

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**READ CLOSELY AND SHOW EVIDENCE OF THINKING BY ANNOTATING. Annotate all readings by highlighting the main idea in yellow; the best evidence supporting in blue, and any interesting phrases in green.**

# THE STORY OF PROMETHEUS

by James Baldwin 1895

In those old, old times, there lived two brothers who were not like other men, nor yet like those Mighty Ones who lived upon the mountain top.<sup>1</sup> They were the sons of one of those Titans<sup>2</sup> who had fought against Jupiter<sup>3</sup> and been sent in chains to the strong prison-house<sup>4</sup> of the Lower World.<sup>5</sup>

The name of the elder of these brothers was Prometheus, or Forethought; for he was always thinking of the future and making things ready for what might happen to-morrow, or next week, or next year, or it may be in a hundred years to come. The younger was called Epimetheus, or Afterthought; for he was always so busy thinking of yesterday, or last year, or a hundred years ago, that he had no care at all for what might come to pass after a while.

For some cause Jupiter had not sent these brothers to prison with the rest of the Titans.

Prometheus did not care to live amid the clouds on the mountain top. He was too busy for that. While the Mighty Folk were spending their time in idleness,<sup>6</sup> drinking nectar and eating ambrosia,<sup>7</sup> he was intent upon plans for making the world wiser and better than it had ever been before.

He went out amongst men to live with them and help them; for his heart was filled with sadness when he found that they were no longer happy as they had been during the golden days when Saturn was king.<sup>8</sup> Ah, how very poor and wretched they were! He found them living in caves and in holes of the earth, shivering with the cold because there was no fire, dying of starvation, hunted by wild beasts and by one another-the most miserable of all living creatures.

"If they only had fire," said Prometheus to himself, "they could at least warm themselves and cook their food; and after a while they could learn to make tools and build themselves houses. Without fire, they are worse off than the beasts."

Then he went boldly to Jupiter and begged him to give fire to men, that so they might have a little comfort through the long, dreary months of winter.

## Myth of the Week #2-Prometheus

“Not a spark will I give,” said Jupiter. “No, indeed! Why, if men had fire they might become strong and wise like ourselves, and after a while they would drive us out of our kingdom. Let them shiver with cold, and let them live like the beasts. It is best for them to be poor and ignorant, that so we Mighty Ones may thrive and be happy.”

Prometheus made no answer; but he had set his heart on helping mankind, and he did not give up. He turned away, and left Jupiter and his mighty company forever.

As he was walking by the shore of the sea he found a reed, or, as some say, a tall stalk of fennel,<sup>9</sup> growing; and when he had broken it off he saw that its hollow center was filled with a dry, soft pith<sup>10</sup> which would burn slowly and keep on fire a long time. He took the long stalk in his hands, and started with it towards the dwelling of the sun in the far east.

“Mankind shall have fire in spite of the tyrant<sup>11</sup> who sits on the mountain top,” he said.

He reached the place of the sun in the early morning just as the glowing, golden orb was rising from the earth and beginning his daily journey through the sky. He touched the end of the long reed to the flames, and the dry pith caught on fire and burned slowly. Then he turned and hastened<sup>12</sup> back to his own land, carrying with him the precious spark hidden in the hollow center of the plant.

He called some of the shivering men from their caves and built a fire for them, and showed them how to warm themselves by it and how to build other fires from the coals. Soon there was a cheerful blaze in every rude<sup>13</sup> home in the land, and men and women gathered round it and were warm and happy, and thankful to Prometheus for the wonderful gift which he had brought to them from the sun.

It was not long until they learned to cook their food and so to eat like men instead of like beasts. They began at once to leave off their wild and savage habits; and instead of lurking in the dark places of the world, they came out into the open air and the bright sunlight, and were glad because life had been given to them.

After that, Prometheus taught them, little by little, a thousand things. He showed them how to build houses of wood and stone, and how to tame sheep and cattle and make them useful, and how to plow and sow and reap,<sup>14</sup> and how to protect themselves from the storms of winter and the beasts of the woods. Then he showed them how to dig in the earth for copper and iron, and how to melt the ore,<sup>15</sup> and how to hammer it into shape and fashion from it the tools and weapons which they needed in peace and war; and when he saw how happy the world was becoming he cried out:

“A new Golden Age shall come, brighter and better by far than the old!”

## Myth of the Week #2-Prometheus

### Notes

1. The "Mighty Ones" is a reference to the gods and goddesses of Greek mythology who lived atop Mount Olympus, led by Zeus (or, in Roman mythology, Jupiter), god of sky and thunder and king of the gods.
2. In classical Greek mythology, the Titans were members of the second order of divine beings, born from the first god and goddess Gaia and Uranus. The Titans were giants of incredible strength who ruled during the legendary Golden Age.
3. Jupiter (also called Jove) is the god of sky and thunder and king of the gods in Ancient Roman religion and mythology.
4. This is a reference to Tartarus, a deep abyss in ancient Greek mythology that is used as a dungeon of torment and suffering for the wicked. Zeus/Jupiter sent most of the Titans there after he and the other gods of Olympus defeated the Titans in a power struggle.
5. In mythology, the Lower World – also known as the Underworld – is an otherworld where souls go after death.
6. Idleness (*noun*) : a state of inactivity; not doing anything productive
7. Nectar and ambrosia are the food and drink of the "Mighty Folk" in Greek mythology.
8. "Saturn" is the Roman name for the Greek god Cronus (also spelled Kronos), the leader and youngest of the first generation of Titans. He overthrew his father and ruled during the mythological Golden Age, until he was overthrown by his own son Zeus/Jupiter and imprisoned in Tartarus.
9. a kind of plant
10. the white strings inside a plant or fruit like an orange
11. Tyrant (*noun*) : an unjust or oppressive ruler
12. Hasten (*verb*) : to hurry
13. In this context, "rude" means roughly made or done; lacking subtlety or sophistication
14. These are skills used in farming.
15. a type of rock used to create iron

**WRITE A REFLECTION (3 paragraphs-5 sentences each)-This needs to be submitted through google classroom.**

**One paragraph that reflects on what the writer said**

- Here's where you summarize the main points of the story

**One paragraph that reflects on the writer's style**

- How does the author use rhetorical devices (similes, metaphors, symbols etc.)
- What is the theme/author's message

**One paragraph that reflects the reader's thoughts on the content of the Story**

- Here's where you can discuss your reaction to the story, did it speak to you? Did you like it, why or why not?