

GROUP #4

TOPIC: The last temptation of Christ.

Prof. Helgerson ended his last lecture with the question, why does Satan keep coming back? He wants to find out who this Son of God is, and tries to provoke him to do or say something definitive. But does Satan end his quest satisfied? What can we make of the uncertainty of the poem?

KEY PASSAGE: Satan's last speech and last temptation. IV. 499-540 (p. 568-69)

Then hear, O Son of David, Virgin-born:
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt . . .

Therefore to know what more thou art then man,
Worth naming Son of God by voice from Heav'n,
Another method I must now begin.

QUESTIONS:

What do you make of the uncertainty of Satan's conclusion? What has Satan learned about the Son of God by this point? How and why does Satan justify his attempts to tempt the Son of God? Why does Satan think this final temptation will work, when all the others haven't? What is he trying to accomplish with it? How do you think Satan's uncertainty about who the Son of God is affects our reading of the poem as a whole?

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Suggestions on "team teaching": presenting your discussion to the class

- be clear about what issue you're discussing - first lay out the issues involved, explain what question you're getting at
- refer to textual evidence that encapsulates or illustrates the heart of the issue (i.e. read the passage involved)
- would this passage be a good "exam passage"?
 - show how the passage illustrates the points your group has made (i.e. close read the passage to point out what elements you would write on)
 - think about how the issue and the passage relate to the text as a whole