

# GREEK CREATION MYTH – OUTLINE #3

## I. The Greek Story of Creation, Part 1 – The Primordials to Titans

Based on Hesiod's tale

A. Chaos – 1<sup>st</sup> element, shapeless mass of darkness and meaningless

B. Primordial gods (deities):

1. Nyx – goddess of night (more of a place than character)
2. Erebus – god of darkness (more of a place)
3. Eros – god of youth and desire; a sense of order begins. Romans called him Cupid, son of Aphrodite
4. Tartarus – god of the lowest region of the world (place) prison-like cave, destination of evil souls; more order to the universe
5. Gaea – goddess of Earth; Mother Earth. Like Chaos, Gaia could recreate on her own. She also had the power of prophecy.

## II. Gaea gives birth:

A. Uranus (Father Sky) and he later becomes her mate; he is the first ruler

B. Pontus (the life-giving water; god of the sea)

C. With Uranus, they populate the earth with three sets of children.

1. Hecatoncheires – “hect =hundred-handed”, 50 heads & 100 hands, 3 brothers, giants. Briareus eventually becomes the guard of Tartarus
2. Cyclopes – “wheel-eyed,” large giants, three brothers: Arges – thunderbolt, Brontes - thunder, and Steropes – lightning. These were the first blacksmiths for the gods and made all the tools, weapons, and jewelry.
3. Titans - Another set of children, 12 in all known as the Titans – the powerful ones or elder gods. There were 6 boys and 6 girls. The Titans resemble humans only much larger.

## III. First Deceit - Uranus feared the Hecatoncheires and the Cyclopes and their destructive nature. He tricked them into Tartarus where he locked them away.

## IV. Second Deceit - Gaia asked for her children's help to release those left in Tartarus

A. Only Cronus offered assistance, so Gaia provided him with a scythe (sickle) made from stone in which to strike his father.

B. While Uranus was sleeping, Cronus struck his father with the scythe and causing him to bleed. From the blood came more children:

1. Aphrodite – from the blood which fell to the sea, a foam emerged and then a large clam shell which opened up with Aphrodite fully grown.
2. Eriynes – Furies – furious ones – from the blood which fell to the ground came 3 sisters known as the Furies. Their role is to avenge those who commit sin. They will haunt and torment them. Snakes for hair, dog-face, bat wings – hideous creatures. (Man's conscience). Even the gods feared their presence.
3. Gigantes (Giants) – From the blood which fell to the rocks arose numerous creatures which were man-like with serpent feet (torsos). They were dressed in armor and said to be the first "foot soldiers."

*Big Picture Question: Why would love and hate come from the blood of Uranus?*

V. Titans: 12 in number – elder gods

A. Famous Titans:

1. Cronus – Personifies Father Time. He is usually portrayed as old and wise with the scythe at his side. With his father weakened, Cronus seized power to become the ruler of the universe.
2. Rhea – sister and becomes Cronus' wife, Titaness of fertility
3. Oceanus – god of the water that encircles the earth
4. Hyperion – Titan of light, father of the sun and dawn *(one of the four pillars that hold the heavens and the earth apart. He was the pillar of the north, while the other three pillars were personified by his brothers Coeus, Iapetus and Crius.*
5. Themis – goddess of justice, mother of the Fates and Seasons
6. Iapetus – Father of Prometheus, Epimetheus, and Atlas

*Big Picture Questions: What words do you know may have their origins from the Greek creation myth? What comparisons can be made from the Greek version of creation and other religions?*