

INTRODUCTION TO CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY (SIMPLIFIED REVIEWER)

What People Usually Think About Mythology:

Many people believe that Greek and Roman mythology shows **how ancient humans once thought and felt**. According to this idea, myths take us back to a time when people **felt deeply connected to nature like trees, seas, flowers, and mountains**.

People supposedly **could not clearly separate reality from imagination**, so they believed nymphs and other magical beings lived around them.

Poets often describe this ancient world as beautiful and magical.

However, the author argues that this romantic idea is not completely true. **Early or primitive people were not simply dreamers who imagined lovely spirits everywhere. Instead, their world was filled with fear**. Forests represented danger, not beauty. **Primitive societies believed strongly in magic, rituals, and even human sacrifice to avoid the anger of gods or spirits**.

The Mythology of the Greeks

- Greek Myths Are Different
- Greek mythology is very different from the darker beliefs of primitive societies.
- The Greeks may have once lived brutally like other ancient peoples, but by the time their myths were written, **they had already become highly civilized**. Their myths show how far they had risen above savagery.
- **Only a few traces of primitive beliefs remain in Greek mythology.**

Homer and the Beginning of Greek Mythology

- **Greek mythology officially begins with Homer**, the author of the Iliad and the Odyssey.
- These works are the earliest known Greek literature. **They are written in a rich and beautiful language, proving that Greek civilization was already advanced by that time.**
- Greek myths do not tell us much about primitive humans in general. Instead, they reveal what early Greeks were like. This matters because modern civilization inherited many Greek ideas in art, politics, and thinking.

The "Greek Miracle"

- The phrase "Greek miracle" refers to the **great change Greece brought into human thought**.
- Before Greece, humans were not considered very important. **But the Greeks placed mankind at the center of the universe**. This was a revolutionary idea.
- For the first time, people understood the value and greatness of human beings.

Greek Gods Were Made in Human Image

- One of the most important ideas in Greek mythology is that the **Greeks made their gods look and behave like humans**.
- Earlier civilizations did not do this.

Egyptian and Mesopotamian Gods

Ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian gods were often:

- monstrous
- part animal
- mysterious
- unnatural
- terrifying

Examples include:

- women with cat heads
- sphinxes
- winged beasts
- creatures with mixed animal parts

These gods felt distant and frightening.

Greek Gods

- Greek gods, in contrast, **looked beautiful and human**.
- **Greek artists admired the human body and believed human beauty was the highest form of beauty**. Therefore, gods like Apollo looked like ideal humans.
- **This made the universe feel more rational and understandable.**

Human-Centered Greek Culture

- Greek art and literature **focused on human beings**.
- **The Greeks did not want strange fantasy creatures as ideals**. They admired real human strength, beauty, intelligence, and skill.
- Because their gods were human-like, **heaven itself became familiar and understandable**.

The gods:

- ate and drank
- argued
- loved
- became jealous
- made mistakes

People could even laugh at them.

For example:

- Zeus often failed to hide his affairs from Hera.
- Hera behaved like the stereotypical jealous wife.

Unlike terrifying gods from other cultures, **Greek gods felt companionable and close to humans**.

The Miracle of Greek Mythology

- The greatest achievement of Greek mythology was **creating a humanized world**.
- The **Greeks removed much of the fear found in earlier religions**. Instead of terrifying unknown spirits, they **imagined beautiful gods connected to nature and humanity**.

Even fantastical stories still happen in realistic settings:

- Hercules lives in Thebes.
- Pegasus stays in a stable in Corinth.
- Aphrodite's birthplace could supposedly be visited.

This made myths feel believable and grounded.

Greek Mythology and Rational Thinking

Greek mythology contains fantasy, but it is still **rational and practical** compared to myths from many other cultures.

Magic Was Rare

Unlike other ancient societies:

- magic had little importance
- terrifying witches were uncommon

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- astrology was absent
- priests had limited power

Only two major witches existed:

- Circe
- Medea

Even they were **beautiful rather than horrifying.**

The Greeks also did not fear ghosts as much as other civilizations did.

