

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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A Study for Judaism • Christianity • Islam

DOCUMENT 264

AS THE SIN OF DIVINATION

A Covenant Deep Dive into Rebellion *meri* (rebellion) in the Tanakh

Why Does Yahweh Hate Rebellion Against His Authority and His Moral Order, and How Does Rebellion Ruin Marriages and Friendships? — A Three-Religion Covenant Response

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The Message is Sent to the World

REACHING JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

✡ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
The Day of Atonement confession (the <i>Ashamnu</i>) has the worshiper say " <i>we have rebelled</i> " (<i>maradnu</i>), " <i>we have been stubborn</i> " (<i>sararnu</i>), " <i>we have transgressed</i> " (<i>pashanu</i>), and " <i>we have stiffened our neck</i> " — almost the whole Hebrew vocabulary of rebellion studied here. The Tanakh names that vocabulary first, and it shows why Yahweh treats defiance so seriously.	The line " <i>rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft</i> " (1 Samuel 15:23, King James wording) is often quoted from church pulpits, sometimes to silence questions put to a pastor. In the Tanakh's own setting the rebel in that chapter is the <i>king</i> . The written text says who rebelled, against whom, and why the verdict fell on the one who held the authority.	The Qur'an places the first disobedience in Iblis's pride: " <i>I am better than him</i> " (Q. 7:12), and it names ' <i>uquq al-walidayn</i> ' (<i>undutifulness to parents</i>) among the greatest sins (Sahih al-Bukhari 5976). The Tanakh begins the story of rebellion in the garden, in a human choice, and traces its fruit into marriage, friendship, and the household.

DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY — STANDING RULE OF MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

The sole binding authority of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution is the *Tanakh* — the written covenant of **Yahweh**. No Talmudic tractate, Church council decree, papal encyclical, hadith collection, or extra-biblical tradition carries doctrinal weight equal to or greater than the written Torah. Where any tradition conflicts with the written covenant, the written covenant governs without exception. The Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority. Miqdash Bethel uses the Written Tanakh as its sole source for four reasons: it is the only text Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all recognize as originally given by **Yahweh**; it predates and underlies the Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an, so testing those traditions against it follows the evidentiary direction of **Deuteronomy 19:15** — the earlier witness governs the later commentary; every later tradition that departs from the Tanakh does so by addition or reinterpretation, never by overturning the text itself, so the text remains the fixed standard; and **Yahweh's** own words declare the covenant unchanging (Malachi 3:6; Psalms 119:89), making the written covenant — not evolving institutional interpretation — the only stable ground for doctrine. All three great covenant traditions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — are addressed simultaneously and equally in every Miqdash Bethel document, because **Yahweh's** covenant belongs to every nation that will receive it. The **Deuteronomy 19:15** two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard governs all textual claims in this document.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document applies the sole authority of the written *Tanakh* to five questions about rebellion: what rebellion is in the Hebrew text, why **Yahweh** hates it, where it comes from, how it ruins a marriage, and how it ruins a friendship and a household. A sixth question follows naturally: what breaks it. **Yahweh** (יהוה) and **Elohim** (אֱלֹהִים) appear in bold throughout. Tanakh books and personal names are given in English. Hebrew transliterations appear in ***bold italic*** with the English meaning, also in bold italic, in parentheses at every occurrence. Scripture references are bold. Verse numbers follow the English version; where the Hebrew numbering differs, it is given in brackets on first citation. Scripture is rendered in a literal working translation from the Hebrew. Each finding is graded under the two-or-three-witness standard as **Corroborated** (two or more independent Tanakh witnesses), **Single witness**, or **Not in the text**. Three audiences are addressed simultaneously: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Rabbinic literature, the New Testament, the Qur'an and hadith, and modern research are cited only as historical and comparative reference — not as binding authority. The Written Tanakh governs all conclusions.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Torah	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	The first rebellion and the first broken marriage; the wilderness rebellions; the defiant sinner; Korah; Miriam and Aaron; the stubborn son; the law of the neighbor
Nevi'im (Prophets)	Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Micah, Malachi	Saul; Michal; Absalom and Ahithophel; David and Jonathan; the altar of witness; Israel as the rebellious child and the unfaithful wife; treachery against the wife of one's youth
Ketuvim (Writings)	Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Nehemiah, 1 Chronicles	The betrayed friend; the things Yahweh hates; pride and contention in the house; the whisperer; confession of rebellion; the Persian decree

COMPARATIVE TEXTS CITED — HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE REFERENCE ONLY

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
New Testament	Matthew 15:9; Acts 5:29; Romans 13:1–2; Ephesians 5:21–33; 1 Peter 3:7; Jude 11	Submission, authority, marriage, and Korah in the Christian witness
Qur'an and hadith	Q. 2:34; 4:34–35; 4:128; 7:12; 17:23–24; Sahih al-Bukhari 5976	Iblis's refusal; <i>nushuz (ill-conduct / defiance)</i> in marriage; arbitration; duty to parents
Rabbinic literature	Mishnah Sanhedrin 8:1–5; 11:2; Talmud Sanhedrin 71a; Talmud Kiddushin 30b; Genesis Rabbah 9:7; the <i>Ashamnu</i> confession	The stubborn son, the rebellious elder, the evil inclination, and the liturgy of confession

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Church history and teaching	King James Version (1611), 1 Samuel 15:23; modern authority and "covering" teaching	How 1 Samuel 15:23 is rendered and applied in Christian pulpits
Modern research	John Gottman and the Gottman Institute, "The Four Horsemen" (criticism, contempt, defensiveness, stonewalling)	Observational research on what predicts the breakdown of marriages, tested in Section V-F

I. FRAMING THE QUESTION — WHAT IS REBELLION, AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

I-A. The Questions as They Are Usually Asked

Rebellion is one of the most common words in pulpit preaching and one of the least carefully defined. It is used for everything from a teenager's back-talk to a nation's apostasy, and it is sometimes used as a weapon to silence honest questions. The questions put to this Institution are direct:

First: what does the Tanakh actually mean by rebellion?

Second: why does **Yahweh** hate it so strongly — why is it set beside divination and idolatry?

Third: where did the rebellion begin?

Fourth: how does rebellion ruin a marriage?

Fifth: how does rebellion ruin a friendship, and a household?

This study builds on earlier work in the Library and does not repeat it. **Doc 153** (*Saul Ben Kish: The Trajectory of Disobedience*) traced the eleven stages of Saul's fall; the March 2026 study *Stiff-Necked: Why Mankind Resists Yahweh* surveyed human resistance across the Tanakh and the modern world; **Doc 131** examined *ish ba-yashar be-einav ya'aseh* (*each man did what was right in his own eyes*); and **Doc 235** (*The Two Inclinations*) examined the *yetzer* (*inclination*) in man and woman alike. The present document gathers the full Hebrew vocabulary of rebellion, sets out the Tanakh's own reasons for **Yahweh's** hatred of it, and then follows rebellion into the two places the question asks about: the marriage and the friendship. It corrects five points in the earlier material (Section X).

I-B. The Questions in the Tanakh's Own Terms

The Tanakh's defining sentence on rebellion is spoken by Samuel to a king:

"For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and stubbornness is as iniquity and household idols. Because you have rejected the word of Yahweh, He has also rejected you from being king" (1 Samuel 15:23).

The Hebrew reads **כִּי חַטָּאת־קֶסֶם מֶרִי**, *ki chattat qesem meri* (*for the sin of divination is rebellion*). The verse gives its own definition in the next clause: rebellion is *ma'asta et devar Yahweh* (*you have rejected the word of Yahweh*). Rebellion, in the Tanakh's own terms, is not ignorance and not weakness. It is the knowing refusal of a word **Yahweh** has spoken. The five questions therefore become: What words does the Tanakh use for that refusal? What does the refusal do to **Yahweh**, and why does He answer it as He does? Where did it first appear? And what happens when the same refusal enters a covenant between husband and wife, or between two friends?

