



## Myth Made Fact with Dr. Louis Markos

### Lesson 10: Hercules

#### Outline:

##### Hercules

- Heracles means the glory of Hera, even though Hera is foe of Hercules.
- Hercules is son of Zeus and a mortal woman.
- Hercules is the strongest man who ever lived. Hera always hated him and pursued him.
- Even as a baby, Hercules is already a beast slayer. He snapped the heads off the serpents sent by Hera.
- Hercules is a foundling. He is son of Zeus, but he is raised as a mortal.
- Hercules helps people, but he also has a bad temper. In the end he is noble and heroic.
- Throughout the life of Hercules, Eurystheus ruled over him. He set Hercules to the 12 labors.
  - Killing the Nemean Lion
  - Kill the Hydra
  - Clean the Augean Stables
  - Get the Golden Apples of Hesperides
  - Kidnap Cerberus
    - In Greek Mythology, if you are a hero, there will be one point at which you have to make a descent into the underworld.
    - This is how they faced their fears, and their own mortality.
- Like Theseus, Hercules had a bad ending where the very beast that he slays comes back to haunt him.
  - One of Hercules wife was Deinira.
  - They came across a swiftly flowing river.
  - Hercules asked a centaur to carry his wife across the river.
  - The centaur started to rape Deinira, and Hercules shoots the centaur with a poisoned arrow. He had her keep the shirt of the centaur.
  - Sophocles wrote a play called the Women of Trachis (chorus).
    - Hercules is coming back from one of his labors with a captive woman.
    - Deinira takes the shirt from the jar and asks the son to take the shirt to his father.
    - As soon as Hercules puts on the shirt, the shirt begins to consume him. Hercules can't die, so he walks into the fire and is burnt.
    - Even dead the beast reaches out and tries to kill.



- Hercules has a happy ending. In many stories, he is taken up to live on Mt. Olympus to live as a god.
- The Resurrection of the Body
  - Hercules being taken up to Mt. Olympus gives almost a glimpse of life after death.
- Samson
  - Hercules is like Samson.
  - Samson is consumed by lust.
  - He keeps listening to his misdirected desires.
  - Even though he makes a shambles of his life, in his last moment, he kills more Philistines than he does in his life.
- Hercules at the Crossroads
  - Hercules is met by two women at crossroad in his life.
    - One is dressed in red, with a beautiful but cold face.
    - One is dressed in white, filled with virtue.
  - The one in red whispers, “Take my path and your life will be easy. Come and do whatever you want.”
  - The one in white says, “I don’t promise you an easy way, but I promise you a good way. You will work but after labor there will be rest and your name will be remembered as that of a hero.”
  - He took the club and clubbed the woman in red and chose the path of virtue.
- There is another story of the son of the God who came to a crossroads. He knelt and prayed so intently that he sweated blood. At Gethsemane he did not want to go to the cross, but at the end he said, “Not my will be done, but thy will be done.”
- Jesus did not give in to dark desires. It is easy for our desire to get misdirected.
- Beware that we don’t make the mistake of Hercules and allow our passions to get too strong and push us off into a misdirected desire.
- Christ can help us take those desires and get them back on track.