

Paradise Lost Book Notes

Paradise Lost by John Milton

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Author/Context

John Milton was born on December 9, 1608 on Bread Street in Cheapside, London, England to a scrivener and his wife. Milton's parents had six children, and Milton was one of the three who survived. Milton's father insisted that his son daily education, and at age 16 Milton entered Christ's College, Cambridge. Perhaps the finest student in his class, Milton received his B.A. in 1629 and M.A. in 1632. Milton was proficient in Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and Hebrew, (languages which would no doubt aid him in the eventual writing of *Paradise Lost*), and was an excellent swordsman. Milton had gone to Cambridge to become a clergyman, but he was dissuaded from this occupation due to "tyranny" in the church. So, Milton spent the 6 years after getting his M.A. reading the Greek and Latin classics, and studying mathematics and music.

Milton broke into the public literary scene in 1632 with a eulogy he'd written on Shakespeare which appeared in the second folio edition of *Shakespeare*. Even as his father was the subject of a lawsuit for misappropriating money and his mother died, Milton continued to write. In 1637, 7 months after his mother's death, he wrote the pastoral work "Lycidas." A year later, he visited Italy and met Galileo. He returned to England 1639 and began to think about writing an Arthurian epic. But he gave that idea up soon and wavered between writing on Biblical subjects and heroic figures in British history. In 1640, he decided to write on *Paradise Lost*.

It would be a while before the poem was completed, however. In 1642, at the age of 34, Milton married Mary Powell, age 17. Sadly, his wife ran away before the year was through, and Milton proceeded to write his famous treatise advocating divorce. He and his wife reconciled in 1645, and Milton's daughter Anne was born in 1646. He worked as a secretary for the government starting in 1649, and became blind in 1652. That year his only son and wife died, leaving him a blind widower with three children. He remarried in 1656, but she died in childbirth a year later, ending "the happiest time" in Milton's life. In the following years Milton wrote against the Royalists, mysteriously escaping the scaffold for his scandalous comments. Milton got a third wife in 1663, since his rebellious daughters would not care for him. In 1667, Milton finally concluded an agreement with a publisher for the printing of *Paradise Lost*. Scholars were perplexed when the poem came out, since it shunned the rhyming of other epic poems in its blank verse. But in 1669, the first edition was sold out. In 1671 *Paradise Regained* came out, and in the last year of Milton's life, 1674, the second edition of *Paradise Lost* was published. The poem, originally arranged in ten books, was now arranged in twelve. On the day before his 66th birthday, November 8, 1674, Milton died of gout-fever. He was buried in the Church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, beside his father.

Bibliography

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Masson, David. *Life of John Milton: Narrated in Connection with the Political, Ecclesiastical, and Literary History of His Time*, 7 vols. London: 1859-94. An excerpt from this work appeared in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 9th ed., 1888, and a portion of that excerpt appeared in Ed. Scott Elledge. *Paradise Lost: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, Sources, and Criticism*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1993.

Plot Summary

Paradise Lost is John Milton's elaboration of Genesis into an epic poem. The poem begins with Milton's invocation to a muse for help. The action switches to hell, where Satan and his followers have been banished from heaven after trying to rebel against God. Bitter, they try to make the best of things by building the palace Pandemonium, all the while plotting whether to get revenge against God by war or trickery.

After much debate, they finally decide to try to sabotage the new world of earth and mortal man that God has created. Satan sets off for earth, and meets his offspring, Sin and Death, at the gate of hell. They let him pass, and he journeys onward. Meanwhile, God sees Satan approaching earth and predicts the fall of man. When no one else does, God's Son offers to sacrifice himself to save man.

Satan flies to the sun, where he tricks Archangel Uriel into leading him to Paradise. Satan finds Adam and Eve there and becomes jealous of their happiness. He hears Adam telling Eve that they mustn't eat the fruit from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge. Meanwhile, Uriel warns Gabriel and some other Archangels that one of the fallen angels has entered Paradise. Satan is caught in the shape of a toad trying to whisper to Eve in her sleep and is thrown out of Eden. God eventually tells Raphael, another Archangel, to go warn Adam and Eve about Satan, and remind them that they have the power of free will to determine their fate. Raphael tells Adam and Eve all about Satan and his rebellion, and how God's Son threw them into hell. He speaks of a time when heaven and earth could become one, and leaves Adam and Eve with a final warning.

Unfortunately, Satan hasn't been sufficiently deterred and returns to Paradise as a mist. He then inhabits a serpent. He is thrilled to find Eve all by herself and convinces her that she should eat from the Tree of Knowledge since it only made him "more perfect" and could make her a goddess. Adam, distraught at Eve's mistake, debates what he should do until he finally eats from the tree and joins whatever fate awaits Eve. Adam and Eve become lustful, then hostile toward each other, and finally see shame in their nakedness. God's Son comes to earth and tells them they will not die right away, but gives them punishments such as painful childbirth and hard labor in the fields.

Meanwhile, Sin and Death know that Satan has succeeded and build a pathway for his speedy access between hell and earth. Satan comes back to hell expecting celebration, but he and his followers are turned into serpents and tormented by a copy of the Tree of Knowledge, which turns to ashes instead of bearing real fruit. Back on earth, Adam and Eve finally make amends. God sends Archangel Michael to send them out of Paradise, but first Michael shows Adam visions about other unfortunate events that will arise from his disobedience. Adam is sad at first, but cheers up when he knows God's Son will someday reward the righteous and punish the sinners. Finally, Adam and Eve sadly leave Paradise hand in hand, awaiting their future.

Major Characters

God: He creates the universe, heaven, hell, angels and man. He is omnipresent and omnipotent, but bestows man with free will to decide his actions. God is father of the Son, upon whom he bestows the power to judge man. Satan rebels against God, doubting his omnipotence and challenging his authority.

Satan: God's adversary. Once one of the highest-ranking Archangels in heaven (known as 'Lucifer' there), Satan's pride and rebellion cause him to be thrown down into hell, where he rules and establishes Pandemonium. He eventually destroys Paradise by assuming the shape of a serpent and tricking Eve into eating from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge. He is the father of Sin and Death.

Son: God's son and equal, who is given the power to judge man. He offers to become mortal to save man, but after crucifixion, he is resurrected. He is given the glory in quelling Satan's rebellion. He also confronts Adam and Eve after their transgression and, after clothing them, doles out their punishments.

Adam: The first human, created by God. The husband and 'ruler' of Eve, who was created from his rib. He is warned by Raphael not to transgress. He decides to join Eve in her mortality and against his better knowledge, follows her and eats the forbidden fruit. His punishment includes hard labor in the field and mortality.

