

## JOHN MILTON

### PARADISE LOST

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. It was probably written from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. It was published in \_\_\_\_\_.
2. It is considered as England's great epic poem and even as the \_\_\_\_\_ epic, as Dante's Divine Comedy is considered the Catholic epic.
3. It is written in \_\_\_\_\_ or unrhymed iambic pentameter; that is, every other syllable is stressed, and there are five stressed syllables in each line.
4. Paradise Lost was very popular. In the 18th century over one hundred editions of the poem were published, more than twice the number of editions for Shakespeare's plays.
5. It has twelve books. In this handout, bk. 1 is analyzed closely. A summary of bks. 2-12 is given as sect. V of this handout.

#### II. EPIC CONVENTIONS:

Seven major stylistic or thematic devices of most great epics (Iliad, Odyssey, Aeneid, and Dante's Divine Comedy) are used by Milton.

1. The statement of the \_\_\_\_\_ in the opening lines.
2. An appeal to the \_\_\_\_\_ for poetic inspiration.
3. Beginning the story in medias res (in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the action).
4. The cataloging of a host of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Elaborate similes (the \_\_\_\_\_ simile).
6. Action centering on love and \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Supernatural characters that interact with \_\_\_\_\_.

### III. THEOLOGY:

The major theological beliefs on which the poem is based are as follows:

1. Original \_\_\_\_\_ and the fall of human beings from the Grace of God.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ will of humans. God is omniscient and thus knows what will happen, but God's foreknowledge does not necessitate the event, for each person is \_\_\_\_\_ morally for his or her actions. In this sense, humans are not automatons.
3. The reality of \_\_\_\_\_ through Satan and his devils. Satan tempted \_\_\_\_\_ and Eve to do evil, and Satan and his devils continually tempt all human beings.
4. Human salvation through \_\_\_\_\_ resurrection. The love of God provided His own son, the Christ, to wash away all sins of humans, and whoever believes in Him shall be saved by Chris's Divine \_\_\_\_\_, which is greater than Satan's Hellish \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Through this theology, Milton justifies "the ways of \_\_\_\_\_ to men" (26), the purpose of his poem.

### IV. PARADISE LOST: BOOK ONE

#### A. STRUCTURE

1. Following the practice of Homer and Virgil, Milton begins with a statement of his THEME (lines 1-5): The fall of \_\_\_\_\_ through Adam, who is at once the first father and the first sinner of humanity: "Of man's first \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_ / Of that \_\_\_\_\_ tree, whose mortal taste / Brought \_\_\_\_\_ into the world . . ." (1-3).

2. Milton then affirms (24-25) that his PURPOSE in the poem is to assert Providence as opposed to Fate and to "\_\_\_\_\_ " (i.e., to make apparent the justice of) God's dealing with humans (26).

3. The INVOCATION TO THE MUSE (lines 6-23), also follows an epic tradition.

The Heavenly \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e., Urania, originally the Muse of astronomy) is in reality that divine inspiration which revealed the truths of religion to \_\_\_\_\_.

It is also the spirit of God—the Holy \_\_\_\_\_, or the

third part of the Trinity—which dwells in the heart of every believer.

Milton's invocations are, therefore, really Christian prayers.

4. Lines 27-49 ask what caused humanity to fall; its answer, "the infernal \_\_\_\_\_" (34). The origin of evil—Satan's pride and ungrateful rebellion—is briefly alluded to.

5. In proper epic fashion, Milton begins IN MEDIAS RES. Recovering from the confusion of his great defeat, Satan is seen raising his head from the \_\_\_\_\_ lake. Surveying the fearful scene about him, Satan beholds \_\_\_\_\_, called the Prince of Devils in Scripture (27-82).

6. Satan's first speech to Beelzebub follows (83-124). In it Satan \_\_\_\_\_ his attempted rebellion against God and announces his determination to persist in opposing God.

7. Lines 124-55: Beelzebub's answer to Satan's speech stresses how much the fallen angels have \_\_\_\_\_.

8. Lines 156-91: In his second speech, Satan meets Beelzebub's \_\_\_\_\_ with an expression of resolute opposition to the will of \_\_\_\_\_.

