

Chapter 11: Sin

At this point our study will become more focused on specific chapters and verses to explain the most important teachings we need to understand. Whilst these verses will be provided in these chapters I strongly encourage you to read further during your own study, to ensure you gain a complete understanding of the following teachings.

Faithlessness

Sin is an act, thought, or behaviour that defies the teachings and instruction of God. It is a direct disobedience of the laws, which He gave. Our lack of faith in God's fulfilment of His promises in our lives is the main cause and root of sin. Also our faithlessness extends beyond our disbelief in the fulfilment of God's promises, and extends to our disbelief in the promise of judgement for the sins that we commit. Faithlessness affects our behaviour and influences our choices. If we believe that God will not help, accept, teach, and guide us then we begin to disregard His teachings and search for our own solutions and ideas. At this point we have rejected God's morality and constructed our own because we have not believed Him. Therefore if we being the created disregard the teachings of the Creator we have caused ourselves to commit sinful acts because we have not trusted God's teaching or believed in His promised blessings and punishments.

Faithlessness also leads to fear. Once we allow a circumstance in our lives to cause us to experience fear we lose the ability to trust God and turn away from His commandments and promises. In order to understand this further read Numbers 13-14. Notice how once the people had reasoned with themselves that they were unable to take the land which God had promised them because of the might and power of its inhabitants, they became fearful. This caused them to reject Gods promise that He would deliver them into this land. A promise, which was given to all the descendents of Abraham. Even after God had worked miracles in their sight to free them from the slavery of Egypt they still did not believe and turned away. Notice how God responded to their faithlessness:

20 Then the LORD said: "I have pardoned, according to your word;

21 "but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD--

22 "because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice,

23 "they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it.

24 "But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.

25 "Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valley; tomorrow turn and move out into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea."

26 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,

27 "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints, which the children of Israel make against Me.

28 "Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you:

29 'The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above.

30 'Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in.

31 'But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised.

32 'But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness.

33 'And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness.

34 'According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection.

35 'I the LORD have spoken this; I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.'"

Numbers 14:20-35 (NKJV)

God despises faithlessness. When we disbelieve His word we become powerless to act in it. Imagine how we as individuals would feel if every time we provided help and advice to friends or family if we were constantly doubted. Imagine how we would feel if our intentions were not trusted by those who are close to us. God made a special place for the people of Israel, and throughout His miracles the people saw the impossibility of their circumstances and did not have faith to trust that the Creator of the Universe would overcome these difficulties. God reacted by taking away their promise of the land and gave it to those who trusted Him. This relates back to Exodus 19:1-6 as only by obeying God's instruction, and living within the terms of His agreement, can the people enter into the promise of their reward. Notice how God considers their disbelief in His promises. These people are considered as those who despise His promised land and complain against Him. Therefore we can conclude from this that faithlessness is a quality that God greatly despises.

When we consider the events that are detailed in Exodus we can conclude that faithlessness causes us to not only doubt God's promises, but also His very existence, and ability to intervene in what we may perceive as impossible and difficult circumstances. Even Moses doubted God's ability to control and rebuke His people, which he demonstrated to God by smashing the tablets containing the commandments. This root of faithlessness can be traced back as far as Adam and Eve in Eden when their faithlessness caused them to doubt the command of God, who told them not to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They chose to listen to the deception of the serpent rather than the direct command of the Creator and as a result God administered a very real punishment to mankind, which still affects us today. Now that we have the knowledge of good and evil we are forced to make direct choices to either commit good or evil acts, and as a result of this we are exposed to the punishment for our evil deeds, as God administers it to us, because our disobedience carries consequences.

It seems apparent that it is within our nature to doubt what we cannot see. No person has directly seen God at any time. However He has intervened in our history by revealing Himself and His will through those He has chosen to educate us and perform His will, but just as Adam and Eve in the garden chose to ignore God's command and listened to the serpent rather than the voice of God, we also choose to ignore the command of God, which is given to us through His word, and recorded throughout history, simply because we doubt what we cannot see, and choose to follow only what we can completely perceive to be real. Whether this is our feelings, our peers or teachers we choose to follow them rather than the wisdom of the Creator God. Our greatest flaw is our doubt of God's promises and instruction.

