

Vocabulary of Sin (NT)

It is apparent on TV, in the internet and in printed matter, our society is leaning towards a “flat earth” mentality. Reporters are “collapsing” topics that have multiple dimensions into a single dimension. Take for instance “climate change.” This used to be called “global warming.” Some say that climate change is caused by inconsiderate humans. But that is collapsing the debate into a single dimension when in fact, it includes many variables. The largest of those variables is the sun. Or take immigration. Some would accuse others of being anti-immigration. But immigration has many aspects to it. There are some who cross borders illegally expecting to become citizens. Other countries enforce border integrity. Take for instance the U.S. Marine that crossed into Mexico illegally. He was arrested and incarcerated.

From a news article in 2014:

“A judge in Tijuana ordered the release of Andrew Tahmooressi from jail Friday after spending 214 days behind bars, a family spokesman said.

Tahmooressi — a former U.S. Marine sergeant — was imprisoned after he crossed into Mexico on March 31 with three loaded weapons. He said he crossed into the country with the weapons accidentally.¹”

As we deal with sin in the Bible, we see there are many nuances to the concept. I could have said something simplistic like, “Sin is bad. Don’t do it.” But that is not very helpful. We dealt with the Old Testament vocabulary last week. This week, we deal with words in the New Testament.

¹ <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/jimdalrympleii/us-marine-vet-held-in-mexico-ordered-released-from-jail>

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In the series of Greek words for sin that follow, I have used the explanation of what each is from BibleHub.com. The explanations tend to be fairly simple and give meaning, origin, background and some insight into the culture in which these words were used.

The most prevalent word in the New Testament is *hamartia*.

ἁμαρτία **hamartia**

Meaning: prop: missing the mark; hence: (a) guilt, sin, (b) a fault, failure (in an ethical sense), sinful deed.

Word Origin: Derived from the Greek verb ἁμαρτάνω (hamartanō), meaning "to miss the mark" or "to err."

Corresponding Greek / Hebrew Entries: - חַטָּא (chet, Strong's 2399) – sin, offense

- אָוֶן (avon, Strong's 5771) – iniquity, guilt

- פְּשָׁע (pesha, Strong's 6588) – transgression, rebellion

Usage: In the New Testament, "hamartia" is primarily used to denote sin, which is understood as a moral failing or transgression against God's law. It encompasses both the act of sinning and the inherent sinful nature of humanity. The term implies a deviation from God's standards and a failure to live up to His holiness.

Cultural and Historical Background: In the Greco-Roman world, the concept of "hamartia" was often associated with missing a target or failing to achieve a goal. In the Jewish context, sin was understood as a violation of the Torah, God's revealed law. The New Testament writers, particularly Paul, expanded on this understanding by emphasizing the universality of sin and the need for redemption through Jesus Christ.²

² <https://biblehub.com/greek/266.htm>

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Sin in the singular is often a reference to the sin nature. Sin in the plural is often a reference to personal sins which originate from the sin nature. And of course, there is the imputation of Adam's sin to the human race.

“The word used most frequently in the N.T. is *hamartia*. This word in classical Greek never approaches the depth of meaning it has in the Bible. The pagan Greeks used it of a warrior who hurls his spear and fails to strike his foe.³”

“Brought over into the N.T., this idea of failing to attain an end, gives it the idea of missing the divinely appointed goal, a deviation from what is pleasing to God, doing what is opposed to God's will, perversion of what is upright, a misdeed.⁴”

Romans 3:9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin (noun);

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned (verb) and fall short of the glory of God,

John 9:1 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.

John 9:2 And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?”

3 Wuest (1966). *Word studies in the New Testament: : Volume III* Grand Rapids, MI.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Page 95

4 Wuest (1966). *Word studies in the New Testament: : Volume III* Grand Rapids, MI.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Page 95

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John 9:3 Jesus answered, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

κακός kakos

Corresponding Greek / Hebrew Entries: The Hebrew equivalent often used in the Old Testament is רע (ra', Strong's H7451), which similarly denotes evil, wickedness, or harm.

Usage: The Greek word "kakos" is used in the New Testament to describe that which is morally or ethically wrong, harmful, or evil. It often refers to actions, thoughts, or behaviors that are contrary to God's will and character. "Kakos" can describe both physical harm and moral evil, emphasizing the destructive nature of sin and wrongdoing.

