

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT ASSEMBLY

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

A COVENANT WITNESS AGAINST THE INVOCATION OF PROPHETIC WAR THEOLOGY TO JUSTIFY THE BOMBING OF IRAN

*An Open Letter to Pastor Mark Burns, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth,
and All Who Invoke the Name of Yahweh to Justify This War
— Addressed Also to Tucker Carlson and the Three-Tradition Audience of
Judaism, Christianity, and Islam —*

Issued by Elder Kepha Arcemont, Founder

Miqdash Bethel Covenant Assembly | Pearl River, Louisiana

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I. THE OCCASION OF THIS WITNESS

On March 26, 2026, Pastor Mark Burns — self-described spiritual advisor to President Donald Trump — stood before the Conservative Political Action Conference in Grapevine, Texas, and declared that the bombing of Iran is a "**spiritual obligation.**" His statement, widely reported by The Telegraph and syndicated through Yahoo News, compares American military strikes on Iran to the moral duty of a bystander to stop a violent crime. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth has also publicly invoked Scripture, prayer, and the name of Jesus Christ to frame the Iran war in religious terms, and military watchdog organizations have received more than 200 complaints from

active-duty service members reporting that their commanding officers told them President Trump was

"anointed by Jesus to light the signal fire in Iran to cause Armageddon and mark his return to Earth."

This covenant assembly cannot be silent. A formal witness must stand on the record.

What is being done in the name of God, in the name of Scripture, and in the name of prophetic fulfillment is not authorized by the Torah of Yahweh (יהוה). It is not authorized by covenant law. It is not authorized by any standard of evidentiary witness that the covenant community has ever recognized. This letter addresses the specific claims being made, tests them against the only standard this assembly recognizes — the Tanakh — and issues a formal covenant warning to all who are invoking sacred language to justify an act of war against a nation of millions of human beings.

II. THE STANDARD OF WITNESS: DEVARIM 19:15

Before any evidence can be weighed, the covenant standard of witness must be established. The Torah of Yahweh does not allow a single voice to determine the guilt of a nation or the justification for an act of war. **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15** establishes the irreducible minimum:

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15 — One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.

This standard — two or three witnesses, convergent and independent — is not optional and it is not suspended in wartime. The same Torah that governs personal judgment governs national judgment. A single pastor declaring a "spiritual obligation" does not meet the threshold. A defense secretary reciting a psalm does not meet the threshold. Anonymous military chaplains invoking the Book of Revelation does not meet the threshold. The threshold requires independent, convergent, covenant-grounded witnesses — and the evidence must be weighed against the full counsel of Torah, not

selected proof-texts from a Greek apocalyptic text written under Roman imperial conditions.

III. WHAT PASTOR BURNS ACTUALLY SAID — AND WHY IT FAILS TORAH SCRUTINY

A. The Rape Analogy

Pastor Burns compared the bombing of Iran to a bystander's obligation to stop a rape. This analogy deserves direct scrutiny, not deference.

The analogy assumes three things: (1) that Iran is the aggressor-criminal, (2) that the Iranian people are the innocent victim, and (3) that the United States is the righteous bystander with the power and authority to intervene. Let each assumption be examined against Torah evidentiary standards.

Assumption One: Iran as the aggressor-criminal. This is a political determination, not a covenant determination. The Torah requires a full evidentiary hearing before any party is declared guilty. **Shemot (Exodus) 23:1** commands: ***"Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness."*** Declaring Iran guilty of a crime that justifies bombardment — without a proper hearing, without neutral arbitration, without covenant process — violates the foundational witness standard of Torah.

Assumption Two: The Iranian people as innocent victim. Pastor Burns himself stated that there are "millions of innocent Iranians" — and in making this concession, he has already established that the people of Iran are not the enemy. Yet the military campaign kills Iranians. The people Burns calls innocent are being killed by the war he is calling a spiritual obligation. This internal contradiction destroys the analogy before it can stand.

Assumption Three: America as the righteous bystander. The Torah knows no nation that is automatically granted the covenant standing of righteous arbiter. The covenant standard is this: **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 17:6** — judgment requires proper witness and proper process. No nation, not even ancient Israel, was permitted to execute judgment outside covenant process. The history of American foreign policy — including its documented role in the 1953 CIA-orchestrated coup that overthrew Iran's elected government and installed the Shah — disqualifies the United States from the posture of innocent bystander by any honest evidentiary standard.

