Elenctic Theology

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*Hamartiology*

## The biblical & theological concepts of sin

### The Biblical Terms For Sin

#### ***Old Testament***

##### *Primary Word*—*chatha* - to miss the mark

##### *Secondary Words*

###### *avah* - to be bent or crooked, perverse, miss the mark.

###### *avar* - to cross over.

###### *shagah* - to err

###### *aval* - the lack of integrity or righteousness.

###### *ra* - ruin or destruction, evil. This word joins the evil deed and its consequence.

###### *pasha* - to revolt or refuse subjection to rightful authority.

#### ***New Testament***

##### *Primary Word*—*hamartia* - to miss the mark.

##### *Secondary Words*

###### *parabasis* - passing over a line, transgression (Rom. 4:15)

###### *paraptoma* - falling, stumbling, not maintaining an upright position (Gal. 6:1)

###### *anomia* - lawless, without law (I Jn. 3:4)

###### *paranomis* - has the idea of breaking the law (II Pet. 2:16)

###### *adikia* - the absence of righteousness (I Jn. 1:9)

###### *apeitheia* - disobedience (Eph. 2:2)

###### *poneria* - iniquity, the idea of corruption (I Cor. 5:8)

### Theological Definitions of Sin

#### “Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God.” (Westminster Shorter Catechism)

#### “Sin is a lack of conformity to the moral law of God, either in act, disposition, or state.” (Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p. 233)

#### “Anything in the creature which does not express or which is contrary to, the holy character of the Creator.” (J. O. Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, I, p. 264)

#### “Sin is the failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature” (Grudem, 490)

## The Righteousness, Law & Justice of God[[1]](#footnote-1)

### Righteousness & Sin: Introductory Comments

#### ***God Requires Perfect Righteousness from His Moral Creatures.***

##### Lev. 11:44 cf. I Pet. 1:16

##### James 2:10

#### ***There is an Absolute Necessity of Divine Justice.***

##### Ex 34:7

##### Hab. 1:13

##### Ps 5:4

##### 2 Tim 4:8

### Types of Divine Righteousness

#### ***Internal and External Righteousness Distinguished***

##### *Internal Righteousness* (*iustitia interna*)

###### Internal Righteousness is the *holiness* of the divine will and its perfect correspondence with the good of His eternal law (*lex archetypa*), which is the divine essence.

###### *Positive Holiness* is the essential goodness of God and the goodness of God’s will toward His creatures. (Isaiah 6:3)

###### *Negative Holiness* is that the goodness of God remains inviolate and eternally separate from all that is sinful. (Hab. 1:13)

##### *External Righteousness* (*iustitia externa*)

###### External Righteousness is the righteousness of God as it is manifest externally (*ad extra*) in the Law of God (*Lex Dei*).

###### God’s External Righteousness can be distinguished into the following categories:

Antecedent or Legislative Righteousness

Consequent or Judicial Righteousness

### Antecedent or Legislative Righteousness: The Law

#### ***Definition*:** This is the declaration of the standards of righteousness, which gives the individual and community notice of the expectations of righteousness *before* an act of obedience or disobedience occurs.

#### ***Biblical Terms for Law***

##### *Old Testament: Torah* = Instruction

##### *New Testament: Nomos* = Rule or custom

#### ***Two Types of Ectypal Law*** There are two kinds of antecedent righteousness, or ectypal law, grounded in the archetypal law of the divine essence:

##### **Natural Law** is the universal moral law either impressed on the minds of all people OR immediately discerned by reason in it its encounter with the order of nature

###### Rom. 1:18-23; 2:14-15

###### Leaves people without excuse.

##### **Mosaic Law** is given by Special Revelation.

###### John 1:17

###### It was given as the clear guide for human conduct.

###### It is divided into three sections:

**Civil Law**

The civil laws prescribe the government, judicial system, penal code, and case law of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament (see Deut 1:9-17; 17:14-20; 20:1-20).

With the cessation of the Nation of Israel, the Old Testament “civil laws” were abrogated (Eph 2:14-16).

However, the foundational moral principles of the civil law remain instructive and binding for Christians (1 Cor 9:8-10).

