Biblical Hamartiology: The Terminology of It

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A procedure similar to the previous development of the biblical terminology relating to anthropology will be followed here in the arena of hamartiology. I will commence with the respective Hebrew and Greek words that are *semantically* equivalent to the general word for "sin" in English. Then I will follow up with some salient *theological* terms which develop the doctrine of sin in the Old and New Testaments.

OLD TESTAMENT TERMINOLOGY[1]

The Root חטא (*ḥṭ*ʾ)[2]

Judges 20:16 provides a non-moral picture of the basic idea undergirding this Hebrew root: "among all these soldiers there were seven hundred chosen men who were left-handed, each of whom could sling a stone at a hair and not *miss*" (NIV).[3] These warriors could sling stones and *not miss* their marks, not even by a hair's breadth. If they "missed" their mark, it would be said that they had "failed" to hit the target. Therefore, when this Hebrew root is brought into ethical settings, any failure to hit God's moral mark is a *miss*, i.e. a sin.[4] As Knierim says, "The transition from the literal to the figurative usage in the sense of a perverted life-style is clear."[5]

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[1] Right up front, it should be noted that "the vocabulary for sin in the Old Testament is notably rich because of the strong spiritual and moral sense of the biblical faith" (A. Luc, *NIDOTTE*, 2:87).

[2] This Hebrew root exemplifies a phenomenon that will also show up in the case of other word-groups for sin. The *same* root may speak of the condition or offense of sin, while in other contexts it may signal the divinely prescribed method for propitiating such sin(s). Of this particular word group, Luc observes, "The root *ḥṭ*ʾ with all its derivatives occurs a total of 593 times and possesses the broadest range of meaning, covering sin, sinner, sin offering, etc." (ibid.). For an excellent survey of "sin-offering(s)" in the Bible, see R. E. Averbeck in *NIDOTTE*, 2:93–103.

[3] My emphasis on the translation of the imperfect verb form of חָטָא (*ḥāṭā*ʾ).

[4] Cf., e.g., G. H. Livingston, *TWOT*, 1:277; Luc, *NIDOTTE*, 2:87–88; etc.

[5] *TLOT*, 1:407.

Verbs, verbals and nouns from this word group are found in a variety of situations throughout the Old Testament.[6] In many passages other more strongly nuanced terms for sin stand in parallelism alongside of occurrences from the חטא (ḥṭʾ) word family, but these additions most often function illustratively to expose the heinous nature of *falling short* of God's standard (cf., e.g., Job 34:37).[7] So the root חטא (ḥṭʾ) conveys the most generic and inclusive perspective on sin in the Old Testament.

In a few contexts the verb is beefed up by a certain prepositional complement (i.e. חָטָא לְ־ [*ḥāṭāʾ le-*]; cf., e.g., 1 Kings 8:46; Psalm 51:6 [v. 4, English]). However, let it be known that any sin, whether indicated by a member of the חטא (ḥṭʾ) word group or one of the other terms to follow, brings death apart from the merciful intervention and gracious provisions of a Holy God. Even inadvertent or unintentional "sins" called for sacrifice in the Old Testament (cf. תֶּחֱטָא [*teḥeṭāʾ*], e.g., in Leviticus 4:2ff.).[8]

The Root תעה *(tʿh)*

Like חטא (*ḥṭʾ*), the non-moral usages of the root תעה (*tʿh*) illustrate the hamartiological significance of this word family. These literal usages include physically wandering around (e.g., Genesis 21:14; 37:15; Exodus 23:4; Job 38:41) and staggering about from drunkenness (e.g., Job 12:25; Isaiah 28:7).[9] Needless to say, such images graphically depict sin as moral wandering. Therefore, in ethical settings this word group focuses on "erring" or "going astray."[10] Two very familiar passages which employ this hamartiological metaphor are Psalm 58:4b (v. 3b, English) and Isaiah 53:6 which respectively read:

The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray (תָּעוּ [*tāʿû*]) from birth (Psalm 58:3, NASB).

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[6] Cf., e.g., selected verbs and verbals in Genesis 39:9; Leviticus 5:5; Numbers 15:27–28; Deuteronomy 25:9; Joshua 7:20; 1 Samuel 12:10; 2 Samuel 24:10; 1 Kings 16:2; Psalm 78:32; Isaiah 1:4; 64:5 (v. 4, English); Daniel 9:8; etc. Also note some sample noun forms: Genesis 18:20; Leviticus 26:21; Numbers 16:26; 27:3; Deuteronomy 9:18; 24:16; 1 Samuel 2:17; 1 Kings 8:34; 15:3; Nehemiah 1:6; Psalms 25:7; 51:4, 5, 11 (vv. 2, 3, 9; English); Jeremiah 14:10; Lamentations 4:22; Daniel 9:20; Hosea 9:9; Micah 6:13; etc.

[7] Adam not only missed or failed in his disobedience, he also (especially because of the explicit divine command of Genesis 2:17) high-handedly rebelled against God.

[8] See Knierim's references to " 'errors' " and " 'misdeeds' " (*TLOT*, 1:408–411, *passim*).

[9] F. Brown; S. R. Driver; C. A. Briggs; *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*; Oxford, 1907, 1073.

[10] Cf., e.g. Psalms 95:10 (note this wandering is centered in the "heart" [לֵבָב/*lēbāb*]); 119:110; Proverbs 14:22; 21:16; Isaiah 29:24 (note the center of ethical erring is in the "spirit," i.e. the "mind" [רוּחַ/*rûaḥ*]); 32:6 (a noun form); Ezekiel 14:11; 44:10, 15; 48:11; etc.

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> We all, like sheep, have gone astray (תָּעִינוּ [*tāʿînû*]), each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6, NIV).[11]

Such sinful wanderings are often exposed as deliberate or highhanded, but this is not always the case.[12] Two related word groups in Hebrew perpetuate the basic wandering imagery of the תעה (*tʿh*) family; however, they usually occur in contexts wherein the sin is serious but not intentional.[13] Nevertheless,

> a sin of error does not signify diminished guilt or culpability but only a preferential offer of atonement. The act of atonement is lesser or greater in accord with the status of the wrong doer. … The danger of unknown but no less fully responsible error demonstrates that people are totally dependent on God's disclosure (Psalm 19:13; 119:66f.), guidance (119:10) and judgment or forgiveness (Psalm 119:21, 118). Openness to the disclosure of error thus becomes an important concern of biblical anthropology. According to Ecclesiastes 5:5 one who excuses oneself by referring to an "error" incurs God's wrath.[14]

Man is totally accountable before an absolutely holy God for all wanderings.

The Verb סוּר *(sûr)*

This word depicts a certain kind of wandering, a veering off course. Its basic meaning is "to turn aside," usually implying a departure from the way:[15]

> For the most part *swr* has to do with the moral/spiritual direction someone is taking. Persons turn from the right road. … To turn from the way God commanded is to invite a curse (Deuteronomy 11:28) and worse (Jeremiah 17:13).[16]

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[11] Martens well notes of Isaiah 53:6, "The prophet captures the human dilemma of a bent toward waywardness that spells disorientation and lostness. The metaphor is significant as a way of illuminating sin and how destitute humanity is without salvation" (*NIDOTTE*, 4:319–320).

[12] "The straying may be listless wandering from the known and the true or it may be deliberate departure from the good for something other, such as idols" (ibid., 319). For a good example of the former scenario, cf. Psalm 119:176 in its mega-context.

[13] The Hebrew roots שׁגג (*šgg*) and שׁגה (*šgh*) are most often employed to signal so-called sins of inadvertence. For helpful treatments of these two word groups, see: Hamilton, *TWOT*, 2:903–905; and Hill, *NIDOTTE*, 4:42–44.

[14] Knierim, *TLOT*, 3:1303–1304.

[15] BDB, 693. On literal, i.e. non-moral, turnings aside, cf., e.g., Exodus 3:3; Judges 18:3; 19:15; Jeremiah 15:5; etc. For an excellent moral application, see Deuteronomy 9:12b.

[16] Thompson and Martens, *NIDOTTE*, 3:238–239.

On such moral detours which beg for divine judgment compare especially Jeremiah 17:5: "Thus says Yahweh, 'Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind, and makes flesh his arm, but, from Yahweh, his heart *turns aside*' " (i.e. יָסוּר [*yāsûr*]). Also notice this verb's role in the sweeping indictments regarding the *deviations* that characterize depravity in Psalm 14:1–3.[17] Verse 3 reads: "The whole (lot of them) in solidarity has (morally) *turned aside* (סָר [*sār*][18]); they have turned sour (i.e. they have become morally putrefied); there is not one who does good; there is not even one." This primary focus on deviation,[19] especially when explicitly complemented by the preposition מִן (*min*, i.e. "from"), looks upon sin as apostasy.[20]

The Verb עָבַר (*ʿābar)*

This word also has non-moral movements standing behind its hamartiological employments. In spatial settings it frequently means to "pass over, through, by," etc.[21] For example, it is used for the crossing of a river,[22] the passing through a region or country, the traversing within a land, etc.[23] From these literal situations several metaphorical extensions easily developed.[24]

The most important one of these for our purposes is the moral usage of עָבַר (*ʿābar*). Concerning this term's " 'movement' " from the literal domain into the ethical-metaphorical one (pun intended!), Girdlestone well captures the basic hamartiological significance of its occurrences in ethical contexts when he argues that עָבַר (*ʿābar*) refers to the "crossing over the boundary of right and entering the forbidden land of wrong."[25] The boundary marker, if you will, God's line drawn in the sand, is almost always His covenant with its stipulations.[26] Sin in this sense is therefore portrayed as "overstepping" or "contravening" the LORD's law.[27] Deuteronomy 17:2–7 is exemplary. In this casuistic scenario, the protasis of vv. 2–4 speaks of a man or a woman who *transgresses* (i.e. v. 2) God's covenant. In this case the specific transgression involves idolatry (v. 3); therefore, if there proves to be documented evidence for such a transgression (vv. 4, 6–7), the person must be stoned to death (cf. the apodosis of v. 5). Another good example dramatizing the exceedingly serious nature of stepping across the line of God's Word is found in the historical episode about Achan. עָבַר (*ʿābar*) is used to characterize his sin in Joshua 7:15.[28] Among many other occurrences of this verb which portray high-handed sin, especially note the presence of עָבַר (*ʿābar)* in Numbers 14:41; Joshua 23:16; 1 Samuel 15:24; Isaiah 24:5; and Daniel 9:11. Permit me to add just one more text as a theological punctuation mark for this discussion of עָבַר (*ʿābar*): "But they, like Adam, transgressed (i.e. עָבְרוּ [*ʿābᵉrû*]) the covenant[29]; there they dealt treacherously against Me" (Hosea 6:7).

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[17] Note Paul's application to the *whole* race in Romans 3:10ff.

