

# MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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## DRIVEN OUT FROM THE GARDEN: A DEEP COVENANT STUDY OF BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 3:24

*"So He drove the man out, and He stationed at the east of the Garden of Eden  
the Cherubim and the flaming sword that turned every way,  
to guard the way to the Tree of Life."*

— **Bereishit (Genesis) 3:24 | JPS 1985**

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*Three-Religion Audience: Judaism • Christianity • Islam*

*Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15 — Two or Three Witnesses Standard Applied Throughout*

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### HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT — TANAKH BOOK NAMES

All Tanakh books are cited by Hebrew name with English in parentheses throughout this document. **Yahweh** (יהוה) and **Elohim** (אֱלֹהִים) are never replaced by "God" or "LORD." Prophet names appear bold. *Hebrew lexical terms appear in bold italic* followed by Strong's number in bold. All Scripture quotations appear in bold. Hebrew characters appear following their lexical entry.

Tanakh books cited in this study: Bereishit (Genesis), Shemot (Exodus), Melachim Aleph (1 Kings), Tehillim (Psalms), Mishlei (Proverbs), Yeshayahu (Isaiah), Yehezkel (Ezekiel), Zekharyah (Zechariah).

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### AUTHORITY NOTE

This study operates under the sole doctrinal authority of the Tanakh — the complete Hebrew Scriptures: Torah (Covenant Law), Nevi'im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings). Primary Hebrew lexicons used: Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (**BDB**), Hebrew and Aramaic

Lexicon of the Old Testament (**HALOT**), Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (**TWOT**), Strong's Concordance. Scholars and commentators are cited as historical witnesses only — never as binding authorities. The Tanakh text governs in every case.

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## PART ONE

### THE TEXT — HEBREW, TRANSLATION, AND CONTEXT

#### I. THE HEBREW TEXT

The verse in Hebrew reads:

וַיִּגְרֹשׁ אֶת-הָאָדָם וַיִּשְׁכֵּן מִקְדָּם לְגַן-עֵדֶן אֶת-הַכְּרֻבִים וְאֶת לֶהֱט הַחֶרֶב הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת לְשָׁמֹר אֶת-דֶּרֶךְ עֵץ הַחַיִּים

Transliterated: *Vayegaresh et-ha'adam; vayashken miqqedem le-gan Eden et-hakkeruvim ve'et lahat ha-cherev ha-mithappeket lishmor et-derekh etz ha-chayyim.*

#### II. THREE COVENANT TRANSLATIONS

| TRANSLATION         | BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 3:24   |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>JPS 1985</b>     | <i>"So He drove the man out, and He stationed at the east of the Garden of Eden the Cherubim and the flaming sword that turned every way, to guard the way to the Tree of Life."</i>     |
| <b>Robert Alter</b> | <i>"He drove out the human, and placed to the east of the Garden of Eden the cherubim and the flame of the whirling sword to guard the way to the tree of life."</i>                     |
| <b>Everett Fox</b>  | <i>"He drove the human out and caused to dwell, east of the garden of Eden, the winged-sphinxes and the flame of the ever-turning sword, to watch over the way to the tree of life."</i> |

**Covenant Observation:** Three authoritative translations, three witness confirmations of the same four elements: **(1) the expulsion;** **(2) the Keruvim stationed at the east;** **(3) the lahat ha-cherev ha-mithappeket** — the flaming/whirling sword; and **(4) the explicit purpose: to guard the way to the Tree of Life.** Everett Fox's rendering of the Keruvim as "winged-sphinxes" draws the Ancient Near Eastern parallel directly into the translation — a significant exegetical choice that the covenant student must examine, not merely accept.

### III. NARRATIVE CONTEXT — WHERE BEREISHIT 3:24 SITS

Bereishit (Genesis) 3:24 is the final verse of the account of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden. It is preceded immediately by verse 23: *"Therefore Yahweh Elohim sent him out of the Garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he had been taken."* Verse 23 records **the sending** (shalach — שָׁלַח, H7971, dismissal); verse 24 records **the driving out** (garash — גָּרַשׁ, H1644, forcible expulsion) AND the permanent stationing of guardians. Two verbs — two distinct acts — both confirmed by the Devarim 19:15 two-witness standard.