**Ceremonial Law**

Ceremonial laws prescribed the structures and duties of the priesthood, the precepts for tabernacle and temple worship, and the sacrificial system (Exodus 35-40; Leviticus).

These laws and the acts that were performed as a result were types and shadows of Christ. Since Christ has come, the types are no longer necessary.

The writer of Hebrews affirms that Christ is our Great High Priest (Heb 7:15-17, 23-25) and the “one mediator between God and men” (1 Tim 2:5). As such, there is no longer a need for the Old Testament priestly system.

Christ fulfilled and abolished the Old Testament sacrificial system since he has “by one offering...perfected for all time those who are sanctified” (Heb 10:14). And “where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin” (Heb 10:18).

**Moral Law**

The moral law is summarized in the Ten Commandments, which have continuing authority according to the New Testament (Matt 5:17-19; Rom 13:8-10; Jas 2:8-11).

*The Ten Commandments* (Exodus 20:1-17)  
(1) Then God spoke all these words, saying, (2) ”I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

(3) “You shall have no other gods before Me.

(4) “You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. (5) “You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, (6) but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

(7) “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.

(8) “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. (9) “Six days you shall labor and do all your work, (10) but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. (11) “for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

(12) “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

(13) “You shall not murder.

(14) “You shall not commit adultery

(15) “You shall not steal.

(16) “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

(17) “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

#### ***Selected Attributes of God’s Law***

##### Perfection—Ps. 19:7

##### Majesty—It is superior to all. Jam. 2:8; 4:12

##### Immutability—It remains forever. Ps. 119:89

##### Holiness—It is pure. Ps. 19:8; 119:140

#### ***The Law has not been Abolished.***

##### Christ did Not Abolish the Law. (Mt. 5:17)

##### Moses and the Prophets are useful. (Lk. 16:29)

##### Jesus encouraged keeping the whole law (Mt. 22:34-40)

##### Paul considered the law to be beneficial (Rom. 13:8-10)

##### Faith Establishes the Law (Rom. 3:31)

### *Consequent or Judicial Righteousness: Justice*

#### *Definition:* This is righteousness determined *after* a particular act is performed.

#### It is often designated as “Particular Justice” which can be either:

##### *Remunerative or Distributive*—Rewards obedience in proportion to the value of the deed performed; OR

##### *Retributive, Vindicatory or Punitive*—Penalty is exacted of a transgressor for the sake of vindicating or making restitution to the victim of the wrongdoing

#### *Consequent or Judicial Righteousness & the Work of Christ*

##### Christ satisfies the justice of God as a *substitute*.

###### Remunerative or Distributive

This is important to Christ’s vicarious satisfaction. It indicates an exact equivalence between the merit offered and the salvation bestowed.

Christ’s Active Obedience of keeping the law merits a positive relationship with God.

###### Retributive, Vindicatory or Punitive

This is the strict proportionality of crime and punishment.

This also rests on the sufficiency of the merit of Christ in that He satisfies the retributive justice of God in our place.

### Supererogatory Acts & The Law

#### A supererogatory act is an action one performs that is above the normal requirements and merits remuneration.

#### Arguably, there are no meritorious supererogatory acts in a law based community.

#### One must obey all the law all the time to maintain a relationship with the community.

#### One cannot offer his keeping of the law to satisfy the debt incurred from breaking the law.

##### Example #1: When one runs a red light, one may not offer to the court the green lights through which one passed as satisfaction for running the red light.

##### Example #2: A murderer may not offer to the court his “merit” allegedly accrued for allowing other people in the community to live.

#### Biblically, law breaking brings wrath (Rom. 4:15) and by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified (Romans 3:20).

#### If righteousness can come through the Law, Christ died needlessly (Gal. 2:21)

#### ***Use of the Law for Communitarian Purposes: Covenant***

##### In a personal relationship with another individual or a community, the law provides the terms for the “social contract.”

##### If one obeys the terms of the contract, his remuneration is that he is permitted to have a continued relationship with the community.

