

# [Satan: for this. satan is marked villain because](https://assignbuster.com/satan-for-this-satan-is-marked-villain-because/)

Satan: Epic Hero or Villain? John Milton wrote one of the greatest epic poems of all time when he wroteParadise Lost in 1667. The book tells about mans creation and fall while detailingcharacters and the plot beyond what the Bible taught. One of these characters is Satan, which is one of the most argumented, controversial, and popular characters in the historyof literature. The reason for controversary is the unclarity of whether or not Satan is ahero or a villain.

He contains many qualities that distinguish him as a hero. On the otherhand he also has qualities which say he is a villain. Scholars have written over time tosupport each argument of hero or villain and have explained why Milton decided tocreate such a character. In Paradise Lost there are many times where we see Satan partaking in heroicacts. His bravery and heroism is shown when he encounters Sin and Death at the gates ofhell. Whence and what art thou, execrable Shape, That darst, though grim and terrible, advanceThy miscereated front athwart my wayTo yonder gates? Through them I meant to pass, That be assured, without leave asked of thee. Retire, or taste they folly, and learn by proof, Hell-born, not to contend with the Spirits of Heaven.(Milton 80)This shows us Satan not being scared to fight.

He looks Death right in the face and says that he doesnt get out of the way he will physically move him out of the way. By this readers are not impressed because it is only Satan, but a great heroic figure likeOdysseus would get praised for this. Satan is marked villain because of his reputation. But it is obvious that Satan is a hero for he contains so many heroic characteristicts. Another instance in the book in which Satan shows his heroism is when he is leading thecharge against Michael.

A regular soldier would stay in the back of the army or lingeraround in the middle of the pack. But not Satan, he is right there in the front of theswarm leading his men. He has no hesitations even though he knows that he has verylittle chance to win. He would never show his men fear and by this he leads the chargeand gives him men confidence. This is only something in which a hero would do. Thisis something in which Odysseus a great hero had done. Satan also shows that he was smart and knew what to do in a complicatedsituation.

This is shown when he is in battlle against the good angels, and Satan inventsthe cannon. We see the genius in Satan but he is still denied the title of hero. Any otherperson would be considered a hero for doing something great like this, but not Satan.

Butit is so hard not to see him as one for all the heroic things he did. In the book we see Satans heroic qualities when he talks to his devils givingthem passion and confidence. I should be much open for war, O Peers, As no behind in hate, if what was urgedMain reason to persuade immediate warDid not dissuade me most, and seem to castOminous conjecture on the whole success.

. Worth waiting, since our present lot appears For happy thought but ill, for ill not worst, I we procure not to ourselves more woe. (Milton 65-67)In this we see that Satan has great leadership qualities.

He has the greatleadership as many other heroes of literature. He talks to his men with great passion anddesire, this allows them to feel every word that he is saying. When he finally finishes, they are ready to attack heaven.

He has the attention of the devils so greatly that they feelhis words and want to live them out immediately. This great quality is shared again withOdysseus as he had the same great charisma when he rallied his troops before battle inthe underworld. Satans leadership is first seen when he stands up and takes control andleadership over all the devils. By this we see that Satan has the urge to lead and be incontrol of the situation. He would rather have it in his hands than someone elses. Yet heisnt given the credit he well deserves. Satan possesses another heroic quality and this is pride.

He shows great pridethroughout the story and it is most seen when he admits he misses Gods grace.... How dearly I adide that boast so vain, Under what torments inwardly I groan; While they adore me on the throne of Hell, With diadem and sceptre high advanced, The lower still I fall, only supremeIn misery-such joy ambition finds! But say I could repent, and could obtain.

..(Milton 117)In this we see that Satan admits that he misses God, yet he is still too proud to begfor forgiveness and to return to heaven.