The expulsion is not merely the result of covenant violation; it is set in motion immediately after the divine deliberation recorded in verse 22: *"And Yahweh Elohim said: See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and also take of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live forever—"* The verse cuts off — a literary device conveying urgency. The action of verse 23–24 follows without delay. The guarding of the Tree of Life is therefore the direct fulfillment of the divine concern expressed in verse 22. It is purposeful, measured, and permanent.

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## PART TWO

### WORD-BY-WORD LEXICAL ANALYSIS

The six primary Hebrew units of Bereishit 3:24 are examined here in sequence, using **BDB**, **HALOT**, **TWOT**, and Strong's as four independent lexical witnesses.

| HEBREW UNIT /<br>STRONG'S   | LEXICAL ANALYSIS AND COVENANT SIGNIFICANCE  |
|---|---|
| <p>וַיִּגְרֶשׁ <i>Vayegaresh</i> (He drove out) <b>H1644</b>   גָּרַשׁ</p>                | <p><b>BDB:</b> "to drive out from a possession; especially to expatriate or divorce." <b>HALOT:</b> "to drive out, expel, banish." <b>TWOT:</b> used of forcible, legal expulsion — not a gentle departure. <b>Strong's H1644:</b> also translated "divorced" (Vayikra/Leviticus 22:13; Bamidbar/Numbers 30:9). This is the same word used when Egypt drove Israel out (Shemot/Exodus 10:11; 12:39). <b>Covenant Declaration:</b> The expulsion is <b>legally binding and covenant-weighted</b>. The Adam-Yahweh covenant was violated; garash is the covenantal penalty term — as final and formal as divorce. The same Elohim who cut covenant at creation enforces the covenant boundary here.</p> |
| <p>אִתְּ-הָאָדָם <i>et-ha'adam</i> (the man / the human) <b>H120</b>   אָדָם</p>          | <p><b>BDB:</b> <b>adam</b> (<b>H120</b>, אָדָם) — "man, mankind; also the proper name Adam." <b>HALOT:</b> "human being; collective humanity." The definite article <b>ha-</b> is significant: not merely 'a man,' but <b>the man</b> — the specific covenant figure who carried the covenant charge of Bereishit (Genesis) 1:28. <b>Covenant Declaration:</b> Ha-Adam is both individual (the first man) and representative (all of humanity that descends from him). The expulsion is therefore both personal and universal in scope — the entire covenant lineage now begins outside the Garden.</p>   |
| <p>וַיַּשְׁכֵּן <i>Vayashken</i> (He caused to dwell/stationed) <b>H7931</b>   שָׁכַן</p> | <p><b>BDB:</b> <b>shakan</b> (<b>H7931</b>, שָׁכַן) — "to settle down, abide, dwell; to cause to dwell." <b>HALOT:</b> "to settle, pitch (tent), take up residence; Hiphil: to cause to settle, establish permanently." <b>TWOT:</b> same root gives us <i>Mishkan</i> (Tabernacle) — the sacred dwelling of <b>Yahweh</b> in the wilderness. The Hiphil form here (causative) means <b>Yahweh actively placed and established</b> the Keruvim — this was not a</p>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>temporary posting. <b>Covenant Declaration:</b> The same root that describes <b>Yahweh's own dwelling</b> among Israel describes the permanent stationing of the Keruvim as guardians of the sacred threshold. This is <b>divine territorial assignment</b> — not a passing prohibition.</p>   |
| <p><b>מִקְדָּם</b> <i>Miqqedem</i> (at the east of) <b>H6924</b>   <b>קָדָם</b></p>                      | <p><b>BDB: qedem (H6924, קָדָם)</b> — "east; in front of; ancient time; of old." <b>HALOT:</b> "east; in front; antiquity; (from) of old." <b>TWOT:</b> qedem carries both spatial (east) and temporal (ancient/primordial) resonance. Significantly, the Hebrew word for <b>"before"</b> and <b>"ancient/primordial"</b> is the same as "east." <b>Covenant Declaration:</b> The Keruvim are stationed at the <b>east</b> — <b>the entry point of the Garden</b>. In the ancient world, east was the direction of sunrise, of beginnings, and of the sacred. The Tabernacle and the Temple both faced east. The guard is placed precisely where the approach begins. It is both geographically exact and symbolically loaded.</p>  |