[18] It is interesting that the parallel statement of Psalm 53:4 (v. 3, English) most likely reads סָג (*sāg*) instead of סָר (*sār*). Nevertheless, the root סוג (*swg*) perfectly echoes its cousin סור (*swr*). For a good survey of סוג (*swg*) including its hamartiological significance, see Wakely's article in *NIDOTTE*, 3:229–233. The occurrence of וְנָסוֹג (*wᵉnāsōg*) in Isaiah 59:13 is particularly telling in reference to sin as departure and desertion.

[19] Cf. Schwertner, *TLOT,* 2:796–797.

[20] From the perspective of human responsibility, this calls for a reverse 'apostasy' (cf., e.g., Job 28:28; Psalm 34:15 [v. 14, English]; 37:27; Proverbs 3:7; 16:6, 17; etc.).

[21] BDB, 716.

[22] Cf. even the feminine noun (i.e. עֲבָרָה [*ʿᵃbārâ*]) from this root which means "ford."

[23] For a survey, cf. Harman, *NIDOTTE*, 3:314.

[24] For a survey, cf. Van Groningen, *TWOT*, 2:641–642.

[25] Robert Baker Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, reprinted (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 79.

[26] Cf. Harman, *NIDOTTE*, 3:315.

The Root פשׁע (*pŝʿ*)

Words deriving from this root most often depict spiritual rebellion in the Old Testament. Consider its noun forms (meaning "rebellion, revolt, transgression"[30]) as found, for example in Leviticus 16:16, 21 (notice the Day of Atonement context); Joshua 24:19; Job 31:33 (notice, once again, Adam is used as a bad example); Psalms 32:1, 5; 36:2 (v. 1, English); 51:3, 5 (vv. 1, 3; English); 89:33 (v. 32, English); 103:12; Proverbs 12:13; 28:13; Isaiah 53:5, 8; Lamentations 1:14; etc. Verbs and verbals show up, for example, in Isaiah 1:2, 28; 53:12; Jeremiah 2:29; 3:13; Ezekiel 2:3b; 20:38; Hosea 7:13; Zephaniah 3:11; etc. Furthermore, noun *and* verb forms are found in tandem in 1 Kings 8:50 and Ezekiel 18:31.

In many of the passages cited above along with the other occurrences of this root in the Old Testament, פשׁע (*pŝʿ*) is frequently found in parallelism with other hamartiological terms. Sometimes it further specifies חטא (*ḥṭʾ*) by adding the concept of rebellion to failure, but more often it links up with similar terms which convey man's sin as moral mutiny. Two significantly analogous roots are מרר (*mrd*)[31] and its close cousin מרה (*mrh*).[32] Listen to the condemning testimony found in two key verses.

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[27] L. Koehler; W. Baumgartner; *Lexicon in Veteris Libros*, 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1958, 2:779. Cf., e.g., the force of παραβαίνω (*parabainō*) in the New Testament; furthermore, this is the Greek term of choice for עָבַר (*ʿābar*) in the LXX.

[28] Furthermore, because of solidarity, the nation was also said to have "transgressed" God's "covenant" in v. 11.

[29] Remember Genesis 2:17 and the fall of Adam as recorded in chapter 3.

[30] Livingston, *TWOT*, 2:741.

> He said, "Son of Man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious [הַמּוֹרְדִים (*hammôrᵉdîm*) from מרר (*mrd*)] nation that has rebelled against me [מָרְדוּ־בִי (*marᵉdû-bî*) also from מרר (*mrd*)]; they and their fathers have been in revolt [פָּשְׁעוּ (*pāšᵉʿû*) from פשע (*pŝʿ*)] against me to this very day" (Ezekiel 2:3; the Hebrew was added to the NIV rendering).
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> We (emphatic) have rebelled [פָּשַׁעְנוּ (*pāšaʿnû*) from פשע (*pŝʿ*)] and revolted [וּמָרִינוּ (*ûmārînû*) from מרה (*mrh*)]; *You* [also emphatic for an even stronger contrast] have not pardoned (Lamentations 3:42).

From just this brief survey, it is obvious that "*pešaʿ* is a theological term because the deeds it describes affect Yahweh or his sovereignty and consequently require his judgment and forgiveness."[33] Such rebellious deeds are often defined as breaches of the stipulations of the Mosaic covenant.[34]

The Root מעל *(mʿl)*

The harmartiological common denominator of words built upon this root is spiritual infidelity.[35] On the horizontal plane of relationships,[36] "the combination of the verb with the noun occurs in Numbers 5:12, 27, where it refers to a woman's infidelity in the marriage relationship."[37] This kind of picture then extends vertically (i.e. heavenward) with many scriptural indictments of an individual's or the nation's unfaithfulness to

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[31] For מרר in parallelism with other terms for high-handed sin, cf. it as the fourth member of five hamartiological descriptives in Daniel 9:5; also cf. its stand alone occurrence in Daniel 9:9.

[32] Cf. this root as the term of choice for ethical anarchy in Isaiah 1:20. Sometimes מרה (*mrh*), which expresses observable rebellion, is yoked with an occurrence of the root סרר (*srr*) which also speaks of rebellion and/or the stubborn attitude standing behind it (cf. Psalm 78:8). For סרר (*srr*) apart from מרה (*mrh*), cf. Isaiah 30:1; Jeremiah 6:28.

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[33] Knierim, *TLOT*, 2:1036.

[34] Cf., e.g., Carpenter and Grisanti's discussion in *NIDOTTE*, 3:707.

[35] KB, 2:613, gives "disloyalty" or "infidelity" for major meanings of the noun; for a quite complete list of similar nuances, see Wakely, *NIDOTTE*, 2:1020.

[36] Knierim convincingly argues that "*mʿl* refers, then, to the legally definable relationship of trust that exists between two persons" (*TLOT*, 2:681).

[37] Wakely, *NIDOTTE*, 2:1020.

God.[38] At this juncture, Knierim asserts about מעל (*mʿl*), “Thus it is by nature an explicitly theological term.”[39] He then goes on to note, “Characteristic is the formula *mʿl* (*maʿal*) *byhwh* ‘to commit unfaithfulness against Yahweh’ (Leviticus 5:21 [6:2, English]; 26:40; Numbers 5:6; Deuteronomy 32:51; 1 Chronicles 10:13; 2 Chronicles 12:2; 26:16; 28:19, 22; 30:7; cf. Joshua 22:16; Ezra 10:2; Nehemiah 13:27; 1 Chronicles 5:25).”[40] Of course, the standards for identifying and exposing acts of infidelity against the LORD once again are His covenant stipulations.[41]

A very close relative of the מעל (*mʿl*) family is the בגד (*bgd*) word group. Like מעל (*mʿl*), the verb בָּגַד (*bāgad*):

> is used to denote unfaithfulness in several different relationships. It is used in connection with unfaithfulness in marriage. The object of this faithlessness may be the wife (Exodus 21:8, a slave wife; Malachi 2:14, wife of one’s youth), or the husband.[42]

The Malachi 2:14 passage is particularly germane since it shows that if one is dealing treacherously with the wife of his youth, he is also dealing treacherously, i.e. acting faithlessly or deceitfully with the LORD (vv. 10–11, 16). Especially condemning references concerning the history of Israel’s infidelity against Yahweh are found in Psalm 78:57 and Hosea 5:7; 6:7ff. Needless to say, the larger context of Hosea adds the graphic image of harlotry to the treachery conveyed by the root בגד (*bgd*).[43] Such a state of faithlessness and treachery most obviously warrants divine retribution (cf. Proverbs 2:22).[44]

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[38] Cf. ibid., 2:1020–1025.

[39] *TLOT*, 2:681.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Hamilton is quick to note that “in almost all the biblical references *māʿal* is used to designate the breaking or violation of religious law as a conscious act of treachery” (*TWOT*, 1:519–520).

[42] Goldberg, *TWOT*, 1:90; for other scenarios of human infidelity as conveyed by this word group, see Klopfenstein, *TLOT*, 1:198–199; and Wakely, *NIDOTTE*, 1:582–593, *passim*.

[43] Cf. also similar occurrences of the root בגד (*bgd*) in Jeremiah 3:7, 10; the basic metaphor being developed is one of marital infidelity (vv. 6ff). Isaiah 48:8 is even more concise: “You have not heard nor understood; even from of old your ear has not been open. Surely I knew that you would act very treacherously (בָגוֹד תִּבְגּוֹד [*bāgôd tibgōd*], i.e. ‘you would always be gross infidels’) and be called a rebel (i.e. פֹּשֵׁעַ *[pōšēaʿ]*) from the womb.”

[44] And yet, as Wakely observes with amazement (i.e., the amazement of “amazing grace”), “Yet even in the face of Israel’s unrelenting obstinacy and recalcitrance, God’s forbearance persevered, his will remained intent on good, and his resolve to transform blind and deaf Israel into a fit instrument to fulfill his purpose continued steadfast” (*NIDOTTE*, 1:588).

The Root עקב (*ʿqb*)

Moving from concrete acts of treachery to fallen humanity's natural tendency to treachery brings us to the עקב (*ʿqb*) word group. In Hebrew and several of its cognate languages various forms derived from this root develop, but all are somehow related to the noun meaning "heel."[45] Quite illustratively, the name "Jacob" comes from this root. From his birth when he came out of the womb second holding on to his twin brother's "heel" (Genesis 25:26), he historically demonstrated a drive "to supplant." Compare, for example, Esau's retrospective lament in Genesis 27:36: "Then he [i.e. Esau] said, 'Is he not rightly named Jacob [i.e. יַעֲקֹב (*yaʿᵃqōb*) from עקב (*ʿqb*)], for he supplanted me [i.e. וַיַּעְקְבֵנִי (*wayyaʿqᵉbenî*), a verb form from עקב (*ʿqb*)] these two times? He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing' " (Hebrew words added to the NASB translation). The key verb in this verse from עקב (*ʿqb*) could also be rendered "he has deceived me" (cf. NIV). The historical accounts not only confirm the *fact* that Jacob took Esau's place, but they also thoroughly document *how* he did it. Indeed, he was a dean of *deception*.

But Jacob does not stand alone as an unethical trickster. Consider also, for example, Jehu in 2 Kings 10. Listen to vv. 18–19:

> Then Jehu brought all the people together and said to them, "Ahab served Baal a little; Jehu will serve him much. Now summon all the prophets of Baal, all his ministers and all his priests. See that no one is missing, because I am going to hold a great sacrifice for Baal. Anyone who fails to come will no longer live." But Jehu was acting deceptively [בְּעָקְבָּה (*bᵉʿoqbā*), a noun form from עקב (*ʿqb*), literally translated "in deceitfulness" or "with deception"; cf. "in cunning," NASB] in order to destroy the ministers of Baal (the Hebrew phrase added to the NIV rendering of 2 Kings 10:18–19).

