

BASIC BIBLICAL DOCTRINES

A SURVEY OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

By

Michael De Salvo

9 HAMARTIOLOGY (THE DOCTRINE OF SIN).

Jonathan Edwards very perceptively labeled hamartiology “that great important doctrine.”⁶¹

“One degree off course here, according to the massive hamartiological compass of God’s Word, will result in missing the theological destination of an understanding of biblical salvation by a million miles.”⁶²

9.1 What is Sin?

9.1.1 Biblical Terms that Define Sin.

9.1.1.1 Terms Defining the Causes of Sin.

NOTE: Given the complex nature of sin and the various words used to describe it within three different languages (i.e., Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) of Scripture, the following pairing of Hebrew and Greek terms relate more to the theological implications within the language itself and does not necessarily imply that such words are translational equivalents of each other in extrabiblical literature (e.g., LXX). Where possible, only the verbal form of the word is presented. The groupings, also, must be thought of as generic, not precise, as there is much overlap between them. The following framework, however, is a first draft attempt to order these words in a way that clarifies the multifaceted nature of sin.

9.1.1.1.1 Error (i.e., Wander).

9.1.1.1.1.1 Error by Ignorance.

Hebrew: שָׁגָג (shāgāg) | **Greek:** ἄγνοια (agnoia).

To unwittingly err from imprudence, rashness, or ignorance.

- Leviticus 4:2, 22, 27; 5:15, 18.
- Numbers 15:24–29.
- Hebrews 9:7.
- 1 Timothy 1:13.

⁶¹ George J. Zemek, *A Biblical Theology of the Doctrines of Sovereign Grace: Exegetical Considerations of Key Anthropological, Hamartiological, and Soteriological Terms and Motifs* (Little Rock, AR: B.T.D.S.G., 2002), 45.

⁶² Ibid.

9.1.1.1.1.2 Error by Influence.

Hebrew: שָׁגָה (*shāgah*) | **Greek:** πλανᾶω (*planaō*).

ἀποπλανᾶω (*apoplanaō*).

To unwittingly err from a misleading influence (e.g., pride, substance, passion, deception, etc.).

- 1 Samuel 26:21.
- Job 6:24; 19:4.
- Proverbs 19:27.
- Ezekiel 34:6.
- 1 Thessalonians 2:3.
- 1 Timothy 6:10.
- James 5:20.
- 2 Peter 2:18.
- 1 John 4:6.

9.1.1.1.1.3 Error by Inattentiveness.

Hebrew: שָׁלוּ (*shālū*)—*Inadvertent fault because of negligence.*

- Daniel 6:4.

9.1.1.1.1.4 Error by Irreverence.

Hebrew: תָּעַה (*tāāh*) | **Greek:** πλανᾶω (*planaō*)

To mockingly err from lack of reverence—moral degradation.

- 2 Chronicles 33:9.
- Psalm 58:3; 95:10; 119:21.
- Proverbs 10:17; 14:22.
- Amos 2:4.
- Matthew 18:12–13; 22:29; 24:4–5, 11, 24.
- Mark 12:24, 27; 13:5–6
- Luke 21:8.
- John 7:12, 47.
- 1 Corinthians 6:9; 15:33.
- Galatians 6:7.
- 2 Timothy 3:13.
- Titus 3:3.
- Hebrews 3:10; 5:2; 11:38.
- James 1:16; 5:19.
- 1 Peter 2:25.
- 2 Peter 2:15.
- 1 John 1:8; 2:26; 3:7.
- Revelation 2:20; 12:9; 13:14; 18:23; 19:20; 20:3, 8, 10.

9.1.1.1.2 Corruption.

9.1.1.1.2.1 Immoral.

Hebrew: אָלַח (*ālach*)—*To be morally corrupt.*

- Job 15:16.
- Psalm 14:3; 53:4.

Hebrew: חָבַל (*chābal*)—*To act corrupt.*

- Nehemiah 1:7.

