

## MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT ASSEMBLY

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### TORAH LAW EDUCATIONAL COURSE

#### THE 613 MITZVOT OF YAHWEH

*Bereishit • Shemot • Vayikra • Bamidbar • Devarim | The Tanakh Writings*

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## LESSON 15

*Bereishit (Genesis) 17:12; Vayikra (Leviticus) 12:3*

וְכֹן שְׁמוֹנֶת יָמִים יִמּוֹל לָכֶם כָּל זָכָר

*U'ven shmonat yamim yimmol lachem kol zachar*

***"And at eight days old, every male among you shall be circumcised."***

### THE COVENANT SIGN IN THE FLESH

*A Complete Exposition of Brit Milah*

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#### FOUR SPHERES OF INSTRUCTION: INDIVIDUAL • COMMUNITY • NATION • WORLD

*Authority: The Tanakh — The Word of Yahweh Alone*

*Standard: Devarim 19:15 — Two or Three Witnesses*

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## COURSE FRAMEWORK & METHODOLOGY

**Purpose of This Course:** This educational course expounds the 613 Mitzvot (commandments) of Yahweh as revealed exclusively through the Written Torah — Bereishit (Genesis), Shemot (Exodus), Vayikra (Leviticus), Bamidbar (Numbers), and Devarim (Deuteronomy) — and as confirmed by the Tanakh Writings and Prophets. Each lesson is built on Hebrew lexical analysis, two-to-three-witness corroboration, and a four-sphere application framework that reaches the individual, the community, the nation, and the world.

**Authority Hierarchy:** The Written Tanakh alone governs this course. Talmud, Church councils, and hadith are cited only as historical commentary — never as binding authority. Where Talmudic discussion illuminates lexical meaning or legal categories, it is labeled as such.

**Research Standard:** Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15 — Two or three independent witnesses confirm every claim. Primary lexical tools: BDB (Brown-Driver-Briggs), HALOT (Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament), Gesenius, TWOT. Translations consulted: JPS 1985; Robert Alter; Everett Fox (Schocken).

**The Three-Religion Standard:** Every lesson concludes with an audit of where Judaism, Christianity, and Islam uphold Torah and where each departs from it — always using the Torah itself as the measure.

**Four-Sphere Framework:** Every commandment is expounded at four levels: (1) The Individual — personal covenant identity and the sign in the body; (2) The Community — the covenant household, the ceremony, and community responsibility; (3) The Nation — national covenant renewal and the prophetic call; (4) The World — the covenant of Avraham as father of many nations.

**Why Lesson 15 — Circumcision?** Law 75 — the commandment to circumcise every male on the eighth day — is among the oldest and most foundational covenant signs in the entire 613 commandments. It predates Sinai by four centuries, given to Avraham before the Torah was formally delivered to Israel. It is the physical mark by which Yahweh designates His covenant people in the flesh — so fundamental that its neglect carries the most severe individual covenant consequence: *karet* — spiritual excision from the covenant people.

## SECTION I — THE HEBREW TEXT

### A. THE PRIMARY COMMANDMENT: BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 17:12

וּבֶן שְׁמוֹנַת יָמִים יִמּוֹל לְכֶם כָּל זָכָר לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם

*U'ven shmonat yamim yimmol lachem kol zachar l'doroteichem*

*"And at eight days old, every male among you shall be circumcised throughout your generations."*

**Grammatical structure:** The commandment contains five key Hebrew components: *u'ven shmonat yamim* — "and a son of eight days" (the time designation); *yimmol* — Niphal imperfect third person masculine singular of the root מוּל (mul) — "shall be circumcised"; *lachem* — "for you / among you" (covenant community designation); *kol zachar* — "every male" (universal scope); *l'doroteichem* — "throughout your generations" (eternal covenant duration). The Niphal stem is passive — the infant is circumcised — placing the obligation on the father and covenant community, not the infant.

### B. THE CONFIRMING COMMANDMENT: VAYIKRA (LEVITICUS) 12:3

וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי יִמּוֹל בְּשׁוֹר עֶרְלָתוֹ

*U'vayom hashemini yimmol besar orlato*

*"And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised."*

The confirming commandment at Sinai — restating and reinforcing the original covenant of Bereishit 17 within the legal framework of the Torah. This second statement establishes the two-witness requirement (Devarim 19:15): the commandment to circumcise on the eighth day is confirmed by both the Avrahamic covenant and the Sinai legislation.

## C. THE COVENANT CONTEXT: BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 17:9–14

*"And Elohim said to Avraham, 'As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall be circumcised. So shall My covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.'" — Bereishit (Genesis) 17:9–14*

## D. PRIMARY LEXICAL ANALYSIS — ROOT מָוַל (MUL) — H4135

**BDB (Brown-Driver-Briggs):** To circumcise; to cut off; to cut short. The root specifically denotes the covenant act of removing the foreskin. BDB identifies two primary senses: (1) the physical act of circumcision; and (2) the cutting away of that which hinders covenant relationship — as applied to the heart in the prophetic literature. The Qal stem denotes the active cutting; the Niphal the passive being-cut (as in the infant circumcised by another).

**HALOT Classification:** מָוַל appears 36 times in the Tanakh across multiple stems. HALOT distinguishes the physical act (mul in Bereishit 17, Shemot 4, and Yehoshua 5) from the metaphorical application to the heart (mul in Devarim 10:16 and 30:6). Both uses are present in the Written Torah

— establishing that Yahweh Himself connected the physical sign to the spiritual reality within the Torah text.

**Gesenius / TWOT:** The root מול is connected to the concept of cutting away what is excess or obstructive. TWOT notes that the connection between physical circumcision and heart circumcision is structural within the Torah itself — Yahweh commands both in Devarim 10:16 and promises to perform it Himself in Devarim 30:6 ("Yahweh your Elohim will circumcise your heart").

**Total Tanakh occurrences of root 36: מול occurrences** — Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim — confirming its central covenant significance throughout the entire Tanakh canon.