However, this tendency to treachery did not stop when Jacob and Jehu passed off the historical scene. Unfortunately, the whole of Adam's fallen race is characterized by a Jacob/Jehu "heart."

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[45] Cf. Luc, *NIDOTTE*, 3:506; for conjectures on how this basic idea of "heel" relates to various literal and metaphorical employments of the different forms of this word group in the Old Testament; cf. also, Payne, *TWOT*, 2:691–692.

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The adjective derived from this particular Hebrew root is scarce but exceedingly significant when it comes to synthesizing a biblical hamartiology. And this descriptive's appearance in Jeremiah 17:9 seems to say it all: "The heart[46] is more deceitful (עָקֹב [*ʿāqōb*]; i.e. insidious, sly, devious, crafty, manipulative, cunning, etc.) than all,[47] and it is incurably sick.[48] Who can understand it?"[49] Laetsch commendably captures the hamartiological significance of this key verse when he comments:

> In point of deceitfulness, treachery, the human heart exceeds all things. … Just because of its inherent incurable treachery no man can fully fathom the depths of the depravity of man's heart. The Lord is not speaking here of particularly wicked degenerates. He describes the human heart, the life seat of every human being. And the diagnosis of the searcher of man's heart, the greatest Psychologist, is: Incurably wicked![50]

The Root חמס *(ḥms)*

Quite frequently, words from the חמס (*ḥms*) word family emphasize an epidemic of wrong-doing (cf., e.g., the noun form, usually translated "violence," in such contexts as Genesis 6:11–13 [*anarchy* might be a good paraphrase here]; Ezekiel 7:11; Habakkuk 1:3; etc.). Sometimes the word group is applied to specific covenant violations (cf. e.g., Jeremiah 22:3b; Ezekiel 22:26; etc.). As Stoebe notes, "*ḥāmās* characterizes the diminution of another's rights and living space as a violation of duty to the neighbor and encompasses the entire range of antisocial behavior (Amos 3:10) in opposition to justice and righteousness (Jeremiah 22:3; Ezekiel 45:9)."[51] Furthermore,

> crimes described by *ḥms*/*ḥamas* are directed ultimately against Yahweh and provoke his judgment, which is carried out without human intervention on the basis of his holiness and righteousness (Genesis 6:13; 49:7; Judges 9:24; Psalm 7:16 [17]; Jeremiah 51:35; Ezekiel 7:11; Amos 6:7; Obediah 10; Micah 6:13–15; Habakkuk 2:17). For this reason the victims of *ḥamas* in the Psalms are also sure that God will

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[46] I.e. that mission-control center wherein man thinks and plans.

[47] I.e. the heart of man is more deceptive than *anything and everything* imaginable.

[48] Humanity's spiritual heart disease, apart from a heart transplant by the Great Physician, is terminal.

[49] The obvious answer to this rhetorical question is no mere man. Only God can see into its murky depths (cf. v. 10).

[50] Theodore Laetsch, *Bible Commentary: Jeremiah* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1952), 163.

[51] *TLOT*, 1:439; previously, he noted that "*ḥāmās* … violates an order established or guaranteed by God" (ibid., 437). Cf. also Swart and Van Dam, *NIDOTTE*, 2:178.

> hear their passionate appeal for deliverance (Psalm 7:10–13 [11–14]; 55:16–19 [17–20]).[52]

Needless to say, חמס (*ḥms*) is not a hamartiological problem restricted to antiquity; our contemporary headlines reflect the fact that the world is still overflowing with it.[53]

The Root רעע (*r*ʿʿ)

The most basic idea of this root is "to be bad."[54] As Livingston argues:

> The essential meaning of the root can be seen in its frequent juxtaposition with the root *ṭôb*. Thus Moses concluded, "See I set before you today life and what is good [*ṭôb*], death and what is evil/bad [*ra*ʿ] (cf. Micah 3:2). Frequently they occur in the merism that one distinguishes "good and evil/bad" (2 Samuel 14:17; 19:35 [H 36]; 1 Kings 3:9; Isaiah 7:15; cf. here "tree of good and evil," Genesis 2:9, 17).[55]

Furthermore, and very importantly,

> The root can have either a passive or active connotation: "misfortune, calamity," and "wickedness" respectively. It can occur in profane contexts, "bad," "repulsive," and moral contexts, "evil" "wickedness."[56]

Almost always, what separates occurrences of the רעע (*r*ʿʿ) word group into those which are passive/non-moral[57] versus those which are active/moral are the criteria of who is doing a given act labeled רַע (*ra*ʿ) and/or who is evaluating a particular act as רַע (*ra*ʿ).[58]

Of course, our special interest lies in the hamartiological settings of members from this family. And we are not short-changed regarding the biblical data that fall into this ethical category. As Baker notes,

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[52] *NIDOTTE*, 2:179.

[53] Harris aptly argues that חמס (*ḥms*) "is often a name for extreme wickedness" (*TWOT*, 1:297); notice the explicit parallelism in Ezekiel 7:11.

[54] Stoebe, *TLOT*, 3:1249.

[55] *TWOT*, 2:854.

[56] Ibid.

[57] For some examples that fit into this basic box of usage, cf. Baker, *NIDOTTE*, 3:1154. Some of the translations falling into this broad category would be "wild" (of an animal), "misery, sorrow, adversity, trouble, distress, calamity," etc. (BDB, 947–949; Gridlestone, *Synonyms*, 80.)

[58] A good illustration here may be found in different applications of the phrase "in the eyes of," i.e. " 'in the estimation' " of a finite and fallen man, or as ethically evaluated by the holy and righteous God. For discussions, see *NIDOTTE* 3:1155; and *TLOT*, 3:1250.

> Most commonly, the adjective [i.e. רַע (*raʿ*)] is applied to people and their activities in contexts that indicate moral turpitude. … An individual such as Haman is vile (*raʿ*) because of his despicable plot to harm others (Esther 7:6; 9:25; cf. 1 Samuel 30:22). The very heart of humankind is now evil (Jeremiah 3:17; 7:24), as are their inclinations (*yēṣer*; Genesis 8:21). Humanity's way of life is evil (Psalm 119:101; Proverbs 4:14) as are his methods, deeds, and practices (1 Kings 13:33; Nehemiah 9:35; Proverbs 8:13; Ecclesiastes 4:3; Isaiah 32:7; Jeremiah 18:11; Zechariah 1:4). Humankind in groups is also evil, whether as a community (Numbers 14:27), a nation (Jeremiah 8:3; 13:10; Ezekiel 7:24), or a generation (Deuteronomy 1:35). As a result of humanity's wickedness and wicked nature, the good but holy and righteous God will send judgment, which, from the perspective of the one who is its object, is dreadful (*raʿ*) (Ezekiel 14:21; cf. Exodus 33:4; Deuteronomy 6:22).[59]

So, mankind is pictured in the Old Testament as "evil" (i.e. רַע [*raʿ*]) to the core of his being.

The Root רשׁע (*ršʿ*)

Like the previous word group wherein רַע (*raʿ*; "evil") was often given definition standing antithetically with טוֹב (*ṭôb*; "good"), "the root *ršʿ* appears in the Old Testament as the most important antonym of *ṣdq*"[60] (i.e. "wickedness" in contrast with "righteousness"). "The use of *ršʿ* always includes the idea of wickedness, evil intent, and injustice against God or persons."[61] Furthermore, the noun form of this word group "is used in parallel with almost every Hebrew word for sin, evil, and iniquity."[62]

Members of this word family frequently show up in legal contexts thereby emphasizing criminality. "However, it is more than a legal term. It connotes the inner nature of the guilty person when evil has become a habitual feature of one's disposition and actions."[63]

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[59] *NIDOTTE*, 3:1155. Livingston adds: "Left to himself, an evil person has no chance of survival" (*TWOT*, 2:855); he commendably follows up with the importance of repenting from רעע (*rʿʿ*), citing passages such as Psalm 37:27; Proverbs 3:7; Amos 5:14–15; etc.

[60] Van Leeuwen, *TLOT*, 3:1262; cf. this antithesis, e.g., in such key passages as Deuteronomy 25:1 (note the perversion in Proverbs 17:15); Psalms 1:5, 6; 37:28–29; 68:3, 4 (vv. 2, 3; English); especially throughout Proverbs; etc.

[61] Carpenter and Grisanti, *NIDOTTE*, 3:1201.

[62] Livingston, *TWOT*, 2:863; e.g., cf. Solomon's paradigm prayer of confession in 1 Kings 8:47.

[63] Carpenter and Grisanti, *NIDOTTE*, 3:1204. Vine provides a highly condensed character sketch of רָשָׁע (*rāšāʿ*) people when he writes, "The 'wicked' does not seek God (Psalm 10:4); he challenges God (Psalm 10:13). In his way of life the 'wicked' loves violence (Psalm 11:5), oppresses the righteous (Psalm 17:9), does not repay his debts (Psalm 37:21), and lays a snare to trap the righteous (Psalm 119:110)" (*EDOTW*, 287).

As Livingston puts it, “the inner lives of the wicked correspond to their actions. They are vicious, haughty, treacherous, vile, polluted, and unstable.”[64]

The Noun אָוֶן (*ʾāwen*)[65]

The wide-ranging meanings of this word are all negative in nature; for example, “disaster, (looming) disaster, sin, injustice, deception, false, idolatrous cult.”[66] Yet, two basic trends are observable in the Old Testament, “a stress on trouble which moves on to wickedness, and an emphasis on emptiness which moves on to idolatry.”[67] In either case, the end of the line is hamartiologically relevant.[68]

Consider the following excerpts from Carpenter and Grisanti:

> *ʾāwen* can signify wicked conduct in the realms of worship (Isaiah 1:13; Zechariah 10:2), politics (Isaiah 31:2), legal relationships (10:1; 29:20), or warfare (Psalm 56:7 [8]).… The parallel or contextual proximity of *ʾāwen* with several other words for sin demonstrates its moral perversity: *ḥāmās* (violence, Isaiah 59:6; Habakkuk 1:3, …), *ʾawel* (iniquity, Job 11:14; Proverbs 22:8 …, …), *rāʿ* (wickedness, Psalm 28:3; 36:3 [4]; 94:23; 141:4; Proverbs 6:18; 12:21; Isaiah 31:2; 59:7; Jeremiah 4:14; Ezekiel 11:2; Micah 2:1, …), *rāʿâ* (wicked, Psalm 64:2 [3]; 94:16; Proverbs 17:4; Isaiah 31:2, …), and *rāšāʿ* (wicked, Psalm 28:3; 53:3 [4]; 92:7 [8]; 101:8; Proverbs 11:7; 12:21; 19:28; Isaiah 55:7, …).[69]

The high-handed, heinous nature of sin as אָוֶן (*ʾāwen*) is especially illustrated by the prophets’ use of the term.[70] For example, it is used as a scathing substitute for Bethel (i.e. “Bethel,” בֵּיתְאֵל [*bêtʾēl*], ‘House of God’, was renamed, by the dark nature of the things that took place in association with this place, בֵּית אָוֶן [*bêt ʾāwen*], house of iniquity).[71] It is no wonder why Livingston closes his treatment of אָוֶן (*ʾāwen*) with these words of amazement and admonition:

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[64] *TWOT*, 2:864.

