

Sin, Transgression and Iniquity

(**Iniquity** #Strong's Hebrew 5771,5753 Perverse Spirit, Make Crooked.)

(**Transgression**-Tresspass # Strong's Hebrew 6586, moral or religious rebellion, to break away from authority revolt, #Strong's Hebrew 6585 to spread legs, stride)

(**SIN** Strong's # Greek 264 **hamartanó: to miss the mark, do wrong, sin**)

Original Word: ἁμαρτάνω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: hamartanó

Phonetic Spelling: (ham-ar-tan'-o)

Short Definition: I sin

Definition: originally: I miss the mark, hence

(a) I make a mistake,

(b) I sin, commit a sin (against God); sometimes the idea of sinning against a fellow-creature is present.

refer : <http://www.gotquestions.org/iniquity-sin-transgression.html>

Question: "What is the difference between iniquity, sin, and transgression?"

Answer: In Psalm 32:5, the psalmist says, "I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity." I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." In this one verse, "sin," "iniquity," and "transgression" are all mentioned. Basically, **the three words communicate the same idea: evil and lawlessness, as defined by God** (see 1 John 3:4). However, upon closer examination, each word also carries a slightly different meaning.

The word sin and its cognates are used 786 times in the New International Version of the Bible.

Sin means "to miss the mark." It can refer to doing something against God or against a person (Exodus 10:16), doing the opposite of what is right (Galatians 5:17), doing something that will have negative results (Proverbs 24:33-34), and failing to do something you know is right (James 4:17). In the Old Testament, God even instituted sacrifices for unintentional sins (Numbers 15:27).

Sin is the general term for anything that "falls short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Sin leads to a downward progression that, without the restoring power of the Holy Spirit, we all tend toward.

The **sin nature** is present in every human being born since the Fall of Adam (Genesis 3:6-7; Romans 5:12). If left unchecked, continual sin leads to a "**reprobate mind,**" spoken of in Romans 1:24.

Our sin nature causes us to gravitate naturally toward selfishness, envy, and pride, even when we are trying to do good.

The apostle Paul alluded to his propensity to sin when he wrote, "For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out." (Romans 7:18).

The sin nature leads to trespassing.

A trespasser is someone who crosses a line or climbs a fence that he should not cross or climb.

A trespass may be intentional or unintentional.

Trespass can also mean "to fall away after being close beside."

Peter trespassed when he denied Jesus (Luke 22:34, 56-62). We all "cross the line" in thought, word, or attitude many times a day and should be quick to forgive others who do the same (Matthew 6:15).

Transgression refers to presumptuous sin.

It means "to choose to intentionally disobey; wilful trespassing."

Samson intentionally broke his **Nazirite vow** by touching a dead lion (Numbers 6:1-5; Judges 14:8-9) and allowing his hair to be cut (Judges 16:17); in doing so he was committing a transgression.

David was referring to this kind of sin when he wrote, "Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered" (Psalm 32:1). **When we knowingly run a stop sign, tell a lie, or blatantly disregard an authority, we are transgressing.**

Iniquity is more deeply rooted.

Iniquity means "premeditated choice, continuing without repentance."

David's sin with Bathsheba that led to the killing of her husband, Uriah, was iniquity (2 Samuel 11:3-4; 2 Samuel 12:9). Micah 2:1 says, "Woe to those who plan iniquity, to those who plot evil on their beds! At morning's light they carry it out because it is in their power to do it."

In David's psalm of repentance, he cries out to God, saying, "Wash away all **my iniquity** and **cleanse me from my sin**" (Psalm 51:2).

God forgives iniquity, as He does any type of sin when we repent (Jeremiah 33:8; Hebrews 8:12).

However, iniquity left unchecked leads to a state of willful sin with no fear of God.

The build-up of unrepentant sin is sometimes pictured as a "cup of iniquity" being filled to the brim (Revelation 17:4; Genesis 15:16).

This often applies to nations who have forsaken God completely.

Continued iniquity leads to unnatural affections, which leads to a reprobate mind. Romans 1:28-32 outlines this digression in vivid detail.

The sons of Eli are biblical examples of reprobates whom God judged for their iniquities (1 Samuel 3:13-14). Rather than repent, Eli's sons continued in their abominations until repentance was no longer possible.

The biblical writers used different words to refer to sin in its many forms. However, regardless of how depraved a human heart may become, Jesus' death on the cross was sufficient to cover all sin (John 1:29; Romans 5:18). Psalm 32:5, quoted at the beginning of this article, ends with

these words: "And you forgave the guilt of my sin." The only sin that God cannot forgive is the final rejection of the Holy Spirit's drawing to repentance—the ultimate fruit of a reprobate mind ([Matthew 12:32](#); [Luke 12:10](#)).

Recommended Resources: [Basic Theology by Charles Ryrie](#) and [Logos Bible Software](#).

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Question: "What is iniquity according to the Bible?"

Answer: The Bible uses words such as *iniquity*, *transgression*, and *trespass* to indicate levels of disobedience to God. They are all categorized as "sin." [Micah 2:1](#) says, "Woe to those who plan iniquity, to those who plot evil on their beds! At morning's light they carry it out because it is in their power to do it."

The Hebrew word used most often for "iniquity" means "guilt worthy of punishment."

Iniquity is sin at its worst.

Iniquity is premeditated, continuing, and escalating.

When we flirt with sin, we fall for the lie that we can control it. **But like a cute baby monkey can grow to be a wild, out-of-control primate**, sin that seems small and harmless at first can take control before we know it. When we give ourselves over to a sinful lifestyle, we are committing iniquity. Sin has become our god rather than the Lord ([Romans 6:14](#)).

When we realize we have sinned, we have a choice. We can see it for the evil it is and repent. When we do, we find the forgiveness and cleansing of God ([Jeremiah 33:8](#); [1 John 1:9](#)). **Or we can harden our hearts and go deeper into that sin until it defines us.** Partial lists of iniquities are given in [Galatians 5:19–21](#) and in [1 Corinthians 6:9–10](#). These are sins that become so consuming that a person can be identified by that lifestyle. The psalmists distinguish between sin and iniquity when they ask God to forgive both ([Psalm 32:5](#); [38:18](#); [51:2](#); [85:2](#)).

If we continue to choose sin, our hearts harden toward God.

One sin leads to another, and iniquity begins to define our lives, as it did when David sinned with Bathsheba ([2 Samuel 11:3–4](#)). His initial sin of lust resulted in a hardening of his heart, and his sin deepened. He committed adultery, then had Bathsheba's husband killed (verses 14–15). Iniquity had taken over David's life.

It was only when confronted by the prophet Nathan that he repented with great sorrow.

His heartfelt cry for forgiveness is detailed in [Psalm 51](#). Verse 2 says, "**Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.**" **David is a picture of someone who clearly understood the progression of iniquity and who experienced the mercy and forgiveness of God ([Psalm 103:1–5](#)).**

The second half of [Romans 1](#) outlines the progression of sin (verses 10–32). **The end result for those with such hardened hearts is that God turns them over to a "reprobate mind" (verse 28, KJV), and they no longer have the desire or ability to repent.**

Reprobate means "thoroughly depraved, given over to evil until the conscience is seared."

The Scripture is clear that God forgives even iniquity ([Micah 7:18](#)), but if we persist in it, we will reap the wages of sin, which is eternal separation from God ([Romans 6:23](#)).

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