

# A CHECKLIST FOR DISCERNING RELIGION VS COVENANT

This checklist helps you identify when a belief system, church, or doctrine is rooted in human councils and institutions rather than Torah and covenant obedience.

## SECTION 1: AUTHORITY & SOURCE

- Doctrine is based on church councils, creeds, or confessions rather than Torah
- Decisions were made by votes, emperors, bishops, or councils
- Statements like “the church decided” are treated as final authority
- Scripture is filtered through institutional interpretation
- Questioning leadership is discouraged or labeled rebellious

Scripture Test:

- Deuteronomy 4:2
- Matthew 15:9

## SECTION 2: BELIEF OVER OBEDIENCE

- Faith is defined primarily as mental belief
- Obedience is optional, minimized, or called “legalism”
- Torah is described as “abolished,” “fulfilled away,” or “spiritual only”
- Lifestyle is separated from faith
- Confession replaces covenant walking

Scripture Test:

- Matthew 7:21–23
- James 2:17

### **SECTION 3: TRADITION OVER TORAH**

- Traditions are defended even when Scripture contradicts them
- “This is how we’ve always done it” is used as justification
- Rituals exist with no clear Torah foundation
- Calendar, worship days, or practices are changed without Scriptural mandate
- Man-made rules override direct commandments

Scripture Test:

- Mark 7:8–13
- Isaiah 29:13

### **SECTION 4: TITLES, HIERARCHY & MEDIATION**

- Religious titles elevate some above others
- Leaders are treated as spiritual intermediaries
- Access to truth is controlled by rank or office
- Leadership is unaccountable
- Service is replaced by status

Scripture Test:

- Matthew 23:8–11
- Ezekiel 34:2–4

#### **SECTION 5: PHILOSOPHY & ABSTRACT DOCTRINE**

- Teachings rely heavily on Greek philosophical terms
- Complex theological language replaces clear instruction
- Debates about “nature,” “essence,” or “substance” dominate
- Doctrine is defended intellectually rather than lived out
- Knowledge is valued over obedience

Scripture Test:

- Colossians 2:8
- 1 Corinthians 8:1

#### **SECTION 6: UNITY BY FORCE OR FEAR**

- Disagreement is punished rather than examined
- Threats of condemnation are used to enforce belief
- Leaving the system results in shunning or fear tactics
- Unity is prioritized over truth
- Loyalty to the institution is equated with faithfulness

Scripture Test:

- Daniel 7:25
- Galatians 5:1

### **SECTION 7: NAME & IDENTITY ISSUES**

- The Name YAHUAH is avoided or replaced with titles
- Messiah's Hebrew name is dismissed or mocked
- Names are treated as unimportant or symbolic only
- Identity is defined as "members" instead of covenant people
- Scripture about the Name is ignored

Scripture Test:

- Exodus 3:15
- Jeremiah 23:27

### **SECTION 8: WORSHIP AS PERFORMANCE**

- Worship is limited to services or events
- Music and emotion replace obedience
- Righteous living is secondary to attendance
- Public appearance outweighs private faithfulness
- Sacrifice replaces obedience

Scripture Test:

- 1 Samuel 15:22
- Amos 5:21–24

### **FINAL SELF-ASSESSMENT**

- Does this system produce obedient living?
- Does it restore Torah or explain it away?
- Does it point me directly to YAHUAH or to an institution?
- Does it encourage me to study for myself?
- Does it demand belief or invite covenant walking?

If the answers consistently point toward institution, control, belief-only, or tradition, you are looking at religion, not covenant.

### **FINAL DECLARATION**

“Councils protect institutions.

Torah produces obedience.

Yahushua HaMashiach did not die to create a creed,  
but to restore covenant.”