

# MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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## THE 613 LAWS OF THE COVENANT

*A Covenant Course in the Written Instruction of Yahweh*

<b>Course</b>	The 613 Laws of the Covenant
<b>Lesson</b>	Lesson 25
<b>Law Numbers</b>	Positive Law #215   Bereishit (Genesis) 17:10
<b>Primary Text</b>	Bereishit (Genesis) 17:9–14   Vayikra (Leviticus) 12:3   Shemot (Exodus) 4:24–26
<b>Subject</b>	Brit Milah — The Covenant of Circumcision The Covenant Law of the Sign in the Flesh: What the Torah Commands, What Christianity Abandoned, and What Islam Preserved
<b>Visual Standard</b>	Lesson 21 Confirmed Format (EB Garamond / Cinzel Gold)
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### **Authority: The Tanakh — The Written Word of Yahweh Alone**

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

## COURSE FRAMEWORK & METHODOLOGY

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**Purpose of This Course:** This educational course examines each of the 613 covenant laws of **Yahweh** as they appear in the Written Torah — the Tanakh alone. No tradition, council, or rabbinic ruling supersedes the Written Word. Every law is examined using the Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15 standard: two or three independent witnesses from the Tanakh, primary lexicons (BDB, HALOT, Gesenius, TWOT), and verified secondary sources.

**Why This Lesson:** The covenant of circumcision — *brit milah* — is the oldest covenant sign in the Abrahamic family. Instituted with Avraham four centuries before Sinai, it is designated by **Yahweh** Himself as *brit olam* — an everlasting covenant. Three of the world's largest religious traditions claim to stand in the Abrahamic covenant: Judaism maintains *brit milah* as a living practice; Christianity replaced the physical sign with theological reinterpretation; Islam preserved the physical practice through the Sunnah of Ibrahim. Only the Written Torah establishes what **Yahweh** actually commands. This lesson identifies what the Torah says — and measures each tradition against it.

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## SECTION I — THE HEBREW TEXT AND PRIMARY LEXICAL ANALYSIS

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### THE PRIMARY TEXT — BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 17:9–14

#### Bereishit (Genesis) 17:10–11

זאת בריתי אשר תשמרו ביני וביניכם — המול לכם כל-זכר

*Zot briti asher tishm'ru beini u'veineichem — himol lachem kol-zachar*

*"This is My covenant which you shall keep between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised."*

#### Bereishit (Genesis) 17:11

ונמלתם את בשר ערלתכם — והיה לאות ברית ביני וביניכם

*U'nemaltem et b'sar arlat'chem — v'hayah l'ot brit beini u'veineichem*

*"You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you."*

#### Bereishit (Genesis) 17:13–14

והיתה בריתי בבשרכם לברית עולם — וערל זכר אשר לא-ימול — ונכרתה הנפש

*V'hayetah v'rity biv'sar'chem li'vrit olam — v'arel zachar asher lo-yimol — v'nichretah ha-nefesh*

*"Thus shall My covenant be marked in your flesh as an everlasting pact. And if any male who is uncircumcised fails to circumcise — that person shall be cut off from his kin; he has broken My covenant."*

### SUPPORTING TEXTS

Vayikra (Leviticus) 12:3 — *On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.*

Shemot (Exodus) 4:25–26 — *So Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin, and touched his legs with it, saying, 'You are truly a bridegroom of blood to me!' And when He let him alone, she added, 'A bridegroom of blood because of the circumcision.'*

Shemot (Exodus) 12:48 — *But if a stranger who dwells with you would offer the passover to Yahweh, all his males must be circumcised; then he shall be admitted to offer it; he shall then be as a citizen of the country. But no uncircumcised person may eat of it.*

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:16 — *Cut away, therefore, the thickening about your hearts and stiffen your necks no more.*

**Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:6 — *Then Yahweh your Elohim will open up your heart and the hearts of your offspring to love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and soul, in order that you may live.***

