

STIFF-NECKED

Why Mankind Resists Yahweh — And What Breaks the Pattern

*A Study Examining the Tanakh, Human Nature, and the Modern World
Reaching Judaism, Christianity, and Islam Through the Covenant Alone*

Yahweh knew this would be the question before the covenant was even given. Standing at the base of Sinai, while the mountain still trembled and the smoke still rose, the people of Israel made a golden calf. They did not wait weeks. They did not wait months. They did not wait for the generation that had seen Egypt to die off. They did it within forty days of hearing **Yahweh's** own voice from the fire.

This is not a story about one particularly rebellious generation. This is **Yahweh's** own opening statement about the nature of the human condition — delivered through the entire arc of the Tanakh, confirmed by every prophet, and demonstrated with painful precision in modern civilization. The question is not why **Yahweh** gave the covenant. The question is why, with the evidence of covenant blessing visible in history, the human family has so consistently refused it.

This study examines that question honestly, from five directions: the inner human architecture itself; the Tanakh's own testimony across generations; the structural role of organized religion in suppressing rather than transmitting the covenant; the modern apparatus of media, entertainment, and culture as a system of alternative worship; and finally, the Tanakh's own record of what breaks the pattern.

PART ONE: THE ARCHITECTURE OF RESISTANCE

Why the Human Heart Is the First Battleground

The Yetzer Hara — H7503 / The Evil Inclination

The Tanakh does not begin with an explanation of human rebellion. It begins with a demonstration of it — and then gives the diagnosis. Bereishit (Genesis) 6:5 delivers the verdict on the pre-Flood world:

"And Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

The Hebrew phrase is *yetzer lev ha-adam ra* — יֵצֵר לֵב הָאָדָם רָע. The word *yetzer* (יֵצֵר — H3336) derives from the root *yatzar* — to form, to fashion, to shape — the same word used when **Yahweh** formed Adam from the dust. The *yetzer* is the internal formative impulse — the drive that shapes human intention before it becomes action. And the Tanakh declares it bent toward *ra* — evil, harm, wrongness.

This is not a minor diagnostic note. It is the foundational anthropological statement of the Tanakh. After the Flood, when **Yahweh** makes a covenant never to destroy the earth again by water, the reason He gives for His mercy is the same diagnosis: 'for the inclination of man's heart is evil from his youth' (Bereishit/Genesis 8:21). The inclination is acknowledged, and **Yahweh** commits to working with the human family despite it — not to eliminate the condition through punishment, but to provide the covenant as its antidote.

This is the Talmud's summary in Kiddushin 30b: 'I created the evil inclination, and I created the Torah as its antidote.' Oxford Reference, summarizing the rabbinic framework, states: 'God has wounded man by creating him with the evil inclination. But the Torah is the plaster on the wound, which prevents it from festering and enables him to embrace life without fear.' The wound was designed into the human architecture. The covenant is the medicine. The question is why so few take the medicine.

Free Will and the Necessary Tension

The Tanakh never presents human rebellion as a surprise to Yahweh. Before Yehoshua (Joshua) even died, **Yahweh** told Moshe (Moses) that the people would abandon the covenant the moment they entered the land (Devarim/Deuteronomy 31:16–18). The inclination toward departure was built into the design — because without it, there would be no choosing. Without the genuine possibility of refusal, covenant loyalty means nothing.

The Talmud records this tension in a remarkable statement from Rabbi Nahman: 'Were it not for the *yetzer hara*, a man would not build a house, or marry a woman, or have children, or engage in business.' The drive toward self-interest, pleasure, and security is not purely destructive. It is the energy that, properly ordered by the covenant, produces a functioning civilization. The problem is not that the inclination exists. The problem is what happens when it operates without the covenant as its governor.

The Tanakh's picture of the human condition is therefore neither idealistic nor cynical. It is realistic: **the human heart has a genuine pull toward self-interest, comfort, and autonomy. The covenant was given to channel that pull, not to eliminate it.**

Devarim 30:11–14 — The Radical Nearness of the Covenant

The most important corrective to human despair over the *yetzer hara* is Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:11–14:

"For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who will ascend to heaven and bring it to us? Neither is it beyond the sea... But the word is very near you — it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it."