The Dark Side of Greek Mythology

Greek mythology was not completely perfect or moral.

The gods were often:

- selfish
- cruel
- dishonest
- immoral

For example:

- Hera behaves cruelly.
- Many gods act worse than human heroes.

Some myths also preserve older savage ideas:

- **satyrs** are half-goat
- **centaurs** are half-horse
- traces of human sacrifice still exist

However, these darker elements are surprisingly few.

Heroes and Monsters

Greek mythology includes monsters like:

- **Gorgons** - Scary women monsters with **snake hair**. They could turn people into stone by looking at them.
- **Hydras** - **Giant snake monsters with many heads**. If one head was cut off, more would grow back.
- **Chimaeras** - Mixed-up monsters **made from different animals**, usually part lion, part goat, and part snake.

But monsters mainly exist to be defeated by heroes.

Heroes like Heracles symbolize Greece itself defeating fear and irrationality.

Mythology Is Not the Same as Religion

Greek mythology **should not be treated as a "Greek Bible."**

Originally, myths tried to explain nature and the universe:

- thunder came from Zeus
- volcanoes erupted because monsters were trapped underground
- constellations had mythological origins

In this way, myths acted as early science.

However, not all myths explain nature. Some exist simply for entertainment.

Examples:

- Pygmalion and Galatea
- the Quest of the Golden Fleece
- Orpheus and Eurydice

Therefore, myths are both:

- early science
- early literature

The Development of Zeus

- Zeus probably **began as a rain god because Greece needed rain for survival.**
- Over time, he became more morally developed.

At first:

- Zeus mainly **supported the strong.**

Later:

- he punished liars
- protected strangers and the weak
- valued justice

Eventually, Zeus became viewed as:

- protector of mankind
- giver of good gifts
- universal father

This shows how Greek ideas about morality and religion slowly improved.

Major Greek and Roman Writers of Mythology

Homer

Homer wrote:

- Iliad - A Greek epic poem about the Trojan War, especially the **anger and battles of the hero Achilles.**
- Odyssey - A Greek epic poem about **Odysseus's long and difficult journey home** after the Trojan War.

He is the most important source of Greek mythology.

Homeric Hymns

- Poems written to honor different gods.

Hesiod

Hesiod wrote:

- Works and Days - A poem that **teaches about hard work, farming, justice**, and how people should live properly.
- Theogony - A poem about the **origins of the gods and how the universe and the Greek gods were created.**

Pindar

- Pindar wrote victory odes that included myths.

The Three Great Tragic Poets

1. Aeschylus
2. Sophocles
3. Euripides

Their plays are **major sources of mythology.**

Aristophanes

- Aristophanes often referenced myths in **comedy.**

Herodotus and Plato

- Herodotus = **first historian of Europe**
- Plato = philosopher **who discussed myths**

Alexandrian Poets

Important writers include:

Apollonius of Rhodes

- Theocritus
- Bion
- Moschus

Ovid

- **Ovid** told many myths in detail.
- However, unlike earlier Greek writers, **he treated myths more as entertaining stories than sacred truths.**

Apuleius

- Apuleius **wrote the story of Cupid and Psyche.**

Lucian

- Lucian **mocked the gods through satire.**

Apollodorus

- Apollodorus recorded many myths in a **straightforward but dull style.**

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Pausanias

- Pausanias **wrote about mythological places in Greece.**

Virgil

- Virgil gave mythological characters **deep human emotions and realism.**

PART ONE: The Gods, The Creation, and the Earliest Heroes

The Gods

- The Greeks did not believe that the gods created the universe. Instead, they believed the **universe already existed first, and from it the gods were born.**

First came:

- Heaven
- Earth

They became the **parents of the Titans, and the Titans later became the parents of the Olympian gods.**