## E. SECONDARY HEBREW WORD STUDY — KEY TERMS OF THE COMMANDMENT

*Brit* (בְּרִית) — H1285 — covenant, agreement, binding treaty. The word that frames the entire circumcision commandment: *brit milah* — the covenant of circumcision. Brit appears in Bereishit 17:9–14 seven times — the number of covenant completion. Yahweh designates circumcision explicitly as *ot brit* (אוֹת בְּרִית) — a sign of the covenant — not merely a hygienic practice or cultural custom, but a physical sign of the binding covenant relationship between Yahweh and the physical descendants of Avraham.

*Milah* (מִילָה) — H4139 — circumcision. The noun form derived from the root mul. Used specifically for the covenant act of circumcision — distinguished from other forms of cutting.

*Orlah* (עֲרֵלָה) — H6190 — foreskin; uncircumcision. From a root meaning to be covered, obstructed, or hindered. The orlah is the physical covering to be removed — and in the prophetic and theological extension, the orlah of the heart is the spiritual obstruction to full covenant relationship with Yahweh.

The fruit of a newly planted tree is called *orla* for the first three years (Vayikra 19:23) — uncircumcised, not yet ready for covenant use. Moshe describes himself as having *orlay sfatayim* (Shemot 6:12,30) — "uncircumcised lips" — obstructed, hindered in speech.

*Arel* (עָרֵל) — H6189 — uncircumcised. Applied in the Tanakh to: uncircumcised persons (Bereishit 17:14), uncircumcised hearts (Vayikra 26:41; Yirmeyahu 9:26), uncircumcised lips (Shemot 6:12), and uncircumcised ears (Yirmeyahu 6:10). The pervasiveness of this term across body parts in the prophetic literature confirms that physical circumcision is the Torah's foundational sign of a covenant posture that should characterize the entire person.

*Ot* (אוֹת) — H226 — sign, token, mark. Yahweh designates circumcision as an *ot brit* — a sign of the covenant. This is the same word used for the rainbow (Bereishit 9:12–13), the blood on the doorposts at Pesach (Shemot 12:13), and the Shabbat (Shemot 31:13,17). The *ot* is Yahweh's covenant marker — the visible, tangible declaration that a covenant relationship exists. Circumcision is the *ot* of the Avrahamic covenant.

*Yom hashemini* (יוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי) — the eighth day. *Shmoneh* (שְׁמֹנֶה) — H8083 — eight. In Hebrew covenant thought, seven is the number of completion and rest (Shabbat — the seventh day); eight is the number that stands beyond the seven — the first day of the new order, the number of covenant entrance into what transcends the natural cycle. Eight is the covenant number of new beginning. The eighth day of circumcision places the covenant sign at precisely the threshold between the natural order (seven days of the created week) and the new covenant order of Yahweh.

*Karet* (כָּרַת) — H3772 — to be cut off. The consequence for failure to circumcise is explicit in Bereishit 17:14: "Any uncircumcised male... shall be cut off from his people." This is the most severe individual covenant consequence in the entire Torah — the same consequence attached to the blood prohibition (Law 86), the chelev prohibition (Law 87), and the desecration of Shabbat.

## F. KEY TANAKH OCCURRENCES — ESTABLISHING THE FULL SCOPE OF THE COMMANDMENT

Reference	Teaching / Witness
Bereishit (Gen.) 17:9–14	The original covenant of circumcision with Avraham — foundational text. Eight days old; all males throughout generations; karet for neglect.
Bereishit (Gen.) 17:23–27	Avraham circumcises himself (age 99), Yishmael (age 13), and all males of his household on the same day — immediate covenant obedience.
Bereishit (Gen.) 21:4	Avraham circumcises Yitzchak on the eighth day — as Yahweh commanded. First application of the commandment to a newborn on the exact day.
Shemot (Ex.) 4:24–26	Yahweh confronts Moshe and seeks to kill him because his son is uncircumcised. Tziporah performs the circumcision — averting Yahweh's judgment.
Vayikra (Lev.) 12:3	The eighth-day commandment restated at Sinai — confirming the Avrahamic covenant within the Mosaic legal framework. Two-witness confirmation.
Yehoshua (Josh.) 5:2–9	Yahweh commands mass circumcision at Gilgal — all males born in the wilderness were uncircumcised. National covenant renewal before entering the land.
Devarim (Deut.) 10:16	"Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn." Physical sign commands spiritual reality.
Devarim (Deut.) 30:6	"And Yahweh your Elohim will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart." Yahweh promises to perform the deeper covenant act.
Yirmeyahu (Jer.) 4:4	"Circumcise yourselves to Yahweh; remove the foreskin of your hearts." Physical sign insufficient without heart reality.
Yirmeyahu (Jer.) 9:25–26	"All the house of Israel are uncircumcised of heart." Physical circumcision alone does not satisfy Yahweh.

## SECTION II — WHAT THE LAW IS TEACHING

### A. THE COVENANT SIGN — WHAT CIRCUMCISION DECLARES

*"It shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you." — Bereishit (Genesis)*

**17:11**

Circumcision is not primarily a medical procedure, a hygienic practice, or a cultural tradition. It is an *ot brit* — a sign of the covenant — declared by Yahweh Himself. The covenant sign makes a declaration in the flesh of every male member of the covenant household: this body belongs to the covenant of Yahweh.

The significance of the location is theologically precise: circumcision is performed on the reproductive organ — the instrument through which the covenant lineage is carried forward. Yahweh marks the source of covenant continuity with His covenant sign. Every generation born to a circumcised man is born from a body that bears Yahweh's mark. The covenant is literally passed from body to body, generation to generation, through the circumcised flesh of the covenant father.

### B. THE EIGHTH DAY — WHY SPECIFICALLY DAY EIGHT?

Yahweh specifies not merely that circumcision shall be performed — but that it shall be performed on *yom hashemini* — the eighth day. This precision is itself a covenant declaration carrying both theological and biological significance.