9. Lines 192-270: Satan and Beelzebub rise from the fiery lake and fly to \_\_\_\_\_ land, which like the lake is burning.

Satan rejoices because he thinks they have made this flight by means of their own \_\_\_\_\_.

In his third speech, Satan welcomes \_\_\_\_\_ as his home, saying that "Here at least / We shall be \_\_\_\_\_" (258-59).

10. Lines 271-330: Satan then moves across the burning land of Hell to rouse the rest of his \_\_\_\_\_ of fallen \_\_\_\_\_, who lie sprawled upon the lake of fire in complete confusion.

In his fourth speech, addressed to these followers, Satan assumes the role of a \_\_\_\_\_ leader inspiring his troops from lethargy.

11. Lines 331-621: Having assembled the infernal host, Milton proceeds to a CATALOGING of the \_\_\_\_\_, following the precedence of Homer's catalogue of ships and heroes in the second book of the Iliad.

The devils' names are drawn partly from the Holy \_\_\_\_\_, and partly from Egyptian and Greek \_\_\_\_\_, on the theory that the divinities worshiped by Biblical or mythological pagans were in reality the fallen \_\_\_\_\_ who had subsequently seduced mankind from allegiance to the true God.

12. Lines 622-69: The marshaling of the army in \_\_\_\_\_ order is followed by Satan's fifth and last speech in Book One.

It shows that Satan as a \_\_\_\_\_ knows his first task in \_\_\_\_\_ is to secure by eloquence the devotion of his warriors to the purposes for which he wishes to employ them.

13. Lines 670-798: The account of the building of \_\_\_\_\_, in form a Doric temple, and of the metamorphosis whereby the chosen representatives of the army are transformed to \_\_\_\_\_ size that they may be housed without the council chamber brings the book to a close.

## B. SATAN'S FIVE SPEECHES:

### 1. FIRST SPEECH (83-124):

(1) It is delivered to \_\_\_\_\_ from the burning lake.

(2) In a speech of proud rebellion, Satan vows he will not repent: "What though the \_\_\_\_\_ be lost? / All is not \_\_\_\_\_" (105-106).

(3) Satan blames their defeat on God's having \_\_\_\_\_.

(4) He began his rebellion, he states, because he felt God had not \_\_\_\_\_ him enough.

(5) He says the battle in Heaven (in which he was joined by "\_\_\_\_\_ " angels who disliked God's rule) was doubtful in its outcome and that it "shook [God's] \_\_\_\_\_" (101, 105).

(6) He vows to gain revenge. Presenting himself as the proud rebel, he says he never shall \_\_\_\_\_ before God.

(7) He suggests that there is a \_\_\_\_\_ above God—"fate" (116).

(8) Satan praises what his army got from the first \_\_\_\_\_: military experience.

(9) He speaks of God as a \_\_\_\_\_ (124).

### 2. SECOND SPEECH (156-91):

(1) Satan answers \_\_\_\_\_ hesitating speech.

They are still in the burning lake.

(2) Satan says they must dedicate their lives to doing evil because if they succeed, this turning of God's good into evil will "\_\_\_\_\_ " (167) God.

(3) Satan says it was a sign of weakness that God has withdrawn the \_\_\_\_\_ who had driven them down to Hell.

(4) Satan suggests that Beelzebub and he move from the burning lake to a nearby \_\_\_\_\_.

### 3. THIRD SPEECH (242-70):

(1) It is spoken to \_\_\_\_\_ once they are on the land.

(2) Satan says that he is God's equal because he has the power of \_\_\_\_\_.

(3) He contends that God reigns not through right, but by force of \_\_\_\_\_.

(4) Satan accepts \_\_\_\_\_ as his new home.

(5) He stresses the supremacy of mind over matter: "The \_\_\_\_\_ is its own place, and . . . / Can make a Heaven of \_\_\_\_\_, a Hell of \_\_\_\_\_ " (254-55).

(6) Satan praises freedom: "Here at least / We shall be \_\_\_\_\_ " (258-59).