The Titans and the Twelve Great Olympians

The Titans

The Titans were the older gods who ruled the universe before the Olympians. They were:

- enormous in size
- extremely powerful

The most important Titan was:

Cronus (Saturn in Roman mythology)

- **Leader of the Titans**
- **Father of Zeus**
- **Was overthrown by Zeus**

The Romans believed that after losing power, **Saturn fled to Italy and ruled during the "Golden Age," a peaceful and happy time.**

Other Important Titans

Oceanus

- The **great river believed to surround the earth**

Tethys

- Wife of Oceanus

Hyperion

Father of:

- the sun
- the moon
- the dawn

Mnemosyne

- Goddess of **Memory**

Themis

- Goddess connected to **Justice**

Iapetus

Father of:

- Atlas — carried the world on his shoulders
- Prometheus — savior of mankind

Unlike most Titans, some of these gods were allowed to remain after Zeus took power.

The Olympians

- The Olympians became the **ruling gods after the Titans.**
- They lived on **Mount Olympus**, although later **myths describe Olympus more like a heavenly realm above the earth rather than just a mountain.**

Olympus was:

- peaceful

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- bright
- free from storms and snow
- filled with the gods' palaces

The gods lived there happily, feasting on:

- **ambrosia** - The magical food of the gods that gave them strength and immortality.
- **nectar** - The special drink of the gods, often described as sweet and divine.

The gates of Olympus were guarded by the Seasons.

The Twelve Olympian Gods

1. Zeus (Jupiter)
2. Poseidon (Neptune)
3. Hades (Pluto)
4. Hestia (Vesta)
5. Hera (Juno)
6. Ares (Mars)
7. Athena (Minerva)
8. Apollo
9. Aphrodite (Venus)
10. Hermes (Mercury)
11. Artemis (Diana)
12. Hephaestus (Vulcan)

Zeus (Jupiter)

Role

- **Supreme ruler of the gods**
- God of:
 - the sky
 - rain
 - thunder

After drawing lots:

- Poseidon got the sea
- Hades got the underworld
- Zeus ruled the heavens

Symbols

- Thunderbolt
- Eagle
- Oak tree
- Aegis (sacred shield)

Personality

Zeus was powerful, but not all-powerful. He could:

- be tricked
- be deceived
- be opposed

He often had love affairs with many women, which angered Hera.

Despite his flaws, he was also seen as:

- majestic
- protector of justice
- punisher of liars and oath-breakers

Oracle

His sacred oracle was at **Dodona**, where **priests interpreted messages from the rustling oak leaves.**

Hera (Juno)

Role

- **Goddess of marriage**
- Protector of married women
- Wife and sister of Zeus

Personality

Hera is usually portrayed as:

- jealous

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- vengeful
- unforgiving

She especially punished:

- Zeus's lovers
- their children

Her anger caused major events like the destruction of Troy during the Trojan War.

Symbols

- **Peacock**
- Cow

Sacred City

- Argos
-

Poseidon (Neptune)

Role

- **God of the sea**
- Creator of horses
- **"Earth-shaker"**

Powers

He controlled:

- storms
- earthquakes
- waves

He carried a:

- **trident** (three-pronged spear)

Symbols

- Horse
- Bull
- Trident

He lived in a magnificent palace beneath the sea.

Hades (Pluto)

Role

- **Ruler of the dead**
- God of underground wealth and precious metals

Personality

Hades was:

- stern
- serious
- just
- feared but not evil

Important Details

- Owned a **helmet that made him invisible**
- Rarely left the underworld
- **Husband of Persephone**

He ruled the dead but was not Death itself.

Athena (Minerva)

Birth

Athena was **born fully grown and armored from Zeus's head.**

Role

Goddess of:

- wisdom
- **war strategy**
- handicrafts
- agriculture
- civilization

Unlike Ares, she **represented intelligent and defensive warfare.**

Personality

She was:

- wise
- rational

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- pure
- disciplined

Symbols

- Owl
- Olive tree

Sacred City

- Athens

The Parthenon was her famous temple.

