

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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A Study for Judaism • Christianity • Islam

DOCUMENT 308

TO KEEP THE WAY OF YAHWEH

A Covenant Deep Dive into the Pattern of Genesis: *derekh Yahweh (the way of Yahweh)* —
the Fathers, Their Failures, and the Torah They Point To

Why Does the Torah Record the Sins of Its Own Fathers, Do Their Stories Justify What the Torah Forbids, Is Genesis Only Stories, and Why Do the Children of Abraham Kill One Another in His Name? — A Three-Religion Covenant Response

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The Message is Sent to the World

REACHING JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	✠ ISLAM
Rabbinic tradition teaches that <i>“the deeds of the fathers are a sign for the children”</i> (Ramban on Genesis 12:6), yet the same Ramban writes that Abraham sinned in going down to Egypt and that Sarah sinned in afflicting Hagar (on Genesis 12:10; 16:6). The Mishnah names the <i>“disciples of Abraham our father”</i> by a good eye, a humble spirit, and a modest appetite (Avot 5:19), not by birth.	Jesus tells those who claim Abraham, <i>“If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham”</i> (John 8:39). Paul reads Sarah and Hagar as an allegory (Galatians 4:21–31). Many churches today teach Genesis as background stories or as myth, and the curse of Canaan was once preached to defend slavery (Doc 223). The Tanakh is heard first here.	The Qur’an says Abraham <i>“was neither a Jew nor a Christian”</i> but one devoted to the One Creator (Q. 3:67), and that the covenant <i>“does not reach the wrongdoers”</i> among his seed (Q. 2:124). Islam calls Abraham the <i>khalil (friend)</i> of Allah (Q. 4:125); the Tanakh first called him <i>ohavi (My friend / the one who loves Me)</i> (Isaiah 41:8).

DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY — STANDING RULE OF MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

The sole binding authority of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution is the *Tanakh* — the written covenant of **Yahweh**. No Talmudic tractate, Church council decree, papal encyclical, hadith collection, or extra-biblical tradition carries doctrinal weight equal to or greater than the written Torah. Where any tradition conflicts with the written covenant, the written covenant governs without exception. The Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority. Miqdash Bethel uses the Written Tanakh as its sole source for four reasons: it is the only text Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all recognize as originally given by **Yahweh**; it predates and underlies the Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an, so testing those traditions against it follows the evidentiary direction of **Deuteronomy 19:15** — the earlier witness governs the later commentary; every later tradition that departs from the Tanakh does so by addition or reinterpretation, never by overturning the text itself, so the text remains the fixed standard; and **Yahweh's** own words declare the covenant unchanging (Malachi 3:6; Psalms 119:89), making the written covenant — not evolving institutional interpretation — the only stable ground for doctrine. All three great covenant traditions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — are addressed simultaneously and equally in every Miqdash Bethel document, because **Yahweh's** covenant belongs to every nation that will receive it. The **Deuteronomy 19:15** two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard governs all textual claims in this document.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document applies the sole authority of the written *Tanakh* to one question from Elder Kepha's study sheet "*The Pattern of Genesis*": is there a covenant pattern running through Genesis, the book before the law given to Moses, that explains why its righteous fathers are shown doing things the Torah later forbids, and that answers those who use their stories to justify what the Torah condemns? **Yahweh** (יהוה) and **Elohim** (אֱלֹהִים) appear in bold throughout. Tanakh books and personal names are given in English. Hebrew transliterations and their English meanings appear together in ***bold italic*** at every occurrence, and anything in quotation marks is set in ***bold italic***. Scripture references are bold; Strong's numbers are plain. Scripture is rendered in a literal working translation from the Hebrew. **Verse numbers follow the English version. In a few chapters the Hebrew Bible divides the chapter at a different point, so the same verse carries a different number in the Hebrew text. Where that happens, the Hebrew number is given in brackets on first citation, for example Numbers 30:13 [Hebrew 30:14].** Findings are graded **Corroborated** (two or more independent Tanakh witnesses), **Single witness**, or **Not in the text**. Rabbinic commentary, the New Testament, the Qur'an, and modern historical records appear only as historical and comparative