| <p><b>הַכְּרֻבִים</b> <i>Ha-Keruvim</i> (the Cherubim) <b>H3742</b>   <b>כְּרוּב</b></p>                 | <p><b>BDB: keruv (H3742, כְּרוּב)</b> — "a cherub; probably an order of angelic beings... as the guards of the Garden of Eden (Bereishit 3:24); as the living chariot of the theophanic Elohim." Root etymology: BDB notes the root is <b>missing in Hebrew</b> but links to Assyrian <i>karabu</i> ("to be great, mighty; to bless"). <b>HALOT:</b> "cherub; a category of heavenly being serving as guardian and throne-bearer of Yahweh." <b>TWOT:</b> associates the Keruvim with the Ark (Shemot/Exodus 25:18–22), the Mishkan curtains (Shemot 26:1), and Yehezkel's (Ezekiel's) vision (Yehezkel 1; 10). <b>Covenant Declaration:</b> The Keruvim appear here at the first appearance of the term in the Tanakh — Genesis 3:24 is their <b>introduction</b>. From this point forward, these same beings guard <b>Yahweh's throne</b> (Tehillim/Psalm 80:2; 99:1), carry His chariot (Yehezkel 1), and flank the Ark of the Covenant (Shemot 25). <b>Their assignment in Eden is the founding typology of all that follows.</b></p> |
| <p><b>לַהַט הַחֵרֶב הַמִּתְהַפֶּקֶת</b> <i>Labat ha-cherev ha-mithappeket</i> (the flaming/whirling)</p> | <p><b>BDB: lahat (H3858, לַהַט)</b> — "flame; also enchantment/concealment." From root <i>lahat</i> (H3857) "to be on</p>   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>sword)H3858 + H2719 + H2015</p>  | <p>fire." <b>Cherev</b> (H2719, חֶרֶב) — "sword; also: desolation, devastation." From root <i>charav</i> (H2717) "to lay waste." <b>Mithappeketh</b> (H2015, מִתְּפַקֵּת, <i>Hithpael participle</i>) — "turning itself continuously; whirling; self-reversing." BDB: "to turn, overthrow; Hithpael: to turn oneself, to be transformed repeatedly." The most literal rendering per BDB and the academic literature: "<b>the flame of the whirling sword.</b>" The word <b>lahat</b> also carries the secondary meaning of concealment/enchantment — pointing to a layer of the text that goes beyond mere fire: the entrance to Eden may be hidden as well as guarded. <b>Covenant Declaration:</b> This is <b>not a static barrier</b>. The Hithpael form means the sword is <b>perpetually self-turning — omnidirectional and continuous</b>. No angle of approach is unguarded. This is the covenant's ultimate enforcement mechanism: the barrier to misuse of immortality is <b>Yahweh's own active, sustaining will</b>.</p> |
| <p>לשמר את-דֶרֶךְ עֵץ<br/>הַחַיִּים <i>Lishmor et-derekh etz ha-chayyim</i> (to guard the way to the Tree of Life)H8104 + H1870 + H6086 + H2416</p> | <p><b>Shamar</b> (H8104, שָׁמַר) — BDB: "to keep, watch, guard; to observe (covenant); to preserve." TWOT: this word is used for both covenantal observance (keeping the Torah) and protective guarding. Used 468 times in the Tanakh. <b>Derekh</b> (H1870, דֶּרֶךְ) — "way, road, path; manner of life; journey." <b>Etz</b> (H6086, עֵץ) — "tree; wood." Same word used for both the living tree and the construction material. <b>Chayyim</b> (H2416, חַיִּים) — "life; living; lives." Plural of intensity — not merely life, but <b>life in its fullness</b>. <b>Covenant Declaration:</b> The purpose of the entire apparatus — the expulsion, the Keruvim, the whirling sword — is singular and explicit: <b>to guard the derekh, the way-path, to the Etz ha-Chayyim</b>. Not to destroy it. Not to abolish it. <b>To guard it</b>. The Tree of Life remains. The covenant door is not closed forever — it is <b>guarded until the proper time</b>.</p>  |