Eve: The second human, created from Adam's rib. Adam's wife and often described both seductively and submissively. She is tricked by Satan into eating the forbidden fruit, and receives the punishment of becoming mortal and suffering pain in childbirth.

Raphael: The Archangel sent by God to warn Adam and Eve about Satan and remind them of their free will. He engages in a lengthy discussion of Satan's rebellion and the universe's creation at Adam's request.

Michael: Archangel who, with Gabriel, leads the forces of good against Satan and his followers during their rebellion in heaven. He is important for both jabbing Satan and moving mountains. Later, he comes to escort Adam and Eve from Paradise, and tells them of both good and bad events, which will come to pass.

Minor Characters

Muse/Urania: Invoked by Milton at certain points in the poem to give him the inspiration to carry on.

Beelzebub: A fallen angel, and Satan's biggest supporter. A big advocate of the plan to sabotage Paradise and mortal man.

Moloch: A fallen angel. He thinks that open war should be waged against God and heaven.



Belial: A fallen angel. He thinks that hell isn't that bad, and if God isn't angered, he might remit the punishment of the fallen angels anyway.

Mammon: A fallen angel. He argues that it doesn't make any sense to worship someone you hate, and thinks that the fallen angels should make the best out of hell.

Sin: Satan's daughter, who sprung out of his head. Satan impregnated her, and she gave birth to Death. With Death, she guards the gates of hell. She is half woman and half dogs.

Death: Son of Sin. He rapes her, begetting the dogs that eat her bowels. With Sin, he guards the gates of hell.

Chaos: Ruler of the abyss between hell and earth with his consort Night. He aids Satan in getting to earth.

Night: Chaos' consort. Rules the abyss with him, and aids Satan in getting to earth.

Uriel: Archangel of the sun. Uriel is fooled by Satan on his way to earth. Helps to later kick Satan out of Paradise.

Gabriel: Archangel and guard of the Paradise. He demands an explanation of Satan when he's found in Paradise.

Ithuriel: Archangel. With Zephon, he discovers Satan trying to whisper into Eve's ear in Paradise.

Zephon: Archangel. With Ithuriel, he discovers Satan trying to whisper into Eve's ear in Paradise.

Abdiel: Angel who originally goes to rebel with Satan, but stands up to him and chooses to remain faithful to God.

Objects/Places

Pandemonium: The palace of Satan, built in hell after he and his followers were thrown into the abyss.

Tree of Knowledge: The one tree in Paradise from which Adam and Eve must not eat, or else they will become mortal.

Paradise/Eden: The portion of the earth in which Adam and Eve live, where the climate is always perfect and humans and animals get along in perfect harmony.

Quotes

Quote 1: Satan tells Beelzebub that "the mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heav'n of hell, a hell of heav'n." Book 1, lines 254-5

Quote 2: Satan tries to make the best of the situation in hell, explaining "better to reign in hell, than serve in heav'n." Book 1, line 263

Quote 3: Mammon advocates living to themselves in hell, "free, and to none accountable, preferring hard liberty before the easy yoke of servile pomp." Book 2, lines 255-7

Quote 4: He advocates a new course of action: attack mortal man, who Beelzebub describes as "less in power and excellence (than themselves), but favored more" by God. Book 2, lines 349-50

Quote 5: Sin agrees to unlock the gates and let him pass, telling him "thou art my father, thou my author, thou my being gav'st me; whom should I obey but thee, whom follow?" Book 2, lines 864-5

Quote 6: God explains that he created man "sufficient to have stood, but free to fall." Book 3, line 99

Quote 7: God describes the time of the Last Judgement, when the world will burn and "God shall be all in all." Book 3, line 341

Quote 8: Uriel relates how, with God, "order from disorder sprung." Book 3, line 713

Quote 9: Satan, now back on earth, has a moment of doubt and despair in which he says that "the hell I suffer seems a heav'n." Book 4, line 78

Quote 10: He notices that they are "both not equal, as their sex not equal seemed." Book 4, lines 295-6

Quote 11: Satan explains that Adam's "eye sublime declared absolute rule." Book 4, lines 300-1

Quote 12: He hears Adam tell Eve that they must not eat of the Tree of Knowledge, calling it "the only sign of our obedience left," or else God will kill them. Book 4, line 428

Quote 13: Satan, having just learned that the Tree of Knowledge is forbidden to Adam and Eve, ponders "ignorance, is that their happy state,/ the proof of their obedience and their faith?" Book 4, lines 519-20

Quote 14: Soon, Adam decides that it's time to go to bed, and Eve obliges, stating "my author and disposer, what thou bidd'st unargued I obey." Book 4, lines 635-6



Quote 15: Before they fall asleep, Eve adds "God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise." Book 4, lines 637-8

Quote 16: Abdiel encounters Satan once again, this time telling him "I alone seemed in thy world erroneous to dissent from all: my sect thou seest, now learn too late how few sometimes may know, when thousands err." Book 6, lines 145-8

Quote 17: He tells Adam "warn thy weaker" (i.e., Eve), and "let it profit thee to have heard by terrible example the reward of disobedience" Book 6, line 909-11

Quote 18: Milton makes his third invocation, this time to Urania, asking the goddess what caused Adam and Eve to "transgress, and slight that sole command, so easily obeyed amid the choice of all tastes else to please their appetite." Book 7, lines 47-9

Quote 19: After the people in this new world spend enough time being obedient, heaven and earth will become "one kingdom, joy and union without end" Book 7, line 161

Quote 20: This divine figure calls himself the "author of all this thou seest above, or round thee or beneath." Book 8, lines 317-8

Quote 21: Adam has not received a true equal, however; he explains that Eve is "th' inferior, in the mind and inward faculties." Book 8, lines 541-2

Quote 22: Milton starts this book on a melancholy note, informing the reader that he must "change these notes to tragic; foul distrust, and breach disloyal on the part of man, revolt and disobedience." Book 9, lines 5-8

Quote 23: He explains "only in destroying I find ease to my restless thoughts." Book 9, lines 129-30

Quotes 24: Adam replies that God made them "not to irksome toil, but to delight." Book 9, line 242

Quotes 25: Adam says, "solitude sometimes is best society, and short retirement urges sweet return." Book 9, lines 249-50

Quote 26: He asks "Wherein lies th'offense, that man should thus attain to know?" Book 9, lines 725-6

Quote 27: Oblivious Eve is thrilled to have received knowledge, and wonders whether she should let Adam partake in it or not tell him and keep it to her advantage so to "render [herself] more equal." Book 9, line 825

Quote 28: The Son asks Adam if Eve was his God or superior, since his "perfection far excelled hers in all real dignity." Book 10, line 150-1