## PRIMARY LEXICAL ANALYSIS

HEBREW TERM	STRO NG'S	SCRIP T	ROOT / BDB	COVENANT SIGNIFICANCE	OCCURREN CES
<b>brit(covena nt)</b>	<b>H1285</b>	<b>בְּרִית</b>	From barah — to cut. A covenant was not signed; it was cut through blood ratification between parties.	The covenant bond between Yahweh and Avraham. The compound brit milah names both: the covenant (brit) and the act (milah). Brit olam — everlasting covenant — is Yahweh's own designation (Bereishit 17:13). Appears 287x.	287x
<b>mool / mul(to circumcise)</b>	<b>H4135</b>	<b>מול</b>	Primitive root: to cut short, curtail; by implication to blunt; figuratively to destroy. BDB: circumcise, cut down.	The primary verb of circumcision in the Tanakh. Literal (physical cutting) and figurative (removal of obstruction) force. Also connects to the concept 'before / in front of' — the front part of the male member.	36x in 32 vv.
<b>mulah(circu mcision)</b>	<b>H4139</b>	<b>מוֹלָה</b>	Feminine noun from mool.	The act of circumcision. Appears once — Shemot (Exodus) 4:26: chatam damim la-mulot — 'a bridegroom/kinsman of blood because of the circumcisions.' Its sole Tanakh appearance is at the most critical covenant-neglect moment in the Torah.	1x (Shemot 4:26)
<b>orlah(foresk in)</b>	<b>H6190</b>	<b>עֲרֻלָּה</b>	From arel — uncircumcised ; obstruction, covering.	Used literally (foreskin) and metaphorically. The Tanakh speaks of the orlah of the heart (Devarim 10:16), the orlah of the lips (Shemot 6:12), and the orlah of the ear (Yirmeyahu 6:10). In	16x

				every case, orlah is an obstruction preventing the organ from functioning properly before Yahweh.	
<b>arel(uncircumcised)</b>	<b>H618 9</b>	<b>עָרְלָה</b>	Adjective: having a foreskin; by extension: obstructed, blocked.	Used opprobriously in the Tanakh for Philistines and non-covenant peoples. Applied metaphorically as arel lev (uncircumcised of heart) and arel sefatayim (uncircumcised of lips). The arel person is excluded from Passover (Shemot 12:48) and cut off from the people (Bereishit 17:14).	35x
<b>ot(sign, token)</b>	<b>H226</b>	<b>אוֹת</b>	From avah — to mark, designate.	The visible covenant sign. The rainbow is the ot of the Noahic covenant (Bereishit 9:12-13). Circumcision is the ot of the Abrahamic covenant (Bereishit 17:11). The ot is the outward testimony that the covenant relationship exists — never the covenant itself.	79x
<b>brit olam(everlasting covenant)</b>	<b>H128 5+H5 769</b>	<b>בְּרִית עוֹלָם</b>	brit + olam — age, eternity, perpetuity; duration without foreseeable end.	Yahweh's own designation for the covenant of circumcision (Bereishit 17:13). Same term for the Noahic covenant (Bereishit 9:16) — which no tradition claims was abrogated. What Yahweh calls everlasting cannot be made temporary by any later tradition.	brit 287x; olam 439x
<b>karet(cut off)</b>	<b>H377 2</b>	<b>קָרַת</b>	To cut, to cut off; the technical term for covenant excision — being cut off from the covenant people.	The penalty for failing to circumcise (Bereishit 17:14). Karet is among the most severe covenant penalties in the Torah — used for violations of Passover, Yom Kippur, unleavened bread, and the Sabbath as well. Circumcision carries the same weight as these covenant pillars.	289x

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## SECTION II — WHAT THE LAW IS TEACHING

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### I. THE COVENANT SIGN IS CUT IN THE FLESH — NOT MERELY DECLARED

The verb *barab* — from which *brit* derives — means to cut. In the ancient Near East, covenants were sealed by cutting animals and passing between their halves (as in Bereishit 15:9-18). Circumcision is not an arbitrary cultural practice assigned covenant meaning after the fact: it is itself a **blood cutting**, a miniature covenant-sealing act inscribed permanently on the body of every covenant male. The mark in the flesh *is* the covenant in the flesh. **Yahweh** placed the sign at the precise anatomical location of generational transmission — because this covenant is a generational covenant, passed from father to son through all generations.

### 2. THE EIGHTH DAY — COVENANT PRECISION

The command specifies the **eighth day** (*yom ha-shemini*). The number eight in the Tanakh signals a new beginning — beyond the complete cycle of seven. Vayikra (Leviticus) 12:3 confirms the eighth day independently, providing the two-witness corroboration required by Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15. Medical research — without any reference to the Torah — has confirmed that Vitamin K (essential for blood clotting) and prothrombin levels in newborns peak on the eighth day of life, providing optimal conditions for healing. Whether or not ancient Israel knew this science, **Yahweh's** timing was exact. The precision of the command is a witness to its divine origin.

### 3. THE ORLAH AS OBSTRUCTION — PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

The Hebrew word *orlah* (אֵרֶלָה, H6190) means obstruction, covering. The Tanakh uses it three ways:

- **Orlah of the foreskin** — the physical obstruction removed at circumcision (Bereishit 17:11).
- **Orlah of the lips** — Moshe's speech impediment before **Yahweh** (Shemot 6:12; 6:30). An obstruction preventing the mouth from functioning properly.
- **Orlah of the ear** — Israel's inability to hear the prophetic word (Yirmeyahu 6:10). An obstruction preventing the ear from receiving.
- **Orlah of the heart** — Israel's covenant obstruction (Devarim 10:16; Yirmeyahu 9:25-26). The inner obstruction preventing full covenant faithfulness.