Every finding below is graded. A finding is **Corroborated** when two or more independent Tanakh witnesses carry it (**Deuteronomy 19:15**). It is **Single witness** when only one text carries it. It is **Not in the text** when it is taught but the Tanakh does not say it.

II. THE WORD STUDY — THE HEBREW VOCABULARY OF REBELLION

English has one word, *rebellion*. The Tanakh has a family of words, each naming a different side of the same refusal. The table sets out the terms this study relies on.

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
<i>marah (to rebel / be defiant)</i> , מָרָה	H4784	To defy, to be contentious against; used most often of Israel against Yahweh's word	Numbers 20:24; Deuteronomy 9:7, 24; Isaiah 1:20
<i>meri (rebellion)</i> , מֶרִי	H4805	The noun: defiance as a standing condition; <i>beit meri (a rebellious house)</i>	1 Samuel 15:23; Ezekiel 2:5–8; Proverbs 17:11
<i>marad (to revolt)</i> , מָרַד	H4775	To revolt against a sovereign; used of vassal kings and of Israel against Yahweh	Genesis 14:4; Numbers 14:9; Daniel 9:5, 9

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
<i>mered</i> (revolt), מֶרֶד, and <i>mardut</i> (rebelliousness), מַרְדּוּת	H4777 / H4780	The noun of revolt; <i>mardut</i> appears once, in Saul's curse on Jonathan's mother	Joshua 22:22; 1 Samuel 20:30
<i>sarar</i> (to be stubborn), סָרָר; <i>sorer u-moreh</i> (stubborn and rebellious)	H5637	To turn aside and refuse to be led, like a heifer that will not take the yoke	Deuteronomy 21:18; Psalms 78:8; Jeremiah 5:23; Hosea 4:16
<i>pasha</i> (to transgress / revolt), פָּשַׁע; <i>pesha</i> (transgression)	H6586 / H6588	To break away from an authority one is bound to; used of Israel breaking from David's house	1 Kings 12:19; Isaiah 1:2; Exodus 34:7
<i>haftsar</i> (stubbornness / pressing), הִפְצִיר	H6484	From <i>patsar</i> (to press, push): pushing one's own will against a word already given	1 Samuel 15:23
<i>qesbeh oref</i> (stiff of neck), קֶשֶׁה עֹרֶף	H7186 / H6203	The ox that stiffens its neck against the yoke and the goad	Exodus 32:9; Deuteronomy 10:16; 31:27
<i>sherirut lev</i> (stubbornness of heart), שְׁרִירוּת לֵב	H8307	The heart that walks by its own counsel and calls it peace	Deuteronomy 29:19; Jeremiah 7:24
<i>zadon</i> (presumption / pride), זָדוֹן	H2087	Arrogant self-assertion; the root of contention	Deuteronomy 17:12; Proverbs 13:10
<i>be-yad ramah</i> (with a high hand), בְּיַד רָמָה	H3027 / H7311	Sin done openly and defiantly, as opposed to unwitting sin	Numbers 15:30–31
<i>bagad</i> (to deal treacherously), בָּגַד	H898	To betray a covenant partner; the Tanakh's word for marital betrayal	Malachi 2:14–16; Jeremiah 3:20
<i>ma'al</i> (breach of faith), מַעַל	H4604	Treachery against what belongs to Yahweh	Joshua 22:16, 22; 1 Chronicles 10:13 (see Doc 153)
<i>madon</i> (strife), מַדּוֹן; <i>medanim</i> (contentions)	H4066	Quarreling; the fruit of pride; the thing sown between brothers	Proverbs 6:19; 16:28; 26:21

Four lexical observations govern what follows.

II-A. The Stubborn Heifer — Hosea 4:16 Expounded

The prophet's sentence is short, and every word in it comes from the farm:

"For like a stubborn heifer, Israel has been stubborn. Now will Yahweh shepherd them like a lamb in a broad place?" (Hosea 4:16).

The Hebrew reads כָּפָרָה סִרְרָה סָרַר יִשְׂרָאֵל, *ki ke-farah sorerah sarar Yisra'el* (*for like a stubborn heifer, Israel has been stubborn*). The root *sarar* (*to be stubborn*) appears twice in a row: a stubborn heifer, stubborn in her stubbornness. The doubling is deliberate. The prophet isn't describing one bad day at the plow. He's describing an animal whose nature has set.

The heifer. A *parah* (*heifer*), H6510, is a young cow. In the Torah the heifer set apart for purification is one *"on which a yoke has never come"* (Numbers 19:2), and the heifer for an unsolved killing is one *"that has not pulled in a yoke"* (Deuteronomy 21:3). So a heifer is, by definition, an animal that hasn't yet learned the yoke. Anyone who has worked cattle knows what a stubborn one does. She plants her front feet, drops her head, and locks her neck. The harder you pull the rope, the harder she pulls back. She isn't attacking anyone. She's refusing to be led. That is the Tanakh's picture of rebellion: not a raised fist, but a locked neck.

The yoke and the neck. The same picture runs through the prophets:

- Jeremiah hears Israel say it outright: *"Long ago you broke your yoke and burst your bonds, and you said, 'I will not serve'"* (Jeremiah 2:20; compare 5:5).
- Nehemiah's prayer adds the shoulder to the neck, using the same root: *"they turned a stubborn shoulder, stiffened their neck, and would not hear"* (Nehemiah 9:29). The phrase is *katef soraret* (*a stubborn shoulder*).
- Zechariah repeats it word for word: *"they refused to listen, turned a stubborn shoulder, and stopped their ears"* (Zechariah 7:11).

That makes three witnesses who describe rebellion as an animal shrugging off the yoke. This is the *qesbeh oref* (*stiff of neck*) of Sinai (Exodus 32:9) seen in the barnyard.

The heifer who loved easy work. Hosea returns to the image later:

"Ephraim is a trained heifer that loves to thresh; but I have put a yoke on her fair neck" (Hosea 10:11).

Threshing was the easiest work a cow could be given. She walked in circles over the grain, and the Torah forbade muzzling her, so she ate as she worked (Deuteronomy 25:4). Plowing was hard, heavy work under the yoke. Ephraim was willing to serve as long as the service fed her. When Yahweh called

her to the plow, she locked her neck. Rebellion often starts here, with a person who is glad to obey Yahweh while obedience pays and plants his feet the moment it costs him something.

The second half of the verse — two honest readings. The clause *atah yir'em Yahweh ke-khevesh ba-merchav* (*now will Yahweh shepherd them like a lamb in a broad place*) can be read two ways, and both stand on the same Hebrew:

1. **As a question.** How can Yahweh lead them gently to open pasture, like a lamb, when they won't be led at all? The animal that refuses the rope forfeits the green field.
2. **As a stern irony.** Yahweh will now let them have the open space they wanted, like a lone lamb in a wide field: unfenced, unguarded, and exposed to every predator.

On either reading the outcome is the same. The next verse says it plainly: *"Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone"* (Hosea 4:17). The most severe judgment on a locked neck is to stop pulling on the rope.

What the yoke was meant to be. The same prophet shows what the stubborn heifer was refusing:

"I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as one who lifts the yoke from their jaws, and I bent down and fed them" (Hosea 11:4).

Yahweh's yoke was never a chain. He was the farmer who eases the yoke off the jaw so the animal can eat, then bends down to feed it by hand. The heifer locked her neck against the One who was feeding her.

The warning and the way back. Wisdom gives the warning:

"He who is often rebuked and hardens his neck will suddenly be broken, and that without remedy" (Proverbs 29:1).