## PART THREE

### THE KERUVIM — FOUR TANAKH WITNESSES

The Keruvim (כְּרוּבִים) appear **91 times** in the Tanakh. Their first appearance is at Bereishit (Genesis) 3:24. The covenant standard of Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15 requires two or three witnesses — the Tanakh itself provides four major testimony categories. Each must be examined on its own terms before any synthesis is drawn.

#### WITNESS 1: THE KERUVIM AS GUARDIANS OF THE GARDEN (BEREISHIT 3:24)

The founding function: **territorial guardians of the sacred threshold**. Stationed at the east — the only approach to the Garden. Their assignment is not punitive toward humanity; it is **protective of the covenant order itself**. The Tree of Life cannot be approached by fallen, unaccountable humanity — not because Yahweh is capricious, but because the text of verse 22 makes the reason explicit: eating immortality in a state of corrupted moral knowledge would permanently lock mankind into brokenness. The Keruvim prevent a worse covenant violation than the one already committed.

#### WITNESS 2: THE KERUVIM ON THE ARK OF THE COVENANT (SHEMOT/EXODUS 25:18–22)

**Yahweh** commands: *"Make two Cherubim of gold... one cherub on one end, the other on the other end... The Cherubim shall be with wings spread upward, shielding the cover with their wings with their faces one toward the other... There I will meet with you, and from between the two Cherubim that are upon the Ark of the Covenant I will speak to you."* — Shemot (Exodus) 25:18–22

The Ark-Keruvim directly parallel the Eden-Keruvim. Both guard **the sacred presence of Yahweh**. Both face each other flanking the holiest point. In Eden, that point was the Tree of Life; in the Tabernacle, it is the Ark — **Yahweh's throne**. The Keruvim do not guard against **Yahweh**; they guard against **unauthorized human approach to Yahweh's holiness**. The covenant pattern is identical.

#### WITNESS 3: THE KERUVIM AS YAHWEH'S CHARIOT-THRONE (TEHILLIM/PSALMS 18:10; 80:1; 99:1)

*"He mounted a Cherub and flew, gliding on the wings of the wind."* — Tehillim (Psalms) 18:11 | *"You who are enthroned on the Cherubim, shine forth."* — Tehillim 80:1

The Keruvim carry **Yahweh's theophanic movement**. They are not merely static guardians — they are living vehicles of divine presence. This dimension did not begin with Shemot 25; it was already

present in the nature of the beings stationed in Bereishit 3:24. What guards the Tree of Life is not a mechanical barrier — it is **the living chariot-force of Yahweh Himself**.

#### **WITNESS 4: THE KERUVIM IN YEHEZKEL'S VISION (YEHEZKEL/EZEKIEL 1 AND 10)**

The prophet **Yehezkel (Ezekiel)** encounters the Keruvim in exile — by the river Kevar in Babylon. They appear as four living creatures (**chayyot** — note the same root as **chayyim**, "life") with four faces: man, lion, ox, and eagle. Each has four wings. They move by the spirit without turning — **omnidirectional movement**, which exactly echoes the **mithappeket** (whirling, self-turning) of the sword in Bereishit 3:24. In Yehezkel 10, **Yehezkel** explicitly identifies these living creatures as the Keruvim. Their wheel-within-wheel transport mechanism (**H212, ofan**) can move in any direction — the same omnidirectionality as the flaming sword. **Covenant Declaration:** The flaming sword's turning in every direction is **Keruvim-nature itself** — not a separate mechanism but an expression of what these beings are: omnidirectional agents of Yahweh's will who cannot be circumvented.