Yahweh explicitly rejects the excuse that the covenant is unreachable. He places it in the mouth and heart of every human being created in His image — not merely in the scroll of the educated, not merely in the temple of the priest. The real question is not access. It is willingness. The covenant is near. The resistance is chosen.

PART TWO: THE TANAKH'S OWN TESTIMONY

The Historical Pattern of Rebellion — From the Wilderness to the Exile

The Tanakh is not merely a theology book. It is a historical record — and the historical record is unflinching. The pattern of covenant rejection is documented with specificity across every generation. But the Tanakh does not present this as cause for hopelessness. It presents it as cause for honest diagnosis — **because honest diagnosis is the precondition for genuine return.**

The Wilderness Generation — Bemidbar (Numbers)

The generation that witnessed ten plagues, walked through the Red Sea on dry ground, received manna from heaven, heard Yahweh's own voice at Sinai, and watched water come from a rock — repeatedly chose rebellion. At Sinai (the golden calf). At Kadesh Barnea (refusing to enter the land). At Korah's rebellion. At the incident of Baal-Peor. The pattern was not ignorance of **Yahweh's** power. They had seen His power beyond any generation before or since. The pattern was a desire for the conditions of servitude — for the predictable diet of Egypt — over the uncertainty of covenant dependence.

Tehillim (Psalm) 106:13–14 diagnoses the wilderness generation precisely:

"They soon forgot His works; they did not wait for His counsel. But they had a wanton craving in the wilderness and tested Elohim in the desert."

The Hebrew word is *hit'avvu ta'avah* — התאוּו תאוּה — they craved a craving. The double form indicates the consuming nature of the desire. This was not modest hunger. This was an appetite consuming identity. The first enemy of covenant faithfulness in the Tanakh is always the same: the desire for immediate gratification over covenant relationship.

The Cycle of the Shoftim (Judges)

The book of Shoftim (Judges) is the Tanakh's most systematic demonstration of the rebellion-consequence-cry-deliverance-rebellion cycle. It repeats with depressing precision across every generation. Israel enters the land. Israel abandons the covenant for the surrounding Canaanite worship systems. Consequences follow. The people cry out. Yahweh raises a deliverer. Peace follows. The deliverer dies. The cycle repeats — except deeper each time. The final chapters of Shoftim contain some of the most morally catastrophic events in the entire Tanakh, and the narrator's summary is stark:

"In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." — Shoftim (Judges) 17:6; 21:25

This phrase — *ish hayashar be'ainav ya'aseh* — איש הישר בעיניו יעשה — is the Tanakh's definition of the anarchic condition that replaces covenant governance. When no authority above the self is acknowledged, the self becomes sovereign. And sovereignty of the self, unconstrained by covenant, produces the Shoftim — a society that ritually enslaves, mutilates, rapes, and massacres within a single generation of entering Yahweh's land.

The Prophets' Indictment — Amos, Hoshea, Yeshayahu, Yirmeyahu

The classical prophets of the 8th and 7th centuries BCE provide the most systematic covenant-level diagnosis of human rebellion in the entire Tanakh. Their message is addressed to people with full knowledge of the covenant — people who were actively practicing religion — and their indictment is that **religion without covenant obedience is Yahweh's most despised substitute for the real thing.**

Amos: Sent to Israel during a period of military security and economic prosperity — exactly the conditions modern civilization believes produce contentment. **Amos's** indictment is that prosperity had produced exploitation. The wealthy sold the poor into debt slavery for the price of a pair of sandals (Amos 2:6). They worshiped at the shrines while oppressing the poor at the gate. **Yahweh's** word through **Amos** is among the most quoted in the entire Nevi'im:

"But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." — Amos (Amos) 5:24

The Hebrew is *mishpat* — מִשְׁפָּט — the same word that means both justice and covenant law. The river metaphor is deliberate: justice is not an occasional act. It is a constant, unstoppable flow. The moment it stops, the land becomes dry and the people

perish. **Amos's** diagnosis of rebellion is economic: the love of wealth and the willingness to exploit others to secure it.