He shows that he would rather rule in hell thento serve in heaven. This great pride is heroic but because he is Satan it is something thatis horrible. Satan is also a crafty and wise character. He is able to do whatever isnecessary to get the job done. We see this when he lures Eve into eating the forbiddenapple. Thou cast who arst sole wonder, much less armThy looks, the heaven of mildness, with disdain, Displeased that I approach thee thus, and gazeInsatiate, I thus single, nor have fearedThy awful brow, more awful thus retired. Dairest resemblance of they Maker fair, Thee all things living gaze on, all things thineBy gift, and thy celestial beauty adore,.

..(Milton 248)Satan showed his great charisma and inspiring behavior not only in good timesbut in bad times.

When the devils were losing to the good angels in heaven, Satan wasstill able to use his great ability and show that he hadnt been rattled. He was still tryingto give confidence to his soldiers and he gave a speech which inspired a great number ofthe devils. Such implements of mischief as shall dashto pieces and oerwhelm watever stands Adverse, that they shall fear we have disarmedThe Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt. Nor long shall be our labour, yet ere dawn Effect shall end our wish.

Meanwhile revive, Abandon fear; to strength and counsel joinedThink nothing hard, much less to be despaired.(Milton 183)This shows that even though they were being defeated greatly Satan was stilltrying to give confidence to his men and make them believe that they did in fact have agood chance of winning. Scholars have contributed their opinion in the role of Satan that he is a hero in thepoem. With the Prince of Hell Milton reverses the functions and correspndingly thecharacteristicts, stressing thoseappropriate to an epic antagonist and underplaying thoughincorporating those of an example of evil. (Kaston 58)Kaston is saying in the poem Milton totally reverses the beliefs which havealways been associated with Satan.

Everyone has alwasy portrayed Satan as evil and asthe villain of everything. But Milton has used him as a hero who was doing something inwhich everyone thought was evil. Satans actual attemp to defeat god was evil but all thequalities in which Satan showed us were not evil. All the leadership qualities and actsare showing us that he is in fact a hero. Another scholar which writes that Satan was in fact a hero was A. J.

A Waldorle. He wrote: Dryden thought the Devil was Miltons hero, and we must agree that he was, if we are thinking in terms of if he was a saint who foils the knightand drives him out of his stronghold.(Waldocle 1)Warldorle is saying that Satan is a hero in terms of someone who was a greatknight and was able to become a great leader. According to Tertivillain, the Devil was good until the day when he was jealousof Adams destiny, and it was jealousy that was his first sin.

(Coulange 10)In thisCoulange is saying that Satan was a hero until he was jealous of Adam. But it still showsthat he was a hero before this. Before this was the Satans great attempt to take over therealm of God and to be the ruler in heaven. As epic antangonist, the Prince is above all an impressive leader, as general of the armyof Hell and as director of the Stygian Council. Almost everything about him bespeaks asa great epic warrior; he gains additional stature by being the leader of an army whichalthogh recently defeated is presented as greater by far than any human force. (Koston58) Here we see that Koston is saying that Satan was a great epic warrior and leader byleading an army which was greater than any human force.

Even though he was defeatedSatan is a hero because of the great leader in which he was. The loss in the war isovershadowed by how great a leader Satan was. The obdurate pride and stedfast hate of the prnce characterize him far moreconvincingly than they do the archangel. His sense of heroic action, honor, and glorymixed with ferocity and anger filled revenge make him an Achilles magnified a hundredfold, so that as he steps from the stygian Council he not the archangel is the true epicantagonist in Heaven. (Lewis 121) This shows that Satan is the hero in the poem. He compares Satan to Achilles but ahundred times greater.

This is a great compliment to the heroism of Satan. Thegreatness of Satan is so great that it compared to a hundred times that of Achilles. Nowthat is some great company which tells us Satan belongs as the hero. Even though there is all this evidence of Satan being a hero there are still manypeople who feel that Satan was in fact the villain of Paradise Lost. Satan is said to bethe villain mainly because he goes against God and tries to overthrow the most powerfulbeing in the world. Satans own determination allows him to feel that he is greater thanGod and able to take over allows him to become the villain in peoples minds and thisgives him his bad reputation forever.