[65] Knierim, argues that “the Hebrew noun *ʾāwen* ‘harm, disaster’ usually derived from a root *ʾwn* ‘to be strong, powerful’ …, seems to have cognates only in NW Semitic. … The chief meaning of the term largely reflects its etymology: destructive power” (*TLOT*, 1:60, 61). Carpenter and Grisanti add, “Consequently, *ʾāwen* could highlight a negative aspect of power, i.e., the abuse of power that brings harm and destruction” (*NIDOTTE*, 1:310).

[66] KB, 1:22.

[67] Livingston, *TWOT*, 1:23.

[68] Kniermin puts it this way, “… every type of *ʾāwen*-act or *ʾāwen*-sphere is implicitly or explicitly ungodly” (*TLOT*, 1:62).

[69] *NIDOTTE*, 1:310.

[70] For a brief survey, see Bernhardt, *TDOT*, 1:143–144.

[71] Cf., e.g., Hosea 4:15; 5:8; 10:5.

> Generally, biblical theologians have given little attention to *ʾāwen* as a contributor to an understanding of sin. Since the word stresses the planning and expression of deception and points to the painful aftermath of sin, it should be noted more.[72]

The Root עול (*ʿwl)*

All kinds of wrong-doing are encompassed by the occurrences of this word family in the Old Testament.[73] Concerning its prevalent noun forms,[74] "the basic meaning of the term is usually rendered 'injustice, unrighteousness, perversity, crime.' "[75] These noun forms sometimes occur with a verb of *doing* or performing (e.g., "those who commit injustice"; "those who practice perversity"; etc.).[76] As might be expected with meanings such as "injustice" and "unrighteousness," these nouns are often situated in legal settings.[77] And furthermore, as it also might be expected, the Law of God is the norm or standard by which such deeds of injustice are exposed and measured.[78]

Occurrences from this word group often stand in parallelisms with a host of other high-handed hamartiological terms.[79] Furthermore, parallel-passage parallelisms between near synonyms provide a vivid illustration of the nasty nature of עָוֶל (*ʿāwel*): "The complete contrast to anything godly is shown by 'wickedness' being an action of an atheist in Psalm 53:1 [2], one who denies God's very existence. In the parallel Psalm 14:1 *ʿāwel* is replaced by *ʿᵃlîlâ*, describing ruthless and wanton behavior."[80]

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[72] *TWOT*, 1:23–24.

[73] Later Semitic texts in Hebrew and cognate languages indicate that the primary idea standing behind the root is "to deviate" (cf., e.g., Knierim, *TLOT*, 2:849).

[74] Denominative verbs in the Old Testament occur only in Psalm 71:4 and Isaiah 26:10.

[75] Ibid., 850.

[76] Cf., e.g., Livingston, *TWOT*, 2:653.

[77] Cf., Knierim, *TLOT*, 2:849–850.

[78] Herein, Livingston affirms that "the basic meaning of this root means to deviate from a right standard, to act contrary to what is right" (*TWOT*, 2:652). He goes on to supplement his argument by showing that nouns from the עול (*ʿwl*) word group are found regularly in antithetical parallelisms with members of the צדק (*ṣdq*) family (ibid., 653). However, the ultimate antithesis *par excellence* is the character of God (ibid.; cf., e.g., Deuteronomy 32:4 [contrast Deuteronomy 25:16]; 2 Chronicles 19:7; Job 34:10; etc.).

[79] See a good summary paragraph by Baker in *NIDOTTE*, 3:342.

[80] Ibid., 343.

The Root עוה (*ʿwh*)

The force of this root is evidenced by its verbal thrusts:

> The basic meaning of the verb, "to bend, twist, distort," can be seen in its concrete, non-theological uses: … (Psalm 38:7 [v. 6, English]) … (Isaiah 24:1). From this primary notion it derives the sense "to distort, to make crooked, to pervert": … (Lamentations 3:9) … (Job 33:27) … (Proverbs 12:8). When the distortion pertains to law, it means "to sin, to infract, to commit a perversion/iniquity."[81]

Therefore, the high-frequency noun עָוֹן (*ʿāwôn*),[82] generally portrays sin as being morally crooked or ethically perverted. Waltke notes that "the derivative noun *ʿāwōn* occurs with only the derived, abstract theological notion of the root: 'infraction, crooked behavior, perversion, iniquity, etc.' "[83] He also passes along this important observation:

> Moreover, … it [i.e. עָוֹן (*ʿāwôn*)] denotes both the deed and its consequences, the misdeed and its punishment. Both notions are present, but sometimes the focus is on the deed ("sin"), and at other times on the outcome of the misdeed ("punishment"), and sometimes on the situation between the deed and its consequence ("guilt"). … The remarkable ambivalence between the meanings "sin as an act" and "penalty" shows that in the thought of the Old Testament sin and its penalty are not radically separate notions as we tend to think of them. Rather in the Old Testament the action of man and what happens to him are presupposed to be directly related as one process within the basic divine order. This connection has been called a "synthetic view of life" (Von Rad, G., *Theology of the Old Testament I*, p. 205).[84]

As we have seen many times before, these hamartiological terms are further defined by the (bad) company they keep. In the case of עָוֹן (*ʿāwôn*), it stands besides both חטא (*ḥṭʾ*) and פשע (*pšʿ*) thirteen times (cf., e.g., Leviticus 16:21–22). As terrible as these perversities, sins, and rebellions are, amazingly they do not stand beyond atonement as Leviticus 16 makes clear. Luc rejoices in this inexplicable reality of divine forgiveness when he says,

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[81] Schultz, *TWOT*, 2:650; cf. also Vine, *EDOTW*, 231.

[82] Knierim (*TLOT*, 2:863) tabulates 231 occurrences.

[83] Waltke, editor's addition to *TWOT*, 2:650.

[84] Ibid., 650, 651. Waltke gives some sample references for each of these phases of the עָוֹן (*ʿāwôn*) spectrum; however, remember how fluid these nuances are. We have already observed a similar, though not identical, phenomenon in the case of both the חטא (*ḥṭʾ*) and the אשם (*ʾšm*) word groups. For more (probably too much) on this phenomenon as applied to עון (*ʿwn*), see Knierim, *TLOT*, 2:862–866, *passim*.

> … in Exodus 34:7, the phrase “wickedness, rebellion, and sin” is used in God’s proclamation of his mercy to forgive. While this phrase is used to signify the totality of sins against God, it also directs our attention to the completeness of God’s forgiveness for those who repent.[85]

There are other Hebrew terms and a variety of figurative expressions which also contribute to the very extensive hamartiology developed throughout the pages of the Old Testament Scriptures.[86]

Now just prior to pressing on to the New Testament terminology, a review of the data from the Old Testament would be helpful. Since clusters of hamartiological terms in certain passages seem to paint the darkest pictures of sin, it is suggested that APPENDIX E: “Some Selected Dirges on Sin in the Old Testament” be surveyed at this time.

NEW TESTAMENT TERMINOLOGY

ἁμαρτάνω / ἁμαρτία (*hamartanō*/*hamartia*)[87]

In background and usage this New Testament word group is quite similar to the חטא (*ḥṭʾ*) family in the Old Testament. For example, in early Greek ἁμαρτάνω (*hamartanō*) meant “not to hit,” i.e. “to miss.” However, in ancient Greek this word family did not have a predominately ethical focus.[88] The moral association would come into the New Testament through the channel of the LXX.[89] Furthermore, Günther notes that “following the prominent use of *hamartanō* and its cognates in the LXX, the New Testament uses them as a comprehensive expression of everything opposed to God.”[90]

An analysis of the most commonly occurring noun form will give us good insight into the significance of this word group. Preliminarily, it needs to be understood that “*hamartia* is always used in the New Testament of man’s sin which is ultimately directed against God."[91] There are, nonetheless, several *general* categories of usage. Vine suggests four; ἁμαϱτία (*hamartia*):

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[85] *NIDOTTE*, 3:351.

[86] Most of these can be obtained by synthesizing the lists of related terms found at the ends of the articles from the various word books previously cited.

[87] Very obviously this word group provides the name for the division of theology dealing with sin, i.e. *hamartiology*.

[88] Stählin, *TDNT*, 1:293. At its worst in secular settings, the word group sometimes carried an intellectual sense of to ‘ “be mistaken’ ” (Günther, *NIDNTT*, 3:575).

LXX Septuagint

[89] E.g. Stählin observes that “only by its use for חטא in the LXX did ἁμαρτία itself become a distinctly religious term” (ibid.). Remember that this septuagintal phenomenon of impregnating a Greek term with theological meaning is wide-spread.

LXX Septuagint

[90] *NIDNTT*, 3:579.

> … is used of sin as (a) a principle or source of action, or an inward element producing acts, e.g., Romans 3:9; … 6:1, 2; 7:7 … 7:8 (twice), 9, 11, 13, … (b) a governing principle or power, e.g., Romans 6:6 … 7:11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 25; … (c) a generic term (distinct from specific terms …, yet sometimes inclusive of concrete wrong doing …); … Romans 8:3 … Hebrews 9:26; 10:6, 8, 18; 13:11; 1 John 1:7, 8; 3:4 … (d) a sinful deed, an act of sin, e.g. Matthew 12:31; Acts 7:60; … James 2:9. …"[92]

His first two categories (i.e. a & b) obviously are closely related, except that the second one lends itself to sin being considered as a *seemingly* independent power within the world. The fourth category is the most easily recognizable; however, concrete deeds of sin in the New Testament are not as significant as the overall concept of sin for the development of a biblical hamartiology. Concerning Vine's third category, it would seem that the two hamartiological terms mentioned in Romans 5:12–14 illustrate it best. Sin viewed generically (cf. ἁμαϱτία [*hamartia*] and ἁμαϱτάνω [*hamartanō*] in vv. 12 a, b, c; 13 a, b; and the first term of v. 14) takes on a tone of explicit infraction (cf. παϱάβασις [*parabasis*], the second term of v. 14) when the specific ordinances of God come into play.[93] Nevertheless, any and every category of usage of the ἁμαϱτία (*hamartia*) word group is exceedingly important when it comes to developing a panoramic picture of sin in the New Testament.