**In every case, orlah is an obstruction to the proper functioning of the organ before Yahweh.** The removal of the foreskin is not merely hygienic — it is the covenant act that removes the obstruction standing between the male covenant member and full covenant standing.

### 4. KARET — THE SEVERITY OF NEGLECT

The penalty for an uncircumcised male is *karet* — being cut off from the people (Bereishit 17:14). *Karet* is the Torah's most severe non-capital penalty — reserved for violations of Passover, Yom Kippur, the Sabbath, and the covenant foundations. Its application to circumcision places the covenant sign in the same weight class as these pillars. This is not a minor ordinance.

The Shemot (Exodus) 4:24-26 account provides the narrative confirmation. Moshe — just commissioned at the burning bush, about to deliver all Israel — had neglected to circumcise his son. **Yahweh** 'sought to kill him.' Zipporah, his Midianite wife, acted immediately with a flint. Her phrase — *chatan damim* — 'bridegroom of blood' — declares that the blood of circumcision sealed a familial covenant bond. Three lessons from this account: (1) Covenant leadership requires covenant faithfulness in the household. (2) Neglect of the sign is a capital matter. (3) A Midianite woman performing the act establishes that the *ot* belongs to the covenant itself — not to Israelite ethnicity.

## 5. THE BOTH/AND STANDARD — PHYSICAL SIGN AND CIRCUMCISED HEART

The Tanakh itself — not post-biblical commentary — introduces the inner dimension. In Devarim (**Deuteronomy**) 10:16, Israel is commanded: *u-maltem et orlat levav'chem* — 'circumcise the foreskin of your heart.' In Devarim (**Deuteronomy**) 30:6, **Yahweh** promises: *ve-mal Yahweh Elohecha et levav'cha* — '**Yahweh** your **Elohim** will circumcise your heart.' In Yirmeyahu (**Jeremiah**) 4:4, the prophet demands both simultaneously.

**The Tanakh's standard is both/and — not either/or.** Physical circumcision without the circumcised heart is a sign without substance (**Yirmeyahu 9:25-26**). Heart circumcision claimed as a substitute for the physical sign removes the *ot* that **Yahweh** appointed. Any tradition that trades one for the other has departed from the Written Torah.

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## SECTION III — THE FOUR-SPHERE APPLICATION

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### SPHERE ONE — INDIVIDUAL

Every covenant male is responsible for receiving the covenant sign. Every covenant father is responsible for circumcising his son on the eighth day. This is not delegated to priests alone — Bereishit (Genesis) 17:10 addresses Avraham directly, and Avraham's immediate obedience (17:23: 'that very day') is the model. The individual covenant person carries the mark of the covenant in his own body — a permanent, daily witness that he belongs to **Yahweh's** covenant community. The covenant female is bound by the inner dimension: the circumcision of the heart commanded in Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:16 is addressed to 'you' — the entire covenant people.

### SPHERE TWO — COMMUNITY

The covenant community maintains the infrastructure of the sign: qualified personnel to perform *brit milah*, community witness to the covenant act, and the covenant ceremony as a communal celebration. No covenant community should leave its male members without access to the covenant sign on the eighth day. The community is also the witness body — the ceremony before family and community is the public declaration that this child has entered the covenant of Avraham. Bereishit (Genesis) 17:12-13 explicitly includes homeborn slaves and purchased servants — the entire covenant household, not only the biological family.

## SPHERE THREE — NATIONAL

A nation governed by the Torah of **Yahweh** recognizes circumcision as a covenant institution, not a private medical procedure. Yehoshua (Joshua) 5:2-9 establishes the national precedent: before Israel could enter the covenant land, **Yahweh** commanded the circumcision of the entire male population at Gilgal. The nation could not take possession of its covenant inheritance without first establishing a covenant standing through the sign. A covenant nation treats the sign in the flesh as a covenant-national act — the public mark that this people belongs to **Yahweh**.

## SPHERE FOUR — WORLD

The covenant of circumcision carries a message for all nations: Bereishit (Genesis) 17:12-13 and Shemot (Exodus) 12:48 both establish that the covenant sign applies universally to every male of the covenant household — regardless of ethnic origin. The *ger* (sojourner) who desires covenant participation must receive the covenant sign. The Abrahamic covenant is not ethnic property — it is **Yahweh**'s covenant with a specific household, open to all who join that household. The three Abrahamic traditions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — represent over 4.2 billion people, all of whom claim Avraham as their father. **Yahweh**'s covenant sign in Bereishit (Genesis) 17 was given to Avraham before Yitzhak was born — and it was applied to Yishmael on the same day. The Tanakh's own record places both lines under the covenant sign from the beginning.