Maximilian Rudin, a scholar, writes, " The downfall of the Devil is, according to theChurch authority, attributed to self conceit." (Rudwin 6) This can not be consideredsomething that would go against the idea of Satan as a hero because pride is a trait ofevery hero so it can not be used against Satan. Father Louis Coulange is convinced thatthat Satan is a villain." The Devil of the Christian Church is an evil being" (Coulange A) Although this is true, it can not be considered in the case of Paradise Lost because this is a conventional viewof Satan and does not take into consideration all of Satan's actions in the poem. Coulangealso states that " Since his gall, the former prince of the heavenly spirits has used hispower only for evil.

" (Coulange 29) This is true depending on what angle you look at itfrom. It is true that Satan went to Eden with the intention of deceiving Eve and he did goto war with heaven. He is also considered the villain because of his first sin: jealously. Coulange writes " the Devil was good until the day when he was jealous of Adam'sdestiny, and it was jealousy that was his first sin." (Coulange 10) This can be considereda valid point but all humans have committed this sin and not all humans are consideredvillains so it is not really that strong of an argument. Reverend Jewett also has the notionthat Satan is a villain. The devil is the implacable enemy of the human race and especially of believers whomhe desires to devour.

(Jewett 84)Jewett feels that Satan is a villain because he is the enemy. He is the enemy to thehuman race and to everyone who is a believer in him. Satan is a villain because he lurespeople into believing him and the bad things in which he represents. Anyone who refuses to accept the tradition of the four canonical gospels and despisescompanions of the lord despises Christ himself, he even despises the father, and he is selfcondemnded, resisting and refusing his own salvation, as all the heretics do. (Forsyth348) This says that anyone who goes against God is a villain. This is what Satan hasdone and is why he is a villain no matter what other qualities he may have. The more Satan rejcts the order of things by asserting his own angelic natre, the more heaccomplishes his own unfulfillment the more the demons attempt to reasend, the morethey achiever their own self-damnation. (Jewett 20)This says that the more Satan rejected the order of things the more he became a villain.

The more and more he began to want things his way the more of a villainous character hebecame. Even the being of nature of Satan as originally crated was thus met asphysically considered good. But from self-determination and choice of opposition ontoGod, and the conservatoins of holiness in his nature morally considered has becomechanged. (Jewett 91) This states that Satan was originally good but from his own choiceand decision to go against God he then turned into the villain.

If he had not made thatdecision he would have been a good person but once he chose to go against the great Godhe had turned into the villain and will always be looked at as the villain. The Devil of the Christain Church is an evil being. But he has not always been such. His perversity is his own personal fault. He was good in the beginning and it was a sinwhich made him what he is now.

(Coulange A) Coulange is saying that the devil wasgood until his own mistakes made him into the villain he is. If it werent for his ownpersonal fault he would have stayed good and would never have been the villain. Hisoriginal sin is what has made him into the villain which he is in everyones mind. Theoriginal sin that he made has allowed him to be given such a stereotype for all this time. From the fact that the Devil sinned form the beginning and that pride is the begfginningof all sin it was inferred that the Devils sin was pride.

(Rudwin 91) Here is anotherexample in which Satans fault was his original sin and this is what lead him to belabeled the villain time and time again. There is nothing he could have done about itonce he let out his original sin, from there he just took off and never looked back and willbe considered villain in many peoples minds forever. Many people have mixed views of what Satan was in Paradise Lost. Even thoughthere were examples trying to prove him as a villain I feel that he was the hero of thebook. He had many courageous and brave scenes where only a hero could have donesome of the things he did. A regular person would not have been able to make an armyfeel that they can defeat God. Only a hero could do such a thing and only a hero wouldbe willing to lead the charge against the greatest power in the world.