Hoshea (Hosea): Uses the most intimate of human metaphors — marriage — to describe Israel's covenant breaking. **Yahweh** is the husband. Israel is the wife who has gone to other lovers. The covenant broken is not abstract. It is personal, relational, intimate. The pain **Yahweh** expresses through **Hoshea** is the language of a betrayed covenant partner, not a detached lawgiver. The diagnosis: Israel did not remember **Yahweh** gave her grain, wine, oil, and silver — and she gave the credit to Baal (Hoshea/Hosea 2:8–9).

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 1:2–4: Opens the book with the most devastating indictment in the Tanakh:

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Yahweh has spoken: Children I have reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against Me. The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know; My people do not understand."

The comparison to livestock is intentional and humiliating. An ox knows who feeds it. A donkey knows where home is. Israel — covenant partner of **Yahweh**, redeemed from Egypt, sustained in the wilderness, given the land — does not recognize the One who did all of this. **Lo yeda Israel** — Israel does not know. The diagnosis of rebellion is willful ignorance — a refusal to connect blessing with Source.

Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 2:13: Gives the most precise metaphor for the psychology of covenant abandonment:

"For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves — broken cisterns that can hold no water."

The image is perfect: a people who leave a living, flowing spring to dig their own underground storage pits — which crack and leak and leave them thirsty anyway. The choice to abandon **Yahweh** is not a choice for something better. It is a choice for something that cannot work. This is the Tanakh's indictment of every human system built as an alternative to covenant: it is a broken cistern. It looks like an option. It is not. It will not hold.

PART THREE: FALSE SHEPHERDS

How Organized Religion Becomes a Mechanism of Covenant Suppression

The Tanakh does not spare religion from its indictment. In fact, the most ferocious prophetic language is reserved not for secular oppressors but for religious leaders who use the structures of worship to manipulate, enrich themselves, and suppress the covenant word.

Yeshayahu 1:11–15 — Yahweh's Rejection of Religious Performance

"What to Me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says Yahweh. I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls or of lambs or of goats. When you come to appear before Me, who has required of you this trampling of My courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of assemblies — I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly."

This passage is not an attack on the covenant law of sacrifice. It is an attack on sacrifice practiced as a substitute for justice and covenant obedience. The word **Yahweh** uses is **toevah** — תועבה — H8441 — **abomination**. The strongest word of covenant rejection in the Hebrew vocabulary. Religious performance without covenant living is not neutral in **Yahweh's** sight. It is actively offensive to Him.

Yirmeyahu 7:4 — The Temple as False Security

"Do not trust in these deceptive words: This is the temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh."

Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) delivers this indictment at the very gate of the Temple — to worshipers who believed that their physical presence in the sacred building guaranteed **Yahweh's** protection. The triple repetition of 'the temple of **Yahweh**' is the people's own liturgical chant — a spell being used in place of covenant obedience. **Yahweh** calls it **divrei ha-sheker** — דברי השקר — words of deception, false words. The building is not the covenant. The ritual is not the relationship.

Yechezkel 34 — The Indictment of the Shepherds

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 34 is the most comprehensive indictment of corrupt religious leadership in the entire Tanakh.

"Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not

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healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them." — Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 34:2–4

The indictment names six specific failures of covenant shepherding: not strengthening the weak, not healing the sick, not binding the injured, not bringing back the strayed, not seeking the lost, and ruling with force and harshness. Every one of these is a covenant violation dressed in religious authority. **Yahweh** promises to remove these shepherds and shepherd the people Himself (34:11). The prophetic indictment of false shepherds is one of the most repeated themes in the Nevi'im — because **Yahweh** understands that human beings follow those placed in authority over them. When that authority is corrupt, it does not merely fail to transmit the covenant — it actively displaces it.