Apollo

Role

Apollo was:

- God of light
- God of truth
- **Musician**
- Archer
- Healer

He represented purity and truth.

Sacred Place

His most famous oracle was at:

- Delphi

People traveled there seeking divine guidance.

Symbols

- **Lyre**
- Laurel tree
- Dolphin
- Crow
- Bow and arrows

Important Story

Apollo killed the serpent Python, earning the title "Pythian."

Although mostly kind and noble, some myths show him as harsh and cruel.

Artemis (Diana)

Role

- Goddess of:
 - **hunting**
 - wild animals
 - forests
 - the moon

Twin sister of Apollo.

Personality

She protected:

- animals
- young creatures
- maidens

However, she could also be:

- fierce
- revengeful

Connection to Hecate

Later myths connected her with Hecate, goddess of darkness and magic.

Symbols

- Deer
 - Cypress tree
 - Bow and arrows
-

Aphrodite (Venus)

Role

- **Goddess of love and beauty**

Birth

Later myths say she was **born from sea foam** near:

- Cythera

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- Cyprus

Personality

She could be:

- charming
- irresistible
- joyful

But also:

- manipulative
- destructive

Marriage

Usually married to:

- **Hephaestus**

Symbols

- Dove
 - Swan
 - Myrtle tree
-

Hermes (Mercury)

Role

- **Messenger of Zeus**
- God of commerce and trade
- **Guide of souls to the underworld**

Personality

Hermes was:

- clever
- fast
- cunning
- mischievous

As a baby, he stole Apollo's cattle.

Symbols

- Winged sandals
- Winged hat
- Caduceus (magic staff)

He appears in more myths than almost any other god.

Ares (Mars)

Role

- **God of war and bloodshed**

Personality

The Greeks viewed Ares negatively:

- violent
- cruel
- cowardly

Even Zeus disliked him.

The Romans, however, admired Mars as a noble war god.

Companions

War spirits often followed him:

- Discord
- Terror
- Panic

Symbol

- Vulture
-

Hephaestus (Vulcan)

Role

- God of fire
- **Blacksmith of the gods**
- Patron of craftsmen

Appearance

- **Ugly**
- **Lame**

Unlike the other beautiful gods.

Important Details

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He created:

- weapons
- armor
- palaces for the gods

His forge was later believed to be under volcanoes.

Personality

He was:

- kind
 - peaceful
 - hardworking
-

Hestia (Vesta)

Role

- **Goddess of the hearth and home**

She represented:

- family
- **domestic peace**
- sacred fire

Importance

- **Every home and city kept a sacred fire for Hestia.**
- In Rome, her fire was cared for by the Vestal Virgins.

Personality

Hestia is peaceful and gentle, but she has almost no role in myths.

The Lesser Gods of Olympus

Eros (Cupid)

Role

- **God of Love**

In early Greek mythology, Eros was not Aphrodite's son. He was shown as:

- a handsome and serious young god
- a force connected with kindness and goodness

The philosopher Plato described love as something noble that lives in human hearts.

Later Version

Later poets changed Eros into:

- Aphrodite's son
- a mischievous and naughty child

He was often shown:

- **blindfolded, because "love is blind"**
- carrying bow and arrows that make people fall in love

Companions

- Anteros — avenger or opponent of love
 - Himeros — longing and desire
 - Hymen — god of weddings
-

Hebe

Role

- **Goddess of Youth**
- Daughter of Zeus and Hera

She sometimes served as:

- cupbearer of the gods

Her main myth is her marriage to Heracles.

Iris

Role

- **Goddess of the Rainbow**
- Messenger of the gods

In the Iliad, she is the main divine messenger before Hermes became more important in that role.

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The Graces

- Aglaia
- Euphrosyne
- Thalia

Role

The three Graces represented:

- beauty
- joy
- charm
- happiness

They danced beautifully to Apollo's music and brought happiness wherever they went.

