

## **Greek Creation Myth**

In the beginning there was only the infinite space known as Chaos. Inside this void was a single creature, Nyx, the bird with black wings. She laid a golden egg and for ages sat upon it. When it finally hatched, out came Eros, the god of love.

One half of the shell rose up to become the sky, and the other half became the Earth. He named the Earth Gaia and the sky Uranus. Eros then made them fall in love. More... They had many children; among them were giants and Titans, one of which was name Atlas, who, due to his bad behavior was punished to forever hold the Earth and the sky apart.

Two other children were named Cronus and Rhea, who married and ruled the world. They also had children. One was name Demeter, who was the Goddess of all things that grow. Hera was the Goddess of marriage and the birth of children. Hestia, as the goddess of the home and sacred hearth. Poseidon, god of the sea, Hades, god of the dead, and Zeus who became the God of the world and ruled the air and the sky.

Before they were born, the universe prophesied that one of these children would overtake Cronus and rule the world. To avoid this fate, Cronus swallowed up each of his children as soon as they were born. All of them, except Zeus, who had been hidden by his mother Rhea. When he was fully grown, Zeus conquered Cronus in a great war and rescued his siblings. They all divided the world up and ruled together, then sent Cronus to a place called Tartarus, which is beneath the

land of the Dead.

He made his heaven on Greece's Mount Olympus, which has its top hidden in the clouds and is impossible for any mortal to climb because of its sheer steepness. They then put the Earth into order.

Zeus began creating people for the upper world. The first race he made was perfect and cast out of gold. They never grew old or died, and happily lived off of the trees fruit. However, they lived in such peacefulness that did not wake up after going to sleep. Zeus then melted down their bodies and left their souls to watch over the people he would create next.

They were created out of silver, extraordinarily vain and beautiful, they would stare at themselves endlessly and from their pride assumed that they themselves were the gods who ruled the earth.

This was unacceptable, so Zeus buried the race of silver and created the Bronze race instead. They immediately began to create tools and build industries. This satisfied Zeus, but then the race used their tools, arrows, swords, and clubs, to turn on each other and slaughtered themselves in war.

Zeus had to begin again, and this last race was created from iron, the only metal left to him. This race grew old and rusted. They worked, loved, and died. Because of this, they also prayed to the gods and fearfully revered them.

When he was creating the earliest of this race, Zeus requested aid

from one of the Titans name Prometheus, who soon became intrigued with these humans. He trusted them as Zeus did not, for Zeus feared that they may one day overpower him as he had his father, and as his father had before as well.

Thus, on the command of Zeus, fire was hidden from mankind, and there was no chance for this newest race to rise higher than those before him. Without fire, they must eat raw meat, eat no bread, or make tools or weapons of metal. They would not be able to make pots or bowls of clay, as they did not have fire to harden them by.

Prometheus pitied mankind, and decided to steal fire from Mount Olympus and give it to them so that they could rise above the beasts. He knew how terrible and long his punishment would be, but he did it anyway.

One night he carried the flame from Olympus to earth. As soon as it was on earth and the first blaze was kindled, mankind had it forever.

Prometheus made haste and taught man how to use fire, and by the time Zeus saw what was happening, man was already quite civilized.

He instantly who had given this gift of fire, and decided on a most horrible punishment. A giant vulture was sent to eat Prometheus's liver as he was chained to a stone. This was not only a one-time thing, as everyday the vulture would come, and every night a new liver would grow. He was to be punished forever in this way.

Zeus also decided to give his own terrible gift to mankind. He said, I

myself will offer them a gift. It is a beautiful one, and they will love it dearly. However, it shall bring them suffering, and many ills now and for eternity.

First he summoned his son Hephaestus, god of craftsmen and all who labor at the workshop or kiln, to make a lovely image out of clay. It was in the shape of a maiden, likened in the shape of the goddesses themselves.

Then Athena, goddess of wisdom and weaving and needlework, taught her all that she knew. Then the quick-witted messenger, Hermes, taught her to speak and to tell clever lies in order to deceive men. Aphrodite, goddess of love and beauty, made her beautiful so that men should fall in love and break themselves because of her.

Zeus was finally pleased and blew life into the image. He gave her a beautiful box, and told her that she must never open it.

Your name is Pandora said Zeus. It means all-gifted for we have all given you gifts. He was speaking of the gifts that formed her being, but he said this purposefully, for he knew that Pandora would think he was speaking of the treasures in the box.

Hermes then took her and the precious box down to Earth and gave her to Epimetheus, who was the brother to Prometheus. Prometheus, who had the gift of foresight, warned Epimetheus never to accept a gift from Zeus, as it could cause terrible consequences among humankind. Epimetheus, however, could not refuse such a beautiful gift.

Epimetheus, said Hermes, You have been chosen to be the luckiest of men. This is Pandora, the first woman, and she has chosen you to be her husband. Take her and she will tend to you and care for you. Take this box as well, but guard it carefully and never let anyone open it, for it could bring destruction to mankind. Above all, do not let Pandora open it!

He then flew back to Olympus, leaving Epimetheus extremely happy, for he had fallen in love with her immediately. Life was so dull and lonely without a woman he said. I have been given this beautiful creature, the first of her kind!

They were very happy at first. Pandora cooked and cleaned, and looked after Epimetheus, and was perfect for him.

But she was curious to see what was in the box that was given to her, and constantly questioned him about it.

This was the only thing he could not do for her; numerous times he told her not to touch the box, but each time her desire to know grew stronger.

They are mine, and the immortals gave them to me. My name means all-gifted, they are for me to open!

She often imagined the treasures inside that lay awaiting for her, the garments that longed to be worn, all in colors more brilliant than the sun.

At last her curiosity could no longer wait, and she snuck away to the magic box one night, broke the seal, and raised the lid. There was a great whirlwind, and out like a thousand bats flew the plagues that Zeus had prepared for humankind. Want, and suffering, Hunger, thirst, Jealousy and mistrust of fellow man, lies and envy, and all diseases which plague men, immune to all medicines.

The terrified Pandora slammed the box shut, but it was too late. All the evils had already been let out and were around the globe causing troubles to all of mankind.

Only one of these gifts was good, and this alone allowed mankind to continue. This gift was hope. For without this gift, man would die of despair. But hope is always the last resort for all troubles, it seems that it is brought out only when situations cannot get any worse. That after misfortune, things will turn around. This is the gift of hope that we now have, urging us to look forward to all of our futures.