We have learned that faithlessness causes us to disobey hence we commit sin. Therefore in order to remove this from our lives it is important to have faith in the word of God. We must trust that His teachings are real and relevant to our lives. We must have faith that He exists and created all things, as we cannot have complete proof of His existence in the manner that would satisfy the philosophy of science to which we have all subscribed. Therefore we must live by faith. Allowing God's will to be fulfilled without question, to lay down our doubts, completely trust Him and assimilate His will into our circumstances without relying on logical proof of His existence, but rather having pure faith that He exists and cares for us whilst being hopeful and attentive to His will.

The Penalty of Sin

As we have discovered sin is an act, thought, or behaviour that defies the teachings and instruction of God. Therefore if God has set His laws for us to obey we can assume that there will be punishments and penalties for disobeying them. However rather than assuming this to be true we shall look at what is recorded in the Bible relating to His punishments for sin. Consider the following verses and read the verses before and after them to further clarify your understanding:

And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.

Exodus 32:33 (NKJV)

Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it.

Isaiah 13:9 (NKJV)

2 I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in a way that is not good, According to their own thoughts;

3 A people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face; Who sacrifice in gardens, And burn incense on altars of brick;

4 Who sit among the graves, And spend the night in the tombs; Who eat swine's flesh, And the broth of abominable things is in their vessels;

5 Who say, 'Keep to yourself, Do not come near me, For I am holier than you!' These are smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day.

6 "Behold, it is written before Me: I will not keep silence, but will repay - Even repay into their bosom -

7 Your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together," Says the LORD, "Who have burned incense on the mountains And blasphemed Me on the hills; Therefore I will measure their former work into their bosom."

Isaiah 65:2-7 (NKJV)

23 And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD.

24 "And they shall go forth and look Upon the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, And their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

Isaiah 66:23-24 (NKJV)

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

James 1:13-15 (NKJV)

8 If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," you do well;

9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

James 2:8-11 (NKJV)

"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Matthew 10:28 (NKJV)

1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

7 "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

8 "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Revelation 21:1-8 (NKJV)

If we are to summarise all of the lessons that we have learned from these verses we can understand that God will administer three punishments for our sins:

- We could be discounted from Gods promises - Exodus 32:33
- God could administer a relevant punishment to us, which will directly affect our lives on this earth - Isaiah 13:9, Isaiah 65:2-7
- God could administer an eternal punishment after we have physically died - Matthew 10:28, Revelation 21:1-8

To be guilty of breaking one of Gods laws is similar to being convicted in a court. If you transgress the law you are guilty and will receive the appropriate punishment. However the main difference between our court system and God's judgement can be understood by reading James 2:8-11. In these verses we discover that if we break even one law we are charged as guilty of breaking all of them. Therefore all sin carries equal weighting and punishment according to God's judgement, regardless of our own moral standards and reasoning. We can also understand that this three-fold punishment ultimately has eternal consequences for each one of us.

If we are to consider our eternal future, and our existence after we have physically died then we must consider the grave consequences for our sins. Scripture reminds us that after our physical death there is eternal life and makes several references to eternal punishment. Please consider the following verses carefully:

5 The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked, The scepter of the rulers;

6 He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, He who ruled the nations in anger, Is persecuted and no one hinders.

7 The whole earth is at rest and quiet; They break forth into singing.

8 Indeed the cypress trees rejoice over you, And the cedars of Lebanon, Saying, 'Since you were cut down, No woodsman has come up against us.'

9 "Hell from beneath is excited about you, To meet you at your coming; It stirs up the dead for you, All the chief ones of the earth; It has raised up from their thrones All the kings of the nations.

10 They all shall speak and say to you: 'Have you also become as weak as we? Have you become like us?'

11 Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, And the sound of your stringed instruments; The maggot is spread under you, And worms cover you.'

12 "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!

13 For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'

15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.

Isaiah 14:5-15 (NKJV)

1 "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.

2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Daniel 12:1-2 (NKJV)

13 If I wait for the grave as my house, If I make my bed in the darkness,

14 If I say to corruption, 'You are my father,' And to the worm, 'You are my mother and my sister,'

15 Where then is my hope? As for my hope, who can see it?

16 Will they go down to the gates of Sheol? Shall we have rest together in the dust?"

Job 17:13-16 (NKJV)

1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time **their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.**

4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;

5 and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;

6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly;

7 and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked

8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) --

9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,

2Peter 2:9 (NKJV)

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:11-15 (NKJV)

Notice how these passages describe Hell as a place beneath. Perhaps somewhere underground or lower than the earth, perhaps a spiritual place, which is far away from God where punishment is administered for sin by existing there. The place of eternal judgement is mentioned using specific names including: Hell, Sheol, Pit, and Hades. From reading these verses we can understand that Hell is a horrific place, and the prospect of spending an eternity there under judgement and punishment for sin is frightening.