(7) He affirms, "Better to reign in \_\_\_\_\_, than serve in \_\_\_\_\_ " (263).

(8) He tells Beelzebub that they must rouse the other \_\_\_\_\_ angels from the lake and speaks of regaining "Heaven" (270).

### 4. FOURTH SPEECH (315-30):

(1) It is spoken to rouse the \_\_\_\_\_ in the lake.

(2) Satan begins with flattery, calling them "princes . . . the \_\_\_\_\_ of Heaven" (315-16).

(3) He jokes with them: Are you having a \_\_\_\_\_

after the battle?

(4) Next he uses fear. He tells them that if they do not get up, God may send a counterattack and pin them to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the lake.

(5) He lastly gives them hope couched in a threat: "Awake, arise, or be \_\_\_\_\_ fallen" (330).

(6) The speech succeeds, and the fallen angels begin to collect themselves into a \_\_\_\_\_ formation.

#### 5. FIFTH SPEECH (622-61):

(1) Three times Satan pretends to try to speak to the gathered army, but each time he melts into \_\_\_\_\_ (probably false \_\_\_\_\_).

(2) He praises his soldiers as "immortal" and "\_\_\_\_\_ " (622-623).

(3) He asks them who could have foreseen \_\_\_\_\_ in the first battle, seeing how splendid they are.

(4) He uses a lie, saying they have "\_\_\_\_\_ " Heaven (633).

(5) He gives his soldiers the hope of reascending to \_\_\_\_\_.

(6) He points out that God continues to rule because of His \_\_\_\_\_ or because of custom.

(7) Satan says that in the first battle God concealed His \_\_\_\_\_, but now they know it, and \_\_\_\_\_ also know their own \_\_\_\_\_.

(8) He cautions it is better to work by guile in their battle against God: "who overcomes / By \_\_\_\_\_, has overcome but \_\_\_\_\_ his foe" (648-49).

(9) He speaks of a rumor in Heaven that God would create a new being—\_\_\_\_\_. Satan says that their first \_\_\_\_\_ in their war with God should be against this new creation.

(10) The speech, just as Satan's other speeches,

\_\_\_\_\_.

C. THE CHARACTER OF SATAN IN BOOK ONE

1. A few critics regard Satan as the hero of Paradise Lost, and certainly some \_\_\_\_\_ aspects to Satan are presented in bk. 1.

However, with the appearance of \_\_\_\_\_ the Son at the opening of bk. 3, we begin to see in heavenly love the counterpoise of \_\_\_\_\_'s hellish \_\_\_\_\_.

Thereafter, Satan's "heroic" luster dissolves, and in the rest of the poem he is seen in \_\_\_\_\_ terms, as a vulture, a toad, or a snake.

2. In bk. 1, however, the following aspects make some critics think of Satan—in Heaven, before his fall, he was called \_\_\_\_\_, meaning "the son of the Light"—as heroic:

(1) He shows heroic energy in \_\_\_\_\_ himself and his followers to action.

(2) He portrays himself as an underdog, resisting the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

(3) He says that his army lost, but they were fighting against great odds, and that God had a secret weapon—\_\_\_\_\_.

(4) He shows defiant courage in declaring that it is "Better to reign in \_\_\_\_\_, than serve in \_\_\_\_\_" (263).

(5) He presents himself as the glorious rebel who will not \_\_\_\_\_ down to another even in defeat.

(6) In rallying his forces, he shows himself to be a good \_\_\_\_\_ leader.

(7) He manifests (or pretends to manifest) sorrow for his \_\_\_\_\_ comrades.

(8) His declaration that supreme reality and power reside in the \_\_\_\_\_ and cannot be touched by external force can be read as a magnificent affirmation of the unyielding human spirit in the face of even the most devastating \_\_\_\_\_: "The mind is its own place, and . . . / Can make a \_\_\_\_\_ of Hell, a \_\_\_\_\_ of Heaven" (254-55).

