

## **Greek Mythology: Zeus and Mount Olympus**

As an infant, the god Zeus narrowly escaped the fate of his siblings, who at birth had been swallowed up by their father Cronus. When Zeus was born, his mother tricked Cronus into swallowing a stone instead of his newborn. Zeus, aided by Mother Earth, his grandmother, was raised in secret. Mother Earth had long plotted the downfall of her son, Cronus, for having refused to release his imprisoned brothers after rising to power.

Hidden from view, Zeus grew up quickly. He married Metis, goddess of wisdom. She knew that Cronus had his powerful Titan brothers on his side, and that Zeus would need his own allies to overthrow his father. Metis visited Cronus, tricking him into eating magic herbs that she said would make him indestructible. Instead, they made Cronus sick, and he threw up not only the stone he had swallowed, but his other five children – mighty gods and goddesses in their own right – as well. Joining forces with their brother Zeus, Cronus was quickly defeated.

Zeus was now the lord of the universe, sharing power with his siblings. The Titans and their sons, however, refused to be ruled by these new gods and revolted. For support, Zeus freed the long-imprisoned sons of Mother Earth, the Cyclopes and the hundred-armed monsters.

The grateful giants forged lightning bolts for Zeus and a powerful trident for his brother, Poseidon. The Titans fought a bitter battle, but could not defeat Zeus and his thunderbolts. Surrendering, the Titans were locked behind the same gates that had once imprisoned their monstrous brothers.

Mother Earth was now angry at Zeus for imprisoning her first-born sons, the Titans. To fight Zeus, she created Typhon, a monster from whose mouth poured lava and red-hot stones. To destroy them, Typhon planned to hurl the great Mount Aetna at the gods. But before he could, Zeus struck the mountain with a hundred lightning bolts, trapping Typhon underneath. There Typhon still remains, erupting fire, lava, and smoke through Aetna's top.

Finally, Mother Earth gave up her struggle; the war was over. The one-eyed Cyclopes built a palace for the gods that would be hidden in the clouds atop Mount Olympus, the highest mountain in Greece. Zeus shared his powers with his five siblings, six of his children, and Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Together they ruled heaven and earth from their gleaming mountain palace.