

Prometheus: The Wise Titan

Imagine for a second that you have a rare liver disease, and you are going to have to get your liver removed. When you get to the hospital they strap you down to your bed so you can't leave. Then you find out that the doctor they are planning on doing your surgery is an eagle, and I'm not talking about an eagle scout either, I'm talking about the big deadly bird with talons like knives and a razor sharp beak. You make it through the surgery with a big bloody wound, and then pass out and sleep till the next morning. You wake the next morning, and to your horror, you find out that your liver has grown back, and they are going to have to remove it again that day. Now imagine this happening for all of eternity, day after day after day. Pretty crappy huh, well this is the pain that Prometheus had to go through for 30 thousand years. Prometheus was the titan of wisdom. He could tell the future, so when Zeus rebelled against Chronos, Prometheus knew who would win. He and his brother wisely joined the side of Zeus and were later given the privilege of creating life on earth because of it (Pontikis). Zeus and Prometheus got along good for the most part, but he did a couple of things which set Zeus off and eventually caused what was supposed to be his "eternal punishment". Prometheus has a lot of elements and themes in his story that are classic to mythology.

First, it shows how things came to be on the earth. Many stories in Mythology were made for the purpose of showing the origin of things. In Prometheus's story, it shows how humans came to be, and how they got fire. Prometheus and his brother designed all the humans and animals on earth (Pontikis). Zeus's brother foolishly gave most of the good traits to animals, so Prometheus made humans stand up strait. This shows how that came to be. Later in his story, Prometheus insulted Zeus, and Zeus took fire away from the humans. Prometheus couldn't stand to watch his poor creations suffer, so he eventually stole fire from Mt. Olympus (Why the Prometheus Project?). This shows how many things came to be, and also leads to another element that often repeats itself in mythology.

One more thing that happens quite often in mythology is endless torture. After Zeus found out that Prometheus had brought fire to the earth, he was steaming. Zeus took Prometheus and chained him to the peak of Mt. Caucasus. Zeus then sent an eagle to go and eat his liver out. What made this an eternal punishment was that his liver would grow back every night, and the next day the eagle would come back to eat it again. This was *supposed* to happen for eternity, but Hercules eventually came and freed him. There are many other stories in Mythology where eternal punishment happens, like that of Sisyphus, who was forced to push a boulder up a hill for all of eternity, except unfortunately for him, he was never saved (Pontikis). The Gods are usually the ones who give these punishments, which brings us to the next reason why the story of Prometheus is so similar to other mythology stories.

One rule in Mythology, and one that was often broken a lot, is to never mess with the gods. You might think to yourself, Prometheus was practically a god; shouldn't he be able to do this? Well the answer to that is NO! Zeus was kind of like the God of gods, and if you bugged him, it was sure to end badly. Another story where somebody makes the gods mad is the story of Achilles. Achilles dragged the dead body of Hector around the city of Troy. This just ticked the gods off, so then Apollo helped train Paris with a bow and arrow. Paris later shot Achilles with his bow and killed him. This is just another example of why not to offend the gods. Now you can see how Prometheus's story has a lot of traits that are often repeated in Mythology.

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