Meanings

- Aglaia = Splendor
- Euphrosyne = Mirth
- Thalia = Good Cheer

Aglaia later married Hephaestus.

The Muses

The Muses were **nine goddesses** of:

- arts
- music
- poetry
- learning

They were daughters of:

- Zeus
- Mnemosyne (Memory)

They inspired poets, musicians, and thinkers.

The Nine Muses

1. **Clio** — history
2. **Urania** — astronomy
3. **Melpomene** — tragedy
4. **Thalia** — comedy
5. **Terpsichore** — dance
6. **Calliope** — epic poetry
7. **Erato** — love poetry
8. **Polyhymnia** — sacred songs
9. **Euterpe** — lyric poetry

Sacred Mountains

The Muses were connected with:

- Helicon
- Parnassus
- Olympus

They were companions of Apollo.

Divine Ideas and Personifications

Some Greek divine beings represented ideas instead of having full personalities.

Themis

- Divine Justice
- Right and order

Dike

- Human Justice

Nemesis

- Righteous anger
- Punishment for wrongdoing

Aidos

- Reverence
- Shame that prevents wrongdoing

Hesiod said Nemesis and Aidos would leave Earth only when humans became completely wicked.

The Gods of the Waters

Poseidon

- Ruler of the Mediterranean and Black Sea
- **God of seas and underground rivers**

Oceanus

- Titan **god of the great river** surrounding the world

Wife

- Tethys

Children

- Oceanids (river nymphs)
- river gods

Pontus

- Personification of the deep sea

Nereus

Known as:

- **“Old Man of the Sea”**

He was:

- gentle
- truthful
- wise

Wife

- Doris

Children

- **the Nereids (sea nymphs)**

One famous daughter:

- Thetis, mother of Achilles

Triton

- **Son of Poseidon and Amphitrite**
- **Trumpeter of the sea**
- Used a shell trumpet

Proteus

Had powers to:

- tell the future
- change shape

Naiads

Water nymphs living in:

- springs
- brooks
- fountains

Other Sea Divinities

- **Leucothea**
- **Palaemon**
- **Glaucus**

All were once mortals who became sea divinities.

The Underworld

The underworld was ruled by:

- **Hades**
- **Persephone**

It was located beneath the earth.

Tartarus

- **Deepest part of the underworld**
- Prison of terrible beings

Erebus

- **Region where souls first arrive**

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Sometimes both names refer to the entire underworld.

Description of the Underworld

In early Greek myths:

- the underworld was **shadowy and sad**

Later writers described it as:

- a place where good souls are rewarded
- wicked souls are punished

The Roman poet Virgil gave the most detailed description.

Important Features of the Underworld

Rivers

- Acheron** — river of woe
- Cocytus** — river of lamentation
- Phlegethon** — river of fire
- Styx** — river of sacred oath
- Lethé** — river of forgetfulness

Charon

- Ferried souls across the river**
- Only buried people with passage money could cross**

Cerberus

- Three-headed dog** guarding the underworld
- Allowed souls in but never out

Judges of the Dead

- Rhadamanthus
- Minos
- Aeacus

They judged souls after death.

Elysian Fields

- Paradise for **the good and blessed dead**

The Erinyes (Furies)

Erinyes

Also called:

- the Furies

They punished evil people.

The three Furies:

- Tisiphone**
- Megaera**
- Alecto**

Sleep and Death

Hypnos

- God of Sleep

Thanatos

- God of Death

Dreams also came from the underworld through:

- gate of horn = true dreams**
- gate of ivory = false dreams**

Lesser Gods of Earth

Pan

Role

- God of shepherds
- forests
- wilderness
- flocks

Appearance

- half man, half goat**

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Personality

- cheerful
- musical
- wild

He played reed pipes beautifully.

The word "panic" comes from fear associated with Pan.