Quote 29: Secondly, woman is given pain in childbirth, and the Son explains "to thy husband's will thine shall submit, he over thee shall rule." Book 10, lines 195-6



Quote 30: Finally, man gets his punishment: he'll have to toil hard in the fields to get food "till thou return into the ground, for thou out of the ground wast taken: know thy birth, for dust thou art, and shalt to dust return." Book 10, lines 206-8

Quote 31: She says "these are thy magnific deeds, thy trophies, which thou view'st as not thine own, thou art their author and prime architect." Book 10, lines 354-6

Quote 32: He asks God "Why has thou added the sense of endless woes? Inexplicable thy justice seems." Book 10, lines 753-5

Quote 33: She says "both have sinned, but thou against God only, I against God and thee." Book 10, lines 930-1

Quote 34: Michael tells Adam, "you have seen one world begin and end and man as from a second stock proceed." Book 12, line 7

Quote 35: Michael says, "the law of God exact he shall fulfill/ both by obedience and by love." Book 12, lines 403-4

Quote 36: A teary Adam and Eve await their future: "the world was all before them, where to choose/ their place of rest, and Providence their guide:/ They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow,/ Through Eden took their solitary way." Book 12, lines 646-9



Topic Tracking: Authorship & Possession

Topic Tracking: Authorship & Possession

Book 1

Authorship & Possession 1: Satan tells Beelzebub that "the mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heav'n of hell, a hell of heav'n." Book 1, lines 254-5. Since the mind possesses itself, it can dictate its condition. This is the ideology underlying Satan's rationale that he doesn't have to obey God.

Book 2

Authorship & Possession 2: Sin agrees to unlock the gates and let Satan pass, telling him "thou art my father, thou my author, thou my being gav'st me; whom should I obey but thee, whom follow?" Book 2, lines 864-5. In giving birth to her, Satan is Sin's "author"/creator. This metaphor of author as parent figure or creator is echoed later in the poem.

Book 3

Authorship & Possession 3: God describes the time of the Last Judgment, when the world will burn and "God shall be all in all." Book 3, line 341. Unlike Satan's model of one possessing himself, God advocates a model in which he possesses all.

Book 4

Authorship & Possession 4: Soon, Adam decides that it's time to go to bed, and Eve obliges, stating "my author and disposer, what thou bidd'st unargued I obey." Book 4, lines 635-6. As Sin says that Satan is the author and creator of her, Eve does the same with Adam.

Book 5

Authorship & Possession 5: Abdiel argues that since God made them, they should respect him. Satan counters that yes, God made them, but not the Son - therefore the Son can be disrespected. Here, Satan argues that one who hasn't created him cannot possess him. Satan continues to assert that nothing but the self can possess itself.

Book 7

Authorship & Possession 6: After the people in this new world spend enough time being obedient, heaven and earth will become "one kingdom, joy and union without end." Book 7, line 161. In this way, God will finally possess both heaven and earth as one. His ideology of possessing all rather than the individual possessing itself, will prevail.



Authorship & Possession 7: Then man was formed to govern over all in the image of God, and then woman. Since man is "substituting" for God in this way, he may possess Eve. Eve cannot possess herself, or she would be following Satan's theory.

Book 8

Authorship & Possession 8: This divine figure calls himself the "author of all this thou seest above, or round thee or beneath." Book 8, lines 317-8. Since God has created these things, he is the author of them. This is a continuation of the author/creator metaphor.

Book 9

Authorship & Possession 9: The more Satan looks at Eve, the more jealous he becomes that she was not made for his pleasure, and he regains all his hate. Since Satan did not create Eve or have her created for him, he cannot possess her. This fuels his desire to possess her through her transgression.

Book 10

Authorship & Possession 10: Secondly, woman is given pain in childbirth, and the Son explains "to thy husband's will thine shall submit, he over thee shall rule." Book 10, lines 195-6. Again, man, created after God's image, will possess woman.

Authorship & Possession 11: Sin says "these are thy magnific deeds, thy trophies, which thou view'st as not thine own, thou art their author and prime architect." Book 10, lines 354-6. Sin explains that Satan, in causing deeds to happen, is their author. This reiterates a prior assertion of hers.

Book 12

Authorship & Possession 12: Adam is content with this knowledge, and Michael tells him to inquire no more but have faith, virtue, patience, temperance, and love - then he will possess an inner paradise happier than Paradise. If Adam chooses to follow God, he will possess happiness. If he attempted to acquire more knowledge, he would be following in Satan's path of striving for self-possession and transgress God's rule.

Topic Tracking: Misogyny

Book 4

Misogyny 1: Satan explains that Adam's "eye sublime declared absolute rule." Book 4, lines 300-1. In Satan's opinion, Adam rules Eve as a king rules one of his subjects.

Misogyny 2: Eve reminisces to Adam about the first day she encountered Adam and how she looked at him meekly and submissively and surrendered to him. Here, Eve is portrayed as weak and powerless against the stronger Adam.

Book 6

Misogyny 3: He tells Adam "warn thy weaker" (i.e., Eve), and "let it profit thee to have heard by terrible example the reward of disobedience." Book 6, line 909-11. Raphael explains that Eve is weaker than Adam, a thought previously expressed by Satan.

Book 9

Misogyny 4: With Adam's permission, Eve goes, assuring Adam that the proud foe would not stoop to seeking out the weaker of the two. Eve echoes Raphael by calling herself the weaker one. She has assumed the role that others have explained she must fulfill.

Misogyny 5: Satan tells himself how happy he is not to see Adam, since Adam is of a higher intellectual capacity than Eve. This is the first mention specifically of Eve being of a lesser intellectual capacity, and Satan is ready to take advantage of her because of it.

Misogyny 6: Oblivious, Eve is thrilled to have received knowledge, and wonders whether she should let Adam partake in it or not tell him and keep it to her advantage so to "render [herself] more equal." Book 9, line 825. Here, for one brief moment in the poem, Eve envisions a way for she and Adam to be equal. This is her first "transgression" from following others' notions that she should submit to Adam.

Misogyny 7: Adam closes by saying he who trusts women too much should be prepared to be accused if evil ensues. Adam clearly believes men can't trust women, and if they go ahead and trust them anyway, they should be ready to face the consequences.

Book 10

Misogyny 8: The Son asks Adam if Eve was his God or superior, since his "perfection far excelled hers in all real dignity." Book 10, line 150-1. The Son tells Adam he was foolish to believe Eve, since she is imperfect.

Misogyny 9: Adam calls Eve nature's defect and says that men will never find fit mates. This is Adam at the depths of his despair after sinning, and at his most misogynist moment.