## The Uses of the Law[[2]](#footnote-2)

### Law in the State of Innocence

#### The law provides the terms of the Covenant of Works.

### Law in the Fallen-Sinful State

#### *Civil Use of the Law*--For Restraining Sinners (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 1:9)

#### *Elenchtic-Pedagogical Use of the Law*

##### For Condemnation (Rom 4:15; 2 Cor. 3:9)

##### For Conviction of Sin (Rom 3:20)

##### For Leading to Christ (Gal. 3:24)

### Law in the Restored State of Grace

#### *Didactic Use of the Law*--For Sanctification in Christ (Rom. 7:12; 1 Tim. 1:5-10)

## Distinguishing Law & Gospel[[3]](#footnote-3)

### The Importance of the Issue

#### A true understanding of Scripture and the Gospel depends on this distinction.

#### This is because no one is saved by the works of the law.

#### The distinction is seen throughout Scripture.

##### Galatians 2:16

##### Galatians 3:24-25

### Distinguishing the Terms “Law” and “Gospel”

#### ***Definitions***

##### The difference between Law and Gospel is not that Gospel is from God and Law is not.

##### The distinction is one of function, not origin or genesis.

##### “Law,” as a basic concept, is the set of commands of God by which He prohibits or mandates certain behaviors, demanding perfect obedience to all.

##### “Gospel,” as a basic concept, offers a gift of grace for the forgiveness of sins.

#### ***Scriptural Illustrations of the Distinction***

##### A clear distinction can be seen in discussions concerning the way of salvation.

###### Matthew 19:16-22

###### John 1:17

###### John 6:28-29

###### Acts 17:29-34

###### Romans 3:20-22

### Consequences of Ignoring the Distinction

#### ***Introduction***

##### Sinful Humans always wants to prove their self-worth and save themselves by attempting to create and maintain “ideal” legal and ethical structures, by which they may claim they have met the Divine demand.

##### But this is as impossible as the Tower of Babel actually reaching the heavens. (Genesis 11; John 3:13)

##### Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Ps. 111:10; Proverbs 1:7)

#### ***Theological Consequences of Ignoring the Distinction***

##### *Legalism*

###### When law is given the properties of Gospel it results in legalism.

###### It gives people the false notion that they can save themselves.

###### Most, if not all, of the world religions and cults of Christianity fit this category.

##### *Antinomianism*

###### When gospel replaces law, it produces “cheap grace” as Bonhoeffer called it. Here, the law has been abolished.

###### There is no longer any use of the law. This is the position of many contemporary evangelicals.

###### Paul says the Law is good, if we use it lawfully. (1 Tim. 1:8)

###### The State administers the civil use of the law and is a servant of God. (Rom. 13)

###### The Antichrist is designated as the Lawless one (*anomos*) (2 Thess. 2:8)

#### ***Cultural Examples of the Consequences of Ignoring the Distinction***

##### Marxist East—recast Law so that it no longer favors a ruling caste of capitalists and the classless “kingdom” will arrive.

##### Capitalist West—the social engineering is similar, recast Law and man will be in prosperity, peace, harmony, etc.

##### Third World—Place an American Legal and Justice System in Afghanistan or Iraq and we will have peace.

##### These scenarios ignore the basic problem—the Fallen Human Heart (Jer. 17:19 cf. Ezek. 36:22-32)

***I. How God Permits SIn***

### Sin, Agent Causation & Efficacy:  The Permissive Aspect of the Decree

#### (1) God permits His free creatures to choose imperfectly regarding God’s righteous commands. Thus, God permits what He morally forbids.

#### (2) Thus this aspect of the decree can be understood as the decree not to hinder the sinful self-determination of the will. **Acts 14:16:**  “And in the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways.”

#### (3) However, in God’s sovereignty He also decreed to regulate and control the results of the sinful self-determined choice.  So while God permitted His free creatures to sin, the Righteous Sovereign also purposed to overrule it and the evil that results from it.

