

Psalm 38:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

Analysis

For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin. David commits to two actions: declare iniquity (יִתְּבֹּאַל, nagad avon, make known perversity) and be sorry (אָתָּה, da'ag, be anxious/grieved) for sin (תַּאֲפֹת, chatta't, missing the mark). Confession plus contrition—both public acknowledgment and internal grief.

The future tense 'I will' signals resolve to continue what he's already begun. Nagad implies open declaration, not private admission—David won't hide or minimize. Da'ag conveys anxious grief, the godly sorrow that leads to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10). This verse demonstrates the penitent's proper posture: transparent confession + genuine contrition, without excuse or self-justification.

Historical Context

In Israel, confession could be private (to God) or public (before community), depending on the sin's nature. David's public sins (Bathsheba, Absalom's rebellion) required public acknowledgment. Psalm 51, likely written after Nathan's confrontation, exemplifies this transparent confession. Concealed sin perpetuates curse; declared sin opens the door to forgiveness.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Romans 2:1 – Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What 'iniquity' do you need to 'declare' (confess openly) rather than keeping private between you and God?
 2. How does true 'sorrow for sin' differ from regret over consequences or embarrassment at being caught?
 3. Why does genuine repentance require both confession (verbal acknowledgment) and contrition (emotional grief)?

Interlinear Text

מַחְטָאָתִי אָדָא גַּעַגְעָתִי אֶגְעָתִי
לְזִבְחָתִי בְּלִזְבָּחָתִי מִזְבְּחָתִי
H3588 mine iniquity For I will declare I will be sorry for my sin
H5771 H5046 H1672 H2403

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 32:5 (Sin): I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

Proverbs 28:13 (Sin): He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Psalms 51:3 (Sin): For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

Job 33:27 (Sin): He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not;