

SIN, TRANSGRESSION AND INIQUITY

SIN

H2401

חַטָּאת

chăṭā'âh

khat-aw-aw'

Feminine of H2399; an *offence*, or a *sacrifice* for it: - sin (offering), sinful.

H2399

חָטָא

chêṭ'

khate

From H2398; a *crime* or its *penalty*: - fault, X grievously, offence, (punishment of) sin.

H2398

חָטָא

châṭâ'

khaw-taw'

A primitive root; properly **to miss**; hence (figuratively and generally) to *sin*; by inference to *forfeit*, *lack*, *expiate*, *repent*, (causatively) *lead astray*, *condemn*: - bear the blame, cleanse, commit [sin], by fault, harm he hath done, loss, miss, (make) offend (-er), offer for sin, purge, purify (self), make reconciliation, (cause, make) sin (-ful, -ness), trespassive

TRANSGRESSION

H6588

שׁוּבָה

pesha'

peh'-shah

From H6586; a *revolt* (national, moral or religious): - rebellion, sin, transgression, trespassive

H6586

שׁוּבָה

pâsha'

paw-shah'

A primitive root (rather identical with H6585 through the idea of *expansion*); to break away (from just authority), that is, *trespass, apostatize, quarrel*: - offend, rebel, revolt, transgress (-ion, -or).

INIQUITY

H5771

שׁוֹן שׁוֹן

'âvôn 'âvôn

aw-vone', aw-vone'

From H5753; *perversity*, that is, (moral) *evil*: - fault, iniquity, mischief, punishment (of iniquity), sin.

H5753

שׁוּבָה

'âvâh

aw-vaw'

A primitive root; to crook, literally or figuratively: - do amiss, bow down, make crooked, commit iniquity, pervert, (do) perverse (-ly), trouble, X turn, do wickedly, do wrong.

SIN, TRANSGRESSION & INIQUITY

The Bible references **sin**, **transgression** and **iniquity** separately in **Exodus 34:7** when the Lord made the second tablets of the Ten Commandments and descended from the cloud and passed before Moses:

- *And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, ⁷keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."*

This indicates that **sin**, **transgression** and **iniquity** are different in some way. In fact, they represent **increasing levels** of falling "*short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23).

- We can see from **Leviticus 16:21** and the **Strong's Numbers** associated with the King James translation that these are indeed three different words.
 - ²¹And Aaron^{H175} shall lay^{H5564} both^{H8147} his hands^{H3027} upon the head^{H7218} of the live^{H2416} goat^{H8163}, and confess^{H3034} over^{H5921} him all^{H3605} the **iniquities**^{H5771} of the children^{H1121} of Israel^{H3478}, and all^{H3605} their **transgressions**^{H6588} in all^{H3605} their **sins**^{H2403}, putting^{H5414} them upon the head^{H7218} of the goat^{H8163}, and shall send^{H7971} him away by the hand^{H3027} of a fit^{H6261} man^{H376} into the wilderness^{H4057}

So, let's look at **Strong's Dictionary** for each of the words to discern the differences:

1. **H2403 (Sin)**: an offence [i.e. a single event]

- **Sin is anything** that comes short of the glory of God
 - "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²²thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." (Mark 7:21-22)
 - "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21)
- There are many things we do that fall short of God's glory which we usually don't classify as sin. For example:
 - **Fear** – "for God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2Tim.1-7)
 - **Worry** – "do not worry" commands the Lord in Matthew 6:25, 31,34
 - **Shame** – "But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth." (2Cor. 4:2)
 - **Lusts of the flesh** – "For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world." (1John 2:16)
 - **Improper thoughts** – "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' ²²But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." (Matthew 5:21-22)
 - "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ²⁸But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:27-28)

- **Vengeance** – *“Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay” (Romans 12:19)*
- **Pride** – *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Prov. 16:18)*
- **Gossip & Slander** – *“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.” (James 3:6)*

2. H6588 (Transgression): a revolt (national, moral or religious); rebellion

- **Repeated sin becomes outright rebellion** *“which is as the sin of witchcraft” (1 Samuel 15:23)*
 - *“An evil man seeks only rebellion; therefore a cruel messenger will be sent against him.” (Prov. 17:11)*

3. H5771 (Iniquity): perversity, that is, (moral) evil:

- *“Perversity is in his heart, he devises evil continually, he sows discord.” (Prov. 6:14)*

Thus sin, when repeated against the knowledge of God, becomes transgression which, if it continues long enough, eventually becomes iniquity which perverts the flesh.

- This perversion changes the DNA/RNA structure of the “flesh” resulting in genetic changes that are passed on from generation to generation – just as the Bible says in the Second Commandment, which has as yet been repealed by God
- This is the way high blood pressure, alcoholism, sexual perversions, jealousy, anger, fear, etc. are passed down from generation to generation
 - *I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me. (Exodus 20:8)*

The progression from sin, to transgression, to iniquity (bondage in that particular area) is illustrated in the following two diagrams with Scriptural references

- This progression is also described by James 1:15:
 - *Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*

The Progression of Sin

Here are the first three different words for "sin"

Exodus 34:6,7 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin

1. Sin

#2403. חַטָּא chatta'ah, khat-taw-aw' from #2398.

חָטָא chata', khaw-taw' to miss, hence (figuratively and generally) to sin;

2. Transgression

#6588. פֶּשַׁע pasha', peh'-shah, a revolt, to break away from a just authority

3. Iniquity

#5771. עָוֹן `avon, aw-vone' perversity, to twist or distort

Shema means to hear and obey so the next sin is direct disobedience.

Deuteronomy 28:45 Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee:

4. Not Obey

#8085. שָׁמַע shama', shaw-mah'

(Refuse) to hear intelligently (often with implication of attention, obedience)

We are to serve God so what follows is a direct refusal to by serving other gods.

Deuteronomy 8:19 And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.

5. Refusal to serve God

#5647. עָבַד `abad, aw-bad' to work (in any sense); by implication, to serve, enslave, etc.:--X be, keep in bondage.

Now it progresses to acting treacherously, translated as trespass:

Numbers 31:6 And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of every tribe, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war, with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand.

6. To act treacherously

#4604. מַעַל ma'al, mah'-al from 4603; treachery, i.e. sin:falsehood, grievously, sore, transgression, trespass, X very.

This is followed by outright rebellion:

Isaiah 1:20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

7. To make God bitter by being stubbornly disobedient

#4784 מָרָה marah, maw-raw' to make bitter (figuratively) to rebel

This develops into wickedness:

Isaiah 57:20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

8. To be wicked with strong excitement

7563. רָשָׁע rasha', raw-shaw' morally wrong; an (actively) bad person

We have a similar Hebrew word also translated as iniquity with the aleph at the beginning rather than the Ayin:

Micah 2:1 Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.

9. To live worthlessly or without any worthy purpose

205. אָוֵן 'aven, aw-ven' to pant (hence, to exert oneself, usually in vain; to come to naught); strictly nothingness:

Concluding with the Hebrew word for evil:

Genesis 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

10. To spoil or dash to pieces the moral worth

7451. רָע ra', rah evil (natural or moral):-- affliction, calamity,

This is why:

Genesis 6:6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.