B. The Claim of "Spiritual Obligation"

The phrase "spiritual obligation" is a claim that Yahweh has authorized this war. That is a prophetic claim. The Torah governs how prophetic claims are tested.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 18:20–22 — But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which Yahweh hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of Yahweh, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Yahweh hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

This is the Torah test for any claim of "spiritual obligation" to wage war: the outcome must confirm the prophetic word. As of the date of this letter, 13 American service members have already been killed in this operation. The war is ongoing with no declared end state. The families of those 13 killed have paid the price for a "spiritual obligation" that no covenant assembly this writer recognizes has formally established according to Torah standard. Before another life is lost on the basis of pastoral declarations, the prophetic claim must be tested — not applauded.

IV. HEGSETH'S CRUSADER THEOLOGY — A COVENANT ASSESSMENT

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth has brought into the Pentagon a theological framework rooted not in Torah but in medieval Christian Crusader ideology. He bears tattoos of the Jerusalem Cross and the Latin phrase *Deus Vult* — "God wills it" — the documented war cry of the First Crusade, which launched in 1095 and resulted in the massacre of both Muslim and Jewish populations across the Levant. He has publicly defended the Crusades as a positive legacy of Western civilization. He has hosted exclusively Christian worship services at the Pentagon, displayed Bible verses in military promotional content, and overseen the firing of chaplains who served service members of all faiths and no faith.

This assembly issues a formal covenant warning: the Crusader tradition is not Torah. It is not covenant. It is not authorized by Yahweh. The Crusades were launched under papal authority — the authority of Rome, a political entity that this assembly does not recognize as having any covenant standing under the Torah of **Yahweh**. The Crusades resulted in the slaughter of Jewish communities in the Rhineland before the armies ever reached Jerusalem. The elevation of Crusader theology to the level of military doctrine in a nation armed with nuclear weapons is not a matter of denominational preference. It is a covenant emergency.

The Torah of **Yahweh** does not authorize any war in the name of reclaiming land by force without covenant process.

Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 22:3 states: "Thus saith Yahweh; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place."

This is the standard. Not *Deus Vult*. Not the Jerusalem Cross worn by a man who controls the largest military force in human history.

V. THE BOOK OF REVELATION IS NOT A TORAH SOURCE

The reports emerging from military installations — that commanders are citing the Book of Revelation to tell troops this war is the fulfillment of Armageddon prophecy — demand a direct response on the question of authority.

The Book of Revelation is a first-century Greek text, written in the context of Roman imperial persecution of the early Christian community. It is an apocalyptic literary genre rooted in the symbolic tradition of Yechezkel (Ezekiel) and Daniel — but it is not those books. It was written in Koine Greek. It carries the ideological overlay of Hellenistic apocalypticism. It was debated for centuries before being included in the Christian canon, and it was explicitly rejected by major segments of the early church. It is not part of the Tanakh. It is not part of the Torah. It carries no covenant authority recognized by this assembly.

To tell a soldier — who may be Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, secular, or Christian — that he is going to his potential death to fulfill a Greek apocalyptic text's vision of Armageddon is a violation of that soldier's covenant right to honest witness. It is also a violation of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, as more than 30 members of Congress have now formally alleged in their letter to the DOD Inspector General.

The Torah texts that are being selectively invoked — including **Tehillim (Psalm) 144**, which Secretary Hegseth recited at a Pentagon press briefing — deserve to be read in full covenant context. **Tehillim 144** is a Davidic psalm that speaks of **Yahweh** training hands for war — but it also speaks of the desire for peace, the longing for sons who grow tall, daughters as cornerstones, full storehouses, and happy people. The psalm ends with: **"Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose Elohim is Yahweh."** It is a psalm of covenant wholeness. It is not a blank check for a Secretary of Defense to bomb a nation of 90 million people.

VI. TO THE IRANIAN PEOPLE — A COVENANT WORD

This letter is addressed not only to American political and religious leaders, but to the people of Iran.

The Torah of **Yahweh** does not authorize the conflation of a government with its people. The covenant standard throughout the Tanakh consistently distinguishes between the ruling powers — kings, priests, officials — and the population they govern. When **Yahweh** speaks through **Yonah (Jonah)** to the city of Nineveh — the capital of Assyria, the most feared empire of its time, the nation that had devastated the northern kingdom of Israel — He does not call for its destruction. He calls for its repentance. And when Nineveh repents, **Yahweh** relents. The 120,000 people of Nineveh who, in the words of the text, **"cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand"** — those are the ones **Yahweh** names as the reason for covenant compassion.

