



Myth Made Fact with Dr. Louis Markos

Lesson 18: Odysseus in Wonderland

Outline:

Odysseus in Wonderland

- Books 9-12 are filled with monsters and myths, but that whole scene is a flashback. This flashback is heavily based on the story of Jason and the Argonauts.
- Odysseus son of Laertes, husband of Penelope and father of Telemachus.
- It has been 20 years since he has seen Penelope.
- They built a giant horse out of wood and left the belly of the horse empty and hollow in order to hide inside. The rest of Greek army was to hide.
- The Trojans came out and saw the horse and thought the world was over, and they brought the horse into the city. They drank and ate until many passed out.
- When everyone was asleep, the soldiers got out of the horse and sacked the city of Troy. They burnt down the city and brought down the wrath of the gods.
- Odysseus is seeking his island home of Ithaca.
- Some islanders attacked his body and some his soul.
 - On the island of Ismarus, Odysseus' men wanted to eat and drink on the shore. They lost many lives.
 - Next they came to the island of Lotus eaters. They invited them onto the island and gave them to eat the Lotus. Odysseus stayed away from the Lotus, because if you eat you will forget your home and family. Odysseus grabbed his men and forced them back on the boat.
 - Next they came to an island that was still in the Golden Age. The people living there were monsters and cannibals. They lived in a primitive land. They were uncivilized and lived in separate caves.
 - Most of the men stayed behind.
 - Twelve men came along and they found a cave with sheep, cheeses, and milk. They helped themselves to the food in the cave. Odysseus decided to stay.
 - They heard loud footsteps. Into the cave walked Polyphemus, and he sealed off the cave with the stone.
 - He killed two men and devoured them and then lay down and slept.
 - In the morning Polyphemus devoured two more men and left and sealed the cave.
 - The men sharpened the edge of a walking stick.



- Odysseus gave Polyphemus strong wine.
- Odysseus tells Polyphemus that his name is “Nobody”.
- The men drive the walking stick into the Cyclops eye.
- In the morning the sheep began to bleat because they needed to leave the cave. Odysseus and his men were tied to the sheep.
- The ram with Odysseus was the last to leave the cave.
- Rather than leaving, Odysseus cried out his name to the Cyclops, who put a curse on Odysseus.
- Polyphemus was actually the son of Poseidon.
- Next, they landed on a floating island, and there lived a good host (Aeolus).
 - Aeolus took the most dangerous and contrary winds and sealed them in a bag.
 - Finally Odysseus saw Ithaca ahead. Then Odysseus fell asleep, and his men opened the bag, foolishly.
 - The winds came out and blew the ship away back to Aeolus, but Aeolus chased him away and told him he was cursed.
- Next, they landed on an island of giant cannibals.
 - The cannibals ate all but Odysseus’ ship and crew.
- Next, they came to the island of Circe
 - Circe was singing and working on a great tapestry.
 - She gave the men wine and food of all kinds. But she had mixed a drug into the wine and Circe transformed the men into pigs.
 - Odysseus decided he must save his men. He was met by Hermes who told him the danger of Circe. He gave Odysseus a magic drug so that Odysseus would not be affected by the drug.
 - For one year the men stayed on the island of Circe, until Odysseus began to forget his home and his wife.
 - Circe sends Odysseus to the underworld and meet Tiresias.
- Next, they found the portal of Hades.
 - Tiresias warned Odysseus of what was to come.
 - Odysseus met his mother.
 - He met the soul of Agamemnon. He told Odysseus not to trust anyone.
- Next, the men sailed back to Circe, who told Odysseus that he would die twice.
- Next, they passed by the Sirens.
 - Odysseus wanted to be the only man to hear the song and live.
 - Odysseus had the men plug their ears with wax and had his men tie him to the mast.
 - The men tied Odysseus tighter to keep him from going to the sirens.
- Next, they came to Scylla and Charybdis.
 - There is no way to get by them without loss.



- Odysseus hugged Scylla and stood with his spear ready to kill the beast. Suddenly Charybdis sucked in the water and Odysseus looked away briefly.
- Odysseus could only watch as Scylla devoured some men.
- Next, they came to the Island of the Sun, where there were sacred cattle, sacred to the sun god.
 - Tiresias told Odysseus to avoid the island, but to not touch the cows or they would be destroyed.
 - For a long time the men didn't touch the cattle, but as they began to starve the men slaughtered the cattle when Odysseus went out to look for food.
 - The sun struck the ship, drowning the ship and killing all the men. Only Odysseus was saved by holding on to the mast.
- Odysseus goes back to Charybdis.
- Odysseus floats to the island of Calypso.
 - Odysseus stayed there for seven years.
 - Odysseus wanted to go home.
 - Zeus sent Hermes to tell Calypso that she must let Odysseus go home.