Jeremiah records the answer, and it comes in the same farm language, from Ephraim's own mouth:

"You have disciplined me, and I was disciplined, like an untrained calf. Turn me back, and I will be turned, for You are Yahweh my Elohim" (Jeremiah 31:18).

The untrained calf doesn't break itself of stubbornness. It asks the owner to turn it. Yahweh's answer comes two verses later:

"Is Ephraim My dear son? ... My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him" (Jeremiah 31:20).

The yoke shared — marriage and friendship. The picture carries straight into the two bonds this study examines. When two oxen are yoked together, one plants its feet and the furrow stops. The other animal takes the whole strain on its own neck. A marriage or a friendship under a shared yoke works the same way. The locked neck doesn't only halt the one who is refusing; it chokes the one yoked beside him. That is why the covenant's remedy is addressed to every reader first:

"Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer" (Deuteronomy 10:16).

Finding — that the Tanakh pictures rebellion as a young animal refusing the yoke and stiffening its neck against the one who leads it is Corroborated (Hosea 4:16; 10:11; Jeremiah 2:20; 5:5; 31:18; Nehemiah 9:29; Zechariah 7:11; Exodus 32:9). That Yahweh's yoke was meant to be gentle, and that He answers the calf who asks to be turned, is Corroborated (Hosea 11:4; Jeremiah 31:18–20).

First, the vocabulary is relational before it is legal. *marad (to revolt)* is used of vassal kings breaking faith with their overlord (Genesis 14:4), and *pasha (to transgress / revolt)* is used of Israel breaking from the house of David (1 Kings 12:19). Both words assume a bond already in place. A stranger cannot rebel against you; only someone bound to you can. That is why the same words fit a marriage and a friendship.

Second, *sarar (to be stubborn)* and *qesheh oref (stiff of neck)* are farm words. The prophet says it plainly:

"Israel is stubborn like a stubborn heifer" (Hosea 4:16).

The picture is an animal that plants its feet and stiffens its neck against the one who leads it. **Rebellion in the Tanakh is not first a raised fist; it is a locked neck.**

Third, the pair *sorer u-moreh (stubborn and rebellious)* describes a son (Deuteronomy 21:18), a generation (Psalms 78:8), and a heart (Jeremiah 5:23). The Tanakh uses the same words for the household and for the nation, because it treats them as the same kind of bond.

Fourth, Saul's verdict joins the vocabulary of rebellion to the vocabulary of false worship: *meri (rebellion)* is set beside *qesem (divination)*, and *haftsar (stubbornness)* beside *aven (iniquity)* and *teraphim (household idols)* (1 Samuel 15:23). The King James rendering "*witchcraft*" narrows *qesem*, which is divination — seeking guidance from a source other than **Yahweh**. The comparison is exact: the rebel takes his direction from himself, as the diviner takes his from the omen.

III. WHY DOES YAHWEH HATE REBELLION? — FIVE REASONS FROM THE TEXT

III-A. What the Tanakh Says Yahweh Hates

The Tanakh does not leave **Yahweh's** hatred to inference. It names what He hates, and rebellion is on the list both by name and by its fruit.

"All their evil is in Gilgal, for there I hated them. Because of the wickedness of their deeds I will drive them out of My house; I will love them no more. All their princes are rebels" (Hosea 9:15).

The last clause is a wordplay: *sareihem sorerim* (*their princes are rebels*), שָׂרֵיהֶם סֹרְרִים. The leaders who should have held the people to the covenant had locked their own necks against it. The same book says *"Israel is stubborn like a stubborn heifer"* (Hosea 4:16).

"But they rebelled and grieved His holy spirit; therefore He turned to be their enemy, and He Himself fought against them" (Isaiah 63:10).

The wisdom list of what **Yahweh** hates names the fruit of rebellion in the community:

"These six things Yahweh hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers" (Proverbs 6:16–19).

The list begins with *einayim ramot* (*haughty eyes*) and ends with *meshalleach medanim bein achim* (*one who sows discord among brothers*). It begins in pride and ends in broken relationships. That is the path of rebellion this study will follow.

III-B. First Reason: Rebellion Rejects the King, Not Merely a Rule

When Israel demanded a king to replace **Yahweh's** rule through His prophet, **Yahweh** told Samuel who was actually being rejected:

"They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them" (1 Samuel 8:7).

The Torah draws the same line in its law of sin. Unwitting sin — *shegagah* (error / inadvertence) — is covered by an offering (Numbers 15:27–29). Defiant sin is another thing:

"But the person who does anything with a high hand, whether native or stranger, that one reviles Yahweh, and that person shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of Yahweh and has broken His commandment" (Numbers 15:30–31).

The Torah calls the defiant sinner *megaddef* (*one who reviles*). His act is a statement about **Yahweh**: that His word is not worth keeping. The Psalms say the same: *"they rebelled against the words of El, and despised the counsel of the Most High"* (Psalms 107:11). Rebellion is hated because it is personal. It is not a missed rule; it is a verdict passed on the Lawgiver.

III-C. Second Reason: Rebellion Seizes the Right to Define Good and Evil

The first rebellion was offered as a promise:

"you will be like Elohim, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5).

The temptation was not to become a monster. It was to become one's own judge — to decide for oneself what is good. That is an attack on the moral order **Yahweh** set, because it moves the authority to define good from Him to the creature.

The Tanakh follows this attack wherever it goes. Moses forbade it before Israel entered the Land:

"You shall not do ... every man whatever is right in his own eyes" (Deuteronomy 12:8).

The book of Judges closes with its fruit:

"In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25; see Doc 131).

The prophet pronounces the woe on its final form:

"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness" (Isaiah 5:20).

And the Torah describes the inner voice that makes it possible:

"... and he blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart'" (Deuteronomy 29:19 [Hebrew 29:18]).

Here is the heart of *sherirut lev* (*stubbornness of heart*): the rebel does not feel like a rebel. He feels at peace. He has redefined good to match what he already wants.

III-D. Third Reason: Rebellion Is Functional Idolatry

Samuel's verdict sets rebellion beside divination and stubbornness beside idols (**1 Samuel 15:23**). The comparison is not rhetorical. An idol is a thing put in Yahweh's place to be obeyed, consulted, and trusted. The rebel puts his own will in that place. Moses joins the two at the end of his life:

"I know your rebellion and your stiff neck" (Deuteronomy 31:27), and the Song that follows describes the same people who "grew fat and kicked" turning to "strange gods" (Deuteronomy 32:15–16). The locked neck and the strange god are one sin seen from two sides.

This is why Saul is the Tanakh's great example. He did not bow to an image at Amalek. He kept the best of the flocks and said they were for sacrifice (**1 Samuel 15:15, 21**). He put his own judgment above the word he had been given, and he dressed it in worship. **Doc 153** traced where that led: the king who would not obey ended by consulting a medium (**1 Samuel 28:7; 1 Chronicles 10:13**).

III-E. Fourth Reason: Rebellion Wounds a Father and a Husband

The Tanakh describes Yahweh's response to rebellion in the language of a family, not a courtroom.

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for Yahweh has spoken: Children I have raised and brought up, and they have rebelled against Me" (Isaiah 1:2).

"How often they rebelled against Him in the wilderness, and grieved Him in the desert" (Psalms 78:40).

"Surely, as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, says Yahweh" (Jeremiah 3:20).

The verbs are *itsvu* (*they grieved*) (**Isaiah 63:10**) and *ya'atsivuhu* (*they pained Him*) (**Psalms 78:40**). Yahweh's hatred of rebellion is not the cold hatred of a ruler who has lost a subject. It is the anger of wounded covenant love — the hatred a faithful father has for what is destroying his son, and a faithful husband for what has broken his marriage. That is why the same prophet who says:

"I will love them no more" (Hosea 9:15) also records Yahweh saying,

"How can I give you up, Ephraim? ... My heart is turned within Me" (Hosea 11:8).

