

## ***The Ages of Man, History and Culture***

After Homer, the next important Greek poet was Hesiod, who lived toward the end of the eighth century B.C. Hesiod wrote a number of myths based upon myths that already existed. He shaped the following creation myth so that it would teach people how to lead satisfying lives in their own difficult times.

According to Hesiod, as human beings acquired more technology, their values deteriorated. Therefore, the first, golden race of mortals, which led the most simple life, was the most honorable and the happiest of all the races that Zeus created. They were a peaceful society of farmers, and they worshipped the Great Goddess or Mother Goddess (Mother Earth), who made them and their land fertile. In Greek history, this race conforms most closely to the peoples who inhabited Greece before about 2600 to 2000 B.C., when the Mycenaeans invaded the land.

The bronze race of mortals lived during the Mycenaean Age. This was a time of many wars, including the Trojan War, which is the setting of Homer's *Iliad*. The Mycenaeans were more aggressive and acquisitive than the peoples they encountered when they invaded Greece. They worshipped Zeus, and in their society, the male was more powerful than the female.

Hesiod's description in *The Works and Days* of the race of iron refers to the people living in his own time. We are still part of the race of iron. You may find it interesting to compare his vision of people in his time with your view of people today.