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## SECTION IV — COMPLETE APPLICATION TABLE

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COVENANT ELEMENT	TANAKH TEXT	COMMAND	WHO IS BOUND	CONSEQUENCE OF NEGLECT
<b>The Physical Sign</b>	Bereishit (Genesis) 17:10-11	Every male shall be circumcised; the foreskin removed as the sign of the covenant.	All males of the covenant household — biological descendants and acquired members alike.	Karet — cut off from the people (Bereishit 17:14). Exclusion from Passover (Shemot 12:48).
<b>The Eighth Day</b>	Bereishit (Genesis) 17:12; Vayikra (Leviticus) 12:3	Circumcise on the eighth day — not at birth, not at puberty, not at the parents' convenience.	Father responsible for timing; mohel or qualified performer executes the act.	Neglect of timing violates the specific command; Shemot 4:24-26 shows the severity

				of delayed compliance.
<b>Household Scope</b>	Bereishit (Genesis) 17:12-13	Homeborn and purchased slaves must be circumcised — the covenant sign applies to the entire household.	All males of the covenant household regardless of ethnic origin.	An uncircumcised male in the household represents a breach of the covenant sign's completeness.
<b>Passover Access</b>	Shemot (Exodus) 12:43-48	No uncircumcised person may eat of the Passover. A sojourner who desires covenant participation must be circumcised.	All who wish to participate in the covenant meal — including sojourners and strangers.	Exclusion from the central covenant redemption act. The sign is the passport to covenant participation.
<b>Circumcision of the Heart</b>	Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:16; 30:6	Circumcise the foreskin of your heart (human command); Yahweh your Elohim will circumcise your heart (divine promise).	All covenant people — addressed to the entire nation, not to males only.	A physically circumcised male who is uncircumcised of heart fulfills the letter while breaking the spirit (Yirmeyahu 9:25-26).
<b>The Everlasting Designation</b>	Bereishit (Genesis) 17:13	My covenant shall be marked in your flesh as an everlasting pact (brit olam).	All generations — no expiration date given; no termination clause in the Written Torah.	Any tradition that terminates what Yahweh called everlasting has no Tanakh authority for that termination.

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## SECTION V — THREE-RELIGION AUDIT

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*Standard: Does the tradition uphold, modify, or abandon the Torah command of the covenant sign in the flesh?*

## RELIGION ONE — JUDAISM

PRACTICE	DESCRIPTION	VERDICT
<i>Brit milah on the eighth day</i>	Orthodox, Conservative, and traditional Judaism performs brit milah on the eighth day — directly from Bereishit (Genesis) 17:12 and Vayikra (Leviticus) 12:3. The mohel performs the procedure; the Sandak holds the child; the community witnesses. The ceremony is joyous and covenantally significant.	<b>UPHELD — Exact Torah compliance</b>
<i>The brit milah ceremony as covenant entry</i>	The ceremony explicitly marks the child's entrance into the covenant of Avraham. The blessing recited — 'as he has entered the covenant, so may he enter Torah, the wedding canopy, and good deeds' — preserves the covenant character of the act.	<b>UPHELD — Covenant theology maintained</b>
<i>Circumcision requirement for conversion</i>	Orthodox and Conservative Judaism requires circumcision (or hatafat dam brit for the already circumcised) for male converts — directly applying the Shemot (Exodus) 12:48 principle that covenant participation requires the covenant sign.	<b>UPHELD — Correct application of Shemot 12:48</b>
<i>Reform movement acceptance without milah</i>	The Reform movement has accepted male converts without circumcision since 1892, treating it as optional. Bereishit (Genesis) 17:14 specifies karet — cut off from the people — for the uncircumcised male. No Written Torah authority permits this reduction.	<b>DEPARTED — No Tanakh basis for optional status</b>
<i>Post-biblical rabbinic elaborations (periah, metzitzah)</i>	Rabbinic tradition expanded the circumcision procedure beyond the Written Torah's specification (removing the foreskin). The additional steps of periah (drawing back the membrane) and metzitzah are post-biblical rabbinic rulings — not found in the Written Torah.	<b>EXPANDED — Beyond Written Torah text; binding by halacha but not by Tanakh authority</b>
<i>Heart circumcision doctrine</i>	Judaism recognizes the inner dimension from Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:16 and 30:6 — both are upheld alongside the physical command. The two are not in opposition.	<b>UPHELD — Both/and standard preserved</b>

**Judaism Verdict:** Of the three traditions examined, Judaism preserves the closest alignment with the Torah standard. The physical sign on the eighth day is maintained; the covenant character of the act is preserved; the household/conversion scope of Bereishit (Genesis) 17 is upheld. Where Judaism departs is at the point of rabbinic addition — treating post-biblical oral tradition as equal to or more authoritative than the Written Torah, and in the Reform movement’s reduction of the sign to an optional practice. The covenant standard: the Written Torah establishes the requirement; rabbinic tradition is historical reference, not binding covenant authority.

