

The story of Prometheus.

In ancient Greek mythology Prometheus was a god of fire. He was also a trickster and a master craftsman. Prometheus was one of the Titans. The Titans were giants who once ruled the world.

In one story Zeus, the chief god, had Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus create the animals and people. Epimetheus made the animals first. He gave them all the best qualities, such as strength and speed. He also protected them with fur and feathers.

Epimetheus then realized that he had little left to give people. He asked Prometheus for help. Prometheus felt sorry for his human friends so he stole fire from the gods and gave it to humans. Fire was important for many things - like heat and cooking, and hundreds of others. Prometheus stole a lightning bolt from Zeus and hid it in a fennel flower descending Mount Olympus and gave it to mankind. That's when man discovered fire.

Zeus was furious. He ordered Prometheus chained to a rock as punishment for stealing his lightning bolt, and for going behind his back to help the humans. To make Prometheus even more miserable, Zeus sent storms to beat angry waves against Prometheus, helplessly chained to his rock. Zeus made the sun shine brightly to burn his skin. Every day an eagle ate Prometheus' liver and every night he grew a new liver for the bird to eat the next day (because he was immortal). It was quite a punishment for a god who had only tried to help mankind but he had defied Zeus, and that was what made Zeus so angry. Zeus also punished humans after Prometheus gave them fire. Zeus sent the first woman, named Pandora, to Earth. Her curiosity is said to have brought troubles into the world.

After nearly a thousand years, the hero Hercules released the helpless god from his chains.