Misogyny 10: Adam loses all his anger and forgives Eve for being more frail and infirm by nature of her sex. In Adam's ideology, Eve is excused since she was too weak to defend herself from the serpent. Interestingly, Eve's inferiority becomes both the reason she transgressed God's rule, and the reason she should be forgiven.



Topic Tracking: Obedience & Disobedience

Book 1

Obedience & Disobedience 1: Milton asks the muse to sing about man's first disobedience: when man ate from the Tree of Knowledge. Rather than ask the muse to sing of the fall of Adam and Eve, Milton interestingly stresses "disobedience."

Book 2

Obedience & Disobedience 2: Sin agrees to unlock the gates for Satan and let him pass, telling him "thou art my father, thou my author, thou my being gav'st me; whom should I obey but thee, whom follow?" Book 2, lines 864-5. Sin reasons that she must obey Satan since he is her creator.

Book 3

Obedience & Disobedience 3: God predicts that Adam will eat the fruit of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge, which is the only rule Adam could break. The tree of knowledge is established as the means by which Adam can obey or disobey.

Book 4

Obedience & Disobedience 4: Satan hears Adam tell Eve that they must not eat of the Tree of Knowledge, calling it "the only sign of our obedience left" Book 4, line 428, or else God will kill them. This is Adam's reiteration of God's statement.

Obedience & Disobedience 5: Satan, having just learned that the Tree of Knowledge is forbidden to Adam and Eve, ponders "ignorance, is that their happy state,/ the proof of their obedience and their faith?" Book 4, lines 519-20. Satan equates obedience to God to ignorance. Adam and Eve, by refusing to eat the fruit, remain ignorant.

Obedience & Disobedience 6: Soon, Adam decides that it's time to go to bed, and Eve obliges, stating "my author and disposer, what thou bidd'st unargued I obey." Book 4, lines 635-6. Eve reasons that she must obey Adam since she was created from him. This parallels Sin's prior statement to Satan.

Book 5

Obedience & Disobedience 7: Adam asks what God's cautioning of obedience meant. Raphael explains how obedience is related to free will: if Adam errs, it is his choice. Free will allows Adam and Eve to choose to be obedient or disobedient.



Obedience & Disobedience 8: Satan assembled about 1/3 of the angels against God and his Son, since they wanted as few people as possible to obey God. Satan reiterates his feelings that he should not have to obey anyone, especially God.

Book 6

Obedience & Disobedience 9: Raphael explains that Satan and his followers were at a disadvantage by rebelling against God. God's followers had an advantage because they were innocent, and chose to resist Satan's temptation to revolt. Again, the vehicle for salvation is choosing obedience to God, and the vehicle for damnation is choosing disobedience to His rule.

Obedience & Disobedience 10: He tells Adam "warn thy weaker" (i.e., Eve), and "let it profit thee to have heard by terrible example the reward of disobedience." Book 6, line 909-11. This is ironic: the "reward" for disobedience is the punishment Satan received.

Book 7

Obedience & Disobedience 11: Milton makes his third invocation, this time to Urania, asking the goddess what caused Adam and Eve to "transgress, and slight that sole command, so easily obeyed amid the choice of all tastes else to please their appetite." Book 7, lines 47-9. Here, Milton reiterates how easy it was to obey that one simple command of not eating the forbidden fruit.

Obedience & Disobedience 12: After the people in this new world spend enough time being obedient, heaven and earth will become "one kingdom, joy and union without end." Book 7, line 161. God is testing not only Adam and Eve, but every mortal. If, through exercising free will, man is found to be obedient, he will reap the rewards of following God's wishes.

Obedience & Disobedience 13: The sixth day sees the creation of cattle and creeping things: beasts, bees, and most interestingly, the serpent that was not harmful, but obedient. This is an important moment in the poem: the serpent was good when it obeyed. Now that it has been afflicted with Satan's disobedience, it has become bad.

Book 8

Obedience & Disobedience 14: Adam is given Paradise to "till and keep," but he must not eat from the Tree of Knowledge. This is his pledge of obedience and faith. The Tree of Knowledge is the means by which Adam and Eve can either obey or disobey God's rule.

Book 9

Obedience & Disobedience 15: Milton informs the reader that he must "change these notes to tragic; foul distrust, and breach disloyal on the part of man, revolt and disobedience." Book 9, lines 5-8. Man has stopped obeying, so now his story will become unfortunate.

Book 1

Milton begins his epic poem *Paradise Lost* with an invocation to a muse. He does this for two reasons: he believes the muse will help him write, and invoking a muse is a convention of epic poems such as Homer's *Iliad* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. He wants the muse to sing about man's first disobedience.

Topic Tracking: Obedience & Disobedience 1

Milton explains that his goal in the poem involves justifying the ways of God to men. He explains that God threw rebel angels out of heaven into hell, a scene which will be discussed in detail later on in the poem. The poem's action shifts to hell, where Satan and his confidante Beelzebub have just been thrown. Lying in a fiery lake, Satan and Beelzebub debate whether they should try to get revenge on God by force or guile. Beelzebub feels that God cannot be overcome, but Satan is confident that he can defeat God. Satan tells Beelzebub that "the mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heav'n of hell, a hell of heav'n." Book 1, lines 254-5

Topic Tracking: Authorship & Possession 1

Satan tries to make the best of the situation in hell, explaining "better to reign in hell, than serve in heav'n." Book 1, line 263. He tells a host of fallen angels to get up, and in an amusing scene they begin to dig into the ground, unearthing gold and other minerals. They build a temple known as Pandemonium, which will serve as the location of Satan's throne and a meeting place. This is an example of the ways in which Satan and his followers attempt to mimic the glory and splendor of heaven in hell.

Book 2

Satan is sitting on his throne in Pandemonium, arguing that heaven isn't lost and asking the question left unanswered from Book 1: Should God be attacked overtly through war or covertly through guile? Moloch, one of the fallen angels, insists that he wants to wage open war with heaven, since nothing is worse than hell. Next, Belial speaks, contending that if the fallen angels don't anger God, he might remit their punishment. Since God's eye sees all, he dissuades both open and concealed war, reasoning that their present lot in hell is bad, but not the worst it could be. Once Belial finishes, Mammon speaks, arguing that it doesn't make any sense to worship someone you hate. Mammon advocates living to themselves in hell, "free, and to none accountable, preferring hard liberty before the easy yoke of servile pomp." Book 2, lines 255-7. This seems like the most popular idea so far, until Beelzebub speaks. He believes that Mammon is wrong: God will still rule them in hell. He advocates a new course of action: attack mortal man, who Beelzebub describes as, "less in power and excellence (than themselves), but favored more" by God. Book 2, lines 349-50. Beelzebub explains that the best revenge would be seducing men to follow Satan. The only problem is deciding whom they should send. Satan offers to go, saying that if he doesn't he won't be living up to his position as ruler. In this way, Satan parallels scenes later in which the Son volunteers for tasks others find undesirable (such as redeeming fallen mortal man).

