Cronus

Cronus was the son of Uranus and Gaea (Mother Earth), and was the youngest of the Titans. When Gaea gave birth to other children, such as Cyclops, who looked monstrous, Uranus was not proud of them and put them in a pit under the earth. This made Gaea very angry, and she asked Cronus and his Titan brothers to rise up against their father and save their other brothers. Cronus did overthrow his father, but he did not save his monstrous brothers. Gaea, who loved all her children, was so angered that Cronus did not help his brothers that she began to plan Cronus’ ruin.

Cronus was the god of time. He married his sister Rhea, and together they had three sons and three daughters. Cronus was afraid that his children might one day rise up against his authority, as he had against his own father, Uranus. His father predicted that this would happen. In order to be sure that he kept power and the prophecy did not come true, Cronus attempted to escape fate by swallowing each child as soon as it was born.

This filled his wife Rhea with sorrow and anger. When it came to Zeus, her sixth and last child, Rhea was determined to save this one child at least, to love and to cherish. She asked her parents, Uranus and Gaea, for advice and assistance. They told her to wrap a stone in baby-clothes and give it to Cronus. She did, and he swallowed the stone without noticing the deception.

Anxious to keep the secret of his existence from Cronus, Rhea sent the infant Zeus secretly to Crete, where he was fed, protected, and educated. Priests of Rhea beat their shields together and kept up a constant noise at the entrance, which drowned the cries of the child and frightened away all intruders.

Grown to manhood, Zeus determined to make his father restore his brothers and sisters to the light of day. The goddess Metis helped him, convincing Cronus to drink a potion, which caused him to give back the children he had swallowed. Cronus was so enraged that war between the father and son became inevitable. Zeus eventually dethroned his father Cronus, who was banished from his kingdom and deprived forever of the supreme power. Cronus’ son now became supreme god.

Adapted from: Berens, E.M. “Cronus (Saturn)”, *Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece and Rome.*  New York: Maynard, Merrill and Co., 1984. 14-17. Web. 7 June 2013. Public Domain.