Silenus

- Old drunken companion of Dionysus**
- Sometimes connected to Pan

Usually shown riding a donkey because he was too drunk to walk.

Castor

Pollux

Also called:

- the Dioscuri

Role

Protectors of:

- sailors
- warriors

Important Story

- When Castor died, Pollux begged Zeus to let them stay together forever.**
- Zeus allowed them to share immortality.

Symbol

- Gemini constellation

Other Creatures and Spirits

Sileni

- part man / part horse**

Satyrs

- goat-men** connected with Pan
- lived in forests and wild places

Oreads

- mountain nymphs

Dryads / Hamadryads

- tree nymphs
- their lives were tied to their trees

Aeolus

Role

- Keeper of the Winds**

Main Winds

- Boreas = North Wind
- Zephyr = West Wind
- Notus = South Wind
- Eurus = East Wind

Monsters and Strange Beings

Centaurs

- half man / half horse**

Usually wild and violent.

Chiron

was the exception:

- wise
- kind
- teacher of heroes

Gorgons

- winged monsters**

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- could turn people to stone

Graiae

- **three gray sisters sharing one eye**

Sirens

- **sea creatures with beautiful voices**
- lured sailors to death through singing

The Fates

Moirai

The three Fates controlled human destiny.

1. Clotho — spun the thread of life
2. Lachesis — assigned destiny
3. Atropos — cut the thread of life at death

Roman Gods

The Romans adopted many Greek gods but gave them Roman names.

Greek to Roman Names

- Zeus → Jupiter
- Hera → Juno
- Poseidon → Neptune
- Hestia → Vesta
- Ares → Mars
- Athena → Minerva
- Aphrodite → Venus
- Hermes → Mercury
- Artemis → Diana
- Hephaestus → Vulcan
- Demeter → Ceres
- Dionysus → Bacchus

Apollo and Pluto kept mostly the same names.

Roman Religion and the Numina

Before adopting Greek gods, Romans worshiped vague divine powers called:

- Numina

These were spirits connected to daily life and practical needs.

Examples:

- protection of homes
- farming
- childbirth
- boundaries

Romans cared more about useful gods than artistic or poetic gods.

Lares and Penates

Lares

- **spirits of ancestors**
- protectors of the household

Penates

- **gods of the hearth and storage**

Every Roman family worshiped them at home.

Other Roman Spirits and Gods

Saturn

- Roman version of Cronus
- celebrated during Saturnalia

Saturnalia

Festival where:

- gifts were exchanged
- masters and slaves ate together

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- peace was celebrated

Janus

- god of beginnings and endings
- had two faces
- month of January named after him

Faunus

- Roman version of Pan

Fauns

- Roman satyrs

Quirinus

- divine form of Romulus, founder of Rome

Manes

- spirits of good dead people

Lemures / Larvae

- spirits of wicked dead people

Camena

Originally practical Roman goddesses connected with:

- springs
- healing
- prophecy

Later identified with the Greek Muses.

Lucina

- associated with childbirth

Pomona and Vertumnus

- protectors of orchards and gardens
- later became characters in love stories

The Two Great Gods of Earth

Demeter — Goddess of Corn and Harvest

- She is the **goddess of agriculture, grain, and fertility.**
- Humans depended on her for food and successful harvests.
- She represents motherhood, nourishment, and sorrow.

Main Story: Demeter and Persephone

Her daughter, Persephone, was kidnapped by Hades and taken to the Underworld.

Demeter became heartbroken and:

- stopped crops from growing
- made the earth barren and cold
- caused famine among humans

Eventually, a compromise was made:

- **Persephone spends part of the year with Hades underground**
- **and the rest with Demeter on earth**

This myth explains the seasons:

- **Spring and summer** = Persephone returns → plants grow
- **Autumn and winter** = Persephone leaves → earth becomes lifeless

Important Ideas

- Demeter shows a very human kind of grief.

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- She was worshiped through the Eleusinian Mysteries, sacred ceremonies connected to hope, life, and death.