III-F. Fifth Reason: Rebellion Spreads and Destroys What Yahweh Made

Rebellion never stays inside the rebel. The Torah warns of *"a root bearing poison and wormwood"* (**Deuteronomy 29:18** [Hebrew 29:17]) — one man's stubborn heart that spreads bitterness through a people. Korah's rebellion began with three men and grew to two hundred and fifty leaders (**Numbers**

16:1–2); the next day *"all the congregation"* murmured against Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16:41 [Hebrew 17:6]). Absalom *"stole the hearts of the men of Israel"* (2 Samuel 15:6), and the revolt ended with twenty thousand dead in the forest of Ephraim (2 Samuel 18:7). The wisdom books compress it into one line:

"An evil man seeks only rebellion; therefore a cruel messenger will be sent against him" (Proverbs 17:11).

Most sobering of all is who stands at the tent door when judgment falls on a rebel. When the ground opened under Dathan and Abiram, they:

"stood at the door of their tents, with their wives, their sons, and their little ones" (Numbers 16:27).

The rebel's household was standing with him. Yahweh hates rebellion because He sees where it ends, and He sees who stands beside the rebel when it does.

III-G. Weakness and Defiance Are Not the Same

An honest reading must hold one more line. Yahweh's hatred of rebellion is aimed at defiance, not at human weakness. The same Torah that cuts off the high-handed sinner provides atonement for the one who sins in error (Numbers 15:27–29).

The psalmist says: *"As a father has compassion on his children, so Yahweh has compassion on those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust"* (Psalms 103:13–14).

The struggling believer who falls and returns is not the rebel of 1 Samuel 15. The rebel is the one who hears the word, understands it, and plants his feet.

Finding — why Yahweh hates rebellion: it rejects Him as King (1 Samuel 8:7; 15:23; Numbers 15:30–31), seizes His right to define good and evil (Genesis 3:5; Deuteronomy 12:8; Isaiah 5:20), functions as idolatry (1 Samuel 15:23; Deuteronomy 31:27; 32:15–16), wounds Him as Father and Husband (Isaiah 1:2; 63:10; Psalms 78:40; Jeremiah 3:20), and spreads to destroy households and nations (Numbers 16:27; Deuteronomy 29:18; Proverbs 17:11). Corroborated on every point. That His hatred falls on defiance rather than weakness is also Corroborated (Numbers 15:27–31; Psalms 103:13–14).

IV. WHERE REBELLION BEGAN, AND WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

IV-A. The First Rebellion — in a Garden, Between a Husband and a Wife

The Tanakh places the first rebellion in the human story, not above it. The man and the woman were given one command (**Genesis 2:16–17**), heard a voice that questioned it (**Genesis 3:1**), and took the right to judge good and evil into their own hands (**Genesis 3:5–6**). Three things followed immediately, and each is a mark of rebellion that the rest of the Tanakh will recognize:

Hiding: *"I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself"* (**Genesis 3:10**).

Blame: *"The woman whom You gave to be with me — she gave me of the tree, and I ate"* (**Genesis 3:12**). The man blames his wife and, in the same breath, Yahweh who gave her.

Rupture: *"Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you"* (**Genesis 3:16**).

It is worth pausing on the order. The first marriage was not broken by incompatibility or hardship. It was broken, in the Tanakh's telling, by rebellion against Yahweh — and the first thing that rebellion did was turn husband and wife against each other. **Genesis 3:16** describes the consequence of the rebellion, not a command given to set things right; **Doc 235** examined that verse in full.

IV-B. Where the Tanakh Does Not Go — the Fallen-Angel Story

Much teaching places the origin of rebellion in heaven, in a glorious angel named Lucifer who rebelled and fell. The texts usually cited are **Isaiah 14:12–15** and **Ezekiel 28:12–17**. Each passage names its own subject. Isaiah's oracle is introduced as *"this proverb against the king of Babylon"* (**Isaiah 14:4**), and the one who fell is *Helel ben Shachar (shining one, son of the dawn)*, a king who said in his heart, *"I will ascend to heaven"* (**Isaiah 14:13**). Ezekiel's lament is addressed to "the king of Tyre" (**Ezekiel 28:12**). Both passages use the imagery of heaven and Eden to describe the pride of human kings. The Library's March 2026 study *Ha-Satan* examined these texts in full.

Finding — that rebellion began among humans, in the garden, by taking the right to judge good and evil, is Corroborated (**Genesis 3:5–6, 22; Ecclesiastes 7:29**). That it began with the rebellion of an angel named Lucifer is **Not in the text**. The Tanakh uses the fall of proud kings as a picture of pride; it does not narrate an angelic revolt.

IV-C. The Anatomy of Rebellion — Seven Marks from Korah

The fullest portrait of rebellion in the Torah is Korah's revolt (**Numbers 16**). It is worth studying closely, because the same seven marks appear later in marriages and friendships.

#	THE MARK	WHAT KORAH AND HIS COMPANY SAID OR DID	TEXT
1	A grievance dressed as principle	<i>"You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy"</i>	Numbers 16:3
2	A coalition gathered	Two hundred and fifty leaders <i>"men of renown"</i> drawn in	Numbers 16:2
3	Motives attacked	<i>"that you must also make yourself a prince over us"</i>	Numbers 16:13
4	History rewritten	Egypt called <i>"a land flowing with milk and honey"</i>	Numbers 16:13
5	Refusal to meet	<i>"We will not come up!"</i> — said twice	Numbers 16:12, 14
6	Contempt for the other's word	<i>"Will you put out the eyes of these men?"</i>	Numbers 16:14
7	The household drawn in	Wives, sons, and little ones standing at the tent doors	Numbers 16:27

Two things in Moses' response matter for everything that follows. First, he did not answer contempt with contempt; "he fell on his face" (Numbers 16:4), when Dathan and Abiram refused his summons (Numbers 16:12), he went to them himself (Numbers 16:25). Second, he left the verdict to Yahweh: "in the morning Yahweh will show who is His" (Numbers 16:5).

IV-D. No One Is Above It — Even Moses

The Tanakh does not let the reader imagine that rebellion is only the sin of other people. At the waters of Meribah, Moses said to the people, *"Hear now, you rebels" (Numbers 20:10)* — and then struck the rock he had been told to speak to. **Yahweh's** verdict turned the word back on him: *"you rebelled against My word at the waters of Meribah" (Numbers 20:24; 27:14).* The man who named the rebels was named a rebel in the same chapter. The one who most loudly identifies rebellion in others is not thereby free of it.

V. HOW REBELLION RUINS A MARRIAGE

V-A. The Order Yahweh Set — Marriage as a Covenant He Witnesses

Tanakh's account of marriage begins with **Yahweh's** own judgment:

"It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper corresponding to him" (Genesis 2:18).

The phrase is *ezer kenegdo* (*a helper corresponding to him*), and *ezer* is the same word used by Yahweh as Israel's help (Psalms 121:1–2). It carries no sense of inferiority. The union is sealed in one sentence:

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). The verb is *davaq* (*to cleave / cling*), דָּבַק.

The prophets call this bond a covenant, and they name **Yahweh** as its witness:

"Yahweh has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant" (Malachi 2:14).

Wisdom says the same of the wife who leaves: she *"forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her Elohim"* (Proverbs 2:17). Two witnesses — one addressed to husbands, one describing a wife — call marriage *berit* (*covenant*), and call it **Elohim's** covenant. That is why rebellion inside a marriage is never only a private matter between two people. A third party witnessed the vows.

V-B. Treachery — the Tanakh's Word for Marital Rebellion

The Tanakh's word for rebellion inside a marriage is *bagad* (*to deal treacherously*), and Malachi uses it five times in three verses (Malachi 2:14–16). The same word describes Israel's rebellion against **Yahweh** as a wife's (Jeremiah 3:20). The two are the same act at two levels: breaking faith with the one to whom you are bound.