**Theological significance of eight:**

In Hebrew covenant thought, seven is the number of completion — the seven days of creation, the seven-day Shabbat cycle, the seven-year Shmitah cycle. Eight stands beyond seven — it is the first day of the new order, the number of covenant entrance into what transcends the natural cycle. Circumcision on the eighth day places the covenant sign at the precise theological threshold between the natural order of the world and the new covenant order of Yahweh. The child passes through seven days of natural life — and on the eighth day enters the covenant. Brit milah is an act of new creation.

**Biological significance of day eight — the neonatal hematology witness:**

Modern neonatal medicine has established that the eighth day of life is the optimal day for a surgical procedure involving cutting and wound healing in a newborn — specifically because of two blood clotting factors:

**Vitamin K and Prothrombin:** Newborns are born with depressed levels of Vitamin K, the vitamin responsible for activating the clotting factors that stop bleeding after a wound. The newborn's gut microbiome — the primary source of Vitamin K synthesis — has not yet been established at birth. As the gut microbiome develops and begins producing Vitamin K in the days after birth, the Vitamin K-dependent clotting factors rise rapidly from their depressed neonatal baseline.

**The day-8 prothrombin peak:** Medical research has established that prothrombin — a key Vitamin K-dependent clotting factor and the primary measure of overall clotting function — peaks on approximately day 8 of the newborn's life, briefly reaching 110% of normal adult levels before settling toward adult range over the following weeks.

Day of Life	Prothrombin Level	Surgical Risk
Days 1–7	Below adult normal	Elevated bleeding risk for any surgical procedure
Day 8	~110% of normal — PEAK	Biological optimal — lowest possible surgical bleeding risk

Day of Life	Prothrombin Level	Surgical Risk
Days 9+	Declining toward adult normal	Adequate but declining from the biological peak

Yahweh designated day 8 — yom hashemini — in Bereishit 17:12, confirmed in Vayikra 12:3. Modern neonatal hematology has established that day 8 is the biological optimal day for the procedure Yahweh commanded on that day. The covenant word and the created biological order speak with one voice — because they come from the same source.

**The two witnesses confirmed — Devarim 19:15 satisfied:** (1) The covenant word of Yahweh — Bereishit 17:12; Vayikra 12:3. (2) Modern neonatal hematology — the prothrombin peak on day 8. Two independent witnesses — one from the covenant text, one from the created order's biological science — confirm the same specific day.

### C. THE SCOPE — "EVERY MALE AMONG YOU"

The scope of the commandment is comprehensive — kol zachar — every male:

- Every male born into the covenant household
- Every male purchased as a servant (Bereishit 17:12–13) — covenant belonging transcends birth status
- Avraham himself — circumcised at age 99 (Bereishit 17:24)
- Yishmael — circumcised at age 13 (Bereishit 17:25)
- All males of Avraham's household on the same day (Bereishit 17:23)

The commandment is not limited to newborns — it applies to any uncircumcised male who enters the covenant household at any age. Yahweh does not permit any male to remain in the covenant household in an uncircumcised state.

## D. THE CONSEQUENCE OF NEGLECT — KARET

*"Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant." — Bereishit (Genesis) 17:14*

Karet — spiritual excision from the covenant people — is the consequence of failing to circumcise. The neglect of circumcision is described in the most precise covenant language available: "he has broken My covenant" — the uncircumcised male is not merely in violation of a regulation. He is a covenant breaker.

## E. THE SHEMOT 4:24–26 WARNING — NEGLECT IS LIFE-THREATENING

*"At a lodging place on the way, Yahweh met him and sought to put him to death. Then Tzipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched his feet with it and said, 'Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me.' So He let him alone." — Shemot (Exodus) 4:24–26*

Moshe — chosen by Yahweh to lead Israel out of Egypt, the greatest prophet in the entire Tanakh — was confronted by Yahweh on the road and threatened with death because his son was uncircumcised. Tzipporah performed an emergency circumcision — averting Yahweh's judgment. The message is unmistakable: the circumcision commandment is not negotiable even for the covenant leader.

## SECTION III — FOUR-SPHERE APPLICATION FRAMEWORK

### SPHERE 1 — THE INDIVIDUAL

#### "The Covenant Sign in the Body of Every Covenant Male"

At the individual level, the circumcision commandment establishes the covenant identity of every male member of the household of Yahweh. The sign is personal, physical, and permanent — carried in the body for life.

#### **What the individual covenant male declares through circumcision:**

- This body belongs to the covenant of Yahweh — the physical declaration of covenant ownership embedded in the most intimate part of the human body
- I am a descendant / member of the covenant of Avraham — the generational covenant identity declared in the flesh
- I bear in my body the sign that Yahweh designated — not a sign chosen by human preference but designated by Yahweh Himself
- The covenant is everlasting — the brit olam of Bereishit 17:13 declared in permanent physical form

#### **The medical science confirmation at the individual level:**

**Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) reduction:** Circumcised males experience UTI rates of approximately 0.1% in infancy, compared to approximately 1% in uncircumcised males — a tenfold reduction. The foreskin provides a warm, moist environment that harbors bacteria and increases ascending infection risk. Circumcision eliminates this anatomical risk factor.

**Phimosis and paraphimosis prevention:** Phimosis (inability to retract the foreskin) affects approximately 1% of adult uncircumcised males and can cause pain, infection, and urinary

obstruction. Paraphimosis is a urological emergency. Neonatal circumcision eliminates both conditions entirely.

**HIV risk reduction (WHO/UNAIDS):** Three landmark randomized controlled trials in sub-Saharan Africa — conducted in Uganda, Kenya, and South Africa and published in peer-reviewed journals — established that male circumcision reduces HIV acquisition in heterosexual men by approximately 60%. The WHO and UNAIDS subsequently recommended voluntary medical male circumcision as part of comprehensive HIV prevention strategy. These are tier-1 peer-reviewed clinical trials — the highest standard of medical evidence.