## RELIGION TWO — CHRISTIANITY

### THE CRITICAL QUESTION: WHAT DID THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM ACTUALLY DECIDE — AND BY WHOSE AUTHORITY?

**Acts 15 (c. 49 CE)** records the Council of Jerusalem’s ruling that Gentile believers in Yeshua were not required to be circumcised. This is the watershed moment at which Christianity formally departed from the physical covenant sign. The question this lesson puts to that ruling is the question of Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:2: *‘You shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish from it.’* No assembly of apostles, church fathers, or councils holds authority to diminish what **Yahweh** designated as *brit olam*. The question is not whether the Council of Jerusalem made a pastoral decision — it is whether that decision carries Written Torah authority. By the Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15 standard, it does not.

PRACTICE	DESCRIPTION	VERDICT
<i>Physical circumcision — historical record</i>	Yeshua was circumcised on the eighth day (Luke 2:21). His disciples were circumcised Jews. The physical sign was not an issue within the Jewish community of the first century — every Jewish male was circumcised. The controversy arose only when Gentiles began joining the covenant community.	<b>UPHELD in original practice — departure came in Acts 15</b>
<i>Council of Jerusalem — Gentile exemption</i>	Acts 15 ruled Gentile believers did not need to circumcise. This ruling has no Written Torah basis. Bereishit (Genesis) 17:12-13 explicitly extends the covenant sign to the entire household — not only to born Israelites. Shemot (Exodus) 12:48 requires circumcision even of sojourners who wish to participate in the covenant meal.	<b>DEPARTED — No Tanakh authority for this ruling</b>

<i>Baptism as replacement for circumcision</i>	Colossians 2:11-12 is used by many Christian theologians to argue that baptism replaced circumcision. The Written Torah designates circumcision as the covenant sign ( <i>ot</i> ) — no later writing holds authority to replace what Yahweh designated as <i>brit olam</i> . The sign appointed by Yahweh cannot be substituted by a sign appointed by later interpretation.	<b>DEPARTED — No Tanakh authority for substitution</b>
<i>Heart circumcision — preserved in theology</i>	Christianity preserves and emphasizes the inner dimension — Romans 2:28-29, Colossians 2:11. Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:16 and 30:6 are widely cited in Christian theology.	<b>UPHELD in part — inner dimension preserved; used incorrectly to replace the outer sign</b>
<i>Circumcision declared unnecessary/harmful (Galatians 5:2)</i>	Paul's statement 'if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you' (Galatians 5:2) goes beyond ruling circumcision optional — it treats it as spiritually harmful. This has no Tanakh basis and directly contradicts Bereishit (Genesis) 17:13 ( <i>brit olam</i> ) and 17:14 ( <i>karet</i> for the uncircumcised).	<b>DEPARTED — Direct contradiction of Written Torah</b>
<i>Circumcision maintained in some Christian traditions</i>	Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity maintains circumcision as a covenant practice. Coptic Christians historically circumcised. Some Hebrew Roots and Messianic Jewish communities maintain it. These communities show awareness that Acts 15 does not carry Tanakh authority.	<b>UPHELD — Where maintained; covenant faithfulness recognized</b>

**Christianity Verdict:** Christianity has formally departed from the physical covenant sign on the basis of Pauline interpretation and conciliar decision — neither of which holds Written Torah authority. The most significant departure is treating *brit olam* — Yahweh's own designation — as a temporary covenant sign abrogated by the coming of Yeshua. The Tanakh provides no such abrogation clause. Heart circumcision — the inner dimension — is preserved and emphasized, but is used incorrectly as a substitute for, rather than a complement to, the physical sign. **The covenant standard: what Yahweh called everlasting remains everlasting.** The physical *ot* and the circumcised heart are both required. Christianity has the inner half of the standard; it has abandoned the outer.

## RELIGION THREE — ISLAM

## ISLAM AND THE COVENANT OF IBRAHIM — THE PHYSICAL PRACTICE WITHOUT THE COVENANT FRAMEWORK

Islam maintains male circumcision (*khitan*) as a universal practice across the Muslim world — making Muslims the largest single religious group practicing male circumcision globally. The Islamic tradition traces *khitan* directly to Ibrahim, citing Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim: Ibrahim circumcised himself at age 80. The Quran itself does not mention circumcision — the practice is grounded in Hadith and established as either obligatory (*wajib*: Shafi'i, Hanbali schools) or strongly confirmed sunnah (Hanafi, Maliki schools). All four major Sunni schools and the Ja'fari Shia school affirm the practice.

