

God's Only Begotten Son

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We're here because God has commanded us to keep and observe the Sabbath times, weekly and annually. We are all commanded to appear before God and worship every week. We worship God in acknowledgement of His sovereignty, His love, His mercy, His wonderfulness and the wonderfulness of His plans and thoughts. We are included in God's thoughts and plans. We're here each Sabbath to remember what we have already learned and to grow in understanding and knowledge. We will begin in Galatians 5—in these last days we have the privilege of more clearly understanding God's plan. The focus of God's plan is building a family; a family that will willingly live under the rule of righteousness. We have opportunity to become part of that family and enjoy the fruits of the righteousness of Almighty God. In Galatians 5:22.

Galatians 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23) gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (NKJV)*

This is the way of the rule of righteousness, this is the way that brings about love, joy and peace. In verse 25 it says:

25) If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (NKJV)

Those that are and will be part of God's family will live, follow, and obey the rules of righteousness.

26) Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (NKJV)

Members of the God family will not practice conflict or evil and we will not be biting and devouring each other. We will not be devouring each other in conflict. There won't be a lot of infighting. That is the way of pain and death. We have a great hope in becoming a part of God's family as spirit beings, as brethren of Jesus Christ. That is the plan of God.

Today, I want to look at some of the aspects of that plan that pertain to our becoming part of the family of God as spirit beings. If you turn over to John 3:18, Jesus is noted as the only begotten Son of God. Some translations render the verse as God's only Son or the only Son of God or something similar. The exact phrase, "the only begotten Son of God" only occurs once in the New King James Bible. I want to start with verse 16 of John 3.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17) For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

18) *“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (NKJV)*

In the first chapter of John there are a couple more references to Jesus being the only begotten Son of God. In 1 John there is also another reference with the same message. The message is that Jesus is the only person fathered or begotten by Almighty God. Part of what is puzzling is that we are also referred to as the children of God. We are told to pray to our Father in heaven. Obviously, there is something unique about Jesus, but what is it? In order to understand why Jesus is called the only begotten Son of God, I want to cover some basic knowledge that we are all likely familiar with. Then I want to put that information into perspective in order to come to a conclusion as to what is unique about Jesus Christ's conception as a human being and what is unique about His receiving of the Holy Spirit.

I think all of us are familiar with the story of Jesus' baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit. It was a very public and joyous event with acknowledgment from God the Father Who actually spoke. In the process of this message, I hope to demonstrate that Mary's physical conception was also a joyous event and a public event. That is something that was a surprise to me when I was researching this a few years ago. Jesus is called the only begotten Son of God and both His physical conception and His receiving or anointing of the Holy Spirit were unique in a special way. The Bible reveals there are two realms of existence. In John 3:6, it says, “that which is born of the flesh, is flesh and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit”. There is the physical realm which was created and there is the spiritual realm inhabited by God. The spiritual realm consists of both, what is eternal—without beginning, not created—and there are also portions of the spiritual realm that have been created; for example, God created the angels. As physical humans, we are part of the physical creation. We become part of the physical creation through a process which was created by God Almighty. That process involves, for each new human, both a human father and a human mother. There are only three exceptions to that process. Adam, Eve and Jesus Christ. God created Adam from the dust of the ground, however God inspired Luke to list Almighty God as the Father of Adam. God is the father of Adam by creation, not by begettal. The same is for Eve. God created Eve from Adam. The person Who took on the name of Jesus Christ—or was given that name—like God the Father, has always existed. He divested Himself of all the power of an eternal God Being to become part of the creation through the process of conception, to become a human being. Mary, the mother of Jesus was human. Both of Mary's parents were human. Mary's conception of Jesus Christ as a physical human being was through begettal by Almighty God. The begettal of a human by Almighty God, Yehovah, only happened once and will never happen again.

As described in the Bible, the process for beginning the existence of each human being other than the three exceptions I just mentioned, involves both a begettal by a man who is the father and a conception by a woman who is the mother. If everything goes well, the process proceeds with the birth of a new physical human. You might want to hold your place in John 3 and turn to Ecclesiastes 3. The biologic makeup is no different than other mammals. There is nothing physical that gives us the vast level of superiority above other creatures. People have studied the brains of different mammals and found there is not a definitive biological reason for the superiority of

humans over the physical realm. This understanding was addressed by Solomon in Ecclesiastes 3:18.