"... so take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For He hates sending away, says Yahweh the Elohim of Israel, and him who covers his garment with violence, says Yahweh of hosts. So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously" (Malachi 2:15–16).

An honest note on translation: the Hebrew of Malachi 2:16, *ki sane shallach* (*for [one] hates, sending away*), can be read two ways. Many translations read it as **Yahweh** speaking — *"I hate*

divorce." Others, including several modern Jewish and Christian versions, read it as describing the man — *"the man who hates and divorces covers his garment with violence."* Both readings stand on the same Hebrew. On either reading, the verse joins treachery toward a wife with *chamas* (violence), *onh*, and Yahweh stands against it.

Notice who is rebuked. Malachi addresses husbands (Malachi 2:14–16); Proverbs describes a wife (Proverbs 2:16–17); Jeremiah uses a wife as the picture and applies it to the whole nation, men and women alike (Jeremiah 3:20). The Tanakh holds both spouses to the same covenant. Treachery is rebellion whichever spouse commits it.

V-C. Pride and Contention — the Stiff Neck at Home

Most marriages are not ruined by one great act of treachery. They are worn down by the daily form of rebellion the wisdom books call *madon* (strife) and its root, *zadon* (pride).

"By pride comes only contention, but with those who take counsel is wisdom" (Proverbs 13:10).

The book is even-handed about who brings strife into a house. It describes *"a contentious woman"* (Proverbs 21:9, 19; 25:24; 27:15), and it describes *"a contentious man"* with the same word: *"As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife"* (Proverbs 26:21). And it gives the same counsel to both:

"The beginning of strife is like letting out water; so abandon the quarrel before it breaks out" (Proverbs 17:14).

"A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1).

The stiff neck at home is the refusal to yield even when one is wrong — the husband or wife who would rather win than be reconciled. The Torah's name for it is the same one it uses for Israel before Yahweh: *qesheh oref* (stiff of neck).

V-D. The Seven Marks of Korah Inside a Marriage

The seven marks of rebellion in **Numbers 16** (Section IV-C) appear, almost unchanged, in marriages that are coming apart. The table sets them side by side.

THE MARK	IN KORAH'S REBELLION	IN A MARRIAGE
A grievance dressed as principle	<i>"All the congregation is holy"</i> (16:3)	A real hurt restated as a charge against the other's whole character

THE MARK	IN KORAH'S REBELLION	IN A MARRIAGE
A coalition gathered	Two hundred and fifty leaders (16:2)	Friends, relatives, or others recruited to one side instead of to reconciliation
Motives attacked	<i>"Make yourself a prince over us"</i> (16:13)	Assuming the worst reason behind the other's actions
History rewritten	Egypt remembered as milk and honey (16:13)	The whole marriage retold as unhappy from the start
Refusal to meet	<i>"We will not come up!"</i> (16:12, 14)	Walking out, shutting down, refusing to talk
Contempt	<i>"Will you put out the eyes of these men?"</i> (16:14)	Mockery, scorn, and treating the spouse as beneath respect
The household drawn in	Wives and little ones at the tent doors (16:27)	Children pulled into the conflict and made to carry it

V-E. Contempt — Michal and David

The Tanakh gives one marriage in which contempt is named, and the account is short and devastating. When David brought the ark into Jerusalem dancing before **Yahweh**, his wife Michal watched from a window,

"and she despised him in her heart" (2 Samuel 6:16).

The verb is *bazab* (to despise), בָּזָה — the same verb the Torah uses for the defiant sinner who *"despised the word of Yahweh"* (Numbers 15:31). She met him with mockery (2 Samuel 6:20), and David answered her in kind (2 Samuel 6:21–22). Neither yielded. The account closes:

"And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death" (2 Samuel 6:23).

Whatever else that verse means, it records a marriage that bore no further fruit after contempt entered it. The fault was not one-sided; the contempt was.

V-F. A Modern Observation, Tested Against the Text

Modern observational research reaches a conclusion the Tanakh records in narrative. The psychologist John Gottman and his colleagues, after decades of observing couples in conflict, identified four patterns that most reliably come before the breakdown of a marriage — criticism, contempt,

defensiveness, and stonewalling — and found contempt the single strongest predictor of divorce. This is modern research, not scripture, and it is cited here only as comparative witness. But each of the four has a Tanakh counterpart already studied: **criticism of character in the attack on motives (Numbers 16:13)**, **contempt in Michal's heart (2 Samuel 6:16)**, **defensiveness in the first husband's blame (Genesis 3:12)**, and **stonewalling in "We will not come up!" (Numbers 16:12, 14)**. The research describes the pattern. The Tanakh names its root: the locked neck of rebellion.

V-G. What Rebellion in Marriage Is Not

Because the word rebellion is sometimes used inside marriages to silence a wife, the Tanakh's own usage must be stated carefully.

First: the Tanakh never uses the vocabulary of rebellion — *meri*, *marad*, or *sarar* — for a wife disagreeing with her husband. When Sarah's counsel troubled Abraham, **Yahweh** told him,

"whatever Sarah says to you, listen to her voice" (Genesis 21:12).

When Abigail acted against her husband Nabal's foolish refusal, David blessed her: *"Blessed is your discernment, and blessed are you"* (1 Samuel 25:33).

Second: the one decree in the Tanakh that treats a wife's refusal as a threat to every husband in the land comes from a Persian court, not from the Torah. When Queen Vashti refused to appear before a king whose heart *"was merry with wine"* (Esther 1:10–12), his counselors warned that all wives would now despise their husbands (Esther 1:16–18), and a decree went out that *"every man should rule in his own house"* (Esther 1:22). The Tanakh records that decree; it does not command it.

Third: no text gives a husband the right to deal treacherously or with violence toward his wife. Malachi names the man who *"covers his garment with violence"* (Malachi 2:16) and sets **Yahweh** against him.

Finding — rebellion ruins a marriage by treachery (Malachi 2:14–16; Proverbs 2:17; Jeremiah 3:20), by pride and contention (Proverbs 13:10; 21:9; 26:21), and by contempt (2 Samuel 6:16–23), and it follows the same pattern as Korah's revolt (Numbers 16). **Corroborated.** Both husband and wife are held to the same covenant. **Corroborated** (Malachi 2:14; Proverbs 2:17; 26:21; 21:9). That a wife's disagreement with her husband is rebellion against Yahweh is Not in the text (Genesis 21:12; 1 Samuel 25:33).

VI. HOW REBELLION RUINS A FRIENDSHIP AND A HOUSEHOLD

VI-A. Friendship in the Tanakh

The Tanakh has several words for friend: *re'a* (*neighbor / friend*), *obev* (*one who loves*), and *aluf* (*close companion*), אֱלֹף. It sets a high standard for the bond. The Torah speaks of

"your friend who is as your own soul" (Deuteronomy 13:6 [Hebrew 13:7]).

Wisdom says,

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (Proverbs 17:17), and *"there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother"* (Proverbs 18:24).

The verb in that last line is *davaq* (*to cleave*) — the same verb used by husband and wife in **Genesis 2:24**. The Tanakh uses marriage language for true friendship, and so the same rebellion that ruins one ruins the other.

The greatest friendship in the Tanakh is a covenant: *"the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant"* (1 Samuel 18:1, 3).

