

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT ASSEMBLY

Pearl River, Louisiana | miqdashbethel.org | miqdashbethel@gmail.com

A COVENANT RESPONSE TO THE TANAKH

Tucker Carlson Interview with Bishop Joseph Strickland

March 30, 2026

*Issued by Kepha Arcemont, Elder and Founder
Miqdash Bethel Covenant Assembly*

OPENING COVENANT STATEMENT

On March 30, 2026, Tucker Carlson conducted a significant interview with the deposed Catholic Bishop Joseph Strickland. The interview touched on the closure of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Palm Sunday, the just war framework, the killing of civilians in Gaza and Lebanon, the threat to destroy Iranian water and energy infrastructure, the persecution of voices speaking truth, and the co-opting of Christianity by political Zionism. Both Carlson and Strickland spoke with moral clarity on many points that the Tanakh independently confirms. Where they spoke true, the Tanakh witnesses it. Where they fell short or erred, the Tanakh corrects it. This response is issued not in hostility but as a covenant witness — applying the standard of **Yahweh's** own written instruction to the events of this hour.

This document is issued under the authority of the Tanakh — the written covenant of **Yahweh** — and reaches Judaism, Christianity, and Islam simultaneously. It is not a defense of any nation, empire, or religious institution. It is a witness to the covenant standard by which **Yahweh** judges all nations equally.

PART ONE

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE — PALM SUNDAY 2026

What Happened

On Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, and Father Francesco Ielpo, the official Guardian of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, were physically prevented by Israeli police from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre — the holiest site in Christianity — to celebrate a private Palm Sunday Mass. The Latin Patriarchate stated that this was ***the first time in centuries*** that the Heads of the Church were prevented from celebrating Palm Sunday at this site. After worldwide condemnation from world leaders including France, Italy, Germany, and even U.S. Ambassador Mike Huckabee — a known Israel supporter — Netanyahu reversed course and approved limited access. But the act had already been done.

The Covenant Witness of the Tanakh

Yahweh's covenant law speaks directly to the protection of the foreigner's right to worship at His house. The Tanakh does not permit any authority — Jewish, Roman, or otherwise — to bar sincere worshippers from approaching a place of covenant reverence.

"Also the foreigners who join themselves to Yahweh, to minister to Him, and to love the name of Yahweh, to be His servants — every one who keeps the Shabbat without profaning it and holds fast My covenant — even those I will bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; for My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."

— Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 56:6–7 — Tanakh

The Roman administrator Pilate did not own the Temple in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem). The Israeli government does not own the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Tucker Carlson was precisely correct on this point. The authority to close a house of worship belonging to another faith community does not rest with the state — any state. The Tanakh is consistent: places of covenant reverence must be open to those who come in peace.

Furthermore, Bishop Strickland was right that this closure was not ultimately a security question. The Latin Patriarchate had been holding private, non-public Masses inside the church since the Iran war began February 28, 2026 — without incident. The denial of four priests entering privately did not meet any proportionality standard even under secular security doctrine, let alone the covenant standard of **Yahweh**.

The Pattern: Targeting Holy Sites During Holy Week

Tucker Carlson noted that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was never closed during World War I or World War II. This is historically accurate and significant. Strickland correctly identified Holy Week as a recurring flashpoint where the truth of Yeshua

(Jesus) is brought into direct confrontation with the powers of the age. The Tanakh contains a parallel pattern:

"Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against Yahweh and against His Anointed."

— Tehillim (Psalm) 2:1–2 — Tanakh

The closure was not simply a security measure. It was a signal — consciously or not — that the message of the Prince of Peace is unwelcome when military power demands exclusive moral authority over the land.

PART TWO

JUST WAR — WHERE STRICKLAND AND THE TANAKH AGREE AND WHERE THEY DIVERGE

Strickland's Just War Summary

Bishop Strickland outlined the Catholic just war framework derived from Augustine and Aquinas: (1) War must be a last resort, not preemptive. (2) It must be proportionate — the harm caused cannot exceed the threat addressed. (3) It must protect innocents — civilian life must not be intentionally targeted. (4) It must have a reasonable expectation of success toward a more peaceful outcome. Strickland correctly stated that few wars in history qualify, and he specifically stated this present conflict fails on every point.

Where the Tanakh Confirms This Standard

The Tanakh does not endorse unlimited warfare. **Yahweh's** covenant law placed explicit boundaries on how war was to be conducted. In Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20, before any siege, Israel was required to offer terms of peace. Fruit trees were to be protected even in siege — an explicit prohibition against environmental warfare.

"When you besiege a city for a long time, making war against it in order to capture it, you shall not destroy its trees by swinging an axe against them. You may eat from them, but you shall not cut them down. Are the trees in the field human, that they should be besieged by you?"

— Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:19 — Tanakh

If Yahweh's covenant standard forbids cutting down *fruit trees* during a siege — because they sustain civilian life — then threatening to destroy *desalination plants that supply drinking water to millions* is a direct violation of this covenant principle. This is not a close question. It is not a gray area. It is a straightforward covenant violation of the highest order.

Trump's Threat to Destroy Iranian Civilian Infrastructure

On March 30, 2026 — the same day as the Tucker/Strickland interview — U.S. President Donald Trump issued a public statement threatening to destroy Iran's electric generating plants, oil wells, and desalination plants if a deal was not reached 'shortly.' Legal experts across multiple institutions confirmed that targeting desalination plants — objects indispensable to civilian survival — violates Article 54 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions and constitutes a potential war crime under international humanitarian law.

Strickland addressed this in the interview, stating plainly that to deliberately target civilian infrastructure is wrong and immoral — that the large-scale destruction of civilian life can never be morally justified. He is correct. And the Tanakh says the same thing — not through church doctrine, but through **Yahweh's** own written covenant instruction.

"You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am Yahweh."

— Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:18 — Tanakh

The Tanakh defines the neighbor — the **ger** (stranger dwelling among you) — as one who falls under the same covenant protection. Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 19:25 extends this even to Egypt and Assyria as heirs to the covenant blessing. The Iranian civilian population — men, women, children, the elderly — are neighbors under covenant law. Their water supply is not a military target.

Where Strickland's Framework Has a Limitation

Bishop Strickland grounded his just war analysis in Augustine, Aquinas, and Catholic social teaching — all of which are commentary traditions built upon a Hellenistic philosophical framework overlaid on selected portions of Scripture. This is historically significant. Augustine wrote in the 4th and 5th centuries CE, after the Roman Empire had already co-opted Christianity as state religion. His just war framework was partly designed to justify Christian emperors going to war — which is itself a departure from first-century covenant teaching.

The Tanakh does not have a just war theory. The Tanakh has covenant law — specific, precise, written instruction from Yahweh governing how conflict is handled, how the stranger is protected, how land is governed, and what judgment falls upon those who shed innocent blood. It is not a theory. It is a covenant standard. Strickland's Catholic framework arrives at the correct moral conclusion — **civilian life cannot be targeted** — but it arrives there through 1,500 years of philosophical commentary when the answer was already written in the covenant from the beginning.

PART THREE

"OLD TESTAMENT VIOLENCE" — CARLSON'S QUESTION, STRICKLAND'S RESPONSE, AND THE TANAKH'S ANSWER

Tucker Carlson raised one of the most important questions in the interview: he noted that Christian leaders who support the current military campaign against Gaza and Iran cite *Old Testament violence* as justification — arguing that because the Hebrew Bible contains accounts of warfare and conquest, the same spirit of warfare is available to modern Christian nations. Strickland's response was to point immediately to Yeshua (Jesus) as the corrective lens. This response is pastorally sincere — but it is theologically incomplete, and it leaves the Tanakh unnecessarily impugned.

The Tanakh never authorized the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians. It is a misreading — and a dangerous one — to suggest that it did. The violence recorded in the Tanakh is descriptive of what occurred, not prescriptive for all nations in all times. Furthermore, the covenant instructions within the Tanakh explicitly bound even Israel's warfare with protections for civilians, strangers, women, children, and the environment. The following covenant texts have been consistently overlooked or misapplied by those claiming 'Old Testament' license for modern military action:

"You shall have the same rule for the sojourner and for the native, for I am Yahweh your Elohim."

— Vayikra (Leviticus) 24:22 — Tanakh

"You shall not oppress a sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt."

— Shemot (Exodus) 23:9 — Tanakh

"Yahweh executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt."

— Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:18–19 — Tanakh

These instructions are not superseded by the New Testament — they are *confirmed* by it. When Yeshua was asked what the greatest commandment is, he quoted Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:5 and Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:18 — Torah — not anything new. The covenant instruction to protect the stranger, the widow, the fatherless, and the civilian population is not Old Testament law that expired. It is the eternal covenant standard of **Yahweh** that no empire, no church, and no state has the authority to void.

The Strickland Correction: Valid Within Its Frame

Strickland correctly stated that those appealing to 'Old Testament' justifications for civilian killing should be challenged: 'Show me that in Christ.' He is correct as a pastoral matter — Yeshua of Nazareth unambiguously taught non-violence, enemy love, and rejection of the sword as the path to the Kingdom. But the covenant response goes further: those appealing to the Tanakh for justification of civilian killing have misread the Tanakh itself. The violence they invoke was never covenant license for empire. They have misread both testaments, not just one.