It is important to remember what we learned in the beginning of our study. The Bible is a collection of many different books that have been written in both Hebrew and Greek originally. Sometimes it is necessary to understand how these words are translated in order to gain a more appropriate understanding of the scriptures. Therefore let us study the exact definitions for the words describing the eternal judgement.

To discover the exact translation of a biblical word without learning Hebrew and Greek we have two books that can aid our study. An Interlinear Bible, which demonstrates the exact Hebrew/Greek to English translation word by word, and The Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. The Interlinear Bible provides numbers for each word that can be referenced to the Strong's Concordance to find the exact definition. (The Interlinear Bible is published by Sovereign Grace Publishers ISBN: 1-878442-82-1 and The New Strong's Concordance of the Bible is published by Thomas Nelson ISBN 0-8407-6750-1) Using these books I will provide you with exact definitions for our consideration:

Sheol – 7585 (Hebrew) – Hades or the world of the dead (as if a subterranean retreat)

Pit – 953 (Hebrew) – a pit hole (espec. one used as a cistern or a prison) – cistern, dungeon, fountain, pit, well

Hell – 5020 (Greek) – to incarcerate in eternal torment

Hades – 86 (Greek) – place (state) of departed souls :- grave, hell.

The severity of God's judgement can now be clearly understood by us. The eternal punishment for sin is two-fold. Firstly there is a state of judgement. A world of the dead similar to a pit or hole where the souls of men and women are incarcerated in a state of torment. Then if we consider Revelation

20:11-15 this state (and those who exist there) is also cast into the lake of fire which implies perpetual burning and torment.

Therefore if we are sinners how do we challenge ourselves, now that we have considered the consequences and punishment for sin? Consider the following:

10 For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit.

11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it.

12 For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."

1Peter 3:10-12 (NKJV)

The Nature of Sin

Since the time that Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil mankind has been aware of the inherent choices between performing a good or evil act. We became aware of sin when we ate the fruit and when we were given the choice by God to either obey or disobey His commandments. Therefore it is important for us to understand the nature of this choice and ask ourselves why we choose to perform an act or disobey a commandment when we understand the consequences for disobedience? Fortunately scripture also provides insight into this dilemma. Consider the following verses from the Book of James.

12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

James 1:12-15 (NKJV)

The words of James inform us that it is our own desires that cause us to disobey God's commandments and sin. Therefore we can understand that disobedience is relational to our own selfishness. If we consider just two of The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) "*You shall not commit adultery*", and "*You shall not steal*" we can perceive that all of our direct acts of disobedience of these commandments are caused by selfish motivation. Is it not our selfish desire for another persons wife or husband, and our selfish desire to take someone else's property for ourselves either for personal ownership, financial gain, or the desire to inflict suffering upon another person, which causes us to be tempted by sin? Certainly we can relate this to our own experiences and acknowledge that this is true. Therefore as James suggested it is our responsibility to endure the temptation and to choose to obey rather than to sin.

James explains the mechanism of sin in verses 14-15. We become tempted to disobey a specific law, and then the temptation grows as our selfish desire to commit this act of disobedience because

of the promise of personal gain begins to affect our reasoning and judgement. Finally we commit the sin once our desire has grown strong enough to cause us to disregard the consequences of disobedience. It is at this point that we choose to disobey and to make our desire more important, effectively placing our will above God's will.

Our disobedient acts also relate directly to faithlessness, as it is our lack of faith that God will administer punishment, coupled with our selfish motivations, which causes us to sin and become rebellious to God's will.

Sin ultimately leads to eternal punishment, which James refers to as "death". Reconsider the first occurrence of sin that is documented in Genesis 3. Once the serpent had convinced Eve that she would not die when she ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he gave her reason to fulfill the desire to taste of the fruit by introducing faithlessness. The serpent caused doubt to enter into Eve's mind and caused her to believe that God would not punish them. Therefore if we understand that sin brings forth death why did they not die once they tasted the fruit? The answer can be found in the same chapter:

22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" --

23 therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.