Hebrew: שָׁחַת (*Shāchath*) | **Greek:** φθορά (*phthora*).

Corruption is like an enslavement that results in unfaithfulness.

- Genesis 6:11–12.
- Isaiah 1:4.
- Romans 8:21.
- 1 Corinthians 15:33.
- Galatians 6:8.
- Ephesians 4:22.
- 2 Peter 1:3; 2:19.
- Revelation 19:2.

9.1.1.1.2.2 Incredulous.

Greek: ἀπιστέω (*apisteō*)—*Unfaithfulness from unbelief.*

- Hebrews 3:12.
- Revelation 21:8.

9.1.1.1.2.3 Inflexible.

Hebrew: סָרָר (*sāar*) | **Greek:** παρακοή (*parakoē*).

A stubborn refusal to listen resulting in disobedience and rebellion.

In classical Greek the word παρακοή (*parakoē*) has the meaning “to hear amiss or incorrectly.” In several New Testament passages it refers to disobedience as a result of inattention (Rom. 5:19; 2 Cor. 10:6).⁶³

- Deuteronomy 21:18–20.
- Nehemiah 9:29.
- Proverbs 7:11.
- Isaiah 30:1.
- Jeremiah 5:23; 6:28.
- Romans 5:19.

9.1.1.1.2.4 Insidious.

Hebrew: מַאֲל (*māal*)—*Unfaithfulness to God’s Word.*

Hamilton notes that “in almost all the biblical references *mā’al* is used to designate the breaking or violation of religious law as a conscious act of treachery” (TWOT, 1:519–520).⁶⁴

- Numbers 5:6.
- Ezekiel 14:13.

Hebrew: בָּגַד (*bāgād*)—*Unfaithfulness to God.*

- Job 6:15.
- Psalm 59:5.
- Jeremiah 3:8, 20.
- Malachi 2:14.

⁶³ Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 519.

⁶⁴ Zemek, *A Biblical Theology of the Doctrines of Sovereign Grace*, 53. Fn. 237.

9.1.1.2 Terms Defining the Character of Sin.

- 1 Timothy 1:8–9.

9.1.1.2.1 Ungodly and Sinners—Against God.

9.1.1.2.1.1 Sin—Imperfect.

Hebrew: חַטָּא (chātā) | **Greek:** ἁμαρτάνω (hamartanō).

- **Sin is a failure to be perfect**—Matthew 5:48.
 - **To fall short of God’s glory**—Romans 3:23.
 - **To be found deficient by the scales of God**—Daniel 5:27.
 - **To miss the mark**—Judges 20:16.
- **Sin is a controlling principle within man**—
 - **Sin desires to rule man**—Genesis 4:7.
 - **Sin enslaves man**—
 - John 8:34.
 - Romans 6:6, 16–22.
 - **Sin dwells within man and compels him to do evil even when he desires to do good**—Romans 7:7–25.
 - **Sin hardens man’s heart by deception**—Hebrews 3:13.
 - *Denies God’s Authority*—Genesis 3:1.
 - *Doubts God’s Word*—Genesis 3:1.
 - *Disregards God’s Word*—Genesis 3:2–5.
 - *Disobeys God’s Word*—Genesis 3:6.
 - **All sin is against God**—Psalm 51:4.

9.1.1.2.1.2 Evil—Impious.

Hebrew: רָשָׁה (rāshā) | **Greek:** ἀσεβέω (asebeō).

“...the inner nature of the guilty person when evil has become a habitual feature of one’s disposition and actions.”⁶⁵

- Psalm 10:4, 13; 11:5, 17:9; 37:21; 119:10.
- Malachi 3:18.
- Romans 1:18; 11:26.
- 2 Timothy 2:16.
- Titus 2:12.
- 2 Peter 2:6.
- Jude 15, 18.