PART FOUR

POLITICAL ZIONISM IS NOT TANAKH COVENANT THEOLOGY

Both Tucker Carlson and Bishop Strickland addressed the expulsion of Kayla Tausche Prejean Bowler from the President's Religious Liberty Task Force, stating she was removed for (1) speaking truthfully about civilian deaths in Gaza and (2) refusing to endorse political Zionism as a Christian obligation. Strickland correctly stated that political Zionism is not something Christians are obligated to embrace, and that the Catholic Church is clear on this distinction.

The Tanakh confirms this distinction with precision. Political Zionism — the 19th-century European nationalist movement for a Jewish state — was not a Torah covenant concept. It was a secular nationalist movement founded primarily by Theodor Herzl, a secular Viennese journalist who explicitly did not ground his project in covenant theology. The Tanakh's covenant promise of the land is conditional upon covenant obedience — not upon the existence of a modern secular state formed by UN partition resolution.

"The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is Mine. For you are strangers and sojourners with Me."

— Vayikra (Leviticus) 25:23 — Tanakh

This verse is the foundation of all Tanakh covenant land theology. **The land belongs to Yahweh.** No nation — not ancient Israel, not the modern State of Israel, not any empire — holds the land as absolute owner. The land is held in covenant stewardship.

Covenant violation forfeits the covenant relationship with the land. The Tanakh records this explicitly in the exiles of both the Northern Kingdom (Assyrian exile, 722 BCE) and the Southern Kingdom (Babylonian exile, 586 BCE) — both as direct consequence of covenant violation, not military defeat alone.

"Also the foreigners who join themselves to Yahweh... I will bring to My holy mountain... for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."

— Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 56:6–7 — Tanakh

The Tanakh's covenant vision for the land of Yisrael (Israel) is a multinational, multi-ethnic covenant household under **Yahweh's** governance — not an ethnic nationalist state. **Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 47:22–23** explicitly commands that the stranger dwelling among Israel shall inherit alongside Israel. This is covenant law — not sentiment, not tolerance policy, but written instruction. Anyone claiming Tanakh authority for a purely exclusive, ethnically-defined state has not read the covenant carefully.

PART FIVE

TRUTH, PERSECUTION, AND THE COVENANT WITNESS

The final segment of the interview addressed persecution — specifically, the pattern of truth-tellers being silenced, canceled, or removed from positions of influence. Both Carlson and Strickland have experienced this personally. They spoke about the spiritual dimension of this suppression, with Strickland citing Paul's letter to the Galatians and the concept of a supernatural 'spell' preventing leaders from seeing what is clearly visible.

The Tanakh speaks to this pattern through the office of the *navi* — the prophet. The prophets of Yisrael were systematically silenced, imprisoned, and killed by the political and religious establishments of their own day — and frequently by the kings of Yisrael and Yehudah (Judah) themselves. The pattern Bishop Strickland describes is not new. It is as old as the covenant:

"They have treated the wound of My people carelessly, saying 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace."

— Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 6:14 — Tanakh

"But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them, that person is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand."

— Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 33:6 — Tanakh

Tucker Carlson and Bishop Strickland are functioning — whether they recognize it or not — in the covenant role of the watchman (**tzofeh**). They are sounding the alarm. The response they are receiving — suppression, removal, and cancellation — is the historic response of every power structure that has chosen silence over truth. The Tanakh does not promise protection from persecution to those who sound the alarm. It promises that those who refuse to sound the alarm will be held accountable for the blood that follows.

The Covenant Witness of Gamaliel — And Its Tanakh Root

Strickland referenced Gamaliel's counsel from the Acts of the Apostles — that if a movement is of **Elohim**, it cannot be stopped, and if it is not of **Elohim**, it will collapse on its own. This is wisdom drawn from the Tanakh pattern. Gamaliel was a Pharisee — a Torah scholar. His counsel was Torah-grounded:

"Every word of Elohim proves true; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him."

— Mishlei (Proverbs) 30:5 — Tanakh

Truth is not fragile. It does not require the protection of censorship. It does not need governments to suppress competing voices to survive. Only lies require that infrastructure. Bishop Strickland is correct: truth prevails. The Tanakh states this across every book of the Nevi'im (Prophets) — not as a hope, but as a covenant certainty.

PART SIX

WHERE THE TANAKH PARTS FROM THE CARLSON/STRICKLAND FRAMEWORK

The Yeshua Question: New Covenant vs. Torah Covenant

Bishop Strickland repeatedly grounded his entire moral framework in Yeshua (Jesus Christ) as the exclusive source of truth. Strickland stated: 'If we claim to be Christians,

we look to Christ.' He also stated that the 'old covenant' belongs to a different world — that Yeshua brought a new covenant that superseded the Tanakh framework.

This is where Miqdash Bethel Covenant Assembly respectfully but directly disagrees with the theological foundation — while affirming the moral conclusions Strickland reaches. The Tanakh is not a preliminary draft replaced by a superior document. It is the written covenant of Yahweh that was confirmed, not annulled, by the first-century teacher Yeshua of Nazareth. Yeshua himself said:

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Torah until all is accomplished."