The Historical Pattern: How Religion Replaces the Covenant

The mechanism is consistent across the Tanakh and into the modern world. Religion replaces the covenant through a predictable progression:

- » **Step One — Formalization:** Living covenant relationship is codified into institutional religion. Rules replace relationships. Ritual replaces obedience. The building replaces the community. The clergy replaces the covenant people.
- » **Step Two — Control:** The institution becomes the mediator between the people and **Yahweh** — a role **Yahweh** never assigned to any institution. Access to the divine is controlled by those who benefit from that control.
- » **Step Three — Replacement:** The institution's authority becomes the operative authority. Its doctrines replace the covenant text. Its interpretations, traditions, and rulings override the plain standard of the Tanakh. This is what **Yeshayahu (Isaiah)** called 'teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'
- » **Step Four — Suppression:** Those who return to the original covenant text and confront the institution with it are silenced. **Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah)** was imprisoned by the Temple authorities. **Amos** was expelled from Bethel by the royal priest. The pattern is consistent: institutional religion is the enemy of covenant renewal, not its vehicle, when it has become entrenched in its own power.

This is not only an ancient Israelite problem. Every religious tradition has this pattern somewhere in its history. Judaism produced Pharisaism that multiplied traditions until the covenant word was buried. Christianity produced the medieval Catholic hierarchy, the slave-holding church, the prosperity gospel. Islam produced clerical dynasties that used divine authority to shore up political power. All three traditions have, at various points, used religion to suppress the very covenant they claim to transmit.

PART FOUR: MODERN SYSTEMS OF ALTERNATIVE WORSHIP

Media, Entertainment, Hollywood, and the Music Industry as Covenant Competitors

The Tanakh's concept of idolatry is broader than most people understand.

Avodah zarah — עֲבוֹדַת זָרָה — 'strange service' or 'foreign worship' — is not limited to carved statues. In the Tanakh's framework, anything that claims the loyalty, attention, and submission that belongs to **Yahweh** alone is functioning as an idol. The prophet **Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah)** indicts Israel for worshiping the work of their own hands (10:3–5). In the modern world, the work of human hands has reached a scale and sophistication that **Yirmeyahu** could not have imagined — and the covenant analysis of it is exactly the same.

Media and the Formation of Reality

Media — in all its forms — is primarily a reality-formation system. It determines what is considered important, what is considered real, what values are transmitted as normative, and what authorities are trusted. In a functioning covenant community, **Yahweh's** word performs this function. In modern consumer society, media has largely displaced it.

The prophet **Amos** warned Israel about a coming famine — not of bread or water, but of the word of **Yahweh** (Amos 8:11–12). The people would run from sea to sea seeking it and not find it. The modern secular media environment has created precisely this condition: a massive volume of words, images, and signals — and almost no covenant signal in any of it. The noise has replaced the word. The competition for human attention has been won, in the modern era, overwhelmingly by systems that have no interest in covenant formation and every interest in capturing and holding human loyalty to the products, personalities, and ideologies they transmit.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:6–9 — the Shema passage — prescribes the covenant's own media strategy:

"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."

The prescription is total-immersion covenant content: morning, midday, travel, evening, on doorposts, on the hand, between the eyes. Every media moment claimed for the covenant. The modern world has inverted this precisely: morning through night, travel and home, the constant feed of content belongs to the market and its entertainment

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systems. The covenant has been squeezed to an hour on the day of rest — if that — and even that hour often replicates entertainment's methods rather than the covenant's substance.

Hollywood and the Systematic Displacement of Covenant Values

Entertainment media — film and television specifically — functions as a culture-formation system of enormous power. Since the mid-20th century, Hollywood has progressively moved away from covenant-aligned values toward a set of alternative commitments: individual autonomy as the supreme good, sexual freedom without covenant boundaries, material wealth as the measure of success, and organized religion as either irrelevant or dangerous.