πλανάω/πλανή (*planaō*/*planē*)

Standing in the background of this hamartiologically significant word group is a long history of literal wanderings or strayings off course.[94] In the LXX, "*planaō* most frequently stands for *tāʿâh*."[95] As a matter of fact, πλανάω (*planaō*) so renders תָּעָה (*tāʿâ*) in Isaiah 53:6, that illustrative passage about the sheep nature of human sinners. Concerning this important imagery as it carries over into the New Testament, Günther has well noted that

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[91] Ibid.

[92] *EDNTW*, 576–577.

[93] Cf. further discussion under παϱαβαίνω (*parabainō*)/παϱάβασις (*parabasis*) below. The principle of hamartiological advancement in the realm of specificity is analogous to the one previously cited in Job 34:37 (cf. and contrast חטא [*ḥṭʾ*] with פשׁע [*pšʿ*]).

[94] For a survey of some of these, see Braun, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* ed. G. Kittel; G. Friedrich, 10 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976, 6:229–230, 234.

LXX Septuagint

[95] Günther, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. C. Brown, 4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971, 2:458.

“the primary, spatial sense is seen most clearly where the picture of sheep is expressly introduced (Matthew 18:12ff.; 1 Peter 2:25), or in combination with *hodos*, way (2 Peter 2:15; …). It is never, however, spatial and nothing more: There is always a theological meaning associated with its use.”[96]

Jude, using a word play on this group, adds yet another vivid picture. He warns about false teachers saying,

> Woe to them! They have taken the way [from ὁδός (*hodos*)] of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam’s error [i.e. from πλανή (*planē*)]; they have been destroyed in Korah’s rebellion. These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars [ἀστέρες πλανῆται (*asteres planētai*)],[97] for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever (Jude 11–13, NIV).

Throughout the New Testament, the verb is used both actively and passively in settings emphasizing the sin of wandering or straying. A good example illustrating both usages is found in 2 Timothy 3:13: “But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving [πλανῶντες (*planōntes*; active voice)] and being deceived [πλανώμενοι (*planōmenoi*; passive voice]” (2 Timothy 3:13, NASB). And, as already intimated, the most common, feminine noun from this family moves from the literal background of “wandering” or “roaming” to “*wandering* from the path of truth,” i.e. “error, delusion, deceit, deception.”[98] Second Peter 3:17 is exemplary in that it warns the flock of God about “the error [πλάνῃ (*planē*)] of unprincipled men.”[99] Needless to say, sin as πλανή (*planē*) is a highly culpable offense.

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[96] Ibid., 459.

[97] Such *literal movement* in space (cf., e.g., the English word “planet” deriving from the πλανάω [*planaō*] word group) provides another illustration of what sinners, conceived as *ethical wanderers* are like.

NIV New International Version

NASB The New American Standard Bible

[98] W. Bauer; W. F. Arndt; F. W. Gringrich; *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*; Chicago, 1957, 671.

[99] Ibid.

παραβαίνω / παράβασις (*parabainō*/*parabasis*)[100]

Vine immediately takes off from the etymological constituents of this word family: "Literally to go aside (*para*), hence to go beyond, … chiefly used metaphorically of 'transgressing'…."[101]

In secular Greek the word group was used when some law was broken by an individual, *stepping over the line* drawn by that law.[102] The idea of 'stepping over' also stands behind later usages in the papyri.[103] More importantly, in the LXX this family is often employed to indicate the violations of God's Law. For example, "man becomes guilty in respect of God's commandments and ordinances, Exodus 32:8: … cf. also Deuteronomy 9:12, 16."[104]

Similarly, as we move into the New Testament, the noun:

> denotes "sin in its relation to law, i.e., to a requirement or obligation which is legally valid or has legal force." Paul in Romans 2:23 alleges that the Jew dishonors God by transgressing the Law. In Romans 4:15 he declares that there is transgression only where there is law.[105]

Romans 4:15 is illuminated more fully by a passage which comes after it in the next chapter of Romans.[106] Vine's survey of παράβασις (*parabasis*) shows how important the context of the fifth chapter of Romans really is for a proper understanding of this word family in the New Testament; this noun is:

> primarily "a going aside," then "an overstepping" … used metaphorically to denote transgression (always a breach of law): (a) of Adam, Romans 5:14; (b) of Eve, 1 Timothy 2:14; (c) negatively, where there is no law, since transgression implies the violation of law, none having been enacted between Adam's

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[100] This word group is the first of three, the different stems of which have the same prefixed preposition, i.e. παρά (*para*). This preposition exhibits two basic "root meanings": 1) "beside, near"; 2) "violation, transgression, neglect" (Bruce M. Metzger, *Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek* [Princeton: Theological Book Agency, 1971], 84). These basic colorings will help us to grasp the hamartiological impact of the following terms.

[101] W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, ed. M. F. Unger; W. White; Nashville: Nelson, 1996, 639; cf. Schneider: intransitively, ' "to go by or beside' "; transitively in a transferred sense, ' "to overstep,' 'to transgress,' 'to offend,' strictly 'to pass by someone without noticing' " (*TDNT*, 5:736).

[102] Schneider, *TDNT*, 5:736.

[103] Ibid., 737.

LXX Septuagint

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid., 739–740.

[106] I.e. a passage previously mentioned under my treatment of the ἁμαρτάνω (*hamartanō*) word group.

> transgression and those under the Law, Romans 4:15; (d) of transgressions of the Law, Galatians 3:19, where the statement “it was added because of transgressions” is best understood according to Romans 4:15; 5:13 and 5:20; the Law does not make men sinners, but makes them transgressors; hence sin becomes “exceedingly sinful,” Romans 7:7, 13.[107]

Let James 2:9 also lend its voice to the basic force of sin further specified as *transgression*: “Now if you show personal favoritism,[108] you are committing sin, being convicted by the Law[109] as transgressors (παραβάται [*parabatai*]).” Consequently, this word group points to high-handed breaches of God’s will as it is revealed in His Word.[110]

παράπτωμα *(paraptōma)*

The etymology of this compound noun also helps to crystallize its main thrust. For example, Michaelis observes that the verb form of this word group in early Greek “means ‘to fall beside or aside.’ ”[111]

Usage wise, the noun form παράπτμα (*paraptōma*) in the LXX often renders מַעַל (*maʿal*, “treachery”), פֶּשַׁע (*pešaʿ*, “rebellion”) and עָוֶל (*ʿāwel*, “wrongdoing”),[112] all of which (as previously noted) indicate highly accountable sins in the Old Testament.[113] This picture of culpability continues on into the New Testament. Bauder’s survey is helpful:

> Apart from the Pauline writings, the noun is only found in the New Testament in Matthew 6:14f. par. Luke 11:25f. As in the Old Testament, it is used as one of several words for sin, but emphasizes strongly the deliberate act (only in Romans 5:20 is it used of a universal fact) with its fateful consequences. Hence, figuratively it means an action through which man falls and loses the position that God gave him. Thus trespasses committed by one man against another directly affect man’s

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[107] *EDNTW*, 640.

[108] Or, “show partiality”; literally, “if you face-take.”

[109] James likely had some application of Leviticus 19:18 in mind; he had just quoted it in v. 8.

[110] A very low frequency word group that parallels the basic thrust of the παραβαίνω (*parabainō*) family in the New Testament is παρανομέω/παρανομία (*paranomeō/paranomia*). Its basic thrust is *overstepping the law*. One verb and one noun occurrence appear respectively in Acts 23:3 (“violate,” NIV) and 2 Peter 2:16 (“transgression,” NASB).

[111] *TDNT*, 6:170.

LXX Septuagint

[112] Ibid.

[113] Cf. Bauder, *NIDNTT*, 3:585–586.

> relation to God and in the final judgment provide the standard by which he is judged (Matthew 6:14f. par. Luke 11:25f.).[114]

I feel compelled to stress how parallel παράβασις (*parabasis*) and παράπτωμα (*paraptōma*) are in Romans 5:12ff.[115] The flagrant sin (i.e. ἁμαρτία [*hamartia*]/ἁμαρτάνω [*hamartanō*]; cf. Romans 5:12, 13, 14, 16, 20) of Adam, the father of our fallen race, is further exposed as both παράβασις (*parabasis*) in verse 14 and παράπτωμα (*paraptōma*) in verses 15, 16, 17, 18, and 20.[116] No wonder the whole lot of humanity is described as "being dead in reference to our transgressions and sins" (τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν [*tois paraptōmasin kai tais hamartiais humōn*]) (Ephesians 2:1).[117]

παρακούω / παρακοή (*parakouō*/*parakoē*)

This word family also develops in relation to the general force of its constituent parts, i.e. a "bad hearing."[118] Kittel asserts that this basic impression involves an "unwillingness to hear … therefore in the guilty sense of disobedience."[119] Conceptually, the force and fruition of this Greek word group echoes the Old Testament idiom of "not listening to," i.e. "not obeying" the LORD.[120] In view of all these things, "*parakoē* expresses above all a refusal to listen, turning a deaf ear."[121] Based upon its occurrence in Romans 5:19, Spicq dubs παρακοή (*parakoē*) "the original human transgression, punishable by death."[122] Erickson's conclusion about its hamartiological significance is on target: "Thus the sin of παρακοή is either the failure to listen and heed when God is speaking, or the disobedience which follows upon failure to hear aright."[123]

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[114] Ibid., 586.

[115] I.e. a passage of great theological significance for anthropology and hamartiology.

[116] παρακοή (*parakoē*), our next word to be considered, also enters the picture in v. 19.

[117] At one point in his argument, Michaelis affirms that παράτωμα (*paraptōma*) "refers directly to the disruption of man's relation to God through his fault" (*TDNT*, 6:172).

[118] Kittel, *TDNT*, 1:223.

[119] Ibid.

[120] I.e. לֹא + שָׁמַע + לְ / בְּ + קוֹל (*lō*ˀ + *šāma*ˁ + *l*^{e}/ *b*^{e} + *qōl*); lit., "not listening to the voice of" the LORD.

[121] Spicq, *TLNT*, 3:29.

[122] Ibid., 28. Such heinous disobedience is even brought into sharper contrast in the presence of the "obedience" of Christ, the 'Second' or 'Last Adam' (cf. again Romans 5:19 in its context). Also, the semantical contrast between "disobedience" (παρακοή [*parakoē*]) and "obedience" (ὑπακοή [*hupakoē*]) is brought out in 2 Corinthians 10:6.

[123] *Christian Theology*, 2:567.

