

Why am I Me?

Our bodies consist mostly of about 75,000,000,000,000 cells of different kinds, the vast majority of which have a full blueprint for all our natural characteristics. A cell in a normal human being has 46 chromosomes, 23 pairs, which carry tens of thousands of genes that make up that blueprint. This is loosely referred to as our DNA, which determines the traits we inherit from father and mother. Each parent contributes one chromosome to each pair.

There are about 6,000,000,000 other people currently alive in the world besides each of us, and the figure is rising. Let us assume that the male to female ratio is roughly fifty-fifty, which would give us 3,000,000,000 couples. Theoretically, any one of these could have been our father and mother. But out of all the possibilities, we have just the one pair who turned out to be our biological parents.

If we had been physically conceived a month earlier or later, the female egg would have contained 23 chromosomes bearing different genes, and we would have been someone else who wasn't born because we were. Furthermore, the successful male sperm carrying the father's 23 chromosomes was just one of hundreds of millions that carried a different assortment of genes. And yet, we happen to be the persons we are.

So we could have been born anywhere in the world, in a palace, a hovel or without a home, amidst opulence or facing starvation, within a marriage or outside of one, and knowing both, one or neither of our parents. What are the chances, then, of being born as the person we discover ourselves to be?

Though the chances of being someone else seem astronomical, each of us is the individual that we know as ourselves, and we are placed in the circumstances with which we are familiar.

However, the wonder of the matter is that chance played no part at all in our birth if our names are written in the Book of Life. Of this I can be certain because the Bible is clear and explicit on the point. Whether chance plays any part in the birth of those who will go their own way without repentance and faith I am a little less sure, but I suspect that it does not. Certainly, all those who turn to God in repentance and faith were conceived in the mind of God before the world began.

This means that our existence here on Earth was either definitely or probably not an accident, as the case may be, but at the appropriate appointed time, our mortal life began exactly as it was envisaged or determined by God.

But we are more than the result of an assortment of genes. That accounts for the mortal flesh, but in addition we have a spiritual aspect, our immortal souls. These, likewise, are not subject to the rules of chance or a mindless fate. They have been specially created to bring glory to God by one means or another. Our bodies temporarily house our souls for the testing period that we spend on this planet, before our souls are resurrected in our heavenly bodies following physical death.

We also need to take into account the surroundings into which we are born. These will also have an influence on the way we develop, either for good or ill, and thus contribute to our full identity.

Part of our human nature is our mind, which seems to me to be related to both our

physical bodies and our souls. Our ability to think and to reason is dependent on our minds, and if we make up our minds to do something, then our minds become our wills. Before we turn to God, our minds tend to concentrate on our own self-interest. After we have turned, if turn we do, our minds look for ways to please God. On Earth, our minds may be corrupted, but those resurrected to eternal life will have minds incapable of corruption. Both God and Satan can suggest things to our minds, so we need to examine our thoughts carefully to determine their origins. Christians are encouraged to have the mind of Christ, which is revealed to them by the Holy Spirit, almost always through the Scriptures. Our wills serve us best when they align with the will of God. Even Jesus subjected His will to that of God, His Father.

Then there are our emotions, ranging from slight feelings to hot passions, that play such a large part in our behaviour. These are an essential part of our make-up, but like fire, they tend to be a good servant but a bad master. We are expected to keep them under control, as some of them would lead us away from what is in our best interests. The Bible speaks a lot about the heart, and it is often said that the heart is the seat of the emotions. We are encouraged to love and fear God, to keep our hearts pure, to love what is good and to hate evil. We tend to let our actions follow the inclinations of our hearts, so the heart's characteristics are extremely important to our spiritual well-being.

We need to add to the points above something rather special if we are to be fruitful servants of God. God's people are regarded in the Bible as one body, the Church, and when we are changed and inherit our heavenly bodies, we shall

collectively form the bride of Christ. While here on Earth, as parts of the Church body, we are given spiritual gifts which need to be exercised in the service of God to the benefit of His kingdom and those around us. These gifts are various, and all, however humble they may seem, are vital to the health of the body as a whole.

So why am I Me? The answer is that God brought me into being as part of His great creation, by design and not by accident, to play my part in bringing glory to my Maker. I may be only one small cog in the vast overall plan, but I have been fashioned and gifted for my particular role in it. To do this, I need to have faith, to act in ways which accord with true repentance, and to be baptised. Should I meet with enmity or persecution for standing up for the truth and for righteousness, I need not be discouraged, for I am assured that great will be my reward in heaven for facing and enduring such, if that be my lot in life.