



Myth Made Fact with Dr. Louis Markos

Lesson 5: Mythical Origins of The Trojan War

Outline:

The mythological background and causes for the Trojan War.

- How Zeus heard a prophecy that he would have a child who would overthrow him. How can I avoid this fate without destroying myself in the process? He would avoid the goddess who would produce this son.
- There was a Titan named Prometheus. He helped Zeus and the Olympians. Prometheus means forethought (a prophetic element). Prometheus knew the identity of the mother. Prometheus would not divulge the secret name.
- Zeus punishes Prometheus. Prometheus was chained and everyday an eagle would eat his liver in the day, and each night his liver grew back.
- Zeus was also angry with Prometheus because Prometheus took pity on man. Prometheus stole the secret of fire from heaven and brought the fire down for man.
 - In mythology fire is the origin of creativity.
- From a Christian point of view, Prometheus is an odd mixture of Satan and Christ. In one sense Prometheus is a rebel, but he is also a Christ figure (crucified on a rock out of his pity for man).
- Prometheus has a brother named Epimetheus (whose name means afterthought). He accepted a gift from the gods that he shouldn't have.
 - The first woman was created later on by the gods, and all the gods gave her gifts. Her name is Pandora. They married her to Epimetheus. They gave her a box and told her not to open it. She opened the box and released all the evil. At the bottom of Pandora's box was hope.
 - These two stories have a lot to do with the fall of man. Pandora is an Eve figure. As in story of Genesis there is a story of hope.
 - A lot of mythology is about origins.
- After being punished for 1000 years Prometheus divulges the name and he is set free. The name was Thetis, a goddess of the sea.
- Zeus forced Thetis to marry a human man named Peleus. He allowed Thetis to marry Peleus on Mount Olympus.
 - They did not invite Eris, the goddess of discord.
 - Eris crafts a beautiful golden apple "to the fairest".
 - Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite refuse to give up the apple. They ask Zeus to choose who is fairest.
 - Zeus has them ask someone else, they meet a shepherd named Paris.



- One by one they go to Paris and whisper a bribe:
 - Hera: I will make you the greatest king.
 - Athena: I will make you the greatest soldier.
 - Aphrodite: I will give you the most beautiful woman.
- Paris chooses Aphrodite.
- Helen of Troy's father is Zeus, and her mother is Leda. Zeus fell immediately in love. Leda gave birth to an egg and out of the egg hatched Helen.
- All the kings of Greece wanted Helen as their bride.
 - The father invited all the kings of Greece to a version of the Olympics.
 - All the kings join hands and makes a pact that they will honor whoever wins Helen. If she is ever taken away, the kings will defend her husband.
 - Menelaus wins Helen.
 - One day Paris visits the court of Menelaus and Helen.
 - Paris then takes Helen. Paris was the son of Priam, king of Troy.
 - This is what sparked the Trojan War.
- Troy has a super strong wall that is impenetrable.
- Achilles was the greatest soldier of all time. Achilles is the son of Peleus and Thetis. He is the son who should have been born to and overthrown Zeus. The Iliad is about the wrath of Achilles. He is raging against his own immortality.
 - The Iliad is about what it means to be mortal.
 - Zeus avoided a conflict in heaven, but in so doing initiated a conflict on earth.
 - **We live in a world of two levels.** The earthly mortal realm and also the divine realm of God (the realm of heaven). Things that happen in heaven often have a repercussion on earth.
 - A third nativity story is told in the book of Revelation. This can be read as what was happening in the heavenly realms when Jesus was born on the Earth.

Greek mythology is full of contradictions, unlike the Bible.

- Mythology will be used to get across lessons (poets, tragedian).
- There are base stories but you can play around with it.
- **Different myths are used in different ways to get across a certain message.**
- Greek mythology is a collection of stories and myths that we use to understand our lives.
- When one person dreams, that's a dream, but when an entire nation dreams together, you end up with a myth.