



[John 8:44](#)

(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.

New King James Version

[Jesus](#) identifies [Satan](#) as the spiritual father of those Jews who opposed Him, implying that they had learned how to murder and lie because the Devil was their spiritual father. They were displaying his characteristics, just as children naturally adopt the traits of their parents. Yet was Satan actually responsible for their sins? Notice what the pre-incarnate Christ says earlier through Ezekiel:

Yet you say, “Why should the son not bear the guilt of the father?” Because the son has done what is lawful and right, and has kept all My statutes and observed them, he shall surely live. The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. ([Ezekiel 18:19-20](#))

[God](#) holds the father accountable for his sins, and the children responsible for their sins. The sinning soul bears its own guilt and penalty—death ([Romans 6:23](#)). Ezekiel 18 completely nullifies the justification that a child can blame his parents for his faults. Even though parents exert tremendous influence, God's view of parent-child relationships does not allow this shifting of blame.

Following this through, God will not accept this justification with regard to an individual blaming his *spiritual* father, Satan, even though he also wields considerable influence. According to the repeated principle in Ezekiel 18, Satan cannot bear the guilt of sins committed by a human. He bears the guilt for his own sins, which include deception, but Satan *cannot* make us [sin](#).

In verses 14-17, God even gives the scenario of a son recognizing the sinfulness of his father and choosing to go a different way. The Jews who opposed Christ in John 8 should have done exactly that—realized that the murder and lies in their hearts did not originate with God, then chosen to act differently from their spiritual father.

In [Genesis 3:17](#), God identifies the trigger of Adam's sin as heeding the voice of his wife. In the same way, our sin may also begin with heeding the voice of another (Satan), but he is not the author of our sin, any more than Eve was the author of Adam's sin. Though Adam and Eve played the blame game, God did not accept their excuses. If we hold to the justification that Satan is the real cause of our sins, we are trying to dodge reality, just as they did.

The apostle Paul declares in [Romans 5:12](#) that sin entered [the world](#) through one man, Adam. Notice that God does not put the origin of human sin on Satan, but on Adam, even though Satan sinned long before and overtly lied to Eve ([Genesis 3:4](#)). This is how God reckons human sin—as difficult as it may be to accept. The overall point in Romans 5 is that, even though the first man introduced sin to mankind, it is through the Son of Man that humanity will be justified and made righteous. Put simply, humanity has made the choice to sin, and Christ *alone* provides atonement upon [repentance](#) ([Acts 4:12](#); [Matthew 1:21](#); [I Timothy 2:5-6](#)).

A few chapters later, in Romans 7, we find Paul's anguish over his struggle with sin. His conclusion is not that Satan is the real cause—the Devil gets only one mention in Romans, where the apostle writes that the God of [peace](#) will crush him ([Romans 16:20](#)). Instead, Paul concludes that *he* had indwelling sin. Rather than point the finger at Satan, he mournfully recognizes his sinful state and declares his [faith](#) in Christ's work and deliverance (verse 25).

Paul's conclusion suggests that, in addition to Satan being completely unworthy of being represented by a substitutionary sacrifice, it is also wholly incongruous to suggest that the sins of the people belong on Satan's head. Their sins are their own, and Satan's sins are his own.

— David C. Grabbe

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