

Ragnarok

by Micha F. Lindemans

Ragnarok ("Doom of the Gods"), also called Gotterdammerung, means the end of the cosmos in Norse mythology. It will be preceded by Fimbulvetr, the winter of winters. Three such winters will follow each other with no summers in between. Conflicts and feuds will break out, even between families, and all morality will disappear. This is the beginning of the end.

The wolf Skoll will finally devour the sun, and his brother Hati will eat the moon, plunging the earth [into] darkness. The stars will vanish from the sky. The cock Fjalar will crow to the giants and the golden cock Gullinkambi will crow to the gods. A third cock will raise the dead.

The earth will shudder with earthquakes, and every bond and fetter will burst, freeing the terrible wolf [Fenrir](#). The sea will rear up because [Jormungand](#), the Midgard Serpent, is twisting and writhing in fury as he makes his way toward the land. With every breath, Jormungand will stain the soil and the sky with his poison. The waves caused by the serpent's emerging will set free the ship Naglfar, and with the giant [Hymir](#) as their commander, the giants will sail towards the battlefield. From the realm of the dead a second ship will set sail, and this ship carries the inhabitants of hell, with [Loki](#) as their helmsman. The fire giants, led by the giant [Surt](#), will leave [Muspell](#) in the south to join against the gods. Surt, carrying a sword that blazes like the sun itself, will scorch the earth.

Meanwhile, [Heimdall](#) will sound his horn, calling the sons of [Odin](#) and the heroes to the battlefield. From all the corners of the world, gods, giants, dwarves, demons and elves will ride towards the huge plain of Vigrid ("battle shaker") where the last battle will be fought. Odin will engage Fenrir in battle, and [Thor](#) will attack Jormungand. Thor will be victorious, but the serpent's poison will gradually kill the god of thunder. Surt will seek out the swordless [Freyr](#), who will quickly succumb to the giant. The one-handed [Tyr](#) will fight the monstrous hound [Garm](#) and they will kill each other. Loki and Heimdall, age-old enemies, will meet for a final time, and neither will survive their encounter. The fight between Odin and Fenrir will rage for a long time, but finally Fenrir will seize Odin and swallow him. Odin's son [Vidar](#) will at once leap towards the wolf and kill him with his bare hands, ripping the wolf's jaws apart.

Then Surt will fling fire in every direction. The nine worlds will burn, and friends and foes alike will perish. The earth will sink into the sea.

After the destruction, a new and idyllic world will arise from the sea and will be filled with abundant supplies. Some of the gods will survive, others will be reborn. Wickedness and misery will no longer exist and gods and men will live happily together. The descendants of [Lif and Lifthrasir](#) will inhabit this earth.

"Ragnarok." *Encyclopedia Mythica* from Encyclopedia Mythica Online.

<<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/r/ragnarok.html>>

[Accessed September 12, 2012].