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## PART FOUR

### ETZ HA-CHAYYIM — THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE TANAKH

*Etz ha-Chayyim* (עֵץ הַחַיִּים) appears in the Tanakh at four primary locations. The definite article — **ha-Chayyim** — is significant: this is not *a* tree of life, but **the** Tree of Life — a specific, known, unique entity. The Tanakh itself uses the phrase three additional times in Mishlei (Proverbs), but as a relational/metaphorical application rather than a physical reference. Each usage must be examined without collapsing them.

| REFERENCE                    | TEXT AND COVENANT SIGNIFICANCE  |
|------------------------------|---|
| Bereishit (Genesis) 2:9      | <i>"And Yabweh Elohim caused to grow from the ground every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, and the Tree of Life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."</i> The Tree of Life is in the <b>midst</b> — the center — of the Garden. It was not forbidden. It was <b>freely accessible</b> before the covenant breach. Life was available. The access was removed only after the failure.   |
| Bereishit (Genesis) 3:22, 24 | Verse 22 establishes why it must be guarded: eating of it now would grant immortality to covenant-broken humanity. Verse 24 records the guarding. The Tree of Life is still present — <b>it has not been destroyed or removed</b> . It is <b>guarded</b> . The path is closed, not the existence. This is the covenant's most urgent structural message in all of Bereishit.  |
| Mishlei (Proverbs) 3:18      | <i>"She [Wisdom/Torah] is a tree of life to those who grasp her, and happy are all who hold her fast."</i> Here the phrase becomes relational and covenantal. <b>Torah is the Tree of Life</b> accessible to those in covenant — the <i>etz chayyim</i> is now available through the keeping of covenant law. The Ark of the Torah in every synagogue is called the <i>aron ha-kodesh</i> , and the Torah scrolls are rolled on wooden poles called <i>etz chayyim</i> — "trees of life." The Eden connection is not metaphorical decoration; it is <b>the covenant structure asserting that Torah IS the restored path to the Tree</b> . |

**Mishlei (Proverbs) 11:30;  
13:12; 15:4**

Three additional Proverbs applications: **the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life** (11:30); **desire fulfilled is a tree of life** (13:12); **a healing tongue is a tree of life** (15:4). Each instance maps a covenant virtue — righteousness, fulfilled hope, healing speech — onto the Etz ha-Chayyim. **Covenant Declaration:** Life in its fullness flows through covenant faithfulness. The path to the Tree is not merely geographic — it is covenantal and behavioral.

**On the Note Between the Trees:** Scholars and post-biblical rabbinic commentary have asked whether the two trees (Etz ha-Da'at vs. Etz ha-Chayyim) are to be understood as structurally related. This study notes that position as historically interesting — but the Tanakh itself does not present them as equivalent, opposed, or paired in a systematic doctrinal sense. The **Etz ha-Da'at** was forbidden (Bereishit 2:17). The **Etz ha-Chayyim** was not forbidden until after the breach. They are **distinct entities with distinct functions**. The covenant student does not harmonize them beyond what the text asserts.

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## PART FIVE

### THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN WITNESS — TWO PILLARS OF CORROBORATION

The covenant research standard requires that all material be evaluated by the Devarim 19:15 two-witness criterion. External historical evidence is used here not as doctrinal authority but as **archaeological and cultural corroboration** — confirming that the Tanakh text, understood in its own time and culture, describes recognizable, coherent realities. The Tanakh governs in every dispute. What the ANE context provides is: **independent confirmation that the text's language was not invented — it was rooted in a world Israel shared, then distinguished itself from.**

#### **PILLAR 1: THE LAMASSU — GATE GUARDIANS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST**

The Assyrian and Babylonian *lamassu* (also *sheddu*) were colossal composite figures — human head, winged body, lion or bull form — placed at the entrances of temples, palaces, and city gates. Their function: **to guard the sacred threshold against unauthorized passage.** They were placed in pairs, always at entrances, always facing outward. Archaeological recovery at Nimrud (Ashurnasirpal II, c. 883–859 BCE) produced examples now in the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** notes directly: "In their function as guardians of Paradise the Cherubim bear an analogy to the winged bulls and lions of Babylonia and Assyria, colossal figures with human faces standing guard at the entrance of temples and palaces." This is confirmation by cultural cognate — the same functional role appears in the same geographic world. **However:** the ISBE also states clearly that **no Assyrian term equivalent to Hebrew keruv has been found.** The origin of the Keruvim and the lamassu may be parallel — not derivative in either direction. Israel's Keruvim are not borrowed lamassu. They are Yahweh-assigned guardians who share a cultural type but operate in an entirely different covenantal framework.