Witness One — Absalom: the Offense Left Unhealed. Absalom's rebellion did not begin at the city gate. It began with an injury no one answered. When Amnon violated Absalom's sister Tamar, David *"was very angry"* (2 Samuel 13:21) — and the text records nothing more. Absalom waited *"two full years"* (2 Samuel 13:23). After his exile and return, the king said, *"let him not see my face"* (2 Samuel 14:24), and Absalom lived *"two full years in Jerusalem, and did not see the king's face"* (2 Samuel 14:28). The final reconciliation was a kiss (2 Samuel 14:33) with no recorded word between them. Then Absalom went to the gate:

"See, your claims are good and right, but there is no one to hear you from the king" (2 Samuel 15:3). *"So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel"* (2 Samuel 15:6).

The lesson for every close bond is written in the gaps of the story: anger without action, distance without conversation, and a kiss without repentance grew into a revolt.

Witness Two — Ahithophel: the Friend Who Lifted His Heel. Ahithophel was David's counselor, whose advice *"was as if one inquired of the word of Elohim"* (2 Samuel 16:23). When

the conspiracy grew, David was told, *"Abithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom"* (2 Samuel 15:31). The Psalms preserve the grief of that kind of betrayal:

"Even my own close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me" (Psalms 41:9 [Hebrew 41:10]).

"For it is not an enemy who reproaches me — then I could bear it ... but it is you, a man my equal, my companion and my close friend. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of Elohim in the throng ... He has put out his hand against those at peace with him; he has profaned his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart" (Psalms 55:12–14, 20–21 [Hebrew 55:13–15, 21–22]).

The phrase *chillel berito* (*he has profaned his covenant*) shows how the Tanakh sees friendship: as a covenant that can be profaned. The friend's rebellion is not an ordinary disagreement. It is the same act as Israel's against Yahweh — breaking faith with one to whom you are bound. Ahithophel's own end was ruin (2 Samuel 17:23).

Witness Three — Miriam and Aaron: Rebellion Inside the Family. Moses' own sister and brother spoke against him. The stated complaint was his Cushite wife; the real complaint came out in the next breath:

"Has Yahweh indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" (Numbers 12:1–2).

This is the pretext-and-grievance pattern of Numbers 16:3 inside a family. Yahweh answered for Moses (Numbers 12:6–9), and Miriam was struck (Numbers 12:10). What Moses did next is the model for every wronged spouse, sibling, or friend: he prayed for the one who had spoken against him — "El, please heal her, please" (Numbers 12:13).

Witness Four — Jonathan: the Friend Who Would Not Rebel. Jonathan stood between a rebellious father and a friend whom Yahweh had chosen. When he defended David, Saul cursed him:

"You son of a perverse, rebellious woman!" (1 Samuel 20:30).

The word is *mardut* (*rebelliousness*), and it is the only place the Tanakh uses it. The man who had rebelled against Yahweh's word (1 Samuel 15:23) called his faithful son a rebel's child, and then threw a spear at him (1 Samuel 20:33). Jonathan did not answer rebellion with rebellion. He did not seize his father's throne, and he did not betray his friend. He went to David in the wilderness and *"strengthened his hand in Elohim"* (1 Samuel 23:16). Covenant friendship, in the Tanakh, is loyalty to the friend within loyalty to Yahweh.

Witness Five — Job's Friends: Wrong, and Restored. Job's three friends came to comfort him and ended by accusing him. Yahweh's verdict fell on them:

"you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has" (Job 42:7).

The friendship was restored the same way Miriam was healed — by the wronged friend praying for those who wronged him:

"And Yahweh restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends" (Job 42:10).

VI-B. The Whisperer and the Sower of Discord

Proverbs names the tools that break friendships, and each is a small form of rebellion against Yahweh's law of the neighbor (Leviticus 19:16–18):

"A perverse man sends out strife, and a whisperer separates close friends" (Proverbs 16:28).

"He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends" (Proverbs 17:9).

"A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle" (Proverbs 18:19).

The word behind "offended" in Proverbs 18:19 is *nifsha*, from *pasha* (to transgress / revolt) — the same root as rebellion against Yahweh. The *nirgan* (whisperer), נִרְגָן, is the same word used of Israel "murmuring" in their tents (Deuteronomy 1:27; Psalms 106:25). And the one who "sows discord among brothers" closes the list of seven things Yahweh hates (Proverbs 6:19). The Tanakh ties the private whisper against a friend to the public murmuring against Yahweh. They are one sin.

VI-C. When a Friend Entices Toward Rebellion

The Torah also foresees the opposite danger: a friend who leads another into rebellion against Yahweh.

"If your brother ... or your son or your daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, entices you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods' ... you shall not consent to him or listen to him" (Deuteronomy 13:6–8 [Hebrew 13:7–9]).

The same law requires that any charge be tested first:

"you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently" (Deuteronomy 13:14).

The covenant ranks loyalty to Yahweh above every human bond, and it forbids acting on an accusation that has not been examined.

VI-D. The Stubborn Son — a Hard Law Read in Full

No discussion of rebellion in the household can skip **Deuteronomy 21:18–21**, the law of the *ben sorer u-moreh* (*stubborn and rebellious son*). It must be read in full, because it is often quoted in pieces. The law requires: both father and mother together (**21:19**); a son who will not listen "*though they discipline him*" — a settled, repeated pattern, not a single act (**21:18**); a charge brought to the elders at the city gate, not settled at home (**21:19**); and a son described as *zolel ve-sove* (*a glutton and a drunkard*) (**21:20**) — an adult-level life of excess, not a child's disobedience. The judgment belongs to the community's court, never to a parent's hand. As with every capital law of the Torah, it assumes a functioning covenant court, which no believer today possesses or may claim.

What the law teaches still stands: persistent rebellion inside a household is a matter of public consequence, and Yahweh takes the honor of parents seriously (**Exodus 20:12; 21:15, 17; Proverbs 20:20; 30:17**). But the Tanakh also records hope for the rebel's children. When Korah perished, "*the sons of Korah did not die*" (**Numbers 26:11**) — and their descendants wrote some of the most beautiful psalms in the Tanakh, including "*As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O Elohim*" (**Psalms 42:1**). A child is not bound to repeat a parent's rebellion. The last promise of the prophets is that Yahweh "*will turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers*" (**Malachi 4:6** [Hebrew 3:24]).

Finding — rebellion ruins friendship through unhealed offense (**2 Samuel 13–15**), betrayal (**Psalms 41:9; 55:12–21; 2 Samuel 15:31**), jealousy dressed as principle (**Numbers 12:1–2**), and whispering and discord (**Proverbs 16:28; 17:9; 6:19**). **Corroborated.** The Tanakh uses covenant language for friendship (**1 Samuel 18:3; Psalms 55:20**) and marriage language for its closest form (**Proverbs 18:24; Genesis 2:24**). **Corroborated.** A rebel's children are not bound to repeat the rebellion (**Numbers 26:11; Ezekiel 18:14–17**). **Corroborated.**

VII. WHAT REBELLION IS NOT — REFUSING SIN IS NOT REBELLION

A study of rebellion must guard against its misuse. The word has been used to silence honest questions, to bind consciences to human leaders, and to call faithfulness a sin. The Tanakh itself sets the boundary.

First, refusing a human command that contradicts Yahweh is obedience, not rebellion. The Hebrew midwives disobeyed Pharaoh because they "*feared Elohim*" (**Exodus 1:17**). Obadiah hid a hundred prophets from Jezebel (**1 Kings 18:4**). Daniel's companions refused the king's image (**Daniel 3:18**), and Daniel kept praying against the king's decree (**Daniel 6:10**). King Hezekiah "*rebelled*" —

the word is *marad* — against the king of Assyria, and the same verse says *"Yahweh was with him"* (2 Kings 18:7). Rebellion is measured against Yahweh, not against whoever holds power.

Second, refusing to sin does not license seizing power. David refused to obey Saul's murderous intent, yet twice he refused to lift his hand against him:

"Yahweh forbid that I should do this thing to my master, Yahweh's anointed" (1 Samuel 24:6; 26:9–11).