Cultural and Historical Background: In the Greco-Roman world, the concept of "kakos" was understood in both moral and practical terms. It was used to describe anything that was not beneficial or that caused harm. In the context of the New Testament, "kakos" is often contrasted with "agathos" (good) and is used to highlight the moral and spiritual decay that results from sin. The early Christian community was called to reject "kakos" and pursue a life of holiness and righteousness.⁵

Romans 3:8 And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), “Let us do evil that good may come”?

5 <https://biblehub.com/greek/2556.htm>

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In modern Greek, this word is still used of something that is really bad, evil.

ἀσεβής asebes

Word Origin: Derived from the Greek prefix ἀ- (a-, "not") and σέβω (sébo, "to worship" or "to revere"), indicating a lack of reverence or piety.

Corresponding Greek / Hebrew Entries: - H2611 (חַנְפָּה, chaneph): Often translated as "profane" or "godless," indicating moral corruption or irreverence.

- H7563 (רָשָׁע, rasha): Translated as "wicked" or "ungodly," referring to those who are morally wrong or guilty.

Usage: The term "asebés" is used in the New Testament to describe individuals or behaviors that are contrary to the reverence and worship due to God. It characterizes a state of moral and spiritual corruption, where there is a deliberate rejection or neglect of God's authority and commandments. This word often conveys a sense of active opposition to God's will and a lifestyle that is inconsistent with His holiness.

Cultural and Historical Background: In the Greco-Roman world, piety and reverence were important cultural values, often associated with the worship of the pantheon of gods. The term "asebés" would have been understood as a serious accusation, implying not only a lack of religious observance but also a threat to social order. In the Jewish context, it would denote a failure to adhere to the covenantal laws and a rejection of the God of Israel.⁶

6 <https://biblehub.com/greek/765.htm>

Romans 5:6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Comment: From the perspective of society, some sins are a threat to the social order.

”Ενοχος enochos

Meaning: involved in, held in, hence: liable, generally with dat. (or gen.) of the punishment.

Word Origin: Derived from the Greek verb ἔχω (echō), meaning "to have" or "to hold."

Corresponding Greek / Hebrew Entries: The Hebrew equivalent often associated with the concept of guilt or liability is אָשָׁם (asham), Strong's Hebrew #816, which refers to guilt or a guilt offering.

Usage: The Greek word "enochos" is used to describe someone who is guilty or liable for a particular action or consequence. It conveys the idea of being held accountable or subject to judgment. In the New Testament, it often refers to moral or legal culpability, particularly in the context of divine judgment or human legal systems.

Cultural and Historical Background: In the Greco-Roman world, legal systems were well-established, and the concept of guilt was central to maintaining order and justice. The term "enochos" would have been understood in both Jewish and Gentile contexts as indicating a person who is answerable to a higher authority, whether human or divine. In Jewish law, guilt was associated with the need for atonement and

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reconciliation with God, often through sacrifices or other prescribed rituals.⁷”

Matthew 5:21 “You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not commit murder’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’”

There are sins which from a human perspective are a threat to the social order. As a result, there are severe penalties in different societies for someone who has been deemed “guilty.” Some states impose “capital punishment” on some.

ἀδικία *adikia*

Meaning: injustice, unrighteousness, hurt.

Word Origin: Derived from ἄδικος (*adikos*), meaning "unjust" or "unrighteous," which itself comes from the prefix ἀ- (*a-*, "not") and δίκη (*dike*, "justice" or "righteousness").

Corresponding Greek / Hebrew Entries: - עוֹל (*avel*): Injustice, unrighteousness

- רָשָׁע (*resha*): Wickedness, guilt

Usage: The term "*adikia*" refers to a state or condition of being unjust or unrighteous. It encompasses actions, thoughts, and behaviors that are contrary to God's standards of justice and righteousness. In the New Testament, "*adikia*" is often used to describe moral wrongness,

7 <https://biblehub.com/greek/1777.htm>

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wickedness, or iniquity, highlighting a deviation from divine law and ethical conduct.

Cultural and Historical Background: In the Greco-Roman world, justice (dike) was a foundational concept in both legal and moral contexts. The prefix "a-" negates the word, thus "adikia" signifies a lack of justice or righteousness. In Jewish thought, righteousness (tzedakah) was closely tied to one's relationship with God and adherence to His commandments. Therefore, "adikia" would be seen as a serious breach of covenantal faithfulness and community ethics.⁸

ἀνομία **anomos**

Meaning: lawlessness, iniquity, disobedience, sin.

