

Greek Mythology: The Beginning of the Gods

The Titans were the very first gods to be created. The children of Mother Earth and Father Sky, also known as Gaea and Uranus, the Titans were so tall that Gaea created the mountains to serve as their thrones. Both Gaea and Uranus were very proud of their six sons.

However, Uranus was not proud of Gaea's next three sons. These were the three Cyclopes known as Thunder, Thunderbolt, and Lightning. While tremendously huge and strong, the Cyclopes were not handsome gods but fierce hammersmiths, with a single glowing eye set in the middle of their forehead. The blows from their heavy, booming hammers created sparks that lit up the sky.

After some time, Gaea had another three sons. These were more hideous and disfigured than the last, having fifty heads and a hundred arms! Uranus was so disgusted by their ugliness that he gathered them up with the Cyclopes and flung all six giants into a dark pit at the deepest part of the earth.

This enraged Gaea who loved *all* her sons. She made a weapon and gave it to Cronus, the youngest and strongest Titan. She told Cronus to use the weapon to banish his father, take the throne, and free his brother. Unable to withstand his son's strength, Uranus fled, and Cronus became lord of the Universe.

Cronus now sat on the highest mountain throne. However, because he did not rescue his brothers as he had sworn to do, Mother Earth was very angry. She began plotting the downfall of her youngest son. Gaea knew that one day another god would come along who would be stronger than Cronus, just as Cronus had been stronger than his father Uranus.

Unfortunately, Cronus was aware of this, too. He did not want to be overthrown. So, each time his wife Rhea had a child, Cronus took the newborn god and swallowed it. Rhea wanted children, so she asked Mother Earth for help. Gaea's idea worked. When Rhea's child, Zeus, was born, she quickly wrapped a child-sized stone in a baby blanket and gave it to Cronus. Thinking it was Zeus, Cronus swallowed the stone. He believed his throne was safe because he held all his children inside him. Meantime, Gaea secretly took the newborn god to a hidden cave on the island of Crete where he was nursed by nymphs and grew quickly.