24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Genesis 3:22-24 (NKJV)

It is apparent to us that mankind could have received immortality if Adam and Eve had not eaten the fruit which was forbidden by God. Therefore sin has ultimately brought forth death in a very real, perceivable, and physical manner as banishment from the Garden of Eden denied mankind the opportunity to live forever and death is our punishment for this act of disobedience. However it is the second death that is mentioned in Revelation, which should be our primary concern as this is a state of eternal punishment. Sin and death are partners, corrupting our lives, thoughts, and souls and striving to banish us to an eternity of torment and punishment.

If we are to examine ourselves against the commandments of God how many of us can truthfully believe that we have not committed any sins in our lifetime? Even disbelief in the existence of God does not excuse us from our crimes against His will. Consider the commandment given by Moses to the people of Israel from God in the following verse:

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

Deuteronomy 6:5 (NKJV)

Therefore if we have been non-believers it is impossible for us to have fulfilled this commandment because we have not loved God at all if we have not believed in Him. Even for those who have

always believed can they truthfully say that they have loved God with all their heart, soul and strength when so many aspects of life distract us from considering Him? Regardless of any other commandments if we consider this one alone we can understand that every human being has sinned. Consider the following verses:

But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

Isaiah 64:6 (NKJV)

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1John 1:8 (NKJV)

For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 (NKJV)

Knowing therefore that we are sinners, and that every person has broken God's commandments within their lifetime (as the Bible teaches us) how should we respond to this? Consider the following:

1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD."

2 Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

3 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD.

4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering,

5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

6 So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"

7 "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

Genesis 4:1-7 (NKJV)

This passage we have studied previously clearly highlights God's desire for us to control our sinful nature. When Cain became angry because his offering was not accepted God already knew that he was about to commit sin. Therefore He instructed Cain to "*rule over*" his sin. Notice also that God told him that, "*sins desire is for you*". This reveals to us another aspect of sins nature as it has a desire to influence us to break God's commandments. Notice how sin is referred to as having a desire. This suggests that there is intelligence driving its nature. That it wishes for us to commit acts against God's will. We can clearly understand that it is our responsibility to resist the desire of sin and control our urges to break God's commandments. Therefore we must attempt to initiate a change in our lives and develop a new attitude to minimise the impact of our temptations and to control our selfish desires, which would cause us to stumble.

The Influence of Satan

Satan (The devil) is one of the most recognised names in the Bible. Some people would consider him to be the being that administers eternal punishment for sin. Popular culture often portrays Satan as dwelling in Hell and being responsible for torturing disobedient souls. However as we have discovered our perceptions of the truth are not always accurate. Therefore we shall demystify him by examining the evidence contained within the scriptures. Consider the following passages:

31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free'?"

34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

35 "And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.

36 "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

37 "I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

38 "I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."

39 They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.

40 "But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this.

41 "You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father--God."

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.

43 "Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.

44 "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

John 8:31-44 (NKJV)

In verse 44 Jesus makes direct reference to Satan. He describes him as a murderer, someone who does not stand in truth and the father of lies. This is a great condemnation by Jesus. In order to fully understand the meaning of these words we must unlock a coded secret within the scriptures. There are several references to Satan in the Bible; if we consider these carefully it is possible for us to completely understand his identity, origin, and agenda. In order to understand Jesus' statement that the devil "was a murderer from the beginning" consider the following passage:

7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,
8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.
9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Revelation 12:7-9 (NJKV)

Notice how in verse nine the devil is referred to as the "serpent of old". Does this sound familiar to us? Let us re-read the account of the fall of man in Genesis to understand this further:

1 Now **the serpent** was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, `You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"
2 And the woman said to **the serpent**, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;
3 "but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, `You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"
4 Then **the serpent** said to the woman, "You will not surely die.
5 "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.
7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.
8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.
9 Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"
10 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."
11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"
12 Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."
13 And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "**The serpent** deceived me, and I ate."
14 So the LORD God said to **the serpent**: "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life.
15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

Genesis 3:1-15 (NKJV)

Revelation 12:7-9 provides us with the identity of the serpent described in Genesis 3. Therefore we can fully understand that Jesus identified the devil in John 8:44 as the one who deceived Adam and

Eve and convinced them to eat the forbidden fruit by lying to Eve and causing her to believe that God would not cause them to die, which in turn caused the fall of man and our exposure to sin and death. Therefore it is clear to us that Satan is the originator of temptation and lies. This is further clarified by examining the meaning of his name. Using the same method for determining the meaning of Sheol, pit, hell and Hades we can discover that the meaning of the word Satan is "the accuser" (Strong's 4567 – Greek). Therefore his primary purpose is to deceive mankind into sinning using deceptive methods and then make accusations against us to God.

