes with its own built-in clarification. But here we have the Bible’s perfect definition of “Son of God.” Jesus is the Son of God precisely because of the miracle worked in Mary. “For this reason he will be the Son of God.” The miraculous begetting and conception provides the simple reason for Jesus being the Son of God. He has no human father. He is the Son of God and God is his Father!

Alas, the Church overturned this crystal clear account of the origin of the Son of God. By 150 AD, 50 years later than the end of the New Testament period, that Son of God had been

invested with a pre-history as Son. This meant that the words of Gabriel were derailed and disregarded. The reason for Jesus being the Son of God was no longer the miracle in Mary. The Son was given a “beginningless beginning,” a so-called “eternal generation.” These terms involved manipulating the meaning of the words “beget, originate, cause to exist.” They were flatly contradicted, removed from the record and invested with non-meanings — meanings they nowhere else ever had! The conversation between Gabriel and Mary was frankly turned into nonsense, made incomprehensible.

Matthew and Luke present us with the true Son of God — a human being who is Son of God by supernatural divine procreation. Later church councils forced on the Church a Son of God whose origin was literally in eternity, by “eternal generation.” The historical Son of God was buried under a strange tradition involving interference with simple words.

Listen to the telling, if rather understated, comment of a leading commentator on Luke 1:35. Ponder this amazing twist suffered by the easy words of Gabriel to Mary: “Later church tradition made something quite other out of this verse” (Fitzmyer, *Anchor Bible Commentary*). (Sadly, Justin Martyr believed that the spirit and power of God were God the Son preexisting his own birth!)

It is most unwise to begin to contradict these lucid accounts of Matthew and Luke by setting John’s gospel against them! John was fully aware of the accounts of Matthew and Luke and certainly did not imagine setting them aside.

John spoke of the eternal plan of God to procreate His unique Son. John spoke not of a “Word” (capitalized in our translations, with no authority for this in the original Greek!). John did not contradict Matthew and Luke by saying “In the beginning was the Son of God.” He spoke rather of God’s eternal purpose, His word, to bring into existence His uniquely begotten, i.e. fathered, sired, procreated Son. John is in complete agreement with Matthew and Luke and Scripture is not thrown into confusion. The word, the promise of the Son, became the human being, Jesus the Son of God. John simply complements Luke’s and Matthew’s accounts. John is to be read in the light of Matthew and Luke and not twisted in a way which contradicts them. Luke 1:35 gives us an unqualified statement about the basis for which Jesus is the Son of God. It is because he was brought into existence supernaturally by the Father in Mary.

God is the Father of Jesus. Joseph is not his biological father, and Jesus is thus the Son of God.

We are dealing here with extremely simple concepts and words and there is no valid excuse for misunderstanding the easy language of begetting or generating. Does anyone stumble when he reads Proverbs 23:22: “Listen to your father who **begat** you, and despise not your mother when she is old”?

You and I came into existence when our fathers begat us. So also, according to Matthew and Luke, the Son of God came into existence when God – his Father – begat him in the virgin Mary. This makes him a real human being. The dissolving of the simple word “beget” into nonsense

caused a completely erroneous creedal definition of the Son to arise. It was then uncritically accepted as true by billions!

Proverbs 23:23 counsels us to “Get the truth, and sell it not — wisdom, instruction and understanding.” The next verse reads like this: “The father of a just man will exult with glee; he who **begets** a wise son will have joy in him.” On what possible grounds could one misunderstand the word “beget”? Apply the same simplicity and honesty to Matthew 1:18, 20 and Luke 1:35 and you will have unlocked the secret to who the Son of God is, and the basis for calling him God’s Son. There is no existence of the Son before his coming into existence. That really is not a hard concept. It is laid out for us at the beginning of our New Testaments and confirmed by the whole Bible. By the “beginning” of the New Testament everyone knows I mean Matthew. By the “genesis” (Matt. 1:1, 18) and begetting of the Son of God (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:35), everyone can know with equal certainty that the Son of God was a procreated person. This event happened some 2000 years ago. Jesus is the man Messiah. There is no other true Messiah.

This precious information was derailed by the hopelessly confusing introduction of an alien meaning of “begetting.” C.S. Lewis, saddled with trying to defend his church tradition, tells us that the begetting of the Son is comparable to two books leaning on each other. They have done this for eternity! But Lewis has butchered the word “beget.” One book leaning on another does not tell us that one book “begat” or “generated” the other! The analogy is false and Matthew’s and Luke’s inspired theology is left in ruins. A return to the sane language of Matthew 1:1, 18, 20 and Luke 1:35 will bring real revival to Bible study and a unifying center for Christian faith. “Theology” (falsely so-called) plunged the Church into confusion from the second century on and the church councils wrote in stone, with threats of excommunication for dissenters, the labored and confusing redefining of the word “beget.”

The origin of the Son of God is not in eternity but in the womb of his mother some 2000 years ago. That means that Jesus really is a human person, not an eternal God-Person with a "generic" humanity! Mary had a baby, and that baby was the son of David, and of Mary and of God. He is the Messiah, our Savior.