Ecclesiastes 3:18 *I said in my heart, "Concerning the condition of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are like animals.*

19) For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity.

20) All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust.

21) Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth? (NKJV)

There is a component of humans that has focus upward toward God. The end of all other mammals is destruction and becoming once again, dust as part of the earth. Over a few pages in Ecclesiastes 12:6 is this verse in poetic language which advises us to set our priorities towards God as early as possible in life.

Ecclesiastes 12:6 *Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed, Or the golden bowl is broken, Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, Or the wheel broken at the well. (NKJV)*

The verse is really saying, you don't know if you will live to an old age, represented by the silver chord, or if your life or abilities may be cut short as the broken bowl, shattered pitcher or broken wheel. The reason is described in the next verse.

7) Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it. (NKJV)

There is a spirit component of humans that is given to each human. Upon physical death, that spiritual component will return to God. The spirit component of humans is not the Holy Spirit. The spirit of man is separate and distinct from God's Holy Spirit. In the normal course of life and death, that spirit component of man returns to God. God will eventually make a final determination as to whether that spirit component will live in newness of life or ultimately be destroyed. Newness of life is a reference to our being resurrected as spirit beings, born again as children of God. In John 3. Jesus revealed that physical birth is a type of human resurrection into newness of life.

John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

2) This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

3) Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (NKJV)

As humans, we have our physical birth. Becoming spirit beings requires another birth. Moving on to verse 4.

4) Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

5) Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (NKJV)

So, he's referencing two births. To enter into either realm of existence requires a birth.

6) *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

7) *Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'*

8) *The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."* (NKJV)

Jesus is differentiating between the two realms of existence; the physical versus the spirit. In the flesh we are part of the physical realm. As humans we have potential to become part of the spiritual realm. In order to become part of the spiritual realm requires birth. We must be born into the spiritual realm. As spirit beings, we will not be physical. Our physical birth is a type of the birth required to become a spirit being. The anti-type, the goal, God's plan is for physical humans to become spirit beings, having already developed the righteous and holy character.

Begettal is a word that refers to procreation. To beget means to produce or father offspring. A father begets, a mother conceives. When a living organism is conceived, the new living organism becomes the offspring child or descendant of the parents. In Romans 8, we read that if we have received God's Holy Spirit and are led by that Spirit, then we are the sons of God.

Romans 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (NKJV)*

Being led by the Spirit means we will have the characteristics that should come naturally based on the fact that we have God's Spirit dwelling in us.

15) *For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."* (NKJV)

This word *adoption* basically means "sonship" and we'll come back to this concept shortly.

16) *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God ...* (NKJV)

Our human spirit is what is called the spirit of man. The spirit of man which comes from God and returns to God when the physical body dies. That gives us the unique characteristics that set us apart from the animals. The human spirit is a spiritual component of human beings that makes us superior to all other creatures in the 'flesh and blood' animal kingdom. This spirit of man is not the Holy Spirit, but it does come from God. The Holy Spirit from God, combined with our human spirit gives us

the potential of developing the characteristics of Almighty God. The characteristics we inherit from Almighty God are commonly known as those we saw summarized in Galatians 5:22-29, as the fruit of the Spirit.

17) and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. (NKJV)

This describes a family relationship. We are joint heirs with Jesus Christ as spiritual brethren. We are not physical brethren; we are spiritual brethren. At the time of our conception and begetting as a human being, each of us had a physical father and mother. Jesus is our brother, yet neither of our physical parents are the father or mother of Jesus. His physical relationship is different than ours in that His parents—His mother is gone. We are only brethren with Christ in a spiritual sense. With modern day genetic testing, the identity of the human father and mother of each of us can usually be determined beyond reasonable doubt. Genetic testing relies on understanding the physical conception process. In the flesh, a child is conceived or begotten from an ovum containing DNA from the mother. The ovum is from the mother. When a female becomes an adult, usually one ovum matures each month and that ovum can become a fetus. A mature ovum can become impregnated by joining the DNA from the father. Once the ovum is impregnated by the father, the ovum becomes a fetus and is no longer part of the mother. The fetus is a unique and distinct human that must solely rely on the mother for life sustaining nourishment and protection until the fetus is born as a human baby. This describes the physical process which is a type of the spiritual process. The spiritual process is also a begetting. When the spirit in man—the anti-type of the ovum—receives the Holy Spirit, we become the children of God. Let's read verse 9 of Romans 8.