The book of Job in the Old Testament describes the tactics of temptation, accusation, and adversity that Satan uses to convince us to sin. Read Job 1-2 then consider the following passage:

8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

9 So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing?"

10 "Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

11 "But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

12 And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Job 1:8-12 (NKJV)

Satan tried to convince God that Job was unworthy of His admiration. We can clearly perceive that the devils tactics are two-fold. To deceive mankind into performing sinful acts and to attempt to persuade God that we are unworthy of His affection. Since the fall of man Satan was banished to the earth as mentioned in Genesis 3. The Book of Job clearly illustrates that since this time the devil has walked amongst us causing enmity between God and mankind.

The work of Satan directly relates to our previous discussion, that there is an apparent intelligence behind the nature of sin. As God revealed in Genesis 4 to Cain, sin has a desire for us. Now that we understand the identity and agenda of Satan we can understand that he is the intellect behind the nature of sin. The one who is seeking to cause us to break God's commandments and enter condemnation and eternal punishment. For further study read the entire Book of Job to understand how he was tested and how God rewarded his faithfulness.

It is most important to realise that God is the creator of all things. Therefore because of this fact we can deduce that God is also the creator of Satan. As curious as this sounds, that God would create an adversary who fights against us, we must remember that all of us have been created with intelligence and free will to choose to follow the paths of good or evil. Therefore there must be a motive behind Satan's actions and choice. The scriptures do contain some hints as to the nature of this motive. Consider the passage that we previously studied when considering eternal punishment:

5 The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked, The scepter of the rulers;

6 He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, He who ruled the nations in anger, Is persecuted and no one hinders.

7 *The whole earth is at rest and quiet; They break forth into singing.*
8 *Indeed the cypress trees rejoice over you, And the cedars of Lebanon, Saying, 'Since you were cut down, No woodsman has come up against us.'*
9 *"Hell from beneath is excited about you, To meet you at your coming; It stirs up the dead for you, All the chief ones of the earth; It has raised up from their thrones All the kings of the nations.*
10 *They all shall speak and say to you: 'Have you also become as weak as we? Have you become like us?*
11 *Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, And the sound of your stringed instruments; The maggot is spread under you, And worms cover you.'*
12 *"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!*
13 *For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;*
14 *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'*
15 *Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.*

Isaiah 14:5-15 (NKJV)

Notice the name used here is Lucifer. This is another name for Satan. The meaning of which is morning star (Strong's 1966 – Hebrew). Revelation 12:7-9 describes Satan as being cast out of heaven and all the angels who followed him were also banished with him to the earth. Now read Revelation chapter 12 in its entirety. Consider verses 3-4 and 9:

3 *And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.*
4 *His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.*

Revelation 12:3-4 (NKJV)

9 *So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

Revelation 12:9 (NKJV)

We can see that there is a direct link between the term dragon and Satan. We can also notice that there is a relation to the terms angel and star as the tail of the dragon threw a third of the stars of heaven to earth and verse nine describes the devil being cast to earth with his angels. Therefore the name Lucifer that is used in Isaiah 14, which is defined as morning star, is indirectly describing Satan as being an angel. Therefore we can reason that Satan is an angel who rebelled against God's will. Further proof of this can be found in Paul's Second letter to the Corinthians:

13 *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.*

*14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.
15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*

2Corinthians 11:13-15 (NKJV)

Paul makes direct reference to Satan as an angel and his ability to approach God with the other angels as described in Job 1. Therefore we now understand that Satan is a rebellious angel. The actual details of his rebellion are recorded in Isaiah, which we studied previously:

*12 "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!
13 For you have said in your heart: `I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;
14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'*

Isaiah 14:12-14 (NKJV)

Isaiah informs us that it was Satan's acts of weakening the nations and his desire to take the place of God, which is his prime source of motivation for becoming rebellious and deceiving mankind. Therefore if we relate this information to the nature of sin we can understand that when we commit sin the nature of the rebellion is the same as Satan's as we are placing our will above God's will and complying with the devils desire for us. If we do commit sin we should be aware of the devils ultimate fate and resist temptation to ensure that we do not endure the same fate.

*10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.
11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.
12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.
13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.
14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.
15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

Revelation 20:10-15 (NKJV)