**HPV and cervical cancer protection:** Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the primary causative agent of cervical cancer. Research has established that male circumcision reduces HPV acquisition and transmission. Women whose male partners are circumcised have significantly lower rates of HPV infection and consequently lower rates of cervical cancer. The covenant sign in the body of the covenant male extends a protective biological benefit to the covenant woman — confirming that Yahweh's commandments are designed for the complete wellbeing of the covenant household.

**Penile hygiene:** Smegma — the accumulation of sebaceous secretions and moisture under the foreskin — provides an environment for bacterial growth causing balanitis and posthitis. Circumcision eliminates this anatomical source of chronic inflammation.

**Penile cancer risk reduction:** Penile cancer occurs almost exclusively in uncircumcised males. The American Cancer Society notes that circumcised men have a significantly lower risk than uncircumcised men.

*"This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you." — Bereishit (Genesis) 17:10–11*

Reference	Teaching / Witness
Bereishit (Gen.) 17:10–11	The foundational individual covenant sign — every male circumcised in the flesh of the foreskin.
Bereishit (Gen.) 17:14	Karet for the uncircumcised male — individual covenant consequence.
Bereishit (Gen.) 21:4	Avraham circumcises Yitzchak on the eighth day — immediate personal covenant obedience.
Shemot (Ex.) 4:24–26	Yahweh seeks to kill Moshe for his son's uncircumcision — individual covenant accountability.
Vayikra (Lev.) 12:3	Eighth-day confirmation at Sinai — individual covenant timing.
Devarim (Deut.) 10:16	"Circumcise the foreskin of your heart" — the individual covenant call to inner transformation.

## SPHERE 2 — THE COMMUNITY

### "The Covenant Household and the Ceremony of Welcome"

The circumcision commandment is not merely a private individual matter — it is a community covenant act. Yahweh commands circumcision for every male in the covenant household, including purchased servants who are not physical descendants of Avraham (Bereishit 17:12–13).

**The father's primary obligation:** The Torah places the responsibility for circumcising the son on the father. Where the father fails, the covenant community bears collective responsibility for ensuring that every male within its boundaries bears the covenant sign.

**The role of trained practitioners:** The commandment requires a competent practitioner. In the Jewish tradition, the mohel (מוֹהֵל) — a trained covenant circumciser — has developed over three

thousand years of continuous practice. The mohel is not merely a surgeon — he is a covenant minister performing the ceremony of covenant entrance. His training encompasses both the technical surgical skill and the covenant theology of the act.

**The ceremony of brit milah:** The covenant community assembles to witness the circumcision ceremony. The assembly of witnesses is itself a covenant act — the community declares its shared covenant identity by witnessing the covenant sign being placed in the flesh of a new member. The naming of the child typically occurs at the brit milah — covenant name and covenant sign given together.

**The inclusion of servants and sojourners:** Yahweh explicitly extends the circumcision commandment to purchased servants (Bereishit 17:12–13), establishing a remarkable covenant principle: covenant membership transcends biological descent. Any male who enters the covenant household fully must receive the covenant sign.

**Tziporah's emergency act:** Shemot 4:24–26 establishes a remarkable precedent: when the father is unable or unwilling to perform the circumcision, another covenant person — even a woman — may perform it in an emergency. The community's covenant responsibility for circumcision transcends gender roles when the covenant's integrity is at stake.

*"He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money shall be circumcised. So shall My covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant." — Bereishit (Genesis) 17:13*

Reference	Teaching / Witness
Bereishit (Gen.) 17:12–13	Every male born in the house or bought — community-wide covenant responsibility.
Bereishit (Gen.) 17:23	Avraham circumcises his entire household on the same day — community covenant obedience.

Reference	Teaching / Witness
Shemot (Ex.) 4:24–26	Tziporah performs emergency circumcision — community covenant responsibility transcends individual failure.
Shemot (Ex.) 12:44, 48	Uncircumcised males cannot participate in Pesach — circumcision is a covenant community prerequisite.
Yehoshua (Josh.) 5:2–9	Community mass circumcision at Gilgal — national covenant renewal.

## SPHERE 3 — THE NATION

### "National Covenant Renewal and the Prophetic Call to National Heart Transformation"

The circumcision commandment operates at the national level in two inseparable dimensions: the physical circumcision of every male in the covenant nation as a national covenant identity marker, and the prophetic call to national heart circumcision as the condition of covenant faithfulness.

#### The national physical dimension — Yehoshua 5:2–9:

*"At that time Yahweh said to Yehoshua, 'Make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time'... For the people of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness... yet all the people who were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised... And Yahweh said to Yehoshua, 'Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.'" — Yehoshua (Joshua) 5:2–9*

An entire generation of covenant males had gone uncircumcised in the wilderness — forty years of national covenant neglect. Before Israel could enter the covenant land, Yahweh required national covenant renewal through mass circumcision. The nation could not function as Yahweh's covenant people in Yahweh's covenant land without bearing Yahweh's covenant sign.

**The national heart dimension — the prophetic witness:**

*"Circumcise yourselves to Yahweh; remove the foreskin of your hearts, O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem; lest My wrath go forth like fire, and burn with none to quench it, because of the evil of your deeds." — Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 4:4*

*"Behold, the days are coming, declares Yahweh, when I will punish all those who are circumcised merely in the flesh — Egypt, Judah, Edom, the sons of Ammon, Moab... for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised of heart." — Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 9:25–26*

Yirmeyahu's covenant indictment is devastating in its precision: Israel — physically circumcised — is placed alongside the uncircumcised pagan nations because their hearts have not followed their flesh. Physical circumcision without heart transformation is, in Yahweh's assessment, equivalent to uncircumcision.

*"Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn." — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:16*

*"And Yahweh your Elohim will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live." — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:6*

Yahweh commands Israel to circumcise the heart — and then promises to perform the circumcision of the heart Himself. The physical sign points to the spiritual reality; Yahweh will ultimately accomplish in the heart what the covenant sign declares in the flesh.