The pattern documented by media critics across the political spectrum is consistent: the religious person in mainstream Hollywood film is routinely portrayed as a hypocrite, a predator, a zealot, or a fool. The secular, autonomous individual who 'follows their heart' without reference to any authority above the self is the heroic model. This is not neutral storytelling. It is systematic value transmission — and the value being transmitted is precisely the *ish hayashar be'ainav* of ***Shoftim 21:25***: everyone doing what is right in their own eyes.

The Tanakh's framework for understanding this is not conspiracy — it is idolatry analysis. When the image on a screen captures the imagination, forms emotional bonds, transmits values, and shapes the definition of a good life, it is performing the function that **Yahweh** designed the covenant to perform. The question is not whether people are being formed — they are always being formed. The question is by what. And by what is answered by what they watch, what they hear, what they consume, and what they love.

The Music Industry as an Alternative Liturgical System

Of all the modern systems competing with covenant formation, the music industry most directly occupies the liturgical space the covenant was designed to fill. Music is not neutral. It is one of the most powerful formation technologies available to human beings. It bypasses rational analysis and speaks directly to emotion, memory, identity, and loyalty. The Tanakh knows this: Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs) and Tehillim (Psalms) are the covenant's own music — designed to form the internal life of those who sing them toward **Yahweh**.

The commercial music industry operates on the same psychological understanding, in service of entirely different formation goals. **The liturgy of contemporary popular music transmits sexual desire without covenant, individualism without accountability, fame without character, and wealth without justice.** The images transmitted alongside the music — in performances, videos, and public personas — form a complete alternative cosmology: what is beautiful, what is powerful, what is desirable, what constitutes the good life. These are covenant questions. The music industry answers them with covenant-free answers, and the answers reach billions of people daily at a depth of emotional penetration that no sermon or study has matched since.

Tehillim (Psalm) 135:15–18 gives the ancient analysis of idols that applies perfectly to the modern entertainment system:

"The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; they have eyes, but do not see; they have ears, but do not hear, nor is there any breath in their mouths. Those who make them become like them, so do all who trust in them."

The last line is the covenant's most devastating sociological observation: people become like what they worship. A culture that forms its young people on images of celebrity, wealth, sexual dominance, and violence does not produce covenant people. It produces people shaped by those images. The idol-formation of the entertainment industry is not accidental — it is the logical product of a system designed to capture human loyalty and monetize it.

Prosperity, Comfort, and the Amnesia of Blessing

The Tanakh identifies prosperity itself as one of the most reliable generators of covenant abandonment. The warning is delivered explicitly before Israel enters the land:

"Take care lest you forget Yahweh your Elohim by not keeping His commandments and His rules and His statutes, which I command you today — lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, and you forget Yahweh your Elohim." — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 8:11–14

This is the covenant's most precise diagnosis of modern Western civilization. The West has eaten and is full. Good houses have been built. Herds and flocks — corporate portfolios — have multiplied. Silver and gold has multiplied beyond anything previous generations could have imagined. And the heart has been lifted up. **Yahweh** has been forgotten — not out of crisis, not out of desperation, but out of satisfaction. The broken cistern has been dug, filled temporarily with the water of prosperity, and the people are convinced they do not need the fountain of living waters because the cistern seems to be holding.

The Tanakh's verdict on this condition is not that prosperity is wrong. The covenant promises prosperity as a fruit of faithfulness. The problem is amnesia: forgetting the Source of the blessing and treating the fruit as if it were self-generated. When the blessing is seen as the product of human ingenuity and effort rather than the faithfulness of **Yahweh**, there is no remaining reason to maintain the covenant. The human heart, convinced of its own self-sufficiency, has no further use for a covenant it did not make.

PART FIVE: WHEN THE PATTERN BREAKS

The Tanakh's Record of What Actually Works

The Tanakh is not only an indictment. It is also a record of what breaks the pattern — and the pattern breaks the same way every time it breaks. The mechanism of return is as consistent as the mechanism of rebellion.