ἀπειθέω/ἀπείθεια/ἀπειθής (*apeitheō/apeitheia/apeithēs*)

This word group and the four to follow have alpha privatives affixed to their respective stems, meaning that the force of each stem's meaning is negated or reversed.[124] In connection with this phenomenon, Vine characterizes the force of the ἀπειθέω (*apeitheō*) group as "literally, the condition of being unpersuadable (*a̲*, negative, *peithō*, to persuade)," denoting " 'obstinacy, obstinate rejection of the will of God'; hence 'disobedience.' "[125] Indeed, since classical times the verb has meant "to be disobedient."[126] Turning to biblical Greek, "in the LXX it is used for various Hebrew words, especially מרה and סרר. Here already it is a significant theological term inasmuch as it denotes the sinful attitude of the people, which in the Old Testament is essentially understood as disobedience against God."[127]

In the majority of this word group's occurrences in the New Testament, the contexts suggest "disobedience to God, mostly in contrast with faith."[128] For example,

> such ἀπειθεῖν can be asserted of either Jews[129] (Romans 11:31, 15:31; Acts 14:2; … 19:9) or Gentiles, or without regard to the nationality of those concerned (1 Peter 2:8; … 3:1; 4:17; John 3:36 …). In this sense ἀπειθεῖν can be used in the absolute (Romans 11:31; 15:31; Acts 14:2; … 19:9; …), or we have ἀπειθεῖν τῷ λόγῳ (1 Peter 2:8; 3:1), τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ (1 Peter 4:17), τῷ υἱῷ (John 3:36 …).[130]

A couple of comments on two different verses wherein members of this word family make their presence known will elucidate the highhanded nature of this hamartiological group. Turning first to the close parallelism between "disobedience" and "unbelief" in Hebrews 3:18, 19,[131] Hughes argues that

> the juxtaposition of unbelief and disobedience indicates the close connection between the two. As Wescott says, "unbelief passed into action." And this is always the case. It is what happened when man first fell from God; it was repeated

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[124] E.g. "righteousness" becomes "*un*righteousness" when the alpha privative is prefixed to it.
[125] *EDNTW*, 173.
[126] Cf. Bultmann, *TDNT*, 6:10.
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[127] Ibid.
[128] Becker, *NIDNTT*, 1:593. In this regard Bultmann aptly observes that "ἀπειθεῖν often stands in antithesis to πισεύειν, Acts 14:1f.; 1 Peter 2:7f; John 3:36. It is also synonymous with ἀπιστία" (*TDNT*, 6:11).
[129] Herein also cf. the noun ἀπείθεια (*apeitheia*) in Romans 11:30, 32; Hebrews 4:6, 11.
[130] Bultmann, *TDNT*, 6:11; respectively, "disobedience" unqualified; then "disobedience" "to the Word," "to the Gospel," "to the Son."
[131] I.e. between ἀπειθήσασιν (*apeithēsasin*) and ἀπιστίαν (*apistian*).

> in the wilderness; and the same disastrous sequence was now threatening the community to whom this letter was sent.[132]

Now concerning John 3:36, consider the hamartiological impact of Godet's credible comment on the substantive participle ὁ ἀπειθῶν (*ho apeithōn*), "he who disobeys brings out the voluntary side in unbelief, that of revolt."[133]

ἀνομία / ἄνομος (*anomia/anomos*)

The alpha privative in the case of the ἀνομία (*anomia*) word group most basically carries the force of "against," i.e. "against the (a) law."[134] The noun occurs in the LXX, for example, in Exodus 34:7; Leviticus 16:21; 2 Samuel 14:9; Ezra 9:6, 7, 13; Job 7:21; Isaiah 1:5; Lamentations 4:6, 22; Ezekiel 3:19; etc.[135] The descriptive adjective crops up in 1 Kings 8:32; Proverbs 21:18; Isaiah 1:4, 28; Ezekiel 3:19; Daniel 12:10; etc.[136] By looking at the settings of these occurrences, its juxtapositions with other words for sin, and the variety of heavy-duty, hamartiological terms that it renders, we can discern that the emphasis of this word group in the Greek Old Testament is on exceedingly serious sin(s). This helps to inform its very condemning references in the Greek New Testament.

BAG breaks down the New Testament occurrences of the noun ἀνομία (*anomia*) into two broad categories of usage, "lawlessness … as a frame of mind" and as "a lawless deed."[137] Obviously, these general categories often overlap, especially as sin regularly manifests itself in observable actions. Even a casual reading of the verses in which the noun form is found will reveal its culpable nature (cf. Matthew 7:23; 13:41; 23:28; 24:21; Romans 4:7; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:7; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 1:9; 8:12; 10:17; 1 John 3:4). Vine, choosing a couple of key passages, characterizes the hamartiological impact of ἀνομία (*anomia*) in New Testament revelation:

> *anomia* …, "lawlessness" … is most frequently translated "iniquity;" in 2 Thessalonians 2:7, RV, "lawlessness" (KJV, "iniquity"); … the display of

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[132] Philip E. Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle of Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 154.

[133] Frederick L. Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, reprinted, n.d.), 1:413.

[134] Gutbrod, *TDNT*, 4:1085.

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[135] "ἀνομία is common in the LXX, though there is no fixed Hebrew equivalent. It corresponds most frequently to עון (some 60 times), און (some 25 times, especially in Psalms), פשע (some 20 times), תועבה (some 25 times, especially in English).… It also corresponds to about 20 other Hebrew terms, but in most cases only once each" (Gutbrod, *TDNT*, 4:1085).

[136] "In the LXX ἄνομος is used some 30 times for רשע, but elsewhere it occurs for about 25 other Hebrew terms, in most cases only once each" (ibid).

[137] BAG, 71.

> "lawlessness" by the "lawless" one (v. 8)[138] will be the effect of the attempt by the powers of darkness to overthrow the divine government. In 1 John 3:4, the RV adheres to the real meaning of the word, "every one that doeth sin (a practice, not the committal of an act) doeth also lawlessness: and sin is lawlessness." This definition of sin sets forth its essential character as the rejection of the law, or will, of God and the substitution of the will of self.[139]

Sticking with Vine, he also selects a good paradigm passage to illustrate the main thrust of the adjective when it occurs in contexts controlled by the standard of "God's moral law":[140]

> *anomos* …, "without law," also denotes "lawless"…. In 2 Peter 2:8 [it is used] of deeds (KJV, "unlawful'), where the thought is not simply that of doing what is unlawful, but of flagrant defiance of the known will of God.[141]

Consequently, this is yet another graphic word group that describes people and their sinful defiance.

ἀδικέω/ἀδικία (*adikeō*/*adikia*)

Alpha privatives prefixed to words built upon the stem -δικ- (-*dik*-) "denote the opposite of the positive concepts" of righteousness, justice, etc.[142] In order to distinguish between "righteousness" and "unrighteousness" some sort of standard or norm must be present.[143] As Günther notes, "the definition of the content of the concept is usually dependent on the norm of justice that obtains at any particular time and to which it is related…. But above all, the concept of *adikia* is rooted in legal thinking…."[144] Concerning this word group's forensic function, Spicq observes that "this latter meaning predominates in the LXX" and that "the New Testament knows only this meaning."[145]

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[138] Carefully note how the noun in v. 7 is followed up by the personal embodiment of supreme lawlessness in the satanic henchman identified in v. 8. This certainly helps us to understand how highly offensive to God sin viewed as ἀνομία (*anomia*) really is.

[139] *EDNTW*, 357.

[140] Cf. also, BAG, 71.

[141] *EDNTW*, 357.

[142] Günther, *NIDNTT*, 3:573; the common denominator of the root of this stem, i.e. δεικ [*deik*], in ancient Greek was ' "to give direction,' 'to show,' 'to indicate,' 'to posit,' 'to establish.' … When applied specifically in the legal sphere, the word means 'what is laid down by law' " (Schrenk, *TDNT*, 2:180).

[143] Cf., Hill's discussion of the δικ (*dik*) word group (*GWHM*, 98ff); cf. also Seebass and Brown, *NIDNTT*, 3:352; etc.

[144] *NIDNTT*, 3:573–574.

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[145] *TLNT*, 1:320.

Now returning to the idea of what is righteous or unrighteous according to some custom or norm, the ultimate *Standard* in biblical Greek is the Person and/or precepts of God.

With this background in mind, Günther illuminatingly informs us about the use of the ἀδικέω (*adikeō*) word complex in the Greek Old Testament:

> The LXX uses these words to translate a variety of Hebrew equivalents; the Hebrew vocabulary is here far more complex and varied than the Greek. The most important are these: *adikeō* translates twenty-four Hebrew words; proportionately the most frequent (twelve times) is the qal of *ʿāšaq*, act unjustly, oppress, extort.… By far the commonest of these words in the LXX is *adikia* (c. 250 times). It represents thirty-six different Hebrew words; most often it translates *ʿāwôn*, offense, guilt, punishment (c. eighty times), but occasionally also *ʿawlâh*, perversity, wickedness (e.g. Hosea 10:13), *ḥāmās*, violent act, injustice (e.g. Psalm 7:16 (17)), and *šeqer*, lie (e.g. Psalm 119:104).[146]

Such is a sampling of this word group's ethically lurid legacy which continues on into the New Testament.

Concerning the verb ἀδικέω (*adikeō*) in the New Testament, its two occurrences in Revelation 22:11 are paradigmatic both by precedent[147] and by parallelism:[148] "Let the one who practices unrighteousness continue to do unrighteousness,[149] … and [logically 'however' in such a setting of stark contrast,] let the righteous one continue to do rightousness.…" In reference to the noun ἀδικία (*adikia*), Schrenk categorizes its main settings as follows:[150]

> 1. It is an antonym to δικαιοσύνη.… In Romans 1:29 ἀδικία is put first in the list of offenses as "violation of the divine law and its norm".… It is in Romans 6:13 however—ὅπλα ἀδικίας/ὅπλα δικαιοσύνης—that we reach the height of contrast to the solemn basic concept of the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ.… b. It is also opposite of ἀλήθεια. …[151]

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[146] *NIDNTT*, 3:574.

[147] Note the present tense, characterizing participle ἀδικῶν (*ho adikōn*).

[148] I.e. through a contrasting parallelism with positive counterparts. Cf. adjectives in antithetical parallelism in Matthew 5:45 and Acts 24:15.

[149] Vine labels this "the retributive and permanent effect of a persistent course of unrighteous-doing" (*EDNTW*, 653).

[150] Excerpted from *TDNT*, 1:155–157.

[151] Cf. e.g. 1 Corinthians 13:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:12; etc.

2. We find … the relationship to ἀσέβεια.… In the thesis of Paul in Romans 1:18: ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργὴ θεοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων, which stands at the head of two sections vv. 19–23 … and vv. 24–32 …, a distinction is made between them.… b. ἀδικία is also defined as "sin against God" … In 1 John 1:9 ἀδικία is expressly linked with ἁμαρτία as unrighteousness against God. A definition along these lines is given in 1 John 5:17: πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστίν. Thus in 3:7ff. ποεῖν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν is the opposite of ποεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην.