Romans 8:9 *But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. (NKJV)*

If we receive the Holy Spirit essence from God the Father, which has joined with our spirit, we are spirit children of God. We are children but not yet born. In the physical sense, an unborn fetus is not yet born a child. In like manner, until we are resurrected as spirit beings, we are not born again as children of God. Continue in Romans with verse 18.

18) For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (NKJV)

From our physical perspective, being part of God's spiritual family as brethren and joint heirs with Christ, is of greater value than anything else imaginable.

19) For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. (NKJV)

To date, only our elder brother, Jesus Christ has been revealed. Jesus Christ has already been resurrected to newness of life. When we are born as spirit beings, we will be in a family relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father. Even now, as physical humans we are called the children of God. In verse 29 of Romans 8:

29) For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (NKJV)

God's intention is that we be like our elder brother, Jesus Christ. If you turn over to Hebrews 2:11.

Hebrews 2:11 *For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren ... (NKJV)*

We are all of the Father—Jesus Christ and those with God's Holy Spirit—are all of the Father.

12) saying: [this is Jesus Who is speaking] "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."

13) And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "Here am I and the children whom God has given Me." (NKJV)

Jesus Christ became a part of the creation. He became a flesh and blood human being through the process of conception by a virgin. Jesus' mother was a flesh and blood descendant of Abraham, Abraham was a descendant of Adam and Eve. In verse 15 of Hebrews, it says:

15) and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (NKJV)

So, the purpose for Jesus becoming flesh was so that we, as God's children, could be redeemed from the penalty of death. The biblical concept of adoption mentioned in Romans 8:15 is also an interesting topic. Jesus became a flesh and blood human being through the birth process. That process required his mother, Mary, to conceive and a father to beget. In the case of Jesus, the Father was Almighty God, Jesus had half-brothers and half-sisters in this flesh, through his mother Mary. We are not physical brothers with Christ; however, we are spiritual brothers with Christ. The concept of adoption in scriptures demonstrates two different perspectives. They are both important and reveal a status of God's children that changes over time. One relates to the physical and the other to the spiritual. The physical comes from the perspective of bringing a child into the family to be raised and nurtured by the adoptive parents, as though they were the actual biologic parents of the child. The adoptive child is given equal status as though being an actual blood offspring of the parents. In this case, the adoptive child receives all the rights and privileges of a child born into the family. The other is the actual recognition of either a natural born mature individual or an adopted mature individual as having the rights, privileges and responsibilities of an heir to the parents. In the Greek and Roman times, this recognition was normally a public, legal ceremony, recognizing the adopted individual with full legal status as an heir. This is the meaning of the spiritual perspective.

There are several examples in the Bible demonstrating the principles of each of the two perspectives. An example of the first perspective can be found in the second chapter of Exodus. Let's turn over to Exodus 2:5. This story occurred after the Israelites had moved to Egypt and Joseph had died. The Israelites were becoming numerous and were causing concern to the Egyptians. They were concerned that the Israelites might become a military problem against Egypt. The solution for the Pharaoh was to order that all newborn male Israelite children should be killed. In order to save her infant son, an Israelite from the tribe of Levi decided to put her son into the Nile River in a basket in the hope that somehow, he might be rescued and saved from death. The baby was found by Pharaoh's daughter. She had compassion on the baby and decided to adopt him and raise him as her son. In verse 5 of Exodus, we see this story.