With that settled, Satan sets off for earth, not allowing anyone to accompany him on his journey. He flies toward the gates of hell, but finds them impenetrable, and the guardian tells him to go away. The guardian turns out to be Sin, Satan's forgotten daughter. Sin is a grotesque combination of human and animal; she's a woman from the waist up, and a pack of dogs from the waist down. Sin informs Satan that she sprung out of his head. Satan then impregnated Sin with a son, Death, who proceeded to rape his mother. The product of that union is the pack of dogs that gnaw on Sin's bowels.

Satan, apparently now recalling his child/wife (Sin) and grandchild (Death) tells them about his mission and offers them a happy place to live in the new world of earth once it's conquered. Sin agrees to unlock the gates and let him pass, telling him, "thou art my father, thou my author, thou my being gav'st me; whom should I obey but thee, whom follow?" Book 2, lines 864-5.

Topic Tracking: Authorship & Possession 2
Topic Tracking: Obedience & Disobedience 2

Satan, having made it past Sin and Death, flies out into the abyss. He encounters Chaos and his consort Night, rulers of the territory. Satan asks them to show him the way to earth, and they oblige.

Book 3

The focus shifts from Satan and his dastardly deeds to God and more holy endeavors. Milton makes a second invocation, this time to Holy Light, God himself. He also describes a new goal: to see and tell of things invisible to mortal sight. The reader learns that God and his Son have been looking down at all that has happened so far. God has seen Satan trying to destroy man, and predicts that man will fall easily due to his own volition. God explains that he created man "sufficient to have stood, but free to fall." Book 3, line 99. In other words, man has free will with which he can choose to do right or wrong. God predicts that Adam will eat the fruit of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge, even after Adam and Eve have pledged their obedience.

Topic Tracking: Obedience & Disobedience 3

The Son worries about God's prediction, but God assures him he will renew man's powers and that no one will be excluded from mercy. However, man and his all his children for generations will die, unless someone redeems him. No one in heaven volunteers until finally the Son comes forward, choosing to become mortal to save man, predicting his victorious resurrection (recall the scene in Book 2 in which Satan comes forward as the only volunteer to seduce mortal man to his side). In assuming this capacity, the Son receives the ability to judge both bad men and angels. God describes the time of the Last Judgment, when the world will burn and "God shall be all in all." Book 3, line 341.

Topic Tracking: Authorship & Possession 3

After showing the reader this window into the future, Milton returns to the action of Satan. Satan lands on earth, but is distracted when he sees the gate of heaven in the distance. He climbs up a few steps and looks out at the earth in jealousy. Then he is distracted again by the sun and flies over to it. He sees an angel standing on the sun and, knowing his plans will be destroyed if he is discovered, transforms himself into an innocent looking cherub and asks directions to Paradise. Satan recognizes the angel as Archangel Uriel. Satan's disguise deceives Uriel, who thinks the cherub only wants to know about the new world God has created. Uriel relates how, with God, "order from disorder sprung." Book 3, line 713. Finally, Uriel shows Satan the way to Paradise.

Book 4

Satan, now back on earth, has a moment of doubt and despair; he comments, "the hell I suffer seems a heav'n." Book 4, line 78. Meanwhile, he has let down his disguise and Uriel realizes that he has been tricked. Satan regains his courage, leaps over the wall of Eden, and sees a magnificent world. Milton describes all the varieties of trees there (finishing with the most important: the Tree of Knowledge) in a lengthy list, another convention of epic literature. Satan turns himself into a seabird and flies into the Tree of Life. Next to it is the Tree of Knowledge. Satan then notices two humans - Adam and Eve. He notices that they are "both not equal, as their sex not equal seemed." Book 4, lines 295-6. Satan explains that Adam's "eye sublime declared absolute rule." Book 4, lines 300-1.

Topic Tracking: Misogyny 1

Satan seems to melt at how harmless and innocent Adam and Eve are as he watches all sorts of animals frolic around them. He hears Adam tell Eve that they must not eat from the Tree of Knowledge, calling it "the only sign of our obedience left" Book 4, line 428, or else God will kill them.

Topic Tracking: Obedience & Disobedience 4

Adam tells Eve they should praise God and do work. Eve reminisces to Adam about the first day she encountered Adam and how she looked at him charmingly and submissively, and meekly surrendered to him. They kiss, and Satan becomes envious.

Topic Tracking: Misogyny 2

Satan, having just learned that the Tree of Knowledge is forbidden to Adam and Eve, ponders: "ignorance, is that their happy state, the proof of their obedience and their faith?" Book 4, lines 519-20. Having obtained knowledge of their weakness, Satan is ready to orchestrate their downfall.

Topic Tracking: Obedience & Disobedience 5

Meanwhile, Uriel warns Archangel Gabriel that he believes one of the fallen angels duped him and got into Eden. Gabriel pledges to keep a look out. Soon, Adam decides that it's time to go to bed, and Eve obliges, stating "my author and disposer, what thou bidd'st unargued I obey." Book 4, lines 635-6.

Topic Tracking: Authorship & Possession 4

Topic Tracking: Obedience & Disobedience 6

Before they fall asleep, Eve adds "God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise." Book 4, lines 637-8. Adam and Eve sleep, and Gabriel and some other Archangels search Paradise for Satan. Ithuriel and Zephon find Satan squatting as a toad at Eve's ear. The two bring Satan to Gabriel, who

demands an explanation from Satan as to why he's there. Satan lies to Gabriel, saying he is just trying to see how nice earth is. Gabriel thinks that Satan has come with others, but Satan assures him that he hasn't. The angels surround Satan with spears, but God intervenes, preventing the fight. Satan flees murmuring.

Book 5

Adam and Eve wake up from their slumber, and Eve tells Adam about a disturbing dream she had: what appeared to be an angel offered her fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, telling her she could be a goddess if she ate it. They flew up to the clouds, but then he disappeared. She sank down, and then awakened from her dream. Adam assures her it was just a dream, and they go off to work in the fields, not before saying a prayer for nature and animals to praise and be in awe of God.