The people of Iran are the Nineveh of this moment. Whatever the covenant failures of the ruling powers in Tehran may be, the population of 90 million human beings — many of them young, many of them already living under profound economic suffering because of sanctions, many of them longing for a different future — cannot be handed

over to a doctrine of Armageddon by American Christian nationalists invoking a Greek text from the first century.

VII. DIRECT ADDRESS TO PASTOR MARK BURNS

Pastor Burns, this letter comes to you in covenant seriousness, not political hostility.

You have called yourself a "Spiritual Diplomat." In January 2026, you organized an International Interfaith Conference at the United States Capitol titled *"United in Liberty: The Rise of Spiritual Diplomats,"* where you stated: ***"In a world often defined by division, we gather with the understanding that the most important stance is not left or right, but standing for human rights."*** This assembly received that statement as a covenant aspiration worthy of respect.

We hold you to it.

Standing for human rights is not compatible with declaring a "spiritual obligation" to bomb a nation. Spiritual diplomacy is not compatible with Crusader theology. The Jesus you claim to represent — tested against His own documented words in the Hebrew-thought context of first-century Judea — consistently elevated covenant mercy over covenant judgment when the choice was his to make. The Tanakh that undergirds all three Abrahamic traditions consistently calls its leaders to seek peace before war, to exhaust all covenant process before the sword, and to protect the stranger, the widow, and the vulnerable.

You told The Telegraph that millions of Iranians are shouting thankfulness to Netanyahu and Trump. We ask in all seriousness: on what evidentiary basis do you make that claim? Have you been to Iran? Have you spoken to Iranians in their own language, in their own context, free from surveillance and fear of the regime you describe? The Torah standard of witness — **Devarim 19:15** — requires more than a political assumption. The souls of millions of people hang on the accuracy of your witness.

This assembly calls on Pastor Mark Burns to publicly reconsider the "spiritual obligation" language, to withdraw the Crusader framing, and to redirect his substantial platform

toward the covenant peace process that his own stated identity as a Spiritual Diplomat demands.

VIII. DIRECT ADDRESS TO TUCKER CARLSON

This letter continues a series of formal correspondence this assembly has addressed to Tucker Carlson, beginning March 10, 2026.

Mr. Carlson, you have questioned this war. You have raised concerns that others in your media ecosystem have been unwilling to raise. You recently released *The Bibi Files* — a documentary film raising serious questions about Prime Minister Netanyahu's conduct and motivations. Your willingness to ask those questions in a political environment that treats any scrutiny of Israeli government policy as antisemitism has cost you politically, and this assembly acknowledges that courage.

Now the question before you is this: will you apply the same evidentiary standard to the "spiritual obligation" language being used to justify this war?

The same standard you applied to the Bibi files — evidence, documentation, independent witnesses, accountability — must now be applied to the theological claims being made by Pastor Burns, Secretary Hegseth, and the commanders reportedly invoking Armageddon prophecy in military briefings. If those claims are false, they are not merely politically wrong. They are covenant fraud. They are the invocation of the Name of Yahweh to justify an act of war — and the Torah of Yahweh calls that presumptuous prophecy, subject to the most serious covenant accountability.

The peace framework this assembly has been developing — grounded in Torah, addressed to all three Abrahamic traditions, and capable of engaging both Israeli and Iranian covenant claims simultaneously — remains available for your review and platform. The covenant is not a weapon. It is the only genuine basis for lasting peace between these nations and peoples.

IX. THE TORAH STANDARD FOR AUTHORIZED WAR — AND WHY THIS WAR DOES NOT MEET IT

For the three-tradition audience: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam each carry inherited frameworks for evaluating when war is justified. All three, at their foundation, trace back to the Torah of Yahweh. Let each be briefly examined.

A. The Torah of Israel

The Torah authorizes war in extremely narrow contexts: defensive response to direct attack, covenant-commanded actions in specific historical moments tied to the covenant people's entry into the land, and the execution of justice after full evidentiary process. None of these categories applies to the current bombing of Iran by the United States. The United States is not the covenant nation of Israel. The bombing of Iran is not a defensive response to a direct attack on American soil. No Torah-authorized court has convened, weighed evidence, and issued judgment.

