



## Myth Made Fact with Dr. Louis Markos

### Lesson 4: Three Generations of Gods

#### Outline:

What is unique about mythology as opposed to the Bible?

- “In the beginning, God...”
- In every mythology it is “In the beginning, stuff (matter)...”
- Aristotle believed that both God and the universe were eternal, but he couldn’t imagine a spirit in the beginning with no matter.
- God created the world ex nihilo (out of nothing).
- In Greek mythology, out of primordial chaos comes night and earth. Earth is the primal deity.
- Eventually the gods will create. In mythology the gods come out of the chaos, they do not pre-exist the chaos.

Greco-Roman mythology is patriarchal.

- There are some mythologies that are more matriarchal.
- In Greek mythology the father sky god principle will predominate.
  - **The first generation of gods are earth and sky.** Earth and sky couple and out of the womb of the earth are born the Titans (Atlas, Prometheus).
  - Gaia gives birth to the monsters.
  - Chronos takes a sickle and he hides behind a rock and castrates the sky god. The Furies are formed out of the earth, they are terrifying female deities. The Furies becomes guardians over right and wrong (conscience, general revelation).
  - The Greeks had taboo, things that made the person and the community unclean.
  - The role of the Furies is that they will chase down (guilty conscience that will drive you mad) those who commit a heinous crime.
- **Chronos (Greek), Saturn (Roman) marries his sister and they become the leader of the Titans (second generation).**
  - Every time Rhea gave birth to a new baby, Chronos would swallow the child and the child would grow up in belly of Chronos. When Zeus was born, she hid him away and she gave Chronos a stone to swallow down. Zeus is hidden away on Crete.
  - **Zeus punches his father and the stone and siblings are released from Chronos. These are the core of the third generation of gods, the Olympian gods.**



- A great war sprang out between the Olympian gods and the Titan gods until Zeus defeats the Titans. Zeus locks the Titans in prison. Hades is not a place of torment, but it is a place of misery, a dark gloomy place.
  - Beneath Hades is a place called Tartarus, this is where Zeus and the Olympians imprison the Titans in chains.

In the New Testament there is a lot of discussion about hell.

- About half the time the word used was Hades.
- Jesus, when he talks about hell, he uses Gehenna.
- 2 Peter 2:4 God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to *hell* and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved under judgement.
  - The Greek word here is *Tartarus*.

The Romans said that while Chronos and the Titans were fighting with the Olympians were losing, they ran away to hid in Italy. When those gods were hiding out in Italy that was the Golden Age of Italy.

Every year in Rome (Roman Republic) they celebrated the Saturnalia.

- That was a week-long festival to harken back to the lost Golden Age of Saturn.
- This was a time of excess. The master would serve his servants. It was a time of innocence and joy.
- They were celebrating the birthday of the unconquerable sun.
- They celebrated the winter solstice on December 25, the conjunction of the birth of the sun and the desire to return to innocence.
- Why did they make December 25 the date of Christmas? They may have done so to reach out to the pagans.
- Constantine wanted to build a bridge. They knew what they were doing.

### **The twelve Olympian Gods**

- Three brothers:
  - Zeus (Jupiter, Jove) – chose the heavens as his domain
    - King of the gods
  - Poseidon (Neptune) – he got the seas
    - He carries the trident, he causes earthquakes and tsunamis
  - Hades (Pluto) – he took the underworld
    - God of the underworld
- Two sisters:
  - Hera – she marries Zeus
  - Hestia (Vesta) – goddess of the hearth and home
- The Romans joined their pantheon with the Greeks, this often happens in paganism.
- Zeus and Hera are always fighting, they have Ares (Mars), the god of war.



- Zeus has Athena (virgin goddess of war, and goddess of hearth and home, and goddess of wisdom).
- Hera had Vulcan, blacksmith of the gods. He is a hunchback, he is the only god that works/sweats.
- Zeus has Apollo (god of light, music, poetry, muses who inspire all of the arts) and Artemis (Diana) (goddess of the hunt, who protects nature).
- Hermes (Mercury), who is the messenger of the gods.
  - Hermes is the bearer of the divine word.
- Aphrodite (Venus)