3. However, a close reading of Book 1 reveals these non-heroic aspects of Satan:

(1) He brags much, for example, about his will \_\_\_\_\_ in raising himself from the burning \_\_\_\_\_ to the land, not realizing what Milton is careful to tell the reader that Satan and his host can rise from the lake of fire only because \_\_\_\_\_ permits them to.

(2) He makes excuses for his army's defeat, saying that he had no way of knowing that \_\_\_\_\_ was so strong since no one had ever tried God's strength.

(3) He lies, when he claims to have \_\_\_\_\_ Heaven, for only a third of the angels rebelled.

(4) He is a fool, deluding himself by minimizing his terrible \_\_\_\_\_ and insisting that his army can regroup and defeat God.

(5) He perverts logic, claiming that evil will be his \_\_\_\_\_.

(6) He is full of \_\_\_\_\_ pride, which is the most severe of the Seven Deadly Sins.

#### D. OTHER STYLISTIC ASPECTS OF BOOK 1:

1. DESCRIPTION: Descriptions of the landscape of Hell and of the personal appearance of Satan and his lieutenants are interspersed throughout the action of bk. 1.

2. Thus at first we are given the general impression of the fiery gulf in which the devils lie confounded, next of the "darkness visible" (50) of the infernal region, then the more specific image of Satan, prone on the flood, with head uplifted, next further details as the leaders, followed by their legions, rise from the lake and take their places on the burning plain.

3. SIMILE: Elaborate similes—more abundant than in any other of the poem's books—enrich the description.

4. BALANCE: The formal effect of the verse is enhanced by careful contrast and balancing throughout: "this" balanced by "that"; "Farewell" balanced by "Hail."

5. Satan's determination and pride in the face of defeat are then dramatically underscored by the emphatic "Here," repeated in three separated

lines.

## V. OVERALL STRUCTURE AND SUMMARY OF BKS. 2 – 12 OF *PARADISE LOST*

### A. OVERALL STRUCTURE

1. Its first half rises from Hell through Chaos to Heaven, and takes place mostly in these cosmic locales.

2. Its second half opens with the word “Descend,” and is largely confined to earth, ending with Adam and Eve’s descent from the Mount of Paradise to the “plain” of our world.

3. The adventure of the fallen Satan in the opening books balances the history of fallen mankind in the closing ones. At the center of the poem are the account of the destructive war in Heaven (Book 6) and that of the Creation (Book 7).

### B. SUMMARY OF BOOKS 2 – 12

Book 2 - Satan tells the fallen angels that God has created another world and another kind of creature; the fallen angels decide to work their revenge against God through His new creation. Satan begins to make his trip through Chaos to Earth to see how this revenge can be successful.

Book 3 - It opens in Heaven. God predicts that Satan will be successful in bringing the fall of humankind. Christ, his son, offers himself as a ransom for mankind, and God accepts that sacrifice. Satan reaches the earth.

Book 4 - Satan gets to Eden. Adam and Eve are described. Satan overhears a conversation between them and learns that they have been forbidden under the penalty of death to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Book 5 - God sends the angel Raphael down to warn Adam and Eve that Satan is seeking their destruction. Adam asks about Satan and Raphael then begins to narrate how Satan incited a third of the angels in Heaven to rebel against God.

Book 6 - A continuation of Raphael’s narrative showing how Christ led the forces which defeated and drove from Heaven the rebelling angels. They fell for nine days into Hell, which God had prepared for them.

Book 7 - Raphael next tells how the universe was created and Man was made.

Book 8 - Adam relates what he remembers of his own creation and of the creation of Eve.

Book 9 - The climax of the story. Eve is seduced by Satan (in the shape of a serpent) into tasting the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. She tells Adam what she has done. Adam, overwhelmed with dismay at her sin, is unable to face the prospect of losing Eve. Thus he also eats of the fruit. Their first reaction is a kind of drunken excitement, but then they begin to accuse each other.

Book 10 - Satan returns to Pandemonium in triumph. Adam and Eve are reconciled with each other and to their fate.

Book 11 - The angel Michael is sent to drive Adam and Eve from Eden.

Book 12 - The angel Michael shows Adam that his race will be redeemed by Christ. Adam and Eve leave Eden.