Jonathan did the same (Section VI-A). The faithful refuse to sin and leave the judgment to Yahweh.

Third, the charge of rebellion must be tested before it is made. When the tribes east of the Jordan built an altar, the other tribes gathered for war and charged them:

"What is this treachery that you have committed against the Elohim of Israel ... to rebel this day against Yahweh?" (Joshua 22:16).

But they sent a delegation first. The eastern tribes explained that the altar was a witness, not a rival (Joshua 22:21–29), and *"it pleased them"* (Joshua 22:30). The altar was named *Ed (witness)* (Joshua 22:34). A war was avoided because one side asked before it struck.

Fourth, the loudest accuser is not thereby innocent. Saul called Jonathan's mother rebellious (1 Samuel 20:30); Moses called Israel rebels and was named one himself (Numbers 20:10, 24). In 1 Samuel 15, the verse most often quoted against questioning leaders, the rebel was the king.

Finding — refusing a human command that contradicts Yahweh is not rebellion (Exodus 1:17; 2 Kings 18:7; Daniel 3:18; 6:10). **Corroborated.** Refusing to sin does not license overthrowing authority by one's own hand (1 Samuel 24:6; 26:9–11). **Corroborated.** A charge of rebellion must be examined before it is acted upon (Deuteronomy 13:14; Joshua 22:13–30; Deuteronomy 19:15). **Corroborated.** That 1 Samuel 15:23 authorizes a leader to call a questioner's conscience witchcraft is **Not in the text.**

VIII. THE WAY BACK — WHAT BREAKS REBELLION

VIII-A. Confession Names It

The Tanakh's way out of rebellion begins by calling it what it is. The survivors of Jerusalem said:

"Yahweh is righteous, for I have rebelled against His word" (Lamentations 1:18).

Daniel prayed: *"We have sinned and committed iniquity, done wickedly and rebelled ... To Yahweh our Elohim belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him"* (Daniel 9:5, 9).

David: *"I acknowledged my sin to You ... I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to Yahweh,' and You forgave the iniquity of my sin"* (Psalms 32:5).

VIII-B. Yahweh Forgives the Rebel Who Returns

The name **Yahweh** proclaimed at Sinai includes *"forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin"* (Exodus 34:7) — and the word for transgression is *pesha*, revolt. Nehemiah's prayer recounts Israel's rebellion in the wilderness and then says,

"But You are an Eloah ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in kindness, and You did not forsake them" (Nehemiah 9:17).

Micah asks, *"Who is an El like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression?"* (Micah 7:18).

The same verse that warns *"if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured"* opens with *"Come now, and let us reason together"* (Isaiah 1:18–20).

VIII-C. The Circumcised Heart and the Softened Neck

The Torah's cure for the stiff neck is a changed heart:

"Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer" (Deuteronomy 10:16).

Yahweh promises to do it Himself for those who return (Deuteronomy 30:6), and the prophets repeat the call (Jeremiah 4:4; Ezekiel 18:31) and the promise:

"I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26).

The humble heart is the one **Yahweh** looks toward:

"to this one I will look: to him who is humble and contrite in spirit, and who trembles at My word" (Isaiah 66:2).

VIII-D. Between People — the Torah's Law Against the Grudge

The Torah gives one law that, kept, would end most rebellion between spouses and friends:

"You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear a grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am Yahweh" (Leviticus 19:17–18).

The law forbids the silent hatred of Absalom's two years, commands honest words instead, and forbids the grudge that keeps score. The Tanakh's narratives show it lived out. The wronged pray for those who wronged them (Numbers 12:13; Job 42:10). The injured refuse to take **Yahweh's** seat:

"Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of Elohim? You meant evil against me, but Elohim meant it for good" (Genesis 50:19–20).

Estranged brothers embrace — Esau ran to meet Jacob and *"fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept"* (Genesis 33:4),

and Joseph *"kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him"* (Genesis 45:15).

The last clause is the one Absalom's reconciliation never reached.

VIII-E. For the Marriage and the Friendship

THE MARK OF REBELLION	THE COVENANT PRACTICE THAT ANSWERS IT	TEXT
Pride and the locked neck	Be the first to yield; take counsel rather than insist	Proverbs 13:10; Deuteronomy 10:16
The grudge nursed in silence	Speak the hurt honestly and early; do not keep score	Leviticus 19:17–18; Proverbs 17:14
Motives attacked	Ask before you charge; hear the explanation	Joshua 22:21–30; Deuteronomy 13:14
Refusal to meet	Go up to the meeting; keep calling the other back	Numbers 16:12, 25; Genesis 33:4
Contempt	Answer softly; honor the other before Yahweh	Proverbs 15:1; 2 Samuel 6:16–23
The whisper and the coalition	Cover the offense instead of repeating it	Proverbs 17:9; 16:28

THE MARK OF REBELLION	THE COVENANT PRACTICE THAT ANSWERS IT	TEXT
The reconciliation without words	After the embrace, talk	Genesis 45:15; 2 Samuel 14:33
The desire for vengeance	Pray for the one who wronged you; leave judgment to Yahweh	Numbers 12:13; Job 42:10; Genesis 50:19

Finding — rebellion is broken by confession (**Lamentations 1:18; Daniel 9:5, 9; Psalms 32:5**), by Yahweh's forgiveness of the one who returns (**Exodus 34:7; Nehemiah 9:17; Micah 7:18**), and by a circumcised heart (**Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Ezekiel 36:26**). **Corroborated.** Between people, it is broken by honest rebuke without hatred, refusal of vengeance, and prayer for the offender (**Leviticus 19:17–18; Numbers 12:13; Job 42:10; Genesis 50:19–21**). **Corroborated.**

IX. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — HOW EACH TRADITION HANDLES REBELLION

The table sets the three traditions against the Tanakh's own findings. Comparative texts are cited as historical reference only, in keeping with the standing rule of this document.

ELEMENT	☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☩ ISLAM
Practice today	The <i>Ashamnu</i> confession of the Day of Atonement names <i>bagadnu</i> (we betrayed), <i>zadnu</i> (we acted presumptuously), <i>maradnu</i> (we rebelled), <i>sararnu</i> (we were stubborn), <i>pashanu</i> (we transgressed), and <i>kishinu oref</i> (we stiffened our neck). The Mishnah restricts the stubborn son law with so many conditions (Sanhedrin 8:1–5) that the Talmud records the view it <i>"never was and never will be"</i> (Sanhedrin 71a).	1 Samuel 15:23 is widely preached, often in the King James wording <i>"witchcraft."</i> The New Testament holds two texts in tension: <i>"let every person be subject to the governing authorities"</i> (Romans 13:1) and <i>"we must obey God rather than men"</i> (Acts 5:29). Marriage teaching varies widely around Ephesians 5:21–33 and 1 Peter 3:7. Jude 11 cites <i>"the rebellion of Korah."</i>	The first disobedience is Iblis's refusal to bow to Adam: <i>"he refused and was arrogant"</i> (Q. 2:34); <i>"I am better than him"</i> (Q. 7:12). Undutifulness to parents is ranked among the greatest sins (Sahih al-Bukhari 5976; Q. 17:23–24). <i>Nushuz</i> (ill-conduct / defiance) in marriage is named of the wife (Q. 4:34) and of the husband (Q. 4:128), with an arbiter from each family (Q. 4:35).