#### **PILLAR 2: THE SACRED TREE MOTIF — ANE ICONOGRAPHY AND THE ETZ HA-CHAYYIM**

Assyrian ivory plaques (8th century BCE, recovered at Nimrud) depict alternating palm trees and composite guardian creatures — likely the same beings later referenced as *karibu* — flanking a central tree that scholars identify as the **Tree of Life**. This iconographic pattern appears across Phoenician, Canaanite, and Mesopotamian art. The date palm was the most common representative of the sacred tree in the ANE. The Tanakh text describes exactly this arrangement: Keruvim stationed **at the approach** to the Tree of Life. The arrangement mirrors ANE iconography so closely that it cannot be coincidental — but the interpretation diverges sharply. **In the ANE, guardian-and-tree is a**

**royal/divine power motif. In the Tanakh, guardian-and-tree is a covenant-enforcement motif.**

The visual language is shared; the theological content is Israel's own.

**Covenant Warning:** Some popular-level presentations collapse the ANE parallel into an assertion that the Keruvim are merely borrowed Mesopotamian mythology. This is **not supported by the evidence**. Shared visual vocabulary does not equal borrowed theology. A hammer looks the same whether a carpenter or a doctor holds it — the function and authority structure determine its meaning. Israel's Keruvim operate within Yahweh's covenant structure. The lamassu operates within a polytheistic royal protection system. They are **not the same thing**.

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## PART SIX

### FIVE COVENANT DECLARATIONS EMBEDDED IN BEREISHIT 3:24

#### COVENANT DECLARATION I: THE EXPULSION IS COVENANTAL, NOT ARBITRARY

The word *garash* (H1644) carries the weight of legal covenant termination — the same word used for divorce, for expulsion from a covenant community, for driving out enemy nations. Adam is not sent away in anger; he is formally expelled as a covenant consequence. This is **Yahweh's justice operating within His own covenant structure**. The covenant was not abandoned; it was enforced. Every subsequent covenant event in the Tanakh — the expulsions of nations, the divorcing of Israel in exile, the driving out of enemies — echoes this first *garash*.

#### COVENANT DECLARATION II: THE KERUVIM ARE YAHWEH'S PERMANENT COVENANT AGENTS

The Keruvim are not temporary enforcers. **Vayashken** — He caused them to dwell, He stationed them permanently. The same *shakan* root that gives Israel the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle of Yahweh's own dwelling) describes the Keruvim's posting. They are **Yahweh's permanent covenantal boundary-agents** — not random supernatural creatures but specific beings with specific assignments that persist throughout the Tanakh. From Eden's gate to the Ark of the Covenant to Yehezkel's chariot-throne, the Keruvim carry **one consistent function: to mark and guard the boundary between Yahweh's holiness and unauthorized human access**.

#### COVENANT DECLARATION III: THE SWORD REPRESENTS ACTIVE, ONGOING COVENANT ENFORCEMENT

The *lahat ha-cherev ha-mithappeket* is not static. The Hithpael participial form *mithappeket* describes **continuous, self-generating, omnidirectional action**. There is no angle of approach that is unguarded. No season, no condition, no covenant actor can bypass this barrier by timing or strategy. This is the covenant's message to every generation: **unauthorized access to divine immortality through human scheming is structurally impossible**. The barrier is not a locked door that can be picked — it is a living, perpetually active force expressing **Yahweh's own active will**.

#### COVENANT DECLARATION IV: THE TREE OF LIFE STILL EXISTS

This is perhaps the most underemphasized covenant truth embedded in the verse. The Keruvim are not guarding a destroyed ruin or an empty place. They guard **derekh etz ha-chayyim — the way to the Tree of Life**. The Tree remains. It is not abolished; it is closed. Post-biblical rabbinic tradition

(cited here as historical record only, not authority) holds that both the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life exist in a realm inaccessible to fallen humanity — consistent with the Tanakh's silence on their destruction. Mishlei (Proverbs) 3:18 applies the *etz chayyim* metaphor to Torah as the accessible path to life — implying that **the covenant, rightly kept, provides access to what the violation foreclosed.** The covenant door is guarded, not abolished. This is a covenant of hope, not only judgment.