Meanwhile, up in heaven, God tells Archangel Raphael to converse with Adam, warn him of Satan's intentions, and remind him of his free will. Raphael sets off for earth, and Adam spies him coming. Adam instructs Eve to prepare dinner and goes to greet Raphael. Adam asks Raphael about heaven, but Raphael tells him he is incapable of comprehending anything beyond earth. Adam then asks what God's cautioning of obedience meant. Raphael explains how obedience is related to free will: if Adam errs, it is his choice to do so.

Topic Tracking: Obedience & Disobedience 7

At Adam's request, Raphael describes events in the past. Back in peaceful times, God told everyone to obey his Son. Everyone did, except for Satan, who had too much pride. Satan assembled about 1/3 of the angels against God and his Son, since they wanted as few people as possible to obey God.

Topic Tracking: Obedience & Disobedience 8

God saw the rebellion uprising, and warned the Son to prepare, lest they lose heaven. Meanwhile, Satan told his followers that they are not equal if they are forced to serve someone. One angel in the entourage, Abdiel, dared to go against the trend and opposed Satan. Abdiel argued that since God made them, they should respect him. Satan countered that yes, God made them, but not the Son - therefore the Son can be disrespected.

Topic Tracking: Authorship & Possession 5

Book 6

Abdiel returned to God, who praised him for upholding the truth against Satan and his followers, and having words stronger than their arms. Archangels Michael and Gabriel were sent to lead the good angels in battle against Satan and his followers. The goal was to drive them out of heaven into what would be hell. But Satan's forces were prepared for the fight, since they had planned the night before to take God by surprise. Abdiel encountered Satan once again, this time telling him "I alone seemed in thy world erroneous to dissent from all: my sect thou seest, now learn too late how few sometimes may know, when thousands err." Book 6, lines 145-8. Satan argued back that sloth made Abdiel and others follow God, and that their freedom came with the price of servility. Abdiel replied that Satan is not free, but "entrall'd" to himself. He told Satan to reign in hell, while he serves in heaven. Then Abdiel struck Satan.

After Abdiel's initial blow, millions of angels on either side began to fight. Michael and Satan sword fight, and although Michael jabbed Satan, he healed rapidly since he is an angel and can't die. Meanwhile, Gabriel pierced Moloch and other angels fought. Raphael explains that Satan and his followers were at a disadvantage; they had disobeyed God and brought evil upon themselves. God's followers had an advantage; they were innocent, defending God, and refusing to sin and disobey His rule.

Topic Tracking: Obedience & Disobedience 9

Fighting ceased for the night, and Satan relished in the fact that he cannot be mortally wounded. He and his followers prepared a new weapon for the next day of fighting: cannons. These were successful the next day, until Michael and the good angels moved mountains to disrupt Satan's success. God had been watching all of this, and reasoned that since the angels were created equally, the war would go on forever unless intervened. So, on the 3rd day, God sent his Son, and told him that only he can have the glory of ending the war. With thousands of thunderbolts and chariots, the Son went to take on Satan's forces. Satan and his followers envied the Son's glory, and the Son started to throw 10,000 thunderbolts at them, but stopped halfway, since his purpose wasn't to destroy them, but banish them from heaven. Heaven opened wide and a spacious gap into an abyss appeared. Satan and his followers fell for 9 days into hell. Hell closed up, and heaven, free of Satan's burden, rejoiced.

Raphael, finished for the time being with his history lesson, informs Adam that Satan is trying to seduce him into disobeying God. He tells Adam "warn thy weaker" (Eve), and "let it profit thee to have heard by terrible example the reward of disobedience." Book 6, line 909-11. Raphael leaves, telling Adam to fear transgression.

Topic Tracking: Obedience & Disobedience 10

Topic Tracking: Misogyny 3

Book 7

Milton makes his third invocation, this time to Urania, asking the goddess what caused Adam and Eve to "transgress, and slight that sole command, so easily obeyed amid the choice of all tastes else to please their appetite." Book 7, lines 47-9.

Topic Tracking: Obedience & Disobedience 11

The action shifts back to Adam, who wants to know how the world of heaven and earth first began, with special attention to why Eden was created. Raphael replies that he will not deny Adam knowledge, although he might not do the story justice. Raphael explains that God decided to create another world after Satan and his followers went to hell. After the people in this new world spend enough time being obedient, heaven and earth will become "one kingdom, joy and union without end." Book 7, line 161.

Topic Tracking: Obedience & Disobedience 12

Topic Tracking: Authorship & Possession 6

Next, Raphael relates the story of creation, which does not deviate greatly from Genesis. On the first and second days, God created heaven, earth, light, day, and night. On the third day, dry land is created on earth; mountains emerge, seas are created, and grass and fruit-yielding trees appear. The fourth day features the creation of the sun, moon, and stars. On the fifth day, reptiles are generated in the waters and fowl in the air. The sixth day sees the creation of cattle and creeping things: beasts, bees, and most interestingly, the serpent that was not harmful, but obedient.

Topic Tracking: Obedience & Disobedience 13

Then man was formed to govern over all in the image of God, and then woman was formed from man.

Topic Tracking: Authorship & Possession 7

There is one rule for the man and woman: they mustn't eat from the Tree of Knowledge, or else they will die. This ends the sixth day, and God spends the seventh day resting while heaven rejoices. The angels sing that God used Satan's evil to create more good and another heaven in the newly created world.

Book 8

Enthralled at how much information Raphael is divulging, Adam asks Raphael sophisticated questions about the movement of planets in the universe. Eve leaves at this point in the conversation, to tend to fruits and vegetables. Raphael explains that God will not divulge his secrets, choosing rather to conceal them and perhaps be amused by people's guesses. Raphael does suggest, though, that planets orbit the sun. Still, Raphael insists that Adam must concern himself with earthly knowledge rather than heavenly knowledge.

Satisfied with Raphael's descriptions, Adam relates his own history. After waking up in a sweat, he stood up, looked heavenward, surveyed his body and surroundings, found himself able to speak and asked how he came there. Then Adam had a dream that someone ordained him "first father" of man, led him to a mountain, and let him survey all the fruit trees. This divine figure called himself the "author of all this thou seest above, or round thee or beneath." Book 8, lines 317-8.

Topic Tracking: Authorship & Possession 8

Adam is given Paradise to "till and keep" but he must not eat of the Tree of Knowledge; the divine being tells him it is his pledge of obedience and faith.

Topic Tracking: Obedience & Disobedience 14

Adam asks if he will have to be there in solitude, and God (the divine being) replies that there are lots of beasts to keep him company. But Adam insists that they are inferior, and he wants an equal. Finally, God complies. He makes Adam fall asleep, and uses one of his ribs to make a woman. Adam has not received a true equal, however; he explains that Eve is "th' inferior, in the mind and inward faculties." Book 8, lines 541-2. Still, he is happy. Raphael finally leaves Adam, reminding him that he has free will to repel any temptation to transgress. Adam thanks him and asks him to return to visit mankind often.

