

The Myth of Prometheus

Prometheus was a Titan from Greek myth, born from the union of the Titan Iapetus and the Nymph Asia. He was one of four children born to the pair. The siblings of Prometheus included Menoetius, Atlas and Epimetheus, all of them Titans. The name Prometheus means foresight, his brother's name Epimetheus means hindsight.

Their father, Iapetus led the revolt against the Gods, his children Menoetius and Atlas joined with him, while his other two sons, Prometheus and Epimetheus sided with the Gods. Menoetius was killed during the revolt and Atlas was given the weight of the world to bear for his actions during the revolt.

According to the myths, a horrendous headache overcame Zeus and no healer of the realm was able to help the Lord of the Gods. Prometheus came to him and declared that he knew how to heal Zeus. Taking a rock from the ground Prometheus proceeded to hit Zeus in the head with it. From out of Zeus' head popped the Goddess Athena, and with her emergence Zeus' headache disappeared.

Prometheus and Epimetheus journeyed to Earth from Olympus. They ventured to the Greek province of Boitia and made clay figures. Athena took the figures and breathed life into them—the figures that Prometheus had created became Man and honored him. The figures that his brother Epimetheus had created became the beasts, which turned and attacked him.

Zeus was angered by the brothers' actions: he forbade the pair from teaching Man the ways of civilization, however, Athena chose to cross Zeus and taught Prometheus so that he might teach Man.

For their actions, Zeus demanded a sacrifice from Man to the Gods to show that they were obedient and worshipful. Man went to Prometheus to inquire which parts of the animals for sacrifice belonged to Zeus and the Gods, and which parts belonged to Man. At Prometheus' instructions, Man sacrificed an ox and placed the sacrifice into two bags. In the first bag the bones were placed with the fat from the ox placed on top to conceal them. In the second bag the meat was placed with the intestines on top to conceal them as well. Prometheus called for Zeus to choose which portion of the sacrifice he and the other Gods demanded. Zeus chose the bag with the fat on top, giving the Gods the bones of the ox as their sacrifice.

Zeus was angered by the actions of Man and Prometheus, so he forbade the Gods to give fire to Man. Prometheus was upset with Zeus' proclamation and was determined to bring fire to Man, but Zeus had guarded the entrance to Olympus. Athena told Prometheus about an unguarded back entrance to Olympus where he would be able to enter with ease.

Prometheus snuck into Olympus at night through the back entrance that Athena had told him of. He made his way to the Chariot of the Sun and lit a torch from the fires that burned there. Extinguishing the torch, Prometheus carried the still hot coals down the

mountain in a pithy fennel stalk to prevent being seen. Upon reaching the lands of Men, Prometheus gave to them the coals, breaking Zeus' order by giving fire to Man.

Zeus was extremely angered by Prometheus' actions, as he had not wanted fire to be given to Man, so Zeus set out to make a trap for Prometheus. Zeus gathered the gifts of the Gods and created Pandora, the world's first woman, and her box, into which he placed all the horrors of the world. Pandora was sent to Prometheus as a gift from Zeus himself.

Prometheus saw the curse that Pandora and her box carried, so he refused the gift and gave it instead to his brother Epimetheus who opened the box and released the chained horrors upon the world.

Zeus was personally affronted by Prometheus' actions: he had refused a gift from the Lord of the Gods himself. At Zeus' order Prometheus was chained to a rock in the Caucasus Mountains where his torture was to be carried out. Every day a great Eagle would come to Prometheus and eat his liver, leaving only at nightfall when the liver would begin to grow back once more, only to repeat the process again the next day.

Zeus offered to free Prometheus if he would tell the secret of the prophecy that told of the dethroning of Zeus one day, but Prometheus refused. The mother of Prometheus, the Nymph Asia, also had the gift of Foresight and went to Zeus and told him the secret of the prophecy. The prophecy told that the offspring of Zeus and the Nymph Clymene would one day rise up and destroy Zeus and Gods.

Zeus sent Heracles to free Prometheus from the rock, but required that Prometheus still be bound to the rock for the rest of eternity. A link of the chain he had been bound with was set with a chip of the rock and Prometheus was required to carry it with him always. Men also created rings with stones and gems set into them to commiserate with him and to honor Prometheus for the actions he had taken on their behalf.

Throughout history, Prometheus has symbolized unyielding strength that resists oppression.