B. The Christian Tradition

The Christian tradition developed the doctrine of "just war" — drawn in part from Augustine and later Aquinas — which requires that war be declared by proper authority, that it be a last resort, that it be proportional, and that civilians be protected. By the standards of just war theology itself — the internal Christian standard — the invocation of Armageddon prophecy to justify military strikes fails on every criterion. War motivated by eschatological fulfillment rather than political necessity is not just war. It is holy war. And the Christian tradition, at its most careful, has always distinguished between the two.

C. The Islamic Tradition

The Islamic tradition, grounded in the Quran and the covenant framework inherited through Ibrahim (Abraham), recognizes *jihad* in its fullest meaning as an internal struggle as well as external defense. Islamic law — like Torah law — requires that war be defensive, proportional, and never targeted at civilian populations. The massacre of civilians is explicitly forbidden. The framing of American military strikes as a righteous crusade by Christian nationalists is precisely the kind of civilizational-clash narrative that Islamic scholars and peacemakers have been warning against for decades, because it forecloses the possibility of covenant dialogue and hardens the ideological framework on both sides.

All three traditions, tested against their own foundational texts, arrive at the same conclusion: this war, framed as a spiritual obligation to fulfill Christian apocalyptic prophecy, is not authorized by the covenant.

X. THE COVENANT PEACE ALTERNATIVE

This assembly does not issue this witness only to condemn. A covenant witness that only names the wound without pointing toward the healing is incomplete.

The Counsel of Peace — a covenant-based governance organization with which this assembly is affiliated — has been developing a framework for genuine, Torah-grounded peace engagement between the parties to this conflict. That framework does not begin with political negotiation. It begins with covenant acknowledgment: the recognition that all parties to this conflict — Israeli, Iranian, American, and the peoples of the broader region — are human beings created in the image of **Elohim (אֱלֹהִים)**, bearers of covenant dignity, subject to the same standard of just treatment under the Torah of **Yahweh**.

The prophet **Yeshayahu (Isaiah)** envisions a day when the nations — not just Israel, but Egypt and Assyria alongside Israel — are bound together in covenant peace:

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 19:24–25 — In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom Yahweh of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

Egypt and Assyria — the two great historic enemies of Israel — are called "my people" and "the work of my hands" by Yahweh Himself. If Egypt and Assyria can be brought into covenant blessing, so can Iran. The covenant was never the exclusive property of any one nation. It was always an invitation extended to all humanity.

This is the covenant peace alternative to Armageddon theology. Not naive. Not politically passive. But grounded in the actual word of **Yahweh** rather than in the eschatological fantasies of those who have confused their political preferences with prophetic mandate.

XI. FORMAL COVENANT WITNESS — STATEMENT OF RECORD

Let this letter stand as a formal covenant witness on the public record:

- 1. The claim that there exists a "spiritual obligation" to bomb Iran has not been established by any Torah-compliant evidentiary process and is hereby formally contested.**
- 2. The invocation of the Book of Revelation and Armageddon prophecy to justify military strikes against a sovereign nation does not meet the covenant standard of authorized prophetic witness under Devarim 18:20–22, and carries the full weight of that Torah warning.**
- 3. The Crusader theological framework being advanced by Secretary Hegseth is not Torah, is not covenant, and is hereby formally rebuked as a dangerous and historically documented source of mass violence against Jewish, Muslim, and Christian populations alike.**
- 4. The people of Iran — those 90 million human beings whom Pastor Burns himself describes as innocent — are entitled to the same covenant dignity and protection as any other human population, and the covenant standard of Yahweh does not authorize their subjection to a war justified by apocalyptic prophecy from a non-Torah source.**
- 5. A covenant peace process — grounded in Torah, respectful of all three Abrahamic traditions, and capable of addressing the legitimate security concerns of all parties — remains available and remains the only durable alternative to a war that is being called eternal before it has even found its end.**

Issued in covenant faithfulness, under the authority of the Torah of **Yahweh**, and in the witness of **Yeshayahu 19** — that all peoples may yet be called blessed.

Elder Kepha Arcemont, Founder

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*This letter may be reproduced and distributed freely for covenant witness purposes.
It is addressed to the public record, to Pastor Mark Burns, to Secretary of Defense Pete
Hegseth,
to Tucker Carlson, and to the three-tradition audience of Judaism, Christianity, and
Islam.*