Hebrew: רָעָה (rāa) | **Greek:** κακός (kakos)—The thing itself is evil;

“whatever is evil in character, base.”⁶⁶

πονηρός (ponēros)—The thing is actively evil; *“evil that causes labor, pain, sorrow, malignant evil.”⁶⁷*

- Isaiah 1:4.
- 1 Kings 14:9.

⁶⁵ Quoting Carpenter and Grisanti, *NIDOTTE*, 3:1204 in *Ibid.*, 58.

⁶⁶ W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 38153rd ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 211.

⁶⁷ W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 38153rd ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 211.

THE TWO GREEK ADJECTIVAL TERMS FOR EVIL / BAD	
<i>κακός (kakos)</i>	<i>πονηρός (ponēros)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wretches—Matthew 21:41. • Bad—Luke 16:25. • Wrong—John 18:23. • Evildoer—John 18:30. • Harm—Acts 28:5. • Evil—Romans 7:19, 21. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evil one (i.e., Satan)—Matthew 13:19, 38; John 17:15; Ephesians 6:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:2; 1 John 2:13; 5:18–19. • Evil spirits—Luke 7:21; 8:2; 11:26; Acts 19:12–16. • Internal evils— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evil (i.e., unbelieving) heart—Matthew 9:4; Hebrew 3:12. ○ Evil treasure—Matthew 12:35. ○ Evil (i.e., envious) eye—Matthew 20:15; Mark 7:22; Luke 11:34. ○ Evil thoughts—Matthew 15:19. ○ Evil suspicions—1 Timothy 6:4. ○ Evil conscience—Hebrew 10:22. ○ Evil motive(s)—James 2:4. • External evils— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evil generation—Matthew 12:39, 45; 16:4; Luke 11:29. ○ Evil men—Luke 6:35, 45; 2 Thessalonians 3:2; 2 Timothy 3:13. ○ Evil age—Galatians 1:4. ○ Evil day(s)—Ephesians 5:16; 6:13. • Bad fruit—Matthew 7:17–18. • Evil deed(s) / work(s)—John 3:19; 7:7; Colossians 1:21; 2 Timothy 4:18; 1 John 3:12; 2 John 11. • Wicked—Matthew 13:49; 25:26; Luke 3:19; Acts 17:5; 1 Corinthians 5:13; 3 John 10. • Worthless—Luke 19:22. • Vicious—Acts 18:14. • Malignant—Revelation 16:2.

9.1.1.2.2 Unholy and Profane—Against Man.

9.1.1.2.2.1 Unrighteous—Iniquitous.

Hebrew: עָוֵל (*āvel*) | **Greek:** ἀδικέω (*adikeō*).
ἀνόσιος (*anosios*).

- **To commit injustice**—Psalm 53:1 (cf. 14:1); Romans 9:14.
- **To wrong someone**—Matthew 20:13; Acts 25:10–11; 1 Corinthians 6:7–8; 7:2, 12; Galatians 4:12; Colossians 3:25; Philemon 18; 2 Peter 2:13; Revelation 22:11.
- **To hurt / mistreat someone**—Acts 7:24, 26; Revelation 2:11.
- **To harm / damage / injure**—Revelation 6:6; 7:2–3; 9:4, 10, 19; 11:5.

9.1.1.2.2.2 Worldly—Illicit.

9.1.1.2.2.2.1 Profane (*i.e., Unclean*).

Hebrew: חָלַל (*chālal*) | **Greek:** βέβηλος (*bebēlos*).
To defile with worldliness and/or godlessness (i.e., profane).

- Ezekiel 22:26.
- 1 Timothy 4:7; 6:20.
- 2 Timothy 2:16.
- Hebrews 12:16.

Hebrew: תָּמֵא (*tāmē*) | **Greek:** ἀκάθαρτος (*akathartos*).
To defile with lewdness and/or forbidden acts (i.e., unclean, impure).

- Genesis 34:5; 49:4.
- 1 Corinthians 7:14.
- Leviticus 18:20.
- 2 Corinthians 6:17.
- Isaiah 6:5.
- Ezekiel 22:11.

