



“Better to Reign in Hell than Serve in Heaven!”
Satan, Paradise Lost



Paradise Lost Study Guide

1. What Biblical allusion is the poem discussing?
2. Why does Milton start the poem with an invocation to the muse(s)?
3. What is the image of the dove hovering and making the void / chaos pregnant meant to convey?
4. In what way does Milton describe the taste of the forbidden tree?
5. What does the poet ask the Spirit to illumine?
6. What is the thesis/theme of the poem?
7. Satan’s defeat has invoked what response/attitude from him?
8. What can never dwell in the regions of sorrow?
9. What is eerie about the flames? What idea do you think Milton is attempting to convey by using this imagery?
10. What does Satan decide to do after he acknowledges that the field is lost?
11. What, apparently, is Satan’s greatest sin?
12. What force or power does Satan believe the Conqueror possesses?
13. What quality do the land and water in Hell share?



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14. What effects does all this fire have on the inhabitants?

15. What words indicate that Satan plans to “make the best of it?”

Application

1. Quote from Paradise Lost IV.73-75: *Me miserable! Which way shall I fly?
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell...*

This is used in the annotated Frankenstein to illustrate the monster’s words: “I, like the arch fiend, bore a hell within me;”

Interpret the meaning of the lines...

2. The annotated Frankenstein says: The Miltonic Adam’s accusation of God the Father, quoted on the title page, suggested the framework for the novel’s antagonisms:

*Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould Me man? Did I solicit thee
From darkness to promote me?*

(Adam)

Interpret how this applies to the novel’s framework.

3. Quote: “*The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.*” **Explain!**

4. “*Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven*” has been the motto of more than one human being! **Give an example and explain your reasoning.**