Exodus 2:5 *Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it.*

6) *And when she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So, she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."*

7) *Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?"*

8) *And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So, the maiden went and called the child's mother.*

9) *Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So, the woman took the child and nursed him.*

10) *And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So, she called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water." (NKJV)*

The benefit to Moses being adopted as the son of Pharaoh's daughter was that he was privileged to be educated in all the knowledge of the Egyptians. Moses was the recipient of the benefits of being the son of Pharaoh's daughter. The benefits that would not normally have been available to an Israelite were given to Moses. Even though the parents of Moses were still alive, the daughter of Pharaoh took on the responsibility of parenting Moses. Because he was adopted, he had opportunity to become a well-educated, mature adult full of wisdom and knowledge. In 1 Chronicles 28, the Almighty God Creator, Yehovah, has also been known to adopt individual, flesh and blood humans. King David assembled the civil military leaders of the tribes of Israel. He assembled his sons and others in Jerusalem where he had to make an announcement concerning Solomon. That announcement is in 1 Chronicles 28:5.

1 Chronicles 28:5 *And of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons) He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel.*

6) *Now He said to me, 'It is your son Solomon who shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father. (NKJV)*

David, Solomon's physical father was still alive when God spoke to him and promised to be a Father to Solomon. God adopted Solomon as a physical human

being. He was offering to be a blessing and guide to Solomon as adopting him as a son. When we receive God's Holy Spirit, God also adopts us in the flesh as His adopted sons. He does not remove our physical parents, rather we become the beneficiaries of the Almighty God, adopting us as His physical children. Pharaoh's daughter did not become the bloodline parent of Moses and God did not replace King David as the blood line, physical parent of Solomon. In like manner, God adopts us as His children while we are still in the flesh. As adopted children with God's Holy Spirit, we receive spiritual benefits of being adopted children of God.

In Galatians 4, a description of the second perspective of adoption can be found in Galatians 4. I want to read beginning in verse 1.

Galatians 4:1 *Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all,
2) but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.*
(NKJV)

Under the Roman culture at the time, when a son was considered by the father to be capable and worthy of trust, an adoption ceremony would be performed. The adoption was a legal ceremony recognizing the son as an heir. The son then had the legal privileges and responsibilities of an heir. Continuing in verse 3.

*3) Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.
4) But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,
5) to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.
6) And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"
7) Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.* (NKJV)

Notice that we become heirs through Christ. Jesus is not our Father, Almighty God, Yehovah is the one we cry out to as Abba, Father. We see back in 1 Chronicles 28, that those who have received God's Holy Spirit in this flesh are the adopted children of God in the same way that God adopted Solomon. We are not yet fully recognized as legal heirs with all the privileges and responsibilities of a born again, spirit being, son of God. Here's a warning.

1 Chronicles 28:9 *As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.* (NKJV)

As we have noted, receiving God's Holy Spirit is a begettal, the start of becoming a living spirit being. We are not yet born again as spirit beings. In the flesh, we are adopted children. As adopted children of God, in the flesh, we can lose that spirit of begettal by forsaking God. This important. I think we can all agree that we cannot be

conceived more than once as a human. If the embryo or fetus or child dies, it cannot be re-conceived and get a second chance at life. We can only be conceived as physical humans once. I realize there is a physical resurrection to judgment but that is not a conception or the beginning of existence for that individual. Spiritually, the same concept applies. We can only be conceived once. If we neglect our begetting by the Holy Spirit and reject God, our spiritual conception cannot be restored. Turn back to Hebrews 6. As confirmation in a spiritual sense, consider the unpardonable sin. If we quench God's Holy Spirit, we cannot be re-conceived by receiving again God's Holy Spirit and be back into God's family. We are told not to quench God's Holy Spirit within us. That Spirit enlightens us. Once a person has quenched God's Holy Spirit, it is impossible for that person to be renewed.

Hebrews 6:4 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5) and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6) if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. 7) For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; 8) but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned. (NKJV)*

We should all take heed. We must take care to cultivate the fruits of righteousness. We do not want to fall into the trap of the way that we quench God's Holy Spirit. Now that we have laid some of the fundamental ground work, it is important to note that the Holy Spirit could not be given to humans while Jesus was in the flesh. From the moment of His conception until He appeared before God the Father, the Holy Spirit was not available to be given to humans except in the case of one exception. In Titus 3, as we saw in Galatians 4:7, God's Holy Spirit comes to us through Christ. In Titus 3, we see that the Holy Spirit is poured out through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Let's read that in Titus 3:4.