PRACTICE	DESCRIPTION	VERDICT
<i>Khitan — physical circumcision</i>	Male circumcision is maintained universally across the Muslim world. The Shafi'i and Hanbali schools consider it obligatory ( <i>wajib</i> ); Hanafi and Maliki consider it confirmed sunnah ( <i>sunna mu'akkada</i> ). Every major school endorses it. Over 1 billion Muslim males are circumcised.	<b>UPHELD — Physical practice maintained</b>
<i>Traced to Ibrahim (Avraham)</i>	Islam explicitly traces khitan to Ibrahim — 'Allah tested Ibrahim with ten things and he fulfilled all of them; one of them was circumcision' (Sahih Bukhari). This is the exact Tanakh account of Bereishit (Genesis) 17. Islam acknowledges the Abrahamic origin even without calling it the Abrahamic covenant sign.	<b>UPHELD — Abrahamic origin correctly identified</b>
<i>Not grounded in Bereishit 17 covenant framework</i>	Islam grounds khitan in Hadith and the Sunnah of Ibrahim rather than in the Written Torah of Yahweh. The covenant theology of Bereishit (Genesis) 17 — <i>brit olam</i> , the <i>ot</i> , the eighth day, <i>karet</i> — is not the organizing framework. The practice is maintained without the covenant architecture that gives it its full meaning.	<b>MODIFIED — Practice preserved; covenant framework not adopted</b>
<i>Eighth-day timing not maintained</i>	The Torah is precise: the eighth day (Bereishit 17:12; Vayikra 12:3). Islamic tradition does not fix circumcision to the eighth day — timing varies by region and custom, ranging from the seventh day (some hadith) to adolescence. The eighth day's	<b>DEPARTED — Eighth-day precision of the Written Torah not maintained</b>

	covenant precision is not part of the Islamic standard.	
<i>Fitra — natural disposition category</i>	Islam places khitan in the category of fitra — natural human disposition toward cleanliness — alongside nail trimming, beard grooming, and pubic hair removal. This framing is consistent with the covenant wisdom embedded in the sign, but reduces its covenantal character to a hygienic practice.	<b>MODIFIED — Hygienic framing; covenantal significance reduced</b>
<i>Heart circumcision doctrine</i>	The concept of the circumcised heart as articulated in Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:16 and Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 4:4 is not a developed Islamic doctrine. The spiritual concept of purification of the heart (tazkiyat al-nafs) exists in Islamic tradition but is not structured around the orlah ha-lev framework of the Written Torah.	<b>NOT PRESENT — Inner dimension not structured around Tanakh framework</b>

**Islam Verdict:** Islam preserves the physical act of circumcision and correctly traces it to Ibrahim — a genuine alignment with the Written Torah's account in Bereishit (Genesis) 17. This is more faithful to the physical sign than mainstream Christianity's abandonment of it. However, Islam grounds the practice in Hadith and the Sunnah framework rather than in the covenant theology of the Written Torah. The eighth-day timing — Yahweh's precise command in Bereishit (Genesis) 17:12 and Vayikra (Leviticus) 12:3 — is not maintained. The covenant architecture of *brit olam*, the *ot*, the *karet* penalty, and the circumcision of the heart is not part of the Islamic framework. Partial faithfulness to the sign — the physical act is there; the covenant meaning of the Torah is not the organizing authority.

### THREE-RELIGION AUDIT SUMMARY

TRADITION	PHYSICAL SIGN	EIGHTH DAY	HEART CIRCUMCISION	COVENANT SCOPE	ALIGNMENT
<b>Judaism</b>	Full — eighth day, mohel, ceremony	Yes — exact Torah compliance	Yes — upheld alongside physical	Household and conversion — maintained	<b>HIGH</b>

<b>Christianity</b>	Abandoned — Acts 15 ruling; baptism substituted	No — physical sign eliminated	Yes — emphasized; used as replacement for physical	Not maintained in Tanakh form	<b>LOW</b>
<b>Islam</b>	Maintained universally	No — eighth day not the standard	Not structured around Tanakh framework	Universal in Muslim community; not structured around Bereishit 17	<b>MODERATE</b>
<b>Torah Standard</b>	Full circumcision on eighth day (Bereishit 17:10-12)	Yes — eighth day precisely (Vayikra 12:3)	Both commanded (Devarim 10:16) and promised (Devarim 30:6)	All males of covenant household — biological and acquired (Bereishit 17:12-13)	<b>THE STANDARD</b>