3. The term is also used apocalyptically.… In 2 Thessalonians 2:10 mention is made of the ἀπάτη ἀδικίας in depiction of the operation of antichrist.… In 2 Peter 2:13 ἀδικούμενος μισθὸν ἀδικίας means being harmed by the reward "paid for unrighteousness." …

4. We find the Hebrew gen. of definition … in [Luke] 18:6 κρι τὴς τῆς ἀδικίας = a judge who "perverts justice."

Just a cursory survey indeed reveals that this word group represents bold sinning. Consider, for example, how Günther characterized this word family as he brings it alongside of the most generic hamartiological group: "In comparison with *hamartia, adikia* describes more forcibly the outwardly visible characteristics of that which stands under the power of sin."[152]

ἀσεβέω/ἀσέβεια/ἀσεβής (*asebeō*/*asebeia*/*asebēs*)

"Derivatives of the stem σεβ- are used commonly in Greek and are a typical expression of Greek piety."[153] So when the negating alpha privative is glued on, for example, to the noun, its basic meaning becomes "*im*piety."[154] In the LXX the verb ἀσεβέω (*asebeō*) renders primarily רָשַׁע *(rāšaʿ)* and פָּשַׁע *(pāšaʿ)* which, as we have already observed, indicate flagrant oppositions to the LORD and/or His Law. Concerning this word group's noun form in the Greek Old Testament, Foerster credibly stresses the fact that

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[152] *NIDNTT*, 2:575.

[153] Foerster, *TDNT*, 7:168; importantly, however, he notes that "the LXX … is very restrained in its use of it" (ibid.). It is illuminating to compare σεβάζομαι (*sebazomai* [Romans 1:25]), σέβομαι (*sebomai*), and σέβασμα (*sebasma*) in the New Testament; of a total of thirteen occurrences approximately one-half of them indicate some kind of improper worship.

[154] Here Forerster observes that "the LXX is not so restrained in relation to ἀσεβής, ἀσέβεια, and ἀσεβέω …" (Ibid., 169).

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> ἀσέβεια is not a subjective disposition but an objective fact.… The objective state of affairs which the group ἀσεβ- denotes in the LXX is the violation of the will of God, in whose territory it also occurs. Since the Law regulates all men's conduct, all bad deeds are ἀσέβειαι.[155]

Flipping over to the Greek New Testament, the verb ἀσεβέω (*asebeō*) "signifies (a) 'to be or live ungodly,' 2 Peter 2:6; (b) 'to commit ungodly deeds,' Jude 15."[156] The noun ἀσέβια (*asebeia*), " 'impiety, ungodliness,' is used of (a) general impiety, Romans 1:18; 11:26; 2 Timothy 2:16; Titus 2:12; (b) 'ungodly' deeds, Jude 15 RV, 'works of ungodliness'; (c) of lusts or desires after evil things, Jude 18. It is the opposite of *eusebeia*, 'godliness.' "[157] Although possibly open to a modicum of semantic criticism, Vine's footnote is basically credible and generally helpful: "*Anomia* is disregard for, or defiance of, God's laws; *asebeia* is the same attitude towards God's person." The descriptive adjective ἀσεβής (*asebēs*) in the New Testament means " 'impious, ungodly' …, 'without reverence for God,' not merely irreligious, but acting in contravention of God's demands, Romans 4:5; 5:6; 1 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 4:18; 2 Peter 2:5 (v. 6 in some manuscripts) 3:7; Jude 4, 15 (twice)."[158] No wonder, for example, 2 Peter and Jude describe "great sinners of all ages up to the end as transgressors, *ungodly*, and sinners."[159]

ἄγνοια (agnoia)

Erickson summarizes the etymological significance of this noun in the following way: "One of the New Testament words stressing a cause of sin is ἄγνοια. A combination of a Greek verb meaning 'to know' (γινώσκω, from γνόω) and the alpha privative, it is related to the English word *agnostic*."[160] The history of this word family in secular Greek is generally quite benign,[161] but in the theological mega-setting of the LXX it often takes on various degrees of culpability. For example,

> In Daniel 9:15 it[162] is used beside *hamartanō*, to sin. Similarly *agnoēma* (in the New Testament only in Hebrews 9:7) is used not merely for error but also for an offense done

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[155] Ibid., 188.

[156] Vine, *EDNTT*, 651.

[157] Ibid.

[158] Ibid. Erickson (*Christian Theology* 2:565) over-corrects those who, like Vine, insist on retaining the more high-handed emphasis of this word group in the New Testament. Foerster's comments (*TDNT*, 7:190) on Romans 1:18; 4:5; 5:6, 8; etc. help to correct the leanings of correctors such as Erickson.

[159] *TDNT*, 7:191, emphasis added; cf. Foerster's full discussion (ibid., 190–191).

[160] *Christian Theology*, 2:565.

[161] Cf., e.g., Bultmann, *TDNT*, 1:115ff.

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[162] I.e. the verb ἀγνοέω (*agnoeō*).

in ignorance.… In legal settings *agnoia* means ignorance of the law; *kat᾽ agnoian* means unwittingly (e.g. Leviticus 5:18). The LXX used *agnoia* (mostly for Hebrew *ʾāšām*) concretely in the sense of *agnoēma*, also meaning (unintentional) guilt, offense, error, generally (e.g., Leviticus 5:18).[163]

The verb ἀγνοέω (*agnoeō*) in the New Testament exhibits the following basic nuances:[164]

a) Not to understand in the sense of not being able to grasp (Mark 9:32 and Luke 9:45, in each case of a passion prediction by Jesus).

b) Not to know, not be informed (e.g., 2 Peter 2:12 …).[165]

c) An ignorance that leads astray. …[166]

d) A failure to know in the sense of a disobedient closing of the mind to the revealing word of God (Acts 13:27; Romans 10:3). This is not simply a lack of knowledge, but "a false understanding, a false path in knowing and thinking" (O. Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, KEK 4, 1966, on Romans 10:3). Ignorance and disobedience are here used as parallels; ignorance is the guilty turning away from the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. …

e) To be unknown. …[167]

Furthermore, in reference to the adjective ἄγνωστος (*agnōstos*) in the phrase "to an *unknown* god" followed by the attention-arresting relative clause "what you worship *without knowing* it" (i.e. ἀγνοοῦντες [*agnoountes*])[168] in Acts 17:23, Bahnsen, after wandering down many illuminating exegetical and theological side roads, correctly asserts that "the unbeliever is fully responsible for his mental state, and this is a state of

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[163] Schütz, *NIDNTT*, 2:406.

[164] Ibid., 406–407.

[165] Schütz includes Paul's famous "do you not know" challenges (e.g. Romans 6:3; 7:1) under this subheading; however, rightly he is quick to qualify such occurrences with the following words: "… a present knowledge is presupposed which implies a need to respond to the gospel. Almost all the passages cited above deal with a partial recognition of faith in Christ, as the object of *agnoeō*. It never means merely a lack of intellectual knowledge which can be removed by a neutral statement of facts" (ibid., 407).

[166] Schütz cites 1 Timothy 1:13 and Hebrews 5:2 as examples (ibid).

[167] Schütz cites 2 Corinthians 6:9 as an example (ibid).

[168] Rendering of BAG, 11; emphasis added.

culpable ignorance. This explains why Paul issued a call for *repentance* to the Athenians (v. 30); their ignorant mindset was immoral."[169]

With this usage background based upon other members of the immediate family of ἄγνοια (*agnoia*),[170] the noun's use as a hamartiological term in the New Testament starts to take on some definition. Bultmann well speaks of "the guilty aspect of ἄγνοια."[171] The force and function of this noun in its setting in Acts 3:17 are captured by Bruce when he comments:

> We may think that Peter's words were surprisingly lenient to people like Caiaphas and his fellow-members of the chief-priestly families, who were so determined to have Jesus put to death. But however that may be, here is a proclamation of divine generosity, offering a free pardon to all who took part in the death of Christ if only *they realize their error, confess their sin, and turn to God in repentance*.[172]

In the middle of v. 18 of Ephesians 4 Paul says of the Gentiles,[173] they stand "alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which dwells in them."[174] Lincoln's comments on this Pauline portion provide for us a great service in reference to our " 'ignorance' " of the hamartiological significance of ἄγνοια (*agnoia*):

> This ignorance does not provide an excuse for the broken relationship with God. In the tradition of Jewish apologetic of which it is a part …, Gentile ignorance is viewed as culpable, and elsewhere in Jewish thought ignorance is linked with sin.… This is certainly also the perspective of the more extended and profound analysis of Romans 1:18–23, where knowledge of God becomes futility and folly and therefore, in effect, ignorance, because of a failure to honor God as God. Here in Ephesians, the Gentiles' responsibility for their own ignorance comes out more explicitly in the following characterizations, but is perhaps hinted at in the formulation "the ignorance that is in them." The ignorance cannot be blamed on other factors; it has its roots within them. …[175]

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[169] Greg L. Bahnsen, *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith*, edited by Robert Booth (Atlanta: American Vision, 1996), 256.

[170] Note the New Testament occurrences of ἄγνοια (*agnoia*): Acts 3:17; 17:30; Ephesians 4:18; 1 Peter 1:14.

[171] *TDNT*, 1:118.

[172] F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 90; italics added to show the culpability of all such "ignorance." Cf. a similar force and function of the noun but in a Gentile setting in Acts 17:30.

[173] Herein=non-Christians.

[174] Schnackenburg's dynamic rendering (Rudolph Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, translated by H. Heron [Edinburgh: T&T Clark 1991], 194).

[175] Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians,* WBC (Dallas: Word, 1990), 278.

Consequently, whether expressed in biblical Greek or by an old English proverb, "Ignorance is no excuse!"

ὀφείλημα (*opheilēma*)

The non-moral background of the ὀφείλημα (*opheilēma*) word group is situated in the realm of business and finance.[176] The common semantical denominator of all members from this word family is "to owe someone something."[177] Foundationed upon this commercial imagery, in the context of Scripture these words often extend into the moral realm. Respectively of the verb and noun, Louw and Nida provide the following renderings and comments: "to commit a sin against someone and thus incur moral debt"; "the moral debt incurred as the result of sin—'offense, sin, transgression, guilt.' "[178] Surprisingly, "the Old Testament does not make use of the concept of legal debt in order to depict obligation to Yahweh."[179] However, "Later Judaism, which views the relation to God as a legal and business relation, often applies the metaphor of indebtedness to the ethical and religious relation between man and God."[180]

The synoptic parallels of Matthew 6:12 and Luke 11:4 illustrate the New Testament's depiction of *sin* as IOU along with man's fundamental need, namely, a divine pardoning of our debts.[181] As Tiedtke and Link put it, "The concept of debt (*opheilēma*) is linked by Jesus not with achievements or demands concerning payments of arrears, but with forgiveness."[182] Our "failure before God,"[183] our moral indebtedness, can only be paid off in full with the credit of Christ and His crosswork.

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[176] Cf., e.g., *GELSD*, 1:582; MM, 468–469; etc.

[177] Hauck, *TDNT*, 5:559.

