



Myth Made Fact with Dr. Louis Markos

Lesson 11: Cadmus and his Daughters

Outline:

The Tragic House of Thebes

- Also known as the tragic house of Cadmus
- After Europa disappeared, her father turned to Cadmus and tells him to find his sister. Instead of searching randomly, Cadmus goes to the Oracle of Delphi.
- The Oracle told him that Europa was in Crete, forget about her, you should found a new city. Follow the heifer until she lays in the grass, and build your city.
- This becomes the city of Thebes.
- The Oracle told him that he would need to do a great heroic task before he founded the city. Cadmus slayed the serpent and sowed the ground with its teeth.
- The dragon teeth sprang up as hearty men.
- The earth men fought and killed until only five were left. These five became the foundation of the citizens of Thebes. This is going to be a city given to a kind of civil war.
- Thebes was famous for her impenetrable walls.
- Cadmus married Harmonia, daughter of Ares and Aphrodite.

Cadmus and His Daughters

- Autonoe
- Ino
- Semele
- Agave

Autonoe

- Autonoe had a son named Actaeon.
- Actaeon turned a corner one day and came upon Artemis and the nymphs bathing.
- Artemis picked up water and through it on his face and he was transformed into a stag.
- The hounds turned on him and tore him to pieces.

Ino

- Ino's son is Melicertes.
- Ino offended the gods.



- One of the gods drove her husband crazy so he thought Melicertes was a wild animal and he killed him.
- Ino picked up Melicertes and jumped into the ocean and both Ino and Melicertes were transformed into a god and goddess of the sea.

Semele

- Semele was the youngest and most beautiful.
- Zeus fell in love with her. He came to Semele as a man and seduced Semele.
- Hera found out and she disguised herself as an old woman and told Semele to require that Zeus show himself to her in all his glory.
- Zeus tries to dissuade Semele, but Zeus revealed himself to her and Semele was burnt to a crisp.
- Zeus reached into Semele's womb and grabbed the embryo and sowed it into his thigh. Bacchus is born out of Zeus's thigh. This is a sort of miraculous birth.
- Bacchus established his Bacchic rights of wine, women, and song. He took followers.
- Once he had conquered the near east, he decided to go home to Thebes and punish his aunts for attacking the name of his mother Semele.

Agave

- Agave is mother of Pentheus.
- Cadmus is an old man. He decides to step down and gave Thebes to Pentheus.
- There is going to be a showdown between Pentheus and Bacchus.

Euripides, The Bacchi

- The chorus is a group of women who are followers of Bacchus.
- He drives his aunts and women of Thebes and drives them wild and they worship Bacchus.
- There is a theological struggle between Pentheus and Bacchus.
 - Apollo is the more rational side, more soul than body.
 - The Dionysiac is linked to the body, passion, emotion, the intoxication vision.
 - The two sometimes argue against each other.
- Pentheus goes to the palace and he sees Cadmus and Tiresias. The two of them are dressed in the garb of Dionysus. The older Cadmus is more in touch with his body and emotions. Pentheus will have nothing to do with this.
- Pentheus has an argument with a messenger of Bacchus, who is also Bacchus.
- Cadmus says, when you drink the wine of Bacchus you are drinking the god himself (foreshadowing of communion).
- Pentheus locks up Bacchus messenger/Bacchus, and every time there is an earthquake and the chains fall off, just like Peter, Paul, and Silas.



- Bacchus gives Pentheus chance after chance. He finally says stop kicking against the pricks. Jesus uses this language with Paul.
- Pentheus refuses. Bacchus gives up. He makes Pentheus mad.
- The Bacchi women rip the tree out by its roots, bringing Pentheus to the ground and they tear him apart.
- Agave rips off his head and puts it on a stick.
- Cadmus says to Bacchus, it was just to give Pentheus choices, but the gods need to learn mercy.
- The Greek world his calling out for a messianic savior who will not be so cruel, who will not tear people apart. The world is yearning for the true Christ.