Book 9

Milton informs the reader that he must "change these notes to tragic; foul distrust, and breach disloyal on the part of man, revolt and disobedience." Book 9, lines 5-8.

Topic Tracking: Obedience & Disobedience 15

Milton asks Urania for help, and returns to present-time action. Satan returns to earth as a mist, and searches for a creature to inhabit. He chooses the serpent since it is the most subtle animal he can find. Satan explains that the more pleasures he sees, the more torment he feels. He doesn't want to live on earth or in heaven, though he wants to make others experience the same pain that ails him. He explains, "only in destroying I find ease to my restless thoughts," Book 9, lines 129-30, stressing that with his intensity of ambition he'll stop at nothing for revenge.

Meanwhile, Eve is suggesting to Adam that they split up when doing their daily work. That way, she argues, they could get more done. Adam replies that God made them "not to irksome toil, but to delight" Book 9, line 242, although he does concede that "solitude sometimes is best society, and short retirement urges sweet return." Book 9, lines 249-50. Still, he warns Eve that their foe wants nothing more than to see them apart, since he would be hopeless to outwit them together. Eve is surprised to see that Adam would doubt her "firmness" because of the foe, and, although Adam persists, Eve argues that they cannot go on dwelling happily if they are living in fear. Finally, Adam gives up and lets her go.

With Adam's reluctant permission, Eve goes, assuring Adam that their proud foe would not seek her first, since she is the weaker one and he'd be ashamed to go after the easy target.

Topic Tracking: Misogyny 4

Meanwhile, Satan is looking for them, hoping "beyond hope" to find Eve separated (clearly she had misjudged the "proud foe"). He gets his wish, and entranced by her beauty, grace, and innocence, is momentarily disarmed of his enmity, envy, hate, and need for revenge. But, the more he looks at her, the more jealous he becomes that she was not made for his pleasure, and he regains all his hate.

Topic Tracking: Authorship & Possession 9

He tells himself how happy he is not to see Adam, since he fears his greater intellect.

Topic Tracking: Misogyny 5

Satan now puts his plan into action. He begins licking the ground Eve is walking on, and tells her she is of "celestial beauty." Eve is shocked to hear a serpent speaking. Satan explains that all he had to do was eat an apple from a tree and it gave him the power to speak. Eve wants to know which tree this was since there are so many in Paradise, and

the serpent leads her to the Tree of Knowledge. Eve explains that it is forbidden to eat from that tree, punished by death. The serpent tells Eve to look at him: he hasn't died from eating from the tree, in fact, it has made him closer to perfection. He tells Eve knowledge of good and evil will make her life happier, and she will be like a goddess. He asks a question which seems logical to Eve: "Wherein lies th' offense, that man should thus attain to know?" Book 9, lines 725-6.

At these words, Eve is easily won over; if beasts can eat the fruit and not die, humans should be able to as well. Plus, she figures the beast is not deceiving her but doing her a favor. So, in a moment of great dread for the reader who knows what is to come, Eve eats from the tree. Immediately afterwards, the earth lets out a sigh to signify the loss, and the guilty serpent slinks back into the thicket. Oblivious, Eve is thrilled to have received knowledge, and wonders whether she should let Adam partake in it or keep it to herself, and use the advantage to "render [herself] more equal." Book 9, line 825.

Topic Tracking: Misogyny 6

Eve wonders if she really will die. If that happened, then Adam would get another woman, and live happily ever after with that woman and not Eve. So the decision is made: Eve resolves that Adam will share with her in prosperity or misfortune. Her conniving illustrates how much she has changed after being seduced by Satan.

Just then, Adam comes upon Eve by the tree. She relates her good fortune thanks to the serpent and implores Adam to eat from the tree. Horror runs through Adam's veins at the "fatal trespass," and he drops a garland he'd made for her. Adam wonders to himself how she could've been tricked, and ruined both of them. He thinks of how heartbroken he'd be with another woman. So, in an effort to not hurt Eve's feelings, he tells Eve that she was "bold" and "adventurous" to eat from the tree and that he doubts God will kill her. Then, with the help of Eve's charms, he agrees to eat from the tree (against his better knowledge). The earth groans again, and it begins to rain.

Lust consumes Adam, and they engage in lustful acts that night. The next morning, they feel shame in their nakedness. Adam tells Eve that they have lost their honor, innocence, faith, and purity. They sew leaves together to hide their genitals, and begin to cry. After crying, they begin to feel anger and hatred toward each other. Adam tells Eve that if she had listened to him, they'd still be happy now and not miserable (this shows how much Adam has changed since first encountering the fallen Eve and trying to make the best of the situation). Eve replies that the serpent could just as easily have found him first, and he wouldn't have known that he was being tricked. Then, she tells him he should've commanded her not to go. Adam is furious at her ungrateful response. He ate the fruit out of love for her, risking death and choosing her over immortal bliss. He insists that he warned her all he could, but couldn't use force upon her. Adam closes, saying he who trusts women must be prepared to be accused if evil ensues.

Topic Tracking: Misogyny 7

Book 10

God has seen the deed from heaven, but couldn't prevent it because of man's free will. Angelic guards ascend into heaven from Paradise, wondering how Satan had gotten by them. God tells them not to worry or feel bad; their "sincerest care" couldn't have prevented Satan from coming to earth. God explains that he won't inflict death immediately, and sends his Son to judge man with mercy and justice.

Adam and Eve hear the Son coming, and hide themselves in the trees. The Son calls them forth, and Adam explains how they feared him and hid. The Son asks why he is feared, when he used to be revered, and asks how they know they are naked. Adam explains succinctly that she gave him the forbidden fruit and he ate it. The Son asks Adam if Eve was his God or superior, since his "perfection far excelled hers in all real dignity." Book 10, line 150-1.

Topic Tracking: Misogyny 8

Eve tells the Son that the serpent tricked her and she ate the forbidden fruit. The Son, having heard both confessions, enacts a series of punishments: first, the serpent is doomed to a life of groveling along the ground. Second, woman is given pain in childbirth, and the Son explains "to thy husband's will thine shall submit, he over thee shall rule." Book 10, lines 195-6.

Topic Tracking: Authorship & Possession 10

Finally, man gets his punishment: he'll have to toil hard in the fields to get food "till thou return into the ground, for thou out of the ground wast taken: know thy birth, for dust thou art, and shalt to dust return." Book 10, lines 206-8. The Son proceeds to clothe their naked bodies with animal skins and their inner nakedness with righteousness.

