

“The Two Great Gods of Earth”

1. For the most part, the immortal gods were little use to mankind and often the reverse
 - Zeus was a dangerous lover and incalculable with his thunderbolt
 - Ares was a maker of war and a general pest.
 - Hera was unjust when she was jealous, which was often.
 - Athena was a war maker and often irresponsible.
 - Aphrodite often used her power to ensnare and betray.
2. Mankind's best friends were Demeter which in Latin is Ceres (Goddess of the Corn) and the daughter of Cronus and Rhea), and Dionysus which in Latin is Bacchus (God of wine)
3. It was natural that it was a goddess that was associated with corn because corn was sowed before wine; cornfields, which were tended by women while the men hunted, were the beginning of settled life.
4. Describe Demeter's festival; it came every five years at harvest time (September) and lasted for 9 days; some rites were very mysterious; held at the great temple of Eleusis; called the Eleusian Mysteries
5. List some of the things common to both Demeter and Dionysus;
 - a). both were suffering gods
 - b). both gave man good gifts
 - c). both present in the “daily acts that life depends on”
 - d). both were the happy gods of the harvest
6. These gods existence helps explain the constant changes men saw—day and night and the seasons

Demeter's Story

7. Demeter's daughter was named Persephone, and she was considered the maiden of spring.
8. Hades fell in love with her, tempting her with a flower called a narcissus so he could bear her away in his chariot to the underworld.
9. Demeter searched for nine days until she was told the story by the Sun.

10. What is the story of Metaneira and her son, Demophoon? Disguised as an old woman, Demeter met her, and for Metaneira's kindness tried to reward her by making her son Demophoon immortal.
 11. Describe the following year: Most dreadful and cruel; nothing grew; men might die from famine.
 12. How did Zeus intervene? He sent the gods, but to no avail; sent Hermes to Hades to tell him to let Persephone go back to her mother, which Hades did after making her eat a pomegranate seed.
 13. Explain the role of a pomegranate seed: It forced Persephone to return to Hades.
 14. What was Rhea's role and what was the result? She negotiated a compromise: Demeter's daughter only had to spend a third of the year in the Underworld with Hades.
 15. What idea is foremost in the story of Demeter and how does this become a comfort for man? The foremost idea is sorrow; Demeter was the goddess who understood men's suffering.
-

Dionysus' Story

16. Dionysus was the last god to enter Olympus; his father was Zeus and his mother was Semele.
17. Tell Semele's story: Hera knew that Zeus had fallen in love with Semele and made Semele ask Zeus to swear on the River Styx that he would allow Semele to see him in his glory; this killed her.
18. So the god of the vine was snatched from his mother's dying body and taken to be raised by nymphs at the mystical valley of Nysa: he was "born of fire and nursed by rain."
19. Dionysus first years were spent in wandering:
 - a). Pirates tried to capture him.
 - b). He defeated the King of Thrace who insulted him.
 - c). Rescues and loves Ariadne who had been abandoned by Theseus.
 - d). Rescues his mother from the Underworld and takes her to Olympus
20. The god of wine could be kind or cruel; be man's blessing or his ruin.

21. Women frenzied by wine were called the Maenads or Bacchantes. Describe their actions and why they had no temples: they could tear animals to pieces and eat their raw flesh; they represented lack of order and beauty.
22. What happened at Thebes? When Pentheus, the king, tried to arrest Dionysus and his followers, the blind prophet Teiresias warned that this was a new god, Semele's child, but he was ignored; Pentheus imprisoned Dionysus and was punished by Dionysus making the womenfolk go crazy—not only Dionysus' followers but also Pentheus' mother and sisters—he caused them to think he was a mountain lion and they "tore him limb from limb" before realizing who he was. Bummer.
23. What good things did the Greeks see in wine? It cheers and warms men's hearts; it quickened courage and banished fear; brought happy freedom and confidence.
24. What bad things did the Greeks see in wine? It made men commit frightful and atrocious crimes that were ugly and degrading.
25. List facts about the great festivals dedicated to Dionysus:
- open, not mysterious like Demeter's festival.
 - took place in the spring when new growth appeared on the vines
 - for five days no one could be put in prison
 - it was a theater for which some of the greatest poetry in the world was written
26. HARD TO FIND/UNDERSTAND IN BOOK: In what ways is it thought that the worship of Dionysus foreshadowed Christian beliefs? Although he was a tragic god who suffered when every year when his "limbs" were hacked away and he was torn to pieces, he was reborn in the spring and became the "assurance that death does not end all. His worshippers believed that his death and resurrection showed that the soul lives on forever after the body dies."