



## Myth Made Fact with Dr. Louis Markos

### Lesson 14: Ovid, His Times, and His Influence

#### Outline:

##### Tiresias, the Blind Prophet of Thebes

- Zeus and Hera were having a fight about pleasure in sexuality.
- Tiresias, as a young man, was walking through a forest when he came to two snakes who were intertwined and he hit them and was transformed to a woman for seven years. Then he found the snakes again, hit them and was transformed back to a man.
- Tiresias says that women have more pleasure, Hera strikes him blind, and Zeus gives him the gift of prophecy.

##### Ovid, The Metamorphoses

- He is the conduit that brought mythology through the middle ages.
- The Greek language and literature was almost lost.
- Ovid was born in 43 B.C. the Golden Age of Rome, the Augustine Age.
  - In 31 B.C. Caesar Augustus became ruler of the Roman world. Before this, Rome was in civil war for almost 100 years.
  - Ovid was 12 years old at Action unlike the other figures who had suffered through civil war.
  - He took for granted all of the prosperity. He is very erotic, racy.
- Ovid was banished by Caesar Augustus. He decided to write an epic about mythology. All the stories that he would tell would have some relationship to a transformation. Everything is in flux.
- This is one of the most fluid books written.
- He makes his book so that different sections of his book offer homage to Homer, Virgil, Euripides.
- The Metamorphoses is almost a textbook collecting all the mythology from the creation to Caesar Augustus.
- Ovid was great at word painting (Europa and the bull).
- He wrote the Metamorphoses when Jesus was a boy.

##### The Gospels and Ovid

- The only way that you can enjoy Ovid, is if you know they aren't true.
- The miracles of Jesus, if they are true, then what wonder and joy.

##### Ovid

- Early Christians, and Jews, and the higher pagans loved Ovid.



- They knew that there was truth there, but they were also horrified by it.
- They started to read Ovid allegorically. Boethius did this.
- Orpheus and Eurydice:
  - On their honeymoon a snake bit Eurydice on the heel and she was taken down to Hades.
  - Orpheus searched the world for the entrance to the underworld.
  - Orpheus went down into Hades and he came before Pluto and asked him to release his bride.
  - Orpheus took out his lyre and played and sang of love, and as he played all of hell grew still.
  - So moved was he by Orpheus that he released Eurydice, but Orpheus must not look at her until you get back to the earth.
  - As Orpheus got close to the exit, he looked back quickly, but as he saw her a wind dragged her back down to Hades.
- Orpheus is the soul that is ascending toward the truth of God, if we look back to the world and flesh, we will be dragged down and we will no longer ascend.
  - Peter walked on water with his eyes on Jesus.
- They looked for a kernel of truth in violent and sexual stories.
- We also are Eurydice. We are the bride that Jesus descended into hell to rescue, but thankfully our savior does not look back and lose us, but he holds us in the palm of his hand and is able to save.