[178] *GELSD*, 1:774.

[179] Tiedtke and Link, *NIDNTT*, 2:667.

[180] Hauck, *TDNT*, 5:561. Nevertheless, the nature of Judaism's metaphorical extensions is quite different from most of the New Testament's teachings about sin as a debt owed (cf., e.g., Tiedtke and Link, *NIDNTT*, 2:667–668). Romans 4:4ff. addresses the difference very pointedly.

[181] Vine well notes that "sin as a debt … demands expiation" (*EDNTW*, 150).

[182] *NIDNTT*, 2:667; their example of "the parable of the unmerciful servant" (Matthew 18:23–35) is especially illustrative (ibid.).

[183] Guelich's common denominator for ὀφειλήματα (*opheilēmata*), whether rendered literally as "debts," or figuratively as "sins" or "trespasses" (Robert A. Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount* [Waco: Word, 1982], 312).

κακός / κακία (*kakos/kakia*)[184]

Since the adjective κακός (*kakos*) and the feminine noun κακία (*kakia*) are such high-frequency terms not only throughout Greek literature but also in the New Testament, most of our attention will be devoted to their occurrences in morally malignant settings.[185] "*Kakos* is found from Homer on in a large variey of associations. It means bad in the sense of lacking something, always in contrast to *agathos*, good."[186]

In the LXX,[187] as might be expected, this word group's morality quotient rises. Conceptually,

> κακός is one of the LXX words which in the main correspond to a specific Hebrew stem, namely, רַע. In numerous cases it is used for synonymous or generally related terms. If it thus misses the particular nuances of the original, it brings out even more strongly the one-sidedness and impressiveness of the moral and religious judgment which Judaism pronounces on evil and wickedness.[188]

Especially significant are the morally freighted occurrences of this word group in Psalms, Proverbs, and the prophets.[189] These ethically pregnant portions of the Old Testament have much to say about *doing* or *not doing* that which is *bad* or *evil*.[190] At this juncture Achilles well notes that "the Old Testament very seldom speaks theoretically of evil. It describes it concretely and concentrates on the case at hand."[191] A good way to illustrate this fact is by pointing to a couple of compounds from the κακός (*kakos*) word family, κακοποιός (*kakopoios*) and κακοῦργος (*kakourgos*). For example, "in Proverbs 2:15, the *kakourgos* is the 'doer of iniquity' (Hebrew *pōʿēl ʾawen*) and is contrasted with the just person, who practices equity."[192]

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[184] This word group along with the one to follow generally look upon sin as being morally bad or evil. On the essential synonymity of these two word groups, see Achilles' introductory paragraph under "Evil, Bad, Wickedness" (*NIDNTT* 1:561). The synoptic parallelism of Matthew 15:19 and Mark 7:2 is especially telling.

[185] Notice, for example, how BAG sorts out these usage-settings: κακία (*kakia*) "1. in the moral sense … a. *depravity, wickedness, vice* generally opposed to virtue … b. a special kind of moral inferiority … *malice, ill-will, malignity*" "2. *trouble, misfortune*"; κακός, ή, όν (*kakos, - ē, - on*) "1. In the moral sense *bad, evil*" … "2. *evil, injurious, dangerous, pernicious* …" "3. Certain passages fall between 1 and 2; in them the harm is caused by evil intent, so that 1 and 2 are combined: *evil, harm, wrong*" (BAG, 397–399).

[186] Achilles, *NIDNTT*, 1:561.

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[187] Statistically, "there are 371 instances of κακός in the LXX. In 227 cases it is a rendering of רַע (293 in the Masora) or רָעָה (346 in the Masora), for which κακία or more often πονηρός (266) is also used" (Grundmann, *TDNT*, 3:477).

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[188] Ibid., 476; beware, however, of Grundmann's unacceptable assumptions when he throws around such statements as "Judaism pronounces."

[189] For a survey, cf. ibid., 476–479, *passim;* but again, read the data through your revelational prescription lenses, not through Grundmann's glasses.

[190] Achilles, *NIDNTT*, 1:562.

[191] Ibid.

Such septuagintal emphases prepare the hamartiological way for the impact of this word complex in the New Testament. Excerpts from Achilles' article aptly highlight the significance of κακός (*kakos*) and its semantical kin in the New Testament:

> *kakos* is used in the New Testament with the meaning evil, bad, destructive, damaging, unjust. It is found 50 times, 26 of these being in Paul (Romans 15 times, but only 7 times in the synoptics).… The noun *kakia* is often used synonymously with the neuter adjective *kakon* as evil, badness, wickedness, and denotes the source of the bahavior of a *kakos*, an evil person, or *kakopoios*, evil-doer (cf. Acts 8:22; Romans 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:8).… The verb *kakoō* means to do evil, cause damage, handle badly or harm (1 Peter 3:13, and often in Acts), stir up, embitter (Acts 14:2, RSV poison); and *kakopoieō* behave badly, do wrong (1 Peter 3:17; 3 John 11), harm (cf. Mark 3:4 parallel).… *kakos* is used attributively and as a noun of persons (Matthew 21:41; 24:48; Philippians 3:2; Titus 1:12; Revelation 2:2) and attributively of things (Mark 7:21; Romans 13:3; 1 Corinthians 15:33; Colossians 3:5; Revelation 16:2). Otherwise it is always a neuter noun meaning evil or the evil in the sense of misfortune, wrong, suffering … or an evil act, a sin (cf. Matthew 27:23 parallel; Acts 23:9; 3 John 11), especially in Paul (cf. Romans 7:19, 21; 12:21; 13:4; 16:19).[193]

Just prior to pressing on to the πονηρός (*ponēros*) word group which is a very close semantical sibling to the κακός (*kakos*) family,[194] a clarification needs to be brought in concerning the roots of the antithesis of "good" and "evil" as found in the Bible. The New Testament does not imbibe any kind of Zoroastrian dualism such as that which apparently made its way into the teachings at Qumran:

> Though numerous dualistic notes may be heard in the New Testament …, one can never find a dualism in which evil has the same power as good. Equally the thought is rejected that the root of evil could lie in God; "for God is untouched [literally cannot be tempted] by evil" (James 1:13, NEB). Evil comes rather from a

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[192] Spicq, *TLNT*, 2:241.

[193] *NIDNTT*, 1:563–564.

[194] As previously noted, the two word groups should be regarded as essentially synonymous, although "*kakos* is the wider term and often covers the meaning of *ponēros*" … "*Kakos* has a wider meaning, *ponēros* a stronger meaning. *Ponēros* alone is used of Satan and might well be translated 'the malignant one' " (Vine, *EDNTW*, respectively, 211, 49).

> man's heart in the form of evil thoughts which find expression in acts (Mark 7:21f. par.; cf. Matthew 15:19 *poneros*). …[195]

πονηϱός/πονηϱία (*ponēros*/*ponēria*)

As in the case of so many of these Greek word groups that contribute biblically to a huge arsenal of hamartiological terms, their background in classical Greek literature was normally quite benign.[196] However, when we examine their usages in the LXX these word groups indicate a high degree of moral culpability. This is transparently clear in the case presently at hand. As a matter of observation, "the use of πονηϱός for רַע and derivates of רָעַע remains within the sphere of the Hebrew original."[197] This also pertains to the noun πονηϱία (*ponēria*) which renders רָעָה.[198] It is obviously the *ethical* sub-categories of these general semantical equivalencies that become exceedingly significant as background for the many moral occurrences of πονηϱός (*ponēros*) and πονηϱία (*ponēria*) in the New Testament. For example, "רַע or πονηϱός is used generally of men in the sense of 'morally bad,' 'culpable.' "[199] More specifically,

> the inner part of man is evil, the will has turned aside from God. … The organs at the disposal of the will and thoughts are also morally evil. …[200] The ὁδός[201] is evil and culpable. …[202]

All of this constitutes a foundation for New Testament revelation. Rare are the occurrences of the adjective πονηϱός (*ponēros*) "in the physical sense."[203] Concerning the noun πονηϱία (*ponēria*) in the New Testament, it "occurs only in a moral sense, especially in a very generalized way, as in lists of vices, e.g. Romans 1:29."[204] Achilles' survey of the main moral usages of the adjective provides a helpful hamartiological synopsis of the whole word group; πονηϱός (*ponēros*):

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[195] Achilles, *NIDNTT*, 1:563–564.

[196] For a sample survey of such hamartiologically anemic usages in secular Greek, cf., e.g. Harder, *TDNT*, 6:546–548.

LXX Septuagint

[197] Ibid., 549.

[198] Ibid., 563.

[199] Ibid., 551; Harder lists Psalm 139:2; Isaiah 25:4; 31:2 as examples.

[200] Remember the synecdochical and instrumental emphases of Old Testament anthropology.

[201] I.e. man's "way" of life.

[202] Ibid., 551; consider some of Harder's documentations for these summaries of usage: Isaiah 3:9; Jeremiah 3:17; 11:19; 18:11; 23:10, 14; Ezekiel 11:2; 13:22; etc.

[203] BAG, 697; i.e., "in the sense of bad, harmful, unserviceable, useless" (Harder, *TDNT*, 6:554).

[204] *TDNT*, 6:565.

> is used ethically in the sense of being opposed to God. (a) Jesus used it as an adjective of men in general, whom he called evil (cf. Matthew 7:11 par.). God alone is good, in contrast to them (Mark 10:18). The Pharisees were evil in the sense of being hardened (Matthew 12:34), just as the Jews were the evil generation (Matthew 12:39; 16:4; Luke 11:29), who showed their character in their opposition to Jesus. So too anyone is evil who decides against Jesus (cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:2; 2 Timothy 3:13). Out of the evil treasure of his heart he brings forth evil (Matthew 12:35 par.).… Thoughts also can be evil (Matthew 15:19). In James 2:4 the *dialogismōn ponēron* means the evil reflections by which judges may be led astray.… In Colossians 1:21 and 2 Timothy 4:18 it is used with *ergon* to denote human actions. …[205]

It should be remembered that the substantive, masculine, singular usage of πονηρός (*poneros*) often occurs as a designation for Satan, the archetype of moral malignancy. Indeed, this word group portrays the devil, his henchmen, and men as evil to the core.

By now it may seem like a broken record, but there are many other Greek terms and a variety of figurative expressions which also significantly contribute to a very extensive hamartiology in the New Testament. For a few samplings of the breadth and depth of the New Testament teachings on sin, it is suggested that APPENDIX F, "Some Selected Dirges on Sin in the New Testament," be perused at this time.[206]

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[205] *NIDNTT*, 1:565–566.

[206] Zemek, G. J. (2005). *A Biblical Theology of the Doctrines of Sovereign Grace: Exegetical Considerations of Key Anthropological, Hamartiological, and Soteriological Terms and Motifs* (pp. 47–81). Wipf & Stock.