#### **COVENANT DECLARATION V: EAST IS THEOLOGICALLY LOADED — THE DIRECTION OF RETURN**

The Garden entrance faces east. The Tabernacle faces east. The Temple faces east. The glory of **Yahweh** departs the Temple toward the east (Yehezkel/Ezekiel 10:19; 11:23) and returns from the east (Yehezkel 43:2). The sun rises in the east. In the Hebrew covenant framework, east is **the direction of divine presence and of origin.** When the Keruvim are stationed at the east, they are stationed at the point where **the path of return begins.** Not the path of destruction — the path of return. Every covenant structure that faces east — Tabernacle, Temple, and the described restoration of Yehezkel 40–48 — points back to this verse: **the way to the Tree of Life runs east. The direction is not closed. The access is guarded until the covenant can be fulfilled.**

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## PART SEVEN

### THREE-RELIGION APPLICATION TABLE

Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution transmits covenant studies simultaneously to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The Tanakh governs. Post-biblical literature from each tradition is cited as historical witness and reference only. The application table below draws these connections while maintaining the covenant's evidentiary standard.

| JUDAISM  | CHRISTIANITY   | ISLAM   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>Eden and the Keruvim:</b> The Mishkan and Temple replicate the Eden structure — Keruvim over the Ark, access restricted to the High Priest alone on Yom Kippur. Torah is the accessible etz chayyim (Mishlei 3:18). Post-biblical rabbinic tradition (Talmud Brachot 61a, cited as historical reference) describes the evil inclination (yetzer ha-ra) as what drove Adam and Eve from the Garden. The Keruvim guard against unchecked human autonomy.</p> | <p><b>Eden and the Keruvim:</b> The New Testament (not binding authority in this study) uses the Etz ha-Chayyim in Revelation 2:7 and 22:2 as a restored access point. The framework inherited from the Tanakh is explicit: what was closed at Bereishit 3:24 is the very thing Revelation describes as restored. The Christian tradition reads the guard as removed through the covenant event of the crucifixion — a claim this institution neither affirms nor disputes, noting only that the Tanakh itself</p> | <p><b>Eden and the Keruvim:</b> The Quran (Surah 2:35–38; 7:19–25) also records the expulsion from the Garden (Jannah). The details differ from the Tanakh (no Keruvim are mentioned; Iblis is the adversary; the expulsion is described as temporary and with promise of guidance). Islamic tradition does not use the Keruvim motif but shares the fundamental covenant structure: human violation of divine instruction resulted in expulsion; the covenant door of guidance (hidayah) remains open through submission to the divine will. The Etz ha-Chayyim has no direct Quranic parallel, but the concept of <i>Jannah</i> as the restored state mirrors the Tanakh's covenant trajectory toward the Tree of Life.</p> |

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|--|---|--|
|  | makes no such connection, and the restoration, if it occurs, must be evaluated on Tanakh grounds. |  |
|--|---|--|

**Three-Religion Covenant Summary:** All three traditions inherit the structural framework established in Bereishit (Genesis) 3:24: **(1)** A covenant violation resulted in expulsion from a sacred, life-sustaining presence. **(2)** That presence is guarded — not destroyed. **(3)** A path of return exists, defined by covenant faithfulness. The Tanakh presents the guard as operational; the path of return as Torah. All post-biblical developments in each tradition trace their soteriological framework to this verse. **Bereishit 3:24 is the founding document of the human covenant condition.**

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## PART EIGHT

### COVENANT WITNESS TO CURRENT EVENTS

Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution applies the Tanakh as a living covenant witness to present-day events. This section identifies two current geopolitical and technological realities that Bereishit (Genesis) 3:24 speaks to directly. This is covenant witness — not prophecy prediction — applied under the Devarim 19:15 two-witness standard.