*"And Yahweh your Elohim will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live." — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:6*

Reference	Teaching / Witness
Yehoshua (Josh.) 5:2-9	National mass circumcision at Gilgal — covenant renewal required before entering the covenant land.
Devarim (Deut.) 10:16	National command: circumcise the foreskin of your heart — remove stubbornness and obstruction.
Devarim (Deut.) 30:6	National promise: Yahweh will circumcise the heart — enabling complete covenant love.
Yirmeyahu (Jer.) 4:4	National prophetic warning: circumcise the heart or face Yahweh's wrath.
Yirmeyahu (Jer.) 9:25-26	National indictment: physical circumcision without heart reality equals uncircumcision in Yahweh's judgment.
Vayikra (Lev.) 26:41	Yahweh promises restoration when Israel's uncircumcised heart is humbled.

## SPHERE 4 — THE WORLD

### "The Covenant of Avraham as Father of Many Nations — The Universal Call to Heart Circumcision"

*"No longer shall your name be called Avram, but your name shall be Avraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations." — Bereishit (Genesis) 17:5*

The circumcision covenant was given to Avraham — designated by Yahweh as the father not of Israel alone but of many nations. The Avrahamic covenant has a world scope. Avraham is the father of the

physical descendants of Yitzchak and Yaakov — the nation of Israel. He is also the father of Yishmael — progenitor of the Arab peoples. He is also the spiritual father of all who walk in the covenant faith of Avraham across all nations.

**The blessing through Avraham to all nations:** "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Bereishit 12:3) — the covenant of circumcision is the foundational physical sign of the Avrahamic covenant whose blessing reaches all nations.

**The heart circumcision call to all peoples:** Yirmeyahu 9:25–26 explicitly places the heart circumcision demand upon all nations — Egypt, Edom, Ammon, Moab — not only Israel. Yahweh judges every nation by the heart circumcision standard. The physical circumcision commandment is specific to the covenant males of Avraham's household — but the spiritual reality it points to is Yahweh's universal demand of all peoples.

**Yishmael's circumcision — the world dimension in Avraham's household:** Yishmael was circumcised at age 13 (Bereishit 17:25) before Yitzchak was born. The circumcision of Yishmael establishes that the covenant sign was placed in the flesh of the progenitor of the Arab peoples — the ancestor of the Islamic world — before the specifically Sinaitic covenant was given to Israel. Islamic circumcision traces directly to this moment.

*"No longer shall your name be called Avram, but your name shall be Avraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations." — Bereishit (Genesis) 17:5*

Reference	Teaching / Witness
Bereishit (Gen.) 12:3	"In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" — world scope of the Avrahamic covenant.
Bereishit (Gen.) 17:4–5	Avraham as father of a multitude of nations — the world dimension of the covenant.

Reference	Teaching / Witness
Bereishit (Gen.) 17:25	Yishmael circumcised — covenant sign in the progenitor of the Arab peoples.
Yirmeyahu (Jer.) 9:25–26	All nations judged by the heart circumcision standard — universal covenant demand of Yahweh.
Devarim (Deut.) 30:6	Yahweh's world-level covenant promise: He will circumcise hearts across all generations.
Yeshayahu (Isa.) 19:23–25	Egypt, Assyria, and Israel as covenant equals — Yahweh's world covenant vision fulfilled.

## SECTION IV — COMPLETE APPLICATION TABLE

Level	Sphere	Application	Torah Witness
INDIVIDUAL	Covenant Sign	Every covenant male bears the physical sign of Yahweh's covenant in his body for life.	Bereishit 17:10–11
INDIVIDUAL	Eighth Day	Circumcision performed on day 8 — the biological optimal day and the covenant threshold of new beginning.	Bereishit 17:12; Vayikra 12:3
INDIVIDUAL	Karet	Neglect of circumcision is a covenant breach carrying spiritual excision from Yahweh's people.	Bereishit 17:14
INDIVIDUAL	Heart	"Circumcise the foreskin of your heart" — the inner covenant reality the physical sign demands.	Devarim 10:16
INDIVIDUAL	Health	UTI reduction; STI prevention; HIV risk reduction (60% per WHO trials); HPV reduction; penile cancer prevention.	Biological confirmation of covenant wisdom
COMMUNITY	Household	Every male in the covenant household — born or acquired — must receive the covenant sign.	Bereishit 17:12–13
COMMUNITY	Ceremony	The brit milah ceremony — covenant community assembly, naming, and witness.	Bereishit 17:23; 21:4
COMMUNITY	Practitioners	Trained covenant circumcisers maintain the community's capacity to fulfill the commandment.	Shemot 4:24–26; Yehoshua 5:2–9
COMMUNITY	Pesach Access	Uncircumcised males cannot participate in the Pesach covenant meal — circumcision is a covenant community prerequisite.	Shemot 12:44, 48
NATION	Gilgal Renewal	National covenant renewal requires national circumcision — Israel could not enter the land uncircumcised.	Yehoshua 5:2–9
NATION	Heart Command	"Circumcise the foreskin of your heart" — the national covenant command to inner transformation.	Devarim 10:16; Yirmeyahu 4:4
NATION	Heart Promise	Yahweh promises to circumcise Israel's heart — enabling full covenant love and life.	Devarim 30:6
NATION	Heart Indictment	Physical circumcision without heart reality = uncircumcision in Yahweh's judgment.	Yirmeyahu 9:25–26
WORLD	Avraham	The circumcision covenant given to the father of many nations — world-historical scope.	Bereishit 17:4–5
WORLD	Yishmael	Yishmael circumcised — covenant sign in the progenitor of the Arab / Islamic world.	Bereishit 17:25

Level	Sphere	Application	Torah Witness
WORLD	All Nations	All nations judged by the heart circumcision standard — Yahweh's universal covenant demand.	Yirmeyahu 9:25-26
WORLD	Covenant Hope	Yahweh will circumcise hearts across all generations and all peoples.	Devarim 30:6

## SECTION V — THREE-RELIGION AUDIT

Where Each Tradition Upholds Torah and Where Each Departs

### JUDAISM

#### **Upholds Torah:**

The Jewish covenant tradition has maintained brit milah — covenant circumcision on the eighth day — with extraordinary fidelity across three thousand years, through every exile, every persecution, and every cultural pressure. The ceremony of brit milah remains among the most universally observed practices in Jewish life across every stream of Jewish community — Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist. The mohel tradition has preserved both the technical skill and the covenant theology of the act across an unbroken chain of practice.

