

Picking Your Parents

On a television show the other day, a man said to his neighbor that she and her husband were such good parents his own kids wanted to be adopted by them! None of us really get to “choose” our parents, though many of us couldn’t have chosen better that we got. Others didn’t or don’t do so well in the parental lotto. It’s OK, remember they didn’t really “pick” us as children either!

But what if we, as adults, got a chance at a do-over; a chance to actually select whom our parents would be for the rest of our lives? Obviously, this choice would also determine grandparents for our children, and great-grandparents for our grandchildren. What an opportunity! We could select, with all the knowledge, understanding, and wisdom we have acquired, the best parents (and thereby grandparents, etc.) available for ourselves, our families, and even future generations. However, if we were actually given such an opportunity, one of the first things that would likely “hit” us would also be the gravity of such a choice.... the responsibilities involved. We would be making a choice that would not only dramatically influence the rest our lives, but also those of our descendants.

Please realize that the above scenario is not altogether hypothetical. We, as adults, actually have such a choice available. We *can* choose to be a “son of God” (cf. Genesis 6:2) or a “son of the devil” (Acts 13:10), and therefore, pick our spiritual parent.

Genesis 6:2 says “*that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.*” I realize there are theories that suggest these “sons of God” were angelic beings that chose to cohabit with the “daughters of men” (contrary to what Jesus said about that, cf. Matthew 22:30), but there is a much simpler explanation provided by the context. Genesis 4 records not only the *sin* of Cain, but also the *sinful legacy* continued by his descendants- *Lamech* was a polygamist, v.19; and evidently a very violent and vengeful man, vv.23-24. But note that with the birth of *Seth* (another son of Adam and Eve), and subsequently his son, *Enosh*, the record says, “**Then men began to call on the name of the Lord,**” v.26.

Thus, the *godless* lineage of Cain is set in contrast to the *godly* lineage of Seth. Genesis 5 continues with the lineage of Seth, and rather than highlighting *sinful* behavior as had been done in chp.4 with Cain’s descendants, *righteousness* and *godly desires* are emphasized, cf. Genesis 5:22-24,29. All of which brings us to chapter 6, where the “sons of God”- the *godly* lineage of Seth (cf. Luke 3:38), was corrupted through the “daughters of men”- the *godless* lineage of Cain, to produce a world that God was willing to destroy with a flood. Now, with that bit of history clarified, let’s get back to the business of choosing your parents...

Cain and Seth had the same *physical* parents, but their lives- and those of their descendants, took dramatically different courses. Why? Simply put: they chose very different *spiritual* parents. Cain chose the path of *faithlessness* and *rebellion*, which ultimately led him to go out “*from the presence of the Lord,*” Genesis 4:16. He selected Satan as his *spiritual* father. But Seth chose differently. He preferred “*to call on the name of the Lord,*” Genesis 4:26. Seth selected God as his spiritual father. These contrasting selections obviously influenced the courses of their families for generations to come- even to eternal consequences. So too will the choice of *spiritual parentage* you and I make.

We can choose to be a “son of the devil,” as did Elymas, and be “*full deceit and fraud,*” an “*enemy of all righteousness*” who does “*not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord*” and in the process turn others “*away from the faith,*” cf. Acts 13:8,10. Or, we can opt to be *children/sons of God* by choosing: to “*believe in His name*” (John

1:12), through *faith* be “*baptized into Christ*” (Galatians 3:26-29), and be “*led by the Spirit of God*” (Romans 8:14-17) to a life of obedience in which we *hold “fast the word of life”* (Philippians 2:14-16).

You get to decide. Whom will you pick to be your *spiritual* parent? The *Father of light, love, and salvation*, cf. James 1:16-18; or the *murderous father of lies*, cf. John 8:44? But remember, choices have consequences. And this particular choice has eternal consequences not only for you, but perhaps also for those that you love and call “family.” Pick your parent carefully, won’t you? (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)