Titus 3:4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared ... (NKJV)

As we've noted before, Almighty God the Father, Yehovah is also noted as our Savior. Here it is, in the kindness and the love of, our Savior, this is Yehovah, He is our Savior.

*5) not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,
6) whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior ... (NKJV)*

Jesus is also listed as our Savior, as has been mentioned so many times. God made the sacrifice and Jesus was the sacrifice.

7) that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (NKJV)

Because we have been redeemed, we can be saved from the penalty of death, which is required for all sin. Yet we are saved by God's grace. Remember the apostles and everyone who received the Holy Spirit on that first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection had to wait until it was sent by Jesus Christ. Jesus had to return to the Father before He could send the Holy Spirit. You'll see that in John 16:7.

John 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. (NKJV)*

Notice, while Jesus Christ was in the flesh, the Holy Spirit could not come. The Holy Spirit comes from the Father, through Jesus Christ, therefore no one could receive the Holy Spirit while Christ was in the flesh. However, there is one exception. The implication is that the Holy Spirit has always come from the Father, through the person that became Jesus Christ. That includes both before and after Jesus became a flesh and blood human. Those that received the Spirit in the Old Testament times, received God's Spirit through the person that became Jesus Christ. The only exception was when Jesus received the Holy Spirit after baptism. Turn to John 1:32. His baptism and receipt of the Holy Spirit was a joyous, public event. When God demonstrated the special circumstances by opening the heavens and the Spirit of God descending like a dove from heaven and God saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased". In reading from John 1:32.

John 1:32 *And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.*

33) I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

34) And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." (NKJV)

John testified that he witnessed Jesus receiving the Holy Spirit. We know receiving the Holy Spirit was required in order to become a Spirit child of God. If you turn to Matthew 3:16.

Matthew 3:16 *When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.*

17) And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (NKJV)

So, Jesus' baptism was a public event and His receiving of the Holy Spirit was public. For all of humanity, receiving of the Holy Spirit always comes through Jesus Christ. The only exception is Jesus Christ. In the case of Jesus, the Spirit did not come through Him but came to Him. Jesus went through the same spiritual conception process that we go through by receiving God's Holy Spirit. The exception is that the Holy Spirit could not come through Jesus Christ. In that way, from a spiritual perspective, Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. For anyone else, the begettal process includes Jesus. The Holy Spirit come from the Father, to Jesus and is given to us through Jesus Christ.

Next, I want to consider the events surrounding Mary's unique conception of Jesus. God the Father Himself, begot the physical human Jesus Christ in the womb of Mary. The only time a physical human has ever been or ever will be begotten by God was when Jesus Christ was conceived in the womb of Mary. Jesus will always be the only begotten Son of God. He is the only person referenced by God as the only begotten Son. In Luke 1 I want to briefly look over the description of Jesus Christ's physical conception, when Mary the mother of Jesus became pregnant. The physical conception of Jesus was also a public and joyous event. Let's review the biblical description of the joyous event of Jesus' physical conception. The location in the scripture of the description of the exact timing of that glorious event was actually a surprise to me. Remember when the angel of the Lord appears to Zacharias at right side of the altar of the incense. He announced to Zacharias that he would have a son and that he was to name Him John. He also said John would be filled with God's Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. We will see that John most likely received the Holy Spirit at the end of the second or the beginning of the third trimester. In Luke 1:13.

Luke 1:13 *But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.*

14) And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.

15) For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. (NKJV)

Even before his birth, John the Baptist received God's Holy Spirit. Based on what we just covered, we know that being filled with God's Holy Spirit includes a spiritual conception. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is also an expression of being led by God's spirit, which we saw in Romans—leading is enabled by receiving God's Holy Spirit. About six months after the begetting and conception of John by his father and mother, the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that if she accepted, she would conceive Jesus by begetting from the Holy Spirit. In verse 35 of Luke 1, we can see that described.

Luke 1:35 *And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.*

36) Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.