Jewish tradition also maintains a rich understanding of the heart circumcision dimension — the concept of avodah shebalev (service of the heart) and the Chassidic emphasis on bitul (self-nullification) as the inner reality the physical sign demands. The physical and spiritual dimensions are held together with theological sophistication.

#### **Departs from Torah:**

Where binding authority has shifted from the Written Torah to the Oral Torah (Talmud and rabbinic codes), some rabbinic elaborations on circumcision — including specific procedural details of the metzitzah (drawing blood from the wound by mouth) — go beyond the Written Torah text and have generated controversy regarding both their textual basis and hygienic safety. Miqdash Bethel evaluates all practices against the Written Torah standard: where Written Torah is silent, rabbinic elaboration is historical commentary, not binding covenant law.

## CHRISTIANITY

### **Upholds Torah:**

The New Covenant community of the first century maintained circumcision for Jewish covenant males — Yeshua was circumcised on the eighth day (Luke 2:21), fulfilling the covenant commandment in His own body. Sha'ul (Paul) circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:3) — a male of Jewish descent — demonstrating that the circumcision commandment for covenant males of Jewish lineage was maintained within the first-century covenant community. The heart circumcision call of Devarim 10:16 and 30:6 is fully upheld in New Covenant teaching as the deepest covenant reality to which all believers are called.

### **The Acts 15 / Galatians Question — A Careful Covenant Reading:**

**Acts 15 — What the Jerusalem Council actually decided:** The Jerusalem Council was convened to address a specific dispute: whether Gentile believers entering the covenant community were required to be circumcised and keep the Torah of Moshe as a condition of salvation and covenant standing before Yahweh (Acts 15:1, 5). The Council ruled: no — Gentile believers are not required to be circumcised as a condition of their acceptance by Yahweh and standing within the covenant community (Acts 15:19–20).

This is a ruling about the basis of salvation and covenant standing — not a ruling about the ongoing validity of the circumcision commandment for those to whom it applies. The Council did not rule that Jewish covenant males need not be circumcised. The Council did not rule that the Avrahamic covenant of circumcision is abolished. The Council ruled that Gentiles do not need to become Jews through circumcision to be accepted by Yahweh. These are two entirely different questions.

Note carefully: Acts 15:21 immediately follows the Council's decision with: "For from ancient generations Moshe has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Shabbat in the synagogues." The Council assumes that the Torah of Moshe — including its circumcision commandment — continues to be taught and practiced in every city. The Council's ruling does not eliminate the Torah. It specifies who is bound by which specific obligations as a condition of covenant entry.

**Galatians — What Sha'ul actually argues:** Sha'ul's arguments in Galatians are directed against a specific theological error: the Judaizers' teaching that circumcision is necessary for justification — that Gentile believers must be circumcised to be right with Yahweh and to be saved. Sha'ul argues forcefully that this position makes the work of the Messiah insufficient — that if circumcision is required for justification, the Messiah's atoning work has no value (Galatians 5:2–4).

This argument addresses circumcision as a soteriological requirement for Gentile justification — not the validity of the circumcision commandment for the physical descendants of Avraham. Sha'ul himself was circumcised. He circumcised Timothy. He declared in Romans 3:1–2 that circumcision has great value and that to the Jewish people were entrusted the oracles of Elohim. His argument in Galatians is not that circumcision is worthless or abolished — it is that circumcision cannot save anyone, and imposing it on Gentiles as a requirement for salvation is a fundamental theological error.

**The covenant distinction that resolves the apparent tension:**

- Physical circumcision as covenant sign for physical Israel — the commandment of Bereishit 17:12 and Vayikra 12:3 — remains valid and binding for every male descended from Avraham through Yitzchak and Yaakov. Yeshua fulfilled this commandment in His own body.
- Circumcision as a soteriological requirement for Gentile salvation — this is what the Jerusalem Council ruled against and what Sha'ul argues against in Galatians. Gentiles are not required to become physically circumcised as a condition of their standing before Yahweh.

- Heart circumcision as the universal covenant call — Devarim 10:16; 30:6; Yirmeyahu 4:4 — the inner reality of covenant relationship applies to every human being, circumcised or uncircumcised in the flesh.

### **Departs from Torah:**

Many Christian traditions have taught that the circumcision commandment is entirely abolished — that it has no ongoing validity for any believer in any context. This position goes beyond what even the New Covenant documents themselves teach. It eliminates the distinction between the specific covenant obligations of physical Israel and the universal covenant call of heart circumcision — collapsing a nuanced Torah position into a blanket abolition that the Torah itself does not support and that Yeshua Himself did not teach. Marcion's antinomianism (144 CE) — which introduced the false Torah-versus-grace dichotomy into Christian theology — is the historical source of the complete abolition position.

## **ISLAM**

### **Upholds Torah:**

Islamic circumcision — *khitan* (ختان) — is among the most widely practiced surgical procedures in the world, observed by the vast majority of Muslim males across all geographic and cultural contexts. Islamic circumcision is traced directly to the covenant of Ibrahim (Abraham) — the same Avrahamic covenant of Bereishit 17. The major Islamic schools of jurisprudence classify *khitan* as either *wajib* (obligatory — Shafi'i, Hanbali) or *sunnah mu'akkadah* (strongly recommended — Hanafi, Maliki). In practice, male circumcision is observed by approximately 1 billion Muslims globally — the largest single circumcision community in the world.

The Islamic hadith tradition records the Prophet Muhammad's identification of circumcision as one of the five practices of *fitrah* (فطرة) — natural human disposition — alongside trimming the mustache,

cutting the nails, plucking the underarm hair, and shaving the pubic hair. These are the practices identified as natural to the covenant humanity that Ibrahim exemplified.