ELEMENT	☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☉ ISLAM
Covenant strength	The liturgy preserves the Tanakh's full vocabulary of rebellion and requires the worshiper to confess it in the first person, as Lamentations 1:18 and Daniel 9:5 do. The court safeguards on the stubborn son match the text's own requirements (both parents, the elders, the gate).	Acts 5:29 matches the Tanakh's midwives and Daniel (Section VII). Ephesians 5:21 (" <i>submitting to one another</i> ") and 1 Peter 3:7 (husbands honoring wives) echo the covenant's holding of both spouses to one standard (Malachi 2:14 ; Proverbs 2:17).	Placing pride at the root of disobedience matches the Tanakh's <i>zadon (pride)</i> (Proverbs 13:10). Naming <i>nushuz</i> of both spouses and sending arbiters from both families matches the Tanakh's even-handedness and its call to hear before judging (Joshua 22).
Covenant departure	The rabbinic doctrine of the <i>zaken mamre (rebellious elder)</i> (Mishnah Sanhedrin 11:2) extends Deuteronomy 17:12 to disagreement with the later sages' rulings, treating human interpretation as if it were the written word. The Tanakh's <i>meri</i> is rebellion against Yahweh 's word itself.	The fallen-angel story of Lucifer, read from Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 , is Not in the text (Section IV-B). Using 1 Samuel 15:23 to label questions put to a pastor as " <i>witchcraft</i> " or a " <i>rebellious spirit</i> " inverts the chapter, in which the rebel was the one holding authority.	The Iblis account, like the Lucifer account, places the origin of rebellion outside the human story; the Tanakh places it in the garden (Genesis 3). Q. 4:34's permission to strike a defiant wife has no Tanakh counterpart; the Tanakh's marriage texts set Yahweh against <i>chamas (violence)</i> (Malachi 2:16).
Covenant witness	The confession " <i>we have stiffened our neck</i> " is Deuteronomy 10:16 turned into prayer — the first step of the way back (Section VIII).	The call to " <i>obey God rather than men</i> " is the Tanakh's own line (Section VII) restated: rebellion is measured against Yahweh , not against those who hold office.	The ranking of duty to parents beside the greatest sins echoes Exodus 20:12 and Malachi 4:6 — the covenant's concern for the household.

X. CORRECTIONS TO EARLIER LIBRARY MATERIAL

The Library's rule is that its own earlier work is tested by the same standard as everyone else's. Five points in earlier studies need correction.

Correction 1 — the Strong's number for *yetzer (inclination)*. The March 2026 study *Stiff-Necked: Why Mankind Resists Yahweh* (Part One) labels *yetzer* as H7503 in its heading. H7503 is ***rafah (to slacken / let go)***. The correct number is **H3336**, which the same study gives correctly two paragraphs later. The heading should be corrected.

Correction 2 — who was about to die. The same study (Part One, "Free Will and the Necessary Tension") says that *"before Joshua even died, Yahweh told Moses"* that the people would abandon the covenant. **Deuteronomy 31:16** was spoken to Moses as his own death approached: *"Behold, you shall sleep with your fathers."* The sentence should read *"before Moses died."*

Correction 3 — the wording of Isaiah 29:13. The same study (Part Three) attributes to Isaiah the phrase *"teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."* That wording is Matthew 15:9, which follows the Greek. The Hebrew of **Isaiah 29:13** reads *"their fear of Me is a commandment of men learned by rote."* The point of the passage stands; the quotation should follow the Hebrew.

Correction 4 — rabbinic sources quoted as support. The same study (Part One) quotes Talmud Kiddushin 30b and a saying it attributes to *"Rabbi Nahman"* in the Talmud as support for its teaching on the *yetzer*. The saying (*"Were it not for the evil inclination, a man would not build a house ..."*) is from Genesis Rabbah 9:7, not the Talmud. Under the Institution's current rule, both sources belong in comparative reference only. The teaching itself stands on the Tanakh: **Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Deuteronomy 30:11–14.**

Correction 5 — the Saul–Sheol root. Doc 153 (Part I-A) presents the shared root of *Sha'ul (Saul, "asked")* and *Sheol (the grave)* as settled *"covenant architecture embedded in the Hebrew text."* The standard lexicons treat the etymology of *Sheol* as uncertain; a link to *sha'al (to ask)* is one proposal among several. The observation should be marked as a possible wordplay, not a finding.

XI. SEVEN COVENANT DECLARATIONS ON REBELLION

Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, no doctrine may stand on a single text. Each declaration below draws on more than one witness.

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
I	Rebellion is the knowing refusal of Yahweh's word — defiance with a high hand, not human weakness.	1 Samuel 15:23; Numbers 15:27–31; Psalms 107:11; 103:13–14
II	Yahweh hates rebellion because it rejects Him as King and seizes His right to define good and evil; it is functional idolatry.	1 Samuel 8:7; 15:23; Genesis 3:5; Isaiah 5:20; Judges 21:25
III	His hatred is the anger of wounded covenant love: rebellion grieves Him as a Father and as a Husband.	Isaiah 1:2; 63:10; Psalms 78:40; Jeremiah 3:20; Hosea 9:15; 11:8

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
IV	Rebellion began in the garden, in a human choice, and its first fruit was a broken marriage. The fallen-angel origin story is not in the text.	Genesis 3:5–16; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Isaiah 14:4; Ezekiel 28:12
V	Rebellion ruins a marriage through treachery, pride, contempt, and refusal to meet — by husband or wife alike. Disagreement is not rebellion, and no authority licenses treachery or violence.	Malachi 2:14–16; Proverbs 2:17; 13:10; 26:21; 2 Samuel 6:16–23; Genesis 21:12; 1 Samuel 25:33
VI	Rebellion ruins friendship through the unhealed offense, the whisper, and the lifted heel. Covenant friendship stays loyal to the friend within loyalty to Yahweh .	2 Samuel 13–15; Psalms 41:9; 55:20–21; Proverbs 16:28; 17:9; 1 Samuel 20; 23:16
VII	Rebellion is broken by confession, a circumcised heart, and forgiveness that refuses Yahweh's seat of vengeance. He pardons the rebel who returns.	Lamentations 1:18; Daniel 9:9; Deuteronomy 10:16; Leviticus 19:17–18; Genesis 50:19; Exodus 34:7

XII. THE COVENANT RESPONSE — WHAT THE TANAKH SAYS TO THE ONE WHO ASKS

Behind a question about rebellion there is usually a person — someone whose marriage is strained, whose friend has turned, whose child will not listen, or who has been called a rebel and wants to know if it is true. Tanakh's answer is fivefold.

First: name it rightly. Rebellion is not disagreement, not weakness, and not a hard question. It is the knowing refusal of **Yahweh's** word (1 Samuel 15:23; Numbers 15:30–31). Do not call faithfulness rebellion, and do not call rebellion anything softer.

Second: look at your own neck first. Moses named the rebels and was named one himself (Numbers 20:10, 24). Before charging a spouse, a friend, or a child, hear the word addressed to every reader: *"Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer"* (Deuteronomy 10:16).

Third: in your marriage, refuse the marks of Korah. Do not dress a hurt as a charge against the other's whole character, do not recruit allies, do not rewrite your history, do not refuse to meet, and do not let contempt into your heart (Numbers 16; 2 Samuel 6:16). Remember who witnessed your

vows (Malachi 2:14). *"So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously"* (Malachi 2:16).

Fourth: in your friendships, cover, speak, and pray. Cover the offense rather than repeat it (Proverbs 17:9). Speak the hurt honestly and early, before it becomes Absalom's two years (Leviticus 19:17; 2 Samuel 14:28). Pray for the friend who wronged you, as Moses prayed for Miriam and Job for his friends (Numbers 12:13; Job 42:10).

Fifth: come back. The One who hates rebellion is the One who says *"Come now, and let us reason together"* (Isaiah 1:18), who is *"ready to pardon"* (Nehemiah 9:17), and whose name includes *"forgiving ... transgression"* (Exodus 34:7). The door of return is open to the rebel who will walk through it.

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"Come now, and let us reason together, says Yahweh: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obey, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken."

Isaiah 1:18–20 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh

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