Word Origin: Derived from the Greek word ἄνομος (anomos), meaning "lawless" or "without law."

Corresponding Greek / Hebrew Entries: - **H5771 (עוֹן, avon):** Iniquity, guilt, punishment of iniquity.

- **H6588 (פְּשָׁע, pasha):** Transgression, rebellion, sin.

Usage: In the New Testament, "anomia" refers to a state of being without law, or more specifically, living in violation of God's law. It denotes a willful disregard for God's commandments and a lifestyle characterized by sin and rebellion against divine order. The term is often used to describe moral and spiritual corruption, highlighting the contrast between God's holiness and human sinfulness.

Cultural and Historical Background: In the Greco-Roman world, law and order were highly valued, and the concept of "anomia" would have

⁸ <https://biblehub.com/greek/93.htm>

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been understood as a serious breach of societal norms. In the Jewish context, the law (Torah) was central to religious life, and "anomia" would signify a grave departure from God's covenantal expectations. The early Christian community, emerging from these cultural backgrounds, viewed "anomia" as a fundamental opposition to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles.⁹

παράβασις parabates

Word Origin: Derived from the Greek verb παραβαίνω (parabainō), meaning "to go beside" or "to transgress."

Corresponding Greek / Hebrew Entries: The Hebrew equivalent often associated with "parabasis" is עֲשָׂה (pasha, Strong's Hebrew 6588), which also means transgression or rebellion against God's law.

Usage: In the New Testament, "parabasis" refers to the act of transgressing or violating a law or commandment. It implies a deliberate crossing of boundaries set by divine law, often highlighting the moral and ethical breach involved in such actions. The term is used to describe both the act of sinning and the state of being in violation of God's commands.

Cultural and Historical Background: In the Greco-Roman world, laws and boundaries were integral to maintaining order in society. The concept of "parabasis" would have resonated with early Christians familiar with both Jewish law and Roman legal systems. In Jewish tradition, the Law (Torah) was central to religious life, and transgressing it was seen as a serious offense against God. The New Testament writers,

9 <https://biblehub.com/greek/458.htm>

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particularly Paul, use "parabasis" to emphasize the gravity of sin and the need for redemption through Christ.¹⁰”

ἄγνοέω Agnoein

Meaning: I do not know, am ignorant of (a person, thing, or fact), sometimes with the idea of willful ignorance.

Word Origin: From the Greek prefix ἄ- (a-, "not") and γινώσκω (ginóskó, "to know")

Corresponding Greek / Hebrew Entries: The concept of ignorance in the Hebrew Bible is often expressed with words like בֹּרַח (bur, "foolish") or חָסֵר (chaser, "lacking"), though there is no direct equivalent to ἄγνοέω.

Usage: The verb ἄγνοέω (agnoeó) is used in the New Testament to describe a state of ignorance or lack of knowledge. It can refer to being unaware of certain facts, truths, or spiritual realities. This ignorance can be due to a lack of information, understanding, or willful neglect. The term is often used in contexts where knowledge is crucial for faith and obedience.

Cultural and Historical Background: In the Greco-Roman world, knowledge was highly valued, and ignorance was often seen as a deficiency. In the Jewish context, knowledge of God and His laws was central to religious life. The New Testament writers, particularly Paul, often addressed ignorance in spiritual matters, emphasizing the importance of understanding God's will and the gospel message.¹¹”

¹⁰ <https://biblehub.com/greek/3847.htm>

¹¹ <https://biblehub.com/greek/50.htm>

πλανᾶω planaō

Meaning: I lead astray, deceive, cause to wander.

Word Origin: Derived from the Greek word πλάνη (planē), meaning "a wandering" or "a straying."

Corresponding Greek / Hebrew Entries: The Hebrew equivalent often associated with deception or leading astray is תָּאַה (ta'ah - Strong's H8582), which means to err, wander, or go astray.

Usage: The verb "planaō" primarily means to lead someone astray or to deceive. It is often used in the New Testament to describe spiritual or moral deception, where individuals or groups are led away from the truth of God's Word. This term can also imply a wandering from the correct path, both physically and metaphorically, indicating a departure from the truth or righteousness.