#### WITNESS TO THE GARDEN: THE LAND QUESTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The geography of the Garden of Eden, as described in Bereishit (Genesis) 2:10–14, places it at the convergence of four rivers, including the Perat (Euphrates) and the Chideqel (Tigris) — in the region of modern Iraq, Syria, and southeastern Turkey. The same region is currently the theater of geopolitical conflict involving the nations of the Middle East, the United States, and multiple external powers.

The covenant framework of Bereishit 3:24 has a specific message for this moment: **the land is not neutral territory**. It is covenant ground — the ground from which ha-Adam was taken (Bereishit 3:19: "for from it you were taken") and to which the covenant struggle returns. The wars over this soil, the disputes over the land of Canaan, the conflict between nations over the geography of the Fertile Crescent — all echo the original covenant reality: **this is the land Yahweh placed under covenant care and covenant consequence**. No political settlement, no military conquest, and no international agreement has the authority to override the covenant established here. The *miqqedem* — the east — is still the direction of the covenant's unresolved account.

#### WITNESS TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: THE NEW TOWER OF THE TREE

The covenant document (Miqdash Bethel Doc 84, *Covenant Intelligence*, May 2026) has already addressed AI as a covenant concern. Bereishit 3:24 adds a specific dimension to that witness. The divine deliberation of Bereishit 3:22 — "*the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the Tree of Life and eat, and live forever*" — describes exactly the concern that attaches to artificial intelligence in 2026: **humanity, having obtained the knowledge of good and evil without the moral covenant structure to govern it, now reaches toward the next prize — immortality through technology**.

Transhumanism, life-extension research, digital consciousness projects, and AI-driven biotechnology are the 21st-century expression of the hand reaching toward the Etz ha-Chayyim. The *mithappeket* — the omnidirectional whirling sword — is the covenant's response: **every angle of approach to**

**immortality outside the covenant structure is guarded.** Technological immortality achieved outside of covenant relationship is not life — it is **the permanent locking of broken humanity into brokenness**, which is exactly what Bereishit 3:22–24 says Yahweh prevented. The Keruvim of Eden are not a relic of ancient mythology. They are **a covenant principle still active: unauthorized access to divine life will be blocked until covenant conditions are met.**

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**SUMMARY — THE SEVEN-POINT COVENANT TESTIMONY OF BEREISHIT  
3:24**

| COVENANT TRUTH  | LEXICAL AND TEXTUAL GROUND   |
|---|--|
| <b>1. Expulsion is covenant justice, not rage</b>                                     | <i>Garash</i> (H1644) = legal, covenantal expulsion. Same word as divorce, expatriation, driving out of enemy nations. This is Yahweh operating within His own covenant structure.                                   |
| <b>2. The Keruvim are Yahweh's permanent agents</b>                                   | <i>Vayashken</i> (H7931 Hiphil) = caused to dwell permanently. Same root as Mishkan. These beings carry a permanent covenantal assignment.   |
| <b>3. The sword is active, omnidirectional, and self-sustaining</b>                   | <i>Mithappeket</i> (H2015 Hithpael participle) = continuously self-turning. No angle of approach exists that bypasses this covenant boundary.  |
| <b>4. The Tree of Life still exists</b>   | The text says the Keruvim guard <i>the way to the Tree of Life</i> — not the site of a former tree. It is guarded, not destroyed. The covenant door is not abolished.  |
| <b>5. East is the direction of return</b>   | <i>Miqqedem</i> (H6924) = east / primordial origin. Every Tanakh sacred structure faces east. The guard is stationed at the direction of covenant return.  |
| <b>6. Torah is the accessible Tree of Life</b>  | Mishlei (Proverbs) 3:18 makes it explicit: Torah is the <i>etz chayyim</i> for those who grasp it. The covenant keeps the path open for the Torah-faithful.  |
| <b>7. The covenant barrier applies to technology as well as to physical geography</b> | The divine concern in verse 22 (lest he take of the Etz ha-Chayyim and live forever) applies to every generation's version of the reach toward unauthorized immortality — including AI-driven transhumanism in 2026. |

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