Meanwhile, Sin and Death are at the gates of hell, which are wide open and pouring out flames. Sin asks Death why they are sitting there, when Satan has gotten them the happier world as promised. Sin decides to make an easy passage from hell to the new world, a "monument of merit" to Satan's accomplishment. She and Death are building the bridge when they see Satan in the guise of an angel. Milton explains that Satan had been witnessing what was going on in Paradise until he saw the Son coming and got scared and fled.

Sin knows just by looking at Satan that he prospered in his mission to earth. She says "these are thy magnific deeds, thy trophies, which thou view'st as not thine own, thou art their author and prime architect." Book 10, lines 354-6.

Topic Tracking: Authorship & Possession 11

Satan is happy, saying he's made one realm of hell and earth. He tells Sin and Death to live in and rule over earth while he goes to visit Pandemonium. Everyone there rushes

to greet him with joy. Satan pledges to lead them out of the "infernial pit" into the "spacious world" of earth, and recounts all that transpired in Paradise's downfall.

Expecting to hear applause, Satan instead hears a scornful hiss. Suddenly, he is transformed into a serpent. Then everyone else in hell turns into a serpent. To aggravate their cause, a fruit-laden tree like the one in Paradise springs up before them. They have an overwhelming temptation to eat the fruit, which turns out only to be bitter ashes. Feeling they are sufficiently tortured, God allows them to resume their original shape outside during certain periods.

Meanwhile, Sin and Death are on earth. God explains that the Son can seal up hell forever and renew heaven and earth. God changes the universe to give earth extreme heat and cold, winds, and storms. Sin and Death make the previously peaceful animals fight each other. Animals are also made to fear men now.

Adam bemoans his condition, saying that generations of men will always blame him. He asks God "Why has thou added the sense of endless woes? Inexplicable thy justice seems." Book 10, lines 753-5. Adam wonders why he is mocked with death and not killed. He pities future generations, wondering why his fault should condemn guiltless people. Eve tries to assuage Adam, but he calls her a false and hateful serpent. He then informs her that she is a nature's defect and because of her, future men will never find fit mates.

Topic Tracking: Misogyny 9

Eve breaks down crying at his feet and begs him not to forsake her. She says "both have sinned, but thou against God only, I against God and thee." Book 10, lines 930-1. She advocates peace between them and a mutual hatred of the serpent. All the blame should be on her, she contends. Adam loses all his anger and forgives her for being frail and infirm. In this way, the righteousness bestowed upon Adam has made him able to once again care about Eve and forgive what she has done.

Topic Tracking: Misogyny 10

Eve thinks that they should remain childless to disappoint Death, but Adam contends that they should have kids to punish the serpent for generations. They both beg God for mercy and pardon at this book's end.

Book 11

Adam and Eve's prayers fly up to heaven, and the Son calls their prayers "fruits" - an ironic metaphor after all that has transpired. He tells God that the redeemed should dwell with him in bliss, and God agrees, but says for now they can no longer dwell in Paradise. To that end, God commands Michael to drive Adam and Eve out of Paradise to the east side of the garden of Eden, and guard all passage to the Tree of Life.

Back on earth, Adam tells Eve that he thinks God will let them live. Eve is happy at this news, although she still feels at fault for everything. She tells Adam they should go work in the fields. Then, Michael appears, not as an angel but as a man in a purple military vest, holding a sword and spear. He tells them he's taking them away, and Eve laments. Adam fears this new place and leaving Eden, which he believes is his only consolation. Still, he knows he cannot change God's mind. He tells Michael he is sad that he won't be able to show his children the places he saw God, but Michael insists it doesn't matter since God is omnipresent.

While Eve sleeps, Michael instructs Adam to follow him to the top of a hill. From there, he can see much of the world. Michael shows him a scene of two men offering sacrifices. One kills the other by stabbing him with a stone in the midriff; Michael explains that these men are Cain and Abel, Adam and Eve's first sons. Horrified, Adam listens as Michael explains that man will die from both violence and diseases, and looks at people suffering from myriad maladies. After Adam weeps, Michael explains that all this can be avoided by temperance in eating and drinking. He also explains that people will lose their beauty and strength as they age.

After seeing this, Adam thinks he should die as quickly as possible, but Michael tells him to leave that to heaven to decide. Next, Adam sees what he thinks is a vision of amorous people partying away, but Michael informs him that they are atheists who will die. Then Michael sees a scene of violent battle and carnage, and Michael explains how violent men will be wrongly hailed as heroes. The scene changes to one of inappropriate excess, and only one man emerges who tells everyone to repent. They refuse, and this man, Noah, builds an ark to take animals in pairs and everyone else perishes in the flood. Adam sees the ark stop on top of a mountain. A raven and dove fly out, and the dove returns with an olive branch. Dry ground appears along with a rainbow. Adam rejoices for this man who was found to be perfect and just. Michael explains that after this, God made a covenant to never again destroy the earth by flood.

Book 12

Michael tells Adam, "you have seen one world begin and end and man as from a second stock proceed." Book 12, line 7. This second stock is Noah's progeny, who live in fear of God, but will lead mostly just and right lives working the land. But, generations later, one (Nimrod) will rise too proud as a tyrant. He tries to build the Tower of Babel up to heaven, and God punishes him for this boastful act by making man now speak all sorts of different languages so no one can understand each other. Adam criticizes this man, since God said man should rule over other beasts, not man. Michael says it's right to criticize him, but true liberty was lost in the fall, and God will not prevent tyranny. Some nations may even forsake God for idol worship. God chooses one of these idol worshippers, Abraham, to travel to Canaan, the Promised Land. His children eventually end up in Egypt enslaved by the pharaoh, and Moses leads them through the parted Red Sea on the way to Canaan.

Michael explains how much later the Israelites will become more and more sinful, until one of King David's descendants, Jesus, appears. Michael says "the law of God exact he shall fulfill both by obedience and by love." Book 12, lines 403-4. He will be crucified, but resurrected within 3 days and then ascend to heaven. Then Michael describes that Jesus will have a Second Coming to earth, and on Judgment Day will reward the good and punish the bad.

Adam is content with this knowledge, and Michael tells him to inquire no more but have faith, virtue, patience, temperance, and love - then he will possess an inner paradise happier than Paradise.

Topic Tracking: Authorship & Possession 12

Michael tells Adam to descend the hill and wake up Eve, who has had dreams that everything will turn out well. Michael leads them to the gate of Eden, and brandishes a blazing sword to bar the entrance. A teary Adam and Eve await their future: "the world was all before them, where to choose/ their place of rest, and Providence their guide:/ They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow,/ Through Eden took their solitary way." Book 12, lines 646-9.