— Mattityahu (Matthew) 5:17–18 — Brit Chadashah (New Testament)

The Tanakh does not need Yeshua to be its interpreter in order to condemn the killing of civilians. It condemned it clearly before Yeshua was born. What Yeshua did was to call his own generation back to covenant — not away from it. Bishop Strickland's appeal to 'show me that in Christ' is appropriate for a Christian audience. But for the Jewish and Muslim communities watching this same conflict, the appeal must be made on the ground they share: the covenant of **Yahweh** written in the Torah and the Nevi'im. That ground is where all three families of Abraham can stand together.

The Gaza Question: Called by its Name

Strickland called the killing in Gaza 'a Holocaust of our time.' He is not wrong in reaching for the strongest language available. The Tanakh does not use euphemism when **Yahweh** addresses the killing of innocents. The prophets named it as blood-guilt:

"For the transgressions of Yisrael I will give up Shomron (Samaria); her wound is incurable... I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked; I will make lamentation like the jackals, and mourning like the ostriches. For her wound is incurable; it has come to Yehudah; it has reached to the gate of my people, to Yerushalayim."

— Mikhah (Micah) 1:5–9 — Tanakh

The prophets did not issue polite diplomatic statements about the killing of civilians. They named it. They cried over it. They held the leaders directly responsible. Strickland's instinct to speak clearly is correct. The Tanakh demands it.

COVENANT CONCLUSION

A Call to All Parties — Grounded in the Covenant of Yahweh

To the State of Israel: The land belongs to **Yahweh**. You are stewards, not owners. The covenant commands you to protect the stranger in your midst, to not shed innocent blood, and to provide equal justice. You cannot invoke the covenant to justify the destruction of a covenant people. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre belongs to the world's 2.4 billion Christians. It must be open.

To the United States Government: The threat to destroy desalination plants — the drinking water supply of a civilian population — is a direct violation of **Yahweh's** covenant standard. **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:19** forbids the destruction of food trees in a siege. The same principle governs water. This must be renounced, not executed.

To Christian leaders who invoke 'Old Testament violence': You have misread the Tanakh. The violence recorded in the Tanakh is not a license for empire. The covenant law of the Tanakh explicitly protects civilians, strangers, and the land itself. Read it carefully before invoking it. The covenant does not belong to one nation's military agenda.

To Bishop Strickland and Tucker Carlson: Your moral clarity in this interview is covenant-consistent on the central points — civilian life cannot be targeted, truth must be spoken regardless of cost, and the closing of holy sites to suppress the message of peace is a form of spiritual warfare. You are functioning as watchmen. Continue.

To all three Abrahamic communities: The covenant of **Yahweh** speaks clearly. The Torah does not belong exclusively to any one nation, church, or empire. It is the instruction of the Creator given to all human beings through the witness of Yisrael. The covenant path forward — in this conflict and in every conflict — is not the path of the sword. It is the covenant path of **shalom** — that deep, multidimensional peace that encompasses justice, restoration, wholeness, and the protection of every human life made in the image of **Elohim**.

"Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

— Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 2:4 — Tanakh

This is not idealism. This is the covenant promise of **Yahweh** — the destination toward which the whole of human history is being pulled. It is the work of covenant people in every generation to bend the arc of this moment toward that destination.

Issued by:

Kepha Arcemont (Peter Paul Arcemont)

Elder and Founder, Miqdash Bethel Covenant Assembly

Pearl River, Louisiana | miqdashbethel.org

miqdashbethel@gmail.com | 985-250-9060

Peace and Blessings

KEY TANAKH SCRIPTURES REFERENCED IN THIS DOCUMENT

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 56:6–7 — House of prayer for all peoples; the covenant right of the foreigner to worship

Tehillim (Psalm) 2:1–2 — The nations conspiring against Yahweh and His Anointed

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:19 — Prohibition on destroying food trees in siege — civilian infrastructure protection

Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:18 — Love your neighbor as yourself; covenant basis for civilian protection

Shemot (Exodus) 23:9 — Do not oppress the sojourner

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:18–19 — Yahweh protects the sojourner; command to love the stranger

Vayikra (Leviticus) 24:22 — One law for the native and the stranger

Vayikra (Leviticus) 25:23 — The land belongs to Yahweh; covenant land theology foundation

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 47:22–23 — The stranger shall inherit the land among Israel

Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 6:14 — False prophets crying 'peace, peace' when there is no peace

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 33:6 — The watchman who does not sound the alarm is accountable for the blood

Mishlei (Proverbs) 30:5 — Every word of Elohim proves true

Mikhah (Micah) 1:5–9 — The prophet's lament over the wound of the people

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 2:4 — Nation shall not lift sword against nation; covenant promise of peace

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