Cultural and Historical Background: In the Greco-Roman world, the concept of being led astray was often associated with false teachings and philosophies that deviated from accepted truths. In the context of the New Testament, "planaō" is frequently used to warn against false prophets, teachers, and deceptive practices that could lead believers away from the teachings of Jesus Christ. The early Christian community was particularly vigilant against such deceptions, as they sought to preserve the purity of the Gospel message amidst a diverse and often hostile cultural environment.¹²

¹² <https://biblehub.com/greek/4105.htm>

παράπτωμα **paraptoma**

Meaning: a falling away, lapse, slip, false step, trespass, sin.

Word Origin: Derived from the Greek verb παραπίπτω (parapiptō), meaning "to fall away" or "to trespass."

Corresponding Greek / Hebrew Entries: The Hebrew equivalent often associated with "paraptōma" is עֲשָׂה (pesha, Strong's H6588), which also means transgression or rebellion against God's law.

Usage: The term "paraptōma" is used in the New Testament to denote a lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness; a misdeed or sin. It often conveys the idea of a moral or ethical failure, a stepping aside from the right path, or a breach of divine law. In the context of Christian theology, it underscores the human propensity to err and the need for divine forgiveness.

Cultural and Historical Background: In the Greco-Roman world, the concept of "paraptōma" would have been understood in the context of legal and moral transgressions. The term reflects the Jewish understanding of sin as a deviation from God's commandments, which was deeply rooted in the Old Testament. The New Testament writers, particularly Paul, use "paraptōma" to articulate the nature of sin and the necessity of redemption through Christ.¹³

¹³ <https://biblehub.com/greek/3900.htm>

ὑπόκρισις **hypocrisy**

Meaning: (lit: stage-playing), a response, answer, hypocrisy, dissembling.

Word Origin: Derived from the Greek verb ὑποκρίνομαι (hupokrinomai), meaning "to answer" or "to act a part."

Corresponding Greek / Hebrew Entries: The concept of hypocrisy in the Hebrew Bible is often associated with terms like חָנָף (chaneph, Strong's H2611), which means "profane" or "godless," and תַּחַשׁ (tachpash, Strong's H2664), meaning "to search" or "to disguise."

Usage: In the New Testament, "hupokrisis" refers to the act of pretending or feigning to be what one is not, particularly in terms of moral or religious integrity. It denotes a discrepancy between one's public persona and private reality, often involving deceit or insincerity.

Cultural and Historical Background: In ancient Greek culture, "hupokrisis" originally referred to the art of acting or playing a role on stage. Over time, it came to be associated with the idea of pretense or insincerity in everyday life. In the context of the New Testament, it is used to criticize those who outwardly display piety or righteousness but inwardly harbor sin or deceit. This concept was particularly relevant in the religious context of first-century Judaism, where Jesus often confronted the Pharisees and religious leaders for their hypocritical behavior.¹⁴

¹⁴ <https://biblehub.com/greek/5272.htm>

πονηρός *poneros*

Evil

“Usage: The Greek word "ponéros" is used in the New Testament to describe that which is morally or ethically evil, wicked, or malicious. It often refers to actions, thoughts, or individuals that are contrary to God's nature and commands. The term can also denote the influence of evil, such as the evil one (Satan) or evil spirits.”

“Cultural and Historical Background: In the Greco-Roman world, the concept of "evil" was often associated with chaos, disorder, and actions that disrupted societal harmony. In the Jewish context, "ponéros" aligns with the Hebrew understanding of evil as anything that opposes God's will and righteousness. The New Testament writers, influenced by both Jewish and Hellenistic thought, used "ponéros" to describe the pervasive nature of sin and the spiritual battle between good and evil.¹⁵”

This word is used to translate the Hebrew word for evil in the LXX.

¹⁵ <https://biblehub.com/greek/4190.htm>

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Salvation words from Andy Woods/Sugarland Bible Church

IV. Salvation Words

- Redemption – payment of a purchase price in order to release from bondage (*apolútrōsis*, Rom. 3:24)
- Reconciliation – change of relationship from one of hostility to one of peace (*katallássō*, Rom. 5:10)
- Expiation – removal of sin's eternal penalty (Ps. 103:11-12)
- Propitiation – satisfaction of divine wrath (*hilasmós*, 1 John 2:2)
- Imputation – Christ's righteousness is transferred to us at the point of faith (Philip. 3:9)