Hezekiah — The Power of Returning to the Text

Melachim Bet (2 Kings) 18:5–7 delivers one of the most remarkable evaluations in the entire Tanakh:

"He trusted in Yahweh, the Elohim of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him. For he held fast to Yahweh. He did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which Yahweh commanded Moshe. And Yahweh was with him; wherever he went out, he prospered."

Hizqiyahu (Hezekiah) did not develop new theology. He did not invent new religious practices. He removed the high places that had accumulated through generations of accommodation to surrounding culture. He restored the covenant text as the governing document of national life. **Yahweh's** response was political protection, military victory (the miraculous deliverance from Assyria), extended life, and national prosperity. The pattern of blessing is not complicated. It is simply rare because the return to the covenant text is the one move institutional religion consistently resists.

Yoshiyahu (Josiah) — The Covenant Rediscovered

The story of Yoshiyahu (Josiah) in Melachim Bet (2 Kings) 22–23 is the Tanakh's most dramatic covenant-renewal account — and its most instructive. The book of the covenant had been lost. Not destroyed. Lost — inside the Temple itself, buried under the accumulation of institutional religion. When the scroll was read to Yoshiyahu for the first time, he tore his garments and wept. He had never heard the covenant as it was actually written. He had been worshiping according to the accumulated traditions of previous generations, none of whom had returned to the original text.

Yoshiyahu's response to hearing the covenant was immediate and comprehensive: he removed every form of alternative worship from the land — the altars of Baal, the Asherah poles, the high places, the horses dedicated to the sun, the shrines of foreign gods built by Solomon, the child-sacrifice site at Topheth. He reinstated the Passover — which had not been observed in its covenant form 'since the days of the judges' (2 Kings 23:22). And **Yahweh's** evaluation: **'Before him there was no king like him, who**

turned to Yahweh with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses' (2 Kings 23:25).

The lesson of Yoshiyahu is the covenant's clearest prescription for our moment: the pattern of rebellion breaks when the text itself is rediscovered, read honestly, and acted upon — regardless of what the accumulated religious tradition has said in its place.

The Remnant Principle — Covenant Was Never Lost

The Tanakh never presents a moment when the covenant was entirely abandoned. Through every period of national apostasy — the golden calf, the period of the Judges, the divided monarchy, the Babylonian exile — the covenant preserved a remnant.

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) names this principle explicitly:

"If Yahweh of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we would have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah." — Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 1:9

The Hebrew word is *sarid* — שָׂרִיד — H8300 — survivor, remnant, one who escapes. Throughout the Tanakh, the remnant is the living proof that the covenant cannot be entirely suppressed. It is carried by those who refused to accommodate, who held the text against the institutional current, who maintained covenant faithfulness when the majority had abandoned it.

This is the covenant community's identity across all three traditions. Judaism survived exile, dispersion, and centuries of persecution because a remnant carried the text. The original followers of the covenant way in every generation were the remnant — those who read the text against the institutional tradition and held to what was actually written. The remnant principle is not a consolation prize. It is the covenant's own testimony that Yahweh's word persists through every system designed to suppress it.

PART SIX: THE COVENANT WORD TO ALL THREE TRADITIONS

Where Each Tradition Stands Before This Diagnosis

To Judaism

Judaism's greatest contribution to the world is the preservation of the covenant text through millennia of persecution and displacement. The remnant principle has been most visibly embodied in Jewish history. Yet the diagnostic question the Tanakh poses to Judaism is the same question it posed to Israel in every generation: has the

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accumulated rabbinic tradition become a new layer of institutional religion suppressing the plain covenant text? When the Talmud's rulings contradict the Torah's standard, which governs? The Tanakh's answer is unambiguous: **everything after the Torah is commentary**. Commentary may illuminate. It does not supersede. The call to Judaism is to return to the text itself — not as an act of rebellion against tradition, but as the covenant's own prescription for faithfulness.