37) For with God nothing will be impossible." (NKJV)

If you hold your place in Luke, I would like you turn over to Matthew and notice a clarification concerning the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit here is a direct reference to God the Father. Matthew 1:18.

Matthew 1:18 *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.*

19) *Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.*

20) *But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.*

21) *And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."* (NKJV)

I want you to notice the clarification here. In Luke and here in Matthew, the first chapter of Matthew, the Holy Spirit is listed as the One that Fathered Jesus Christ. Yehovah is the Father of Jesus Christ. In this case, the Holy Spirit is another name of Almighty God, the Father of Jesus. If you turn back to Luke 1:38.

Luke 1:38 *Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.* (NKJV)

Mary was not forced to accept the responsibility of being the mother of Christ. She had to make a decision to accept and she did accept.

39) *Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah* (NKJV)

With haste indicates she left for Elizabeth's home as soon as possible. Elizabeth, as we recall was the mother of John the Baptist.

40) *and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.*

41) *And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.* (NKJV)

When Elizabeth heard Mary's voice, she received the Holy Spirit and was led by the Holy Spirit in what she said. We know that no one could receive the Holy Spirit while Jesus Christ existed as a physical human. The Holy Spirit comes from the Father to Jesus and from Jesus to each individual human. We also know that Jesus could not give the Holy Spirit when He was in the flesh. From the time of His conception in Mary until He returned to the Father, the Holy Spirit was not available to be received by humans through Jesus Christ. The fact by Elizabeth received the Spirit at the sound of Mary's voice, establishes that Jesus could not have been conceived prior to that moment. Then in verse 46, Mary speaks.

46) *And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord,*

47) *And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.*

48) *For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.* (NKJV)

This word, *henceforth* is translated from the Greek adverb, in English, it's *vuv*. That occurs 147 times in the New Testament. It means:

"from right now", "from this instant", "from now", "henceforth", "from now on".

Mary is saying that from that moment on, she would be recognized as the mother of Jesus. Moments after Elizabeth received God's Holy Spirit, Jesus was conceived in Mary through the begetting of Almighty God. Also remember that Zacharias was told that John the Baptist would receive the Holy Spirit while in the womb. So, we can logically conclude that sometime prior to the moment of Jesus' conception, John the Baptist also received God's Holy Spirit. If you review verses 39-55, I think you will see that the time of Jesus' physical conception is portrayed as a very joyous event.

In conclusion: God is building a family that will willingly live under His holy rule of righteousness. Physical human bodies are made up of DNA from a father and a mother. God adds the spirit of man, that spirit is the component of humans that makes us superior to other physical creatures. That spirit of man can receive God's Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit becomes part of the spirit of man, a begetting and conception of a spirit being is completed. Humans who have received God's Holy Spirit are in an embryonic state for growth and maturity, to eventually be born again into newness of life as spirit children of God. The Holy Spirit added to the human spirit gives us the ability to understand and desire to live by the standards of righteousness which are available from God. We saw those fruits of righteousness in Galatians 5. A consciousness of the embryonic spirit being is maintained by the physical human. It's maintained until that human's death. The physical blood maintains the life. I want to read 1 Corinthians 2:9.

1 Corinthians 2:9 *But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*

10) But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

11) For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

13) These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14) But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

15) But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.

16) For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ. (NKJV)

At some point in the future, God will resurrect to newness of life, those embryonic human spirits. Jesus Christ was an eternal God being. He willingly gave up His life to pay the penalty imposed through sin. God resurrected Him to newness of life and restored to Him all the power and glory that He had prior to conception as a human being. We are all begotten by our human fathers. Jesus is the only person who has been or ever will be, begotten physically by God the Father. Also, He is the only person who has or ever will be given the Holy Spirit directly from God the Father

without that spirit coming through Jesus Christ. God gave His Holy Spirit as a begettal to Jesus Christ. Every other time the Holy Spirit has, is or ever will be given, it must come through Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus was twice conceived and is referred to as the only begotten son of God. God has a wonderful plan for us that is beyond the scope of our imaginations. Let us worship God in acknowledgement of His sovereignty, His love, His mercy and the wonderfulness of His thoughts and plans.