

# Twin Titans and the Creation of Man



*retold by Mallery Blake*

- 1 Long ago the Olympians warred with the Titans, vying for control of the heavens. After ten years of fierce fighting, the young Olympians, led by the mighty Zeus, defeated the aging Titans and ushered in a new era. Zeus banished the Titans to Tartarus and took up his throne on Mt. Olympus.
- 2 Epimetheus and Prometheus were twin Titans who fought on the side of Zeus. Wise Prometheus foresaw that Zeus would be victorious and defected to his side, bringing along his impulsive brother in hopes of avoiding the terrible fate he knew would befall his defeated kin. When the war was won, Zeus showed his gratitude for the twins' service by charging the brothers with populating the Earth and bestowing gifts on all living creatures.
- 3 Epimetheus was excited by this task and quickly set to work fashioning animals out of clay. Prometheus was more thoughtful and considered long how best create a creature worthy of the gods. In his haste, Epimetheus rashly dispensed the gifts to each of his new creations. However, when Prometheus finished with man, there was nothing left to confer to this special creature made in the image of the gods. Without strength or speed, without claws or fangs, lacking a warm covering and keen senses, man was vulnerable, and Prometheus raged.
- 4 Determined to help man, Prometheus stole a spark of heavenly fire and lit man's mind, giving him intelligence and rational thought not unlike the gods. But he soon realized man needed actual fire as well, and he knew Zeus would never consent to sharing that heavenly treasure. Stealthily, Prometheus scaled Mt. Olympus during the night. As Helios's chariot thundered by at dawn, Prometheus reached out and lit a torch from its flames. He made the treacherous journey back down Mt. Olympus, taking care to avoid Zeus's roving eyes. He finally made it back to Earth undetected and gave the gift of fire to man, cautioning him to never let it go out.
- 5 The fire helped man just as Prometheus intended. It offered warmth, frightened away predators, allowed them to forge tools and weapons, and provided a way to cook food. With this power, man ruled the Earth. Prometheus was satisfied with his work, yet Zeus saw the flames rise from Earth and knew what Prometheus had done. Furious, he decided to punish Prometheus and man. He ordered that Prometheus be chained to a rock. An eagle came every day and tore at his liver; at night, the liver regenerated so the torture could be repeated the next day.
- 6 To punish man, Zeus created a woman of great beauty, Pandora. He asked every god to grant her a gift; Demeter showed her how to tend a garden, Athena taught her how to spin and weave, and Apollo gave her the gift of music and song. Zeus himself

gave her curiosity, along with a box he told her never to open. Zeus sent Hermes to escort Pandora to Earth, and Hermes convinced Epimetheus that Zeus was contrite and wanted to make amends by giving him a beautiful, talented wife. Even though Prometheus had warned him never to accept a gift from Zeus, Epimetheus couldn't resist and welcomed Pandora to his home. They were very happy together, but after a time Pandora's curiosity got the best of her, and she opened Zeus's box. Into the world flew great evils: envy, greed, disease, despair, death, crime, old age. Pandora screamed, and Epimetheus raced to the box and slammed it shut, leaving only one last item in the box: hope. And so, Zeus had his revenge.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## QUIZ

### *Twin Titans and the Creation of Man*

*Directions: Circle the best answer.*

1. Why did Zeus use Pandora as a way to punish man?
  - a. He wanted the world to have hope.
  - b. He knew men would not be able to resist Pandora and they would fight over her.
  - c. He was angry at man for using fire to rule the Earth.
  - d. He thought Pandora could control her curiosity and would not actually open the box.
2. What is the importance of fire in this myth?
  - a. Prometheus had to steal fire because he knew Zeus would not allow him to give it to humans.
  - b. Epimetheus forgot about the gift of fire, so it was the only thing Prometheus had to give the humans.
  - c. A spark of heavenly fire is the source of human wisdom, and actual fire helped humans rule the Earth.
  - d. Fire belonged to the gods.
3. The word defected in paragraph 2 means
  - a. deserted.
  - b. surrounded.
  - c. surrendered.
  - d. disappeared.
4. Epimetheus is best described as
  - a. cruel and careful.
  - b. impulsive and disorganized.
  - c. arrogant and happy.
  - d. careless and angry.
5. Why does Zeus punish Prometheus?
  - a. Prometheus failed to plan how to distribute the gifts to the animals fairly.
  - b. Prometheus created humans in the shape of the gods.
  - c. Prometheus made humans rulers of the whole Earth.
  - d. Prometheus gave humans the gift of fire.