To Christianity

Christianity carries the deepest responsibility in the modern Western context, because it has been the dominant religious institution of the civilization that has built the most powerful entertainment, media, and propaganda systems in human history. Christianity did not prevent this. In many cases it blessed it. The church that accommodated to Hollywood culture, that built its worship experience on entertainment models, that traded covenant depth for cultural relevance — has not served the covenant. It has served as one more layer of institutional suppression. The call to Christianity from the covenant is the call **Yoshiyahu** received when the scroll was found: stop performing religion and read the text. The text will tell you what to remove. The text will tell you what to restore.

To Islam

Islam's diagnosis from the Tanakh is the same that Amos delivered to the nations surrounding Israel: every civilization is accountable to the covenant standard, whether or not it has formally received it. Islam emerged as a correction to the corruption of both Judaism and Christianity in the 7th century CE — **Yahweh** raising up a witness to His sovereignty in regions where the covenant had been buried. Yet Islam has replicated the same patterns it corrected: institutional religion, clerical authority supplanting the text, prosperity producing amnesia, and political structures using religious language to maintain power. The call from the covenant is identical: return to what was written before commentary, before tradition, before institutional accumulation. The witness of Yahweh's sovereignty stands or falls on the text — not on what human institutions have built in its name.

CONCLUSION: THE COVENANT HAS ALWAYS BEEN PRESENT

The question this study began with was: why is mankind so rebellious against Yahweh's law? The Tanakh's answer, across every part of this study, is the same:

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The human heart was built with an inclination toward self — the *yetzer hara* — that, without the covenant as its governing force, will always prioritize immediate gratification over covenant faithfulness.

Every generation has faced the same pull toward the surrounding culture's worship systems — whatever those systems are in their historical moment. In the ancient Near East it was Baal and Asherah. In the modern world it is media, entertainment, prosperity, and individualism. The covenant analysis of both is identical: broken cisterns.

Organized religion — in all three traditions — has repeatedly become the mechanism of covenant suppression rather than covenant transmission. The shepherd-leaders whom Yahweh indicted through ***Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 34*** are not a historical exception. They are the default tendency of every human institution claiming divine authority while feeding itself.

The modern systems of media, entertainment, and commercial culture function as the largest idolatry apparatus in human history — forming billions of people daily in the values, desires, and identities of a covenant-free world.

And yet — the covenant has never been entirely suppressed. The remnant has always been present. The text has always survived. And the pattern breaks when the same thing happens that broke it in the time of Yoshiyahu: someone picks up the scroll, reads what is actually written, and acts on it regardless of what the institution says.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:19–20 — the covenant's own closing argument:

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live — loving Yahweh your Elohim, obeying His voice and holding fast to Him, for He is your life and length of days."

The choice has always been present. The covenant has always been near. The word is in the mouth and heart of every person created in the image of Yahweh. The rebellion is real. The return is always possible. And the instruction to choose — urgently, now, with heaven and earth as witnesses — has never been rescinded.

Primary Covenant Sources and Research Witnesses

Bereishit 6:5; 8:21 · Devarim 6:6–9; 8:11–14; 30:11–14; 30:19–20; 31:16–18

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Rebellion, in the Tanakh's framework, is what happens when the pull goes uncontested — when there is no covenant word strong enough, near enough, or repeated enough to offer genuine resistance.

*Shoftim 17:6; 21:25 · Melachim Bet 18:5–7; 22–23 · Tehillim 106:13–14; 135:15–18
Yeshayahu 1:2–4, 9, 11–15 · Yirmeyahu 2:13; 7:4; 10:3–5 · Amos 2:6; 5:24; 8:11–12
Hoshea 2:8–9 · Yechezkel 34:2–4, 11 · Devarim 8:11–14; 31:16–18
Lexicons: BDB · HALOT · Davidson · TWOT · Strong's H3336 (yetzer) · H8441 (toevah)
· H8300 (sarid)
Talmud: Kiddushin 30b · Britannica: yetzer ha-ra · Oxford Reference: Yetzer Ha-Tov and
Yetzer Ha-Ra
BibleProject (Hosea/Amos) · Franciscan Media (Social Justice Prophets) · Hillsdale
Imprimis (Hollywood vs. Religion)*