#### (4) **General Biblical Examples**

##### (a)    **Ps. 76:10:**  “For the wrath of man shall praise Thee.”

##### (b)   **Genesis 50:20:**  “And for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”

#### (5) The Example of the Crucifixion of Christ as an Illustration of the Sovereignty of God, the Efficiency of the Decree, the Order of the Decree, and Permissive Agent Causation Regarding Sin

##### (a)    The eternal divine decree is seen clearly in the death of Christ, and we can trace this decree through Scripture.

##### (b)   In the opening chapters of Genesis, God’s plan (decree) of salvation begins to be revealed:  God says to the serpent after the fall:  **Genesis 3:15:**  *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”*

##### (c)    Christ’s crucifixion was prophesied in the Old Testament.  **Isaiah 53:5**—“But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.”

##### (d)   Before Jesus went to the cross, Jesus said to the disciples:  **Luke 22:22**—“For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed.”

##### (e)    The Apostle Peter told his Pentecost audience, concerning Jesus:  **Acts 2:23:**  “This Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.”

##### (f)     Later a group of disciples confessed in their prayer that the ones who crucified Christ:  **Acts 4:27, 28:**  “For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do what ever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur.”

##### The three preceding passages clearly refer to those taking part in the crucifixion.  The crucifixion was the most heinous crime in human history and those who participated in His death were guilty of sin.

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## The Sin Nature & Original Sin

### The Definition of Original Sin

#### “The sinful state or condition in which men are born” (Berkhof, *ST*, p. 244).

#### “The effects of Adam’s sin upon his posterity are. . .(1) The guilt of his first sin, (2) The loss of original righteousness, (3) The corruption of our whole nature” (Hodge, *ST*, II, p. 227).

#### “Original Sin (*peccatum originale)*, or the state of depravity, which followed Adam’s transgression and which now inheres in all his posterity, embraces (a) hereditary guilt (*culpa hereditaria*) and (b) hereditary corruption (*corruptio hereditaria*)” (Mueller, *Dogmatics*, p. 216).

### The Theological Term “Original Sin”

#### This term is sometimes used for Adam’s sin and sometimes just for the imputation of Adam’s guilt and depraved nature. However, it is most frequently used to describe the sinful state of sinful man.

#### It is called Original Sin because:

##### It is derived from the original root of the human race.

##### It is present in the life of every individual from the time conception.

##### It is the inward root of all *actual sins* that defile the life of man.

### The Universality of Original Sin

#### All humans are born (conceived) sinful.

##### Gen. 8:21

##### Job. 14:4

##### Ps. 51:5

##### Ps. 58:3

##### Prov. 22:15

##### Jn. 3:6

#### All humans are sinful *by nature*.

##### Jer. 13:23

##### Eph. 2:2-3

#### All suffer the penalty of sin–death, even those who have never sinned by personal and conscious choice.

##### Rom. 5:12-21

### The Nature of Original Sin

#### Original sin involves two aspects:

##### Guilt (related to God’s justice)

##### Corruption (related to God’s holiness)

#### All aspects of man’s nature are said to be corrupted by sin. The entire person is affected.

##### Rom. 1:21

##### Eph. 4:17, 18

##### Tit. 1:15

##### Heb. 9:14

##### Jer. 17:9

##### Mk. 7:21-23

##### Gen. 6:5

##### I Tim. 4:2

##### Tit. 1:15

##### Rom. 8:7

##### Jer. 13:23

##### Jn. 5:40

#### Radical Depravity

##### Negatively, *what it does not mean*.

###### That every man is as depraved as he can possibly be.

Gen. 15:16

I Tim. 3:13

###### That the sinner has no innate knowledge of the will of God or a conscience that discriminates between good and evil.

Rom. 2:15

###### That sinful man is incapable of good acts toward men.

Mk. 10:21

Matt. 7:11

Matt. 5:46, 47

###### *That every unregenerated man will indulge in every form of sin.*

##### Positively, *what it does mean*.

###### *That inherent corruption extends to all aspects of man’s nature.*

Mind

Will

Emotions

Physical Body

###### *That there is no spiritual good the sinner can do in relation to God.*

Rom. 7:18

###### *Total inability to correct the sinner’s corrupt nature*

Jer. 13:23

Rom. 7:24

###### What does this doctrine mean when salvation is considered? Can man participate in salvation? To what degree, if at all?