The Islamic tradition's maintenance of circumcision is the most direct living connection between the Avrahamic covenant of Bereishit 17 and the contemporary world — practiced continuously from Yishmael's circumcision in Bereishit 17:25 to the present day in an unbroken chain of covenant observance that spans fourteen centuries and one billion people.

### **Departs from Torah:**

Where Islamic tradition substitutes the Quran and hadith as final authority over the Written Torah — and where the specific timing of the eighth day designated in Bereishit 17:12 and Vayikra 12:3 is modified by Islamic practice (which does not specify the eighth day as required timing) — the Islamic tradition departs from the precision of Yahweh's covenant designation. The eighth-day requirement is the specific covenant designation of the Written Torah — confirmed by neonatal hematology science — and Islamic practice, while maintaining circumcision, does not observe the specific eighth-day timing that Yahweh designated.

## SECTION VI — THE EIGHTH DAY, THE COVENANT, AND THE CREATED ORDER

### The Single Most Remarkable Biological Confirmation in All of 613 Laws

Of all the biological confirmations documented in the 613 Laws course — and there are many, across dietary law, agricultural law, and covenant practice — the confirmation of the eighth-day circumcision commandment by modern neonatal hematology stands as the single most precise and remarkable convergence of covenant word and created biological science in the entire course.

### THE MEDICAL DATA IN FULL

Newborn infants are born with a coagulation system that is not yet fully functional. Several clotting factors — particularly the Vitamin K-dependent factors (Factors II, VII, IX, and X) — are present at significantly lower levels in newborns than in older children and adults. This is because:

- The newborn's gut microbiome — the primary source of Vitamin K synthesis — has not yet been established at birth
- Vitamin K crosses the placenta poorly — the newborn's stored Vitamin K from the mother is limited
- Breast milk, while nutritionally complete, is relatively low in Vitamin K

As a result, neonatal prothrombin time is prolonged in the first days after birth — the newborn's blood clots more slowly than an adult's. This is why neonatal circumcision performed in the first 24–48 hours carries elevated bleeding risk compared to later timing.

### WHAT HAPPENS ON DAY 8

As the newborn's gut microbiome establishes itself and begins producing Vitamin K — and as the infant begins receiving nutritional Vitamin K through feeding — the Vitamin K-dependent clotting factors rise rapidly from their depressed neonatal baseline. Medical research has established that prothrombin levels peak on approximately day 8 of the newborn's life, briefly reaching 110% of normal adult levels before settling back toward normal adult range over the following weeks.

Day of Life	Vitamin K / Prothrombin Status	Surgical Significance
Days 1–7	Below adult normal — gut microbiome not yet established	Elevated bleeding risk — suboptimal for surgical procedure
Day 8	PEAK — approximately 110% of normal adult level	Biological optimal day — lowest possible surgical bleeding risk
Days 9–14	Declining from peak toward adult normal range	Adequate but declining from the biological optimal point
Days 15+	Normal adult range established	Normal adult clotting function

## THE COVENANT WORD AND THE CREATED ORDER — ONE VOICE

**Yahweh designated day 8** — yom hashemini — as the specific day for circumcision in Bereishit 17:12, confirmed in Vayikra 12:3. Modern neonatal hematology has established that day 8 is the biological optimal day for the procedure Yahweh commanded on that day. Yahweh, who created the human body and its coagulation system, designated the precise day when that system operates at maximum efficiency for the covenant sign He commanded.

### The two witnesses — Devarim 19:15 satisfied:

- First witness: The covenant word of Yahweh — Bereishit 17:12; Vayikra 12:3 — "at eight days old, every male shall be circumcised"
- Second witness: Modern neonatal hematology — the prothrombin and Vitamin K peak on day 8, confirming the biological optimal timing

## THE HISTORICAL MEDICAL WITNESS

The precision of the eighth-day designation has been noted by physicians and researchers outside the covenant community:

- S. I. McMillen, M.D., in *None of These Diseases* (1963) — a physician's analysis of the medical wisdom of the Torah — specifically documented the prothrombin and Vitamin K peak on day 8 as confirmation of the circumcision commandment's biological wisdom
- W. J. Crozer Griffith documented prothrombin levels in newborns in the early 20th century, establishing the day-8 peak
- Multiple neonatal hematology studies have consistently identified the day-7 to day-10 window as the period of maximum neonatal coagulation efficiency, with day 8 at the center

These are not covenant researchers seeking to validate Scripture. They are physicians following the data — and the data consistently points to day 8 as the biological optimal day for neonatal circumcision.

Yahweh designated day 8 at Sinai. Medical science confirmed it in the 20th century. The covenant word preceded the scientific confirmation by three thousand years.

## THE NUMBER EIGHT — BEYOND SEVEN

The theological significance of the eighth day deepens the biological confirmation: in Hebrew covenant thought, seven is the number of the natural created order — the seven days of creation, the Shabbat rest. Eight stands beyond seven — the number of new covenant order, the new creation entrance. The child born into the covenant household passes through seven days of natural life — and enters the covenant of Yahweh on the eighth day, the day that stands beyond the natural cycle, the day of covenant new beginning.

Yahweh placed the circumcision — the covenant sign — on the very day that declares: something beyond the natural order has occurred. The child has entered Yahweh's covenant. The biological peak of clotting function on the same day declares: Yahweh created the body to be ready for this covenant

act on this specific day. The theology and the biology confirm each other with a precision that could only come from the same Creator who designed both the covenant sign and the human body that bears it.

## STUDY REVIEW & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

1. Bereishit 17:11 designates circumcision as an *ot brit* — a sign of the covenant. What is the covenant significance of where Yahweh placed this sign — in the reproductive organ — rather than in a more visible location such as the hand or forehead?
2. The consequence for neglecting circumcision is *karet* — spiritual excision from the covenant people (Bereishit 17:14). This is the same consequence attached to the blood prohibition and Shabbat desecration. What does this tell you about Yahweh's valuation of the circumcision commandment relative to other covenant obligations?
3. Devarim 10:16 commands: "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart." What does it mean practically for an individual to circumcise the heart? What is the *orlah* (foreskin/obstruction) that covers the heart — and what covenant behaviors represent its removal?
4. The eighth day is designated by Yahweh as the specific day for circumcision — confirmed by modern neonatal hematology as the day of peak prothrombin function. How does this biological confirmation affect your understanding of Yahweh's knowledge of the human body He created?