Dionysus — God of Wine, Joy, and Tragedy

- God of wine, celebration, theater, ecstasy, and inspiration.
- **Son of Zeus and the mortal woman Semele.**
- He represents both joy and destruction.

His Two Sides

Dionysus could:

- bring happiness, freedom, courage, and creativity
- but also madness, violence, and chaos

Wine itself symbolized this double nature.

Famous Stories

Pirates Story

- Pirates kidnapped him thinking he was a rich prince. He transformed the ship with vines and wine, became a lion, and turned the pirates into dolphins.

Pentheus Story

- King Pentheus rejected Dionysus and mocked his worship. Dionysus drove the women of Thebes into madness, and Pentheus was torn apart by them — even by his own mother.

This story shows the danger of disrespecting gods and ignoring divine power.

Why These Two Gods Were Special

Unlike the other Olympians:

- they understood suffering
- they were closely connected to nature and human life
- **they symbolized death and rebirth**

Demeter represented:

- the cycle of crops and seasons

Dionysus represented:

- the cycle of the vine
- emotional freedom
- rebirth after suffering

*Both became connected to the idea that **life continues after death.***

Dionysus and Theater

Ancient Greek theater was created in honor of Dionysus.

- **Tragedies and comedies** were performed during his festivals.
- Famous Greek playwrights wrote plays as **acts of worship to him.**

That is why Dionysus is also called the god of drama and theater.

Beginning of the World

At first, there was only **Chaos — a dark, empty, shapeless void.**

From Chaos came:

- **Night (Nyx)**
- **Erebus** (deep darkness)

Then came **Love (Eros)**, and with love came order, light, and beauty.

After that:

- **Earth (Gaea)** appeared
- **Heaven (Ouranos)** appeared above her

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Together, Earth and Heaven produced the first beings.

The First Creatures

Their children were huge and powerful monsters:

- **Cyclopes** — one-eyed giants
- **Hundred-Handed monsters**
- **Titans** — giant beings with enormous strength

*One Titan named **Cronus** attacked his father Heaven and became ruler of the universe.*

Zeus Becomes King

Cronus feared one of his children would overthrow him, so he swallowed them at birth.

But his wife **Rhea secretly saved their youngest son, Zeus.**

When Zeus grew up:

- he forced Cronus to release his siblings
- fought the Titans in a massive war
- defeated them and became ruler of the gods

This is how the Olympian gods gained power.

Creation of Humans

There are different stories about how humans were created.

1. Prometheus Creates Humans

The Titan **Prometheus** shaped humans and gave them:

- upright bodies
- intelligence
- **fire stolen from the gods**

Fire helped humans survive and progress.

Pandora: The First Woman

Zeus became angry because Prometheus helped humans too much.

To punish mankind, Zeus created **Pandora**, the first woman.

She was given a box (or jar) and told never to open it.

But **curiosity overcame her.**

When she opened it:

- sickness
- sorrow
- suffering
- evil

escaped into the world.

Only Hope remained inside.

Punishment of Prometheus

- Zeus punished Prometheus for stealing fire.
- **He chained him to a mountain where an eagle ate his liver every day.** Since he was immortal, it grew back each night.
- Later, **Hercules** freed him.

The Five Ages of Man

The Greeks believed humanity passed through five ages:

1. **Golden Age** — peaceful and happy
2. **Silver Age** — foolish and violent
3. **Bronze Age** — warlike and destructive
4. **Age of Heroes** — great legendary heroes
5. **Iron Age** — the present age, full of hardship and suffering

The Great Flood

Humans became wicked, so Zeus sent a huge flood to destroy them.

Only:

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- Deucalion
- Pyrrha

survived in a chest (like a boat).

After the flood, they repopulated the earth by throwing stones behind them:

- stones thrown by **Deucalion became men**
- stones thrown by **Pyrrha became women**

That is why humans were called the "Stone People."