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## SECTION VI — COVENANT WITNESS TO CURRENT EVENTS

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### 1. THE MEDICAL CIRCUMCISION DEBATE — A COVENANT WITNESS TO SCIENCE

The contemporary medical debate over circumcision — whether it is beneficial, neutral, or harmful — is being conducted without reference to the document that contains the original command. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) acknowledges that the health benefits of male circumcision exceed surgical risks but stops short of universal recommendation. Research consistently demonstrates reduced rates of UTI in infancy, reduced risk of certain sexually transmitted infections, elimination of phimosis and paraphimosis. These are not the reason **Yahweh** commanded the sign — but they are corroborating witnesses that the sign embedded in the covenant carries embodied wisdom. The covenant witness to medicine: the health benefits you are still debating, **Yahweh** commanded 4,000 years ago on the precise day that medical science now confirms is optimal for neonatal healing.

### 2. THE EIGHTH DAY AND VITAMIN K — COVENANT PRECISION CONFIRMED

Vitamin K (essential for blood clotting) and prothrombin levels in newborns peak on the eighth day of life — a fact confirmed by modern neonatology entirely independent of the Torah. The circumcision command in Bereishit (Genesis) 17:12 and Vayikra (Leviticus) 12:3 specifies the eighth day precisely. **Yahweh** gave this command to Avraham approximately 2,000 BCE. Prothrombin levels were not measured until the 20th century CE. The precision is its own witness. **The covenant position: Yahweh's commands carry embedded wisdom that humanity is still confirming. Obedience comes first; science confirms afterward.**

### 3. THE INTACTIVIST MOVEMENT — A COUNTER-WITNESS THAT REQUIRES A RESPONSE

A growing movement — 'intactivism' — argues that circumcision violates bodily autonomy and constitutes harm to children who cannot consent. This argument presents the covenant community with a direct challenge that must be answered from the Written Torah, not ignored. **The Torah's response: Yahweh owns every body He created (Tehillim 24:1)**. Covenant obligations precede individual autonomy claims. The eighth-day timing was given precisely so that the covenant sign is applied before the child has a capacity for consent or dissent — because the covenant is a household covenant, transmitted generationally by the authority of **Yahweh**, not by the individual's later consent. The same logic applies to circumcision that applies to brit milah itself: the covenant community does not defer **Yahweh's** commands to individual consent schedules. The covenant witness to the intactivist position: bodily autonomy is a 21st-century philosophical framework. *Brit olam* is a 4,000-year-old covenant command from the Creator of the body in question.

### 4. YIRMEYAHU (JEREMIAH) 9:25-26 — THE PROPHETIC PLUMB LINE FOR TODAY

*Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 9:25-26 — A time is coming — declares Yahweh — when I will take note of all who are circumcised in the foreskin: Egypt, Judah, Edom, the Ammonites, Moab, and all the desert dwellers who have their hair clipped at the temples. For all these nations are uncircumcised, but all the house of Israel are uncircumcised of heart.*

**Yahweh** names multiple nations practicing physical circumcision — including Judah alongside Egypt, Edom, and Moab — and declares them all uncircumcised in heart. This text is the prophetic plumb line for 2026. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam collectively encompass over 4 billion people who claim some form of the Abrahamic covenant. **Yahweh's** question to all of them is Yirmeyahu's question: are you circumcised in the heart? The outer sign without the inner transformation is the condition **Yahweh** named and condemned in 600 BCE. It has not changed.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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- Bereishit (Genesis) 17:13 calls circumcision *brit olam* — an everlasting covenant. By what Written Torah authority does any tradition declare it temporary or optional?
- The Shemot (Exodus) 4:24-26 account shows Yahweh 'seeking to kill' Moshe because his son was uncircumcised. What does this tell us about the weight Yahweh places on covenant leadership having covenant households?
- Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:16 commands Israel to circumcise the heart; Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:6 promises Yahweh will circumcise the heart. What is the relationship between the human act and the divine promise?

- Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 9:25-26 names Israel alongside Egypt and Edom as 'uncircumcised of heart' despite physical circumcision. How does this text challenge Judaism's physical focus and Christianity's spiritual focus simultaneously?
- Shemot (Exodus) 12:48 requires circumcision even of the sojourner who wishes to eat the Passover. What does this tell us about the universal scope of the covenant sign — and what does it say about covenant access today?
- Islam traces khitan to Ibrahim and maintains the physical practice universally — yet does not ground it in the covenant theology of Bereishit (Genesis) 17. What is the difference between performing a covenant act and understanding its covenant architecture?
- The eighth day of life is the optimal day for neonatal healing — a fact confirmed by 20th-century medicine. What does this convergence between the Written Torah command and modern science tell us about the nature of Yahweh's covenant instructions?