## The Imputation of Sin

### Definition of Imputation

#### The term has the basic meaning “to reckon” or “to charge to one’s account.”

#### The basic meaning is seen in Philemon 18 where Paul asks Philemon to have Onesimus’s debts transferred to Paul, “If he has wronged you. . .charge that to my account.”

### Imputation of Original Sin

#### The Fact of Imputation

##### Rom 5:12-21

##### Imputed Sin: In Adam all sinned and all died (Rom 5:12-14)

##### Imputed Righteousness: Those found in Christ are alive and righteous (Rom 5:15-21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22).

#### Views On the Connection of Adam’s Sin with the Human Race (cf. Creeds & Councils)

##### Pelagianism

##### Semi-Pelagianism

##### Semi-Augustinianism

##### 

##### Augustinianism

#### **Theories of the Imputation of Sin**

##### *Immediate Imputation Theories (Direct Imputation)*

###### **Realistic Theory**

The universal human nature became corrupt and guilty in Adam and every individualization of it (human nature) in the descendants of Adam is also corrupt and guilty from the beginning.

This view teaches that we *really or actually* sinned in Adam.

This view is usually associated with the Traducian View of the origin of the soul.

###### **Federal or Representative Theory**

Adam as the representative head of the human race in the covenant of works sinned. And as a result of his disobedience God imputes the guilt of the first sin to all who are federally related to him. As a result all are born in a depraved and sinful condition which involves corruption and guilt.

This view explains why only the first sin of Adam is imputed to us.

This view is usually associated with the Creationist View of the origin of the soul.

##### *Mediate Imputation Theory*

###### This theory denies the *direct* (immediate) imputation of *guilt* to the descendants of Adam. It is *indirectly* (mediately) imputed to them.

###### The descendants of Adam derive their inherent *corrupt nature* from Adam through generation.

###### Adam’s descendants are not corrupt because they are guilty, they are guilty because they are corrupt.

###### In sum, our corrupt nature is not based on our legal status (i.e., guilty), but our legal status is based on our corrupt nature.

## Actual Sin (Personal)

### the origin of actual /personal sin

#### James 1:13

#### Matt. 12:33-35

#### Matt. 15:18-19

### the various kinds of actual/personal sins & the distinction between sins of act and thought

#### Matt. 5:21-22

#### I Jn. 3:15

#### Ex. 20:17

#### Col. 3:5

#### James 4:17

#### I Jn. 3:17

### To Whom is the offense of sin directed?

#### Prov. 8:36

#### Prov. 1:18; 6:32

#### I Cor. 8:12

#### Is. 42:24

#### Ps. 51:4

#### Prov. 6:32

#### Luke 15:18

#### I Sam. 12:23

### degrees of sin

#### Is personal sin considered more than the sin nature where judgment is concerned?

##### Rev. 20:12-13

##### Jn. 8:21, 24

##### Rom. 2:5-6

##### Conclusion:

#### How does the question of knowledge relate to degree of sin and punishment?

##### Matt. 10:15

##### Luke 12:47-48

##### Luke 23:34, cf. Jn. 19:11

##### Acts 7:30

##### I Tim 1:13

##### Num. 15:29-30, cf. Heb. 10:26

#### In light of what you know concerning sin and punishment, how much should the church emphasize evangelism compared with worship and fellowship? Why?

## The Punishment of Sin

### Physical Death

#### Cessation of the union of the physical body and the soul.

#### Gen 3:19: James 2:26

### Spiritual Death

#### Cessation of communion with God.

#### Conscience reminds us of guilt; fear of punishment fills the heart

#### Gen. 2:17; Is. 59. 1-2; Eph. 2:1-7

### Eternal Death

#### This is the completion of spiritual death.

#### The full weight of the wrath of God descends on the condemned.

#### Separation from God, the source of all life and joy, is complete and permanent

#### Matt. 25: 41, 46; Rev. 14:11; 20:11-15.

1. *See* Muller, *DLGTT*, “*iustitia*” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *See* Montgomery, *Law Above the Law* and *Law & Gospel* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)