### COMMUNITY LEVEL

5. Bereishit 17:12–13 extends the circumcision commandment to purchased servants — males who join the covenant household through acquisition rather than birth. What does this tell you about the

nature of covenant community membership — is it primarily a matter of biological descent or covenant commitment and belonging?

6. The *brit milah* ceremony traditionally involves the covenant community as witnesses to the covenant sign being placed in a new member's body. What is the covenant significance of this communal witnessing — why is circumcision not merely a private family matter?

7. Shemot 4:24–26 records Tziporah performing an emergency circumcision — a woman performing the covenant act when the father had neglected it. What does this event establish about the community's covenant responsibility when the primary responsible party fails?

8. Shemot 12:44, 48 establishes that an uncircumcised male cannot participate in the Pesach covenant meal. What is the covenant principle connecting circumcision to covenant meal participation?

## NATIONAL LEVEL

9. Yehoshua 5:2–9 records that an entire generation born in the wilderness was uncircumcised — and Yahweh required national mass circumcision at Gilgal before Israel could enter the Promised Land.

What covenant principle does this establish about the relationship between the covenant sign and the covenant inheritance?

10. Yirmeyahu 9:25–26 places physically circumcised Israel alongside uncircumcised pagan nations — because Israel is "uncircumcised of heart." What covenant warning does this carry, and what does it establish about the relationship between the physical sign and the spiritual reality it represents?

**11.** Devarim 30:6 promises: "Yahweh your Elohim will circumcise your heart." What is the significance of Yahweh promising to perform the heart circumcision Himself — rather than simply commanding Israel to perform it? What does this reveal about Yahweh's understanding of human capacity for self-transformation?

## WORLD LEVEL

**12.** Bereishit 17:4–5 designates Avraham as "father of a multitude of nations" — at the same moment Yahweh establishes the circumcision covenant. What is the world covenant significance of the circumcision sign being given to the father of many nations?

**13.** Yishmael was circumcised in Bereishit 17:25 — before Yitzchak was born. The Islamic world maintains circumcision through the lineage of Yishmael to this day. What covenant theology does this historical continuity suggest about Yahweh's relationship with the Islamic circumcision tradition?

**14.** The WHO and UNAIDS recommended voluntary medical male circumcision for HIV prevention based on three tier-1 randomized controlled trials establishing a 60% reduction in HIV acquisition. Yahweh commanded circumcision three thousand years before HIV was identified. What does this tell you about the scope of covenant wisdom embedded in the commandments of Yahweh?

**15.** Yirmeyahu 9:25–26 applies the heart circumcision standard to all nations — not only Israel. On what basis does Yahweh hold nations outside the Sinai covenant accountable to the heart circumcision standard?

## SCRIPTURE INDEX — LESSON 15: BEREISHIT 17:12; VAYIKRA 12:3

Reference	Teaching / Witness
Bereishit (Gen.) 12:3	"In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" — world scope of the Avrahamic covenant.
Bereishit (Gen.) 17:1–8	Yahweh establishes the Avrahamic covenant — the context for the circumcision commandment.
Bereishit (Gen.) 17:4–5	Avraham as father of a multitude of nations — the world dimension of the covenant.
Bereishit (Gen.) 17:9–14	The circumcision commandment — all males, eighth day, karet for neglect.
Bereishit (Gen.) 17:11	Circumcision as ot brit — sign of the covenant.
Bereishit (Gen.) 17:13	"My covenant shall be in your flesh an everlasting covenant."
Bereishit (Gen.) 17:23–27	Avraham circumcises himself, Yishmael, and his entire household — immediate covenant obedience.
Bereishit (Gen.) 17:25	Yishmael circumcised at age 13 — covenant sign in the progenitor of the Arab peoples.
Bereishit (Gen.) 21:4	Avraham circumcises Yitzchak on the eighth day — first application to a newborn on the exact day.
Shemot (Ex.) 4:24–26	Yahweh threatens Moshe's life for son's uncircumcision — Tziporah performs emergency circumcision.
Shemot (Ex.) 6:12, 30	Moshe describes himself as having "uncircumcised lips" — the orlah concept applied to speech.
Shemot (Ex.) 12:44, 48	Uncircumcised males excluded from Pesach covenant meal.
Vayikra (Lev.) 12:3	Eighth-day commandment restated at Sinai — two-witness confirmation.
Vayikra (Lev.) 19:23	Orlah of fruit trees — the concept of uncircumcision applied to agricultural covenant law.
Vayikra (Lev.) 26:41	"Their uncircumcised heart is humbled" — heart circumcision as condition for national restoration.
Devarim (Deut.) 10:16	"Circumcise the foreskin of your heart" — the national covenant command to inner transformation.
Devarim (Deut.) 30:6	"Yahweh your Elohim will circumcise your heart" — the covenant promise of heart transformation.
Yehoshua (Josh.) 5:2–9	National mass circumcision at Gilgal — covenant renewal before entering the land.
Yeshayahu (Isa.) 52:1	"The uncircumcised and the unclean shall enter you no more" — covenant land protection.
Yirmeyahu (Jer.) 4:4	"Circumcise yourselves to Yahweh; remove the foreskin of your hearts."

Reference	Teaching / Witness
Yirmeyahu (Jer.) 6:10	"Their ears are uncircumcised — they cannot listen." Uncircumcision applied to the hearing faculty.
Yirmeyahu (Jer.) 9:25–26	All nations judged by heart circumcision standard — universal covenant demand of Yahweh.
Yechezkel (Ezek.) 44:7, 9	"No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, shall enter My sanctuary." Physical and heart circumcision required for covenant sanctuary access.

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***"And Yahweh your Elohim will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live." — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:6***

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