Hebrew: זִמְּאָה (*zimmāh*)—*To defile with audacious and daring lewd / infamous acts of wickedness fixed / schemed in the heart (i.e., wickedness).*

- Leviticus 18:17; 19:29; 20:14.
- Judges 20:6.
- Psalm 26:10; 119:150.
- Proverbs 10:23.

Hebrew: נִדְּאָה (*niddāh*) | **Greek:** κοινόω (*koinoō*).
To defile with detestable and unclean things (i.e., impure, unclean).

- **Ceremonially unclean in the Law of Moses—**
 - ***A woman's menstruation***—Leviticus 12:5; 15:19–20, 24–26, 33; 18:19; Ezekiel 18:6; 22:10; 36:17.
 - ***A corpse***—Numbers 19:13.
 - ***Things not yet sprinkled by the water for impurity***—Numbers 19:9; 19:20–21; 31:23; Hebrews 9:13.
- **Abhorrent behavior—**
 - ***Taking a brother's wife***—Leviticus 20:21.
 - ***Idolatry***—Ezra 9:11; Lamentations 1:17; Ezekiel 7:19–20.
 - ***Things that come out of the heart***—Matthew 15:11, 18, 20 (cf. Mark 7:15, 18, 20; Acts 10:15; 11:9); Acts 10:15.

9.1.1.2.2.2.2 Perverse.

Hebrew: לִזְ (lūz) | **Greek:** ἀποστρέφω (*apostrophō*).
To deviate from that which is straight (i.e., pervert).

- Proverbs 2:15; 3:32; 4:24; 14:2.
- Isaiah 30:12.

Hebrew: נָטָה (*nātāh*) | **Greek:** ἀποστρέφω (*apostrephō*).

To turn aside to a crooked way (pervert).

- Deuteronomy 16:19.
- Luke 23:14 (ESV).
- 1 Kings 11:4.
- 2 Timothy 4:4.
- 1 Samuel 8:3.
- Titus 1:14.
- Psalm 125:5.
- Hebrews 12:25.

Hebrew: אָנָה (*āvāh*) | **Greek:** διαστρέφω (*diastrephō*).

To distort, bend, and make crooked that which is straight (i.e., pervert).

- 1 Samuel 20:30.
- Luke 9:41; 23:2.
- 2 Samuel 24:17.
- Acts 13:8, 10; 20:30.
- 1 Kings 8:47.
- Philippians 2:15.
- Esther 1:16.
- Job 33:27.
- Proverbs 12:8.
- Jeremiah 3:21.

Hebrew: סָלַף (*sālaph*) | **Greek:** μεταστρέφω (*metastrephō*).

To subvert by twisting, distorting, and misleading from that which is right (i.e., pervert).

- Exodus 23:8.
- Galatians 1:7.
- Deuteronomy 16:19.
- Proverbs 11:3; 13:6; 15:4;
19:3; 21:12.

Hebrew: אָוַת (*āvath*) | **Greek:** ἐκστρέφω (*ekstrephō*).

To falsify, defraud, and cheat by bending and making crooked that which is right (i.e., pervert).

- Job 8:3; 19:6; 34:12.
- Psalm 119:78.
- Ecclesiastes 1:15.
- Lamentations 3:36.
- Amos 8:5.
- Titus 3:11.

Hebrew: שֶׁקֶשׁ (*iqqēsh*)—*A perverse person who walks in a double way, subserviating virtue to vice.*

- 2 Samuel 22:27.
- Psalm 101:4.
- Proverbs 17:20; 22:5.

Hebrew: פֶּתַלְתָּל (*pethaltōl*) |
A crooked person.

Greek: σκολιός (*skolios*).

- Deuteronomy 32:5.
- Luke 3:5.
- Acts 2:40.
- Philippians 2:15.
- 1 Peter 2:18.