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## SCRIPTURE INDEX

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<b>Bereishit (Genesis)</b> 9:12-13, 16	Ot of the Noachic covenant — the rainbow as covenant sign. Same ot framework as Bereishit 17.	Section I
<b>Bereishit (Genesis)</b> 15:9-18	The covenant of the pieces — Yahweh passes between the animal halves; brit as blood cutting.	Section II
<b>Bereishit (Genesis)</b> 17:9-14	Primary covenant text: the command, the sign, the eighth day, the scope, brit olam, karet penalty.	Sections I, II, IV
<b>Bereishit (Genesis)</b> 17:23-27	Avraham's immediate obedience — circumcises himself, Yishmael, and all household males that same day.	Section III
<b>Bereishit (Genesis)</b> 21:4	Yitzhak circumcised on the eighth day — covenant passed to the next generation precisely.	Section II
<b>Shemot (Exodus)</b> 4:24-26	Zipporah circumcises her son with a flint; saves Moshe from Yahweh's judgment; chatan damim.	Sections II, VI
<b>Shemot (Exodus)</b> 6:12, 30	Orlah of the lips — Moshe's speech impediment; establishes the metaphorical use of orlah.	Section II
<b>Shemot (Exodus)</b> 12:43-49	Passover exclusion of the uncircumcised; sojourner must circumcise to participate.	Sections II, IV

<b>Vayikra (Leviticus) 12:3</b>	Eighth day circumcision command — independent second witness corroborating Bereishit 17:12.	Sections I, II, IV
<b>Vayikra (Leviticus) 26:41-42</b>	Uncircumcised hearts — Yahweh will remember His covenant when Israel's heart is humbled.	Section V
<b>Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:2</b>	You shall not add to or subtract from the word Yahweh commanded — covenant authority standard.	Section V
<b>Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:16</b>	Circumcise the foreskin of your heart — u-maltem et orlat levav'chem — human command.	Sections II, V
<b>Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15</b>	Two or three witnesses standard — the evidentiary standard applied throughout this lesson.	Throughout
<b>Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:6</b>	Yahweh your Elohim will circumcise your heart — the divine promise of inner transformation.	Sections II, V
<b>Yehoshua (Joshua) 5:2-9</b>	Mass circumcision at Gilgal before covenant land entry; rolling away the reproach of Egypt.	Section III
<b>Tehillim (Psalms) 24:1</b>	The earth and all it contains belongs to Yahweh — authority over the body.	Section VI
<b>Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 4:4</b>	Circumcise yourselves to Yahweh — both inner and outer act demanded simultaneously.	Sections II, V
<b>Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 6:10</b>	Orlah of the ear — they cannot hear the prophetic word; establishes the metaphorical use.	Section II
<b>Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 9:25-26</b>	All nations — including Israel — uncircumcised of heart. The prophetic plumb line.	Sections II, V, VI
<b>Shmuel Bet (2 Samuel) 23:5</b>	Brit olam — Davidic covenant uses same term as the circumcision covenant.	Section I

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## COVENANT CLOSING CITATIONS

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**Bereishit (Genesis) 17:10–11**

זאת בריתי אשר תשמרו — המול לכם כל-זכר — ונמלתם את בשר ערלתכם — והיה לאות  
ברית ביני וביניכם

*Zot briti asher tishm'ru — himol lachem kol-zachar — u'nemaltem et b'sar arlat'chem — v'hayah  
l'ot brit beini u'veineichem*

***"This is My covenant which you shall keep: every male among you shall be circumcised.  
You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the sign of the covenant  
between Me and you."***

The foundational covenant command — the sign in the flesh is the covenant in the flesh.

### Bereishit (Genesis) 17:13

והיתה בריתי בבשרכם לברית עולם

*V'hayetah v'rity biv'sar'chem li'vrit olam*

***"Thus shall My covenant be marked in your flesh as an everlasting pact."***

Brit olam — everlasting covenant. No tradition holds authority to terminate what Yahweh declared permanent.

### Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:6

ומל יהוה אלהיך את-לבבך ואת-לבב זרעך

*U'mal Yahweh Elohecha et l'vav'cha v'et l'vav zar'echa*

***"Then Yahweh your Elohim will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring."***

The divine promise: what human effort begins, Yahweh completes. The physical and inner dimensions are both His.

### Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 9:25-26

כל-בית ישראל ערלי-לב

*Kol-beit Yisra'el ar'lei-lev*

***"All the house of Israel are uncircumcised of heart."***

The prophetic plumb line: the physical sign without the circumcised heart is Yahweh's own definition of covenant failure — for Israel and every nation that bears the name of Avraham.

*miqdashbethel.org | Authority: The Tanakh — The Word of Yahweh Alone | Devarim 19:15 — Two or  
Three Witnesses*

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