reference. This document judges teachings and deeds, never the worth of any people; every reader, Jew, Christian, or Muslim, is addressed as a child of the one Creator. The Written Tanakh governs all conclusions.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Torah	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	The fathers and their households; the way of Yahweh before Sinai; the statutes that later forbid what the fathers did; the covenant remembered at the Exodus; the land given on conditions
Nevi'im (Prophets)	Joshua, 1 Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Obadiah, Micah, Malachi	Abraham taken from idolatry; the prophets' use of the fathers as covenant precedent; the claim to Abraham refused to those who stand on the sword; one father of all
Ketuvim (Writings)	Psalms, Proverbs, Nehemiah, 2 Chronicles	The covenant with the fathers remembered in song and prayer; the warning not to be like the fathers; Abraham Yahweh's friend; brothers dwelling in unity

COMPARATIVE TEXTS CITED — HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE REFERENCE ONLY

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
New Testament	John 8:37–40; Romans 4:16; 9:7; Galatians 3:7, 29; 4:21–31	Who the children of Abraham are, in Christian teaching; the Sarah–Hagar allegory
Qur'an	Q. 2:124–136; 3:65–68; 4:125; 37:100–111	Abraham, his covenant, his sons, and his friendship with Allah in the Islamic witness

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Rabbinic literature	Mishnah Avot 5:19; Talmud Yoma 28b; Ramban on Genesis 12:6, 12:10, 16:6, 34:13; Maimonides, Laws of Kings 9:14	The fathers as a sign; the fathers' faults named; the Shechem dispute
Historical records	The 1929 Hebron massacre; the 1994 Cave of the Patriarchs massacre and the Shamgar Commission	Bloodshed at the grave of Abraham (Section VIII-B)
Earlier library material	Docs 219, 223, 245, 259, 267, 268, 297, 305, 307	Built upon here; checked in Section XII

I. FRAMING THE QUESTION — STORIES OR COVENANT?

I-A. The Questions as Elder Kepha Put Them

Elder Kepha's study sheet observes that Genesis comes before the law given to Moses, and that it tells the stories of righteous men who set a pattern of doing things contrary to that law. Their deceptions, weaknesses, and wrongs did not stop them from being the fathers of the people later called the children of Israel. Many readers take the stories of Cain and Abel, Noah and his sons, Abraham with Sarah, Hagar, Isaac, and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, and Joseph and his brothers, and use them to justify deeds the Torah condemns. Those who call themselves the children of Abraham today are at odds and killing one another in his name, while holding different beliefs and claiming one father. And some, especially in Christianity, read Genesis as *"just stories."* The sheet asks whether there is a storyline running through the book, and asks that it be explained in terms the people of **Yahweh** can understand.

The questions are five:

First: is Genesis part of the Torah's instruction, or only a collection of old stories?

Second: is there a pattern that runs through the book from Cain to Joseph and leads to Sinai?

Third: why does the Torah record its own fathers doing things it later forbids?

Fourth: do those stories give anyone license to do the same things today?

Fifth: what does the Tanakh say to the children of Abraham who kill one another in his name?

I-B. What This Study Builds On

The Library has studied many of these households one at a time, and this document does not repeat them. **Doc 245** (*The Voice of Your Brother's Blood*) studied Cain and the law of bloodguilt. **Doc 223** and **Doc 307** (*Have We Not All One Father?*) showed that Noah's curse fell on Canaan and names have no color. **Doc 219** (*Counted as Righteousness*) studied Abraham's faith. **Doc 267** (*Bless Me, Even Me Also*) studied the blessing and the birthright, Jacob's deceit, and the pattern of the younger before the elder. **Doc 268** and **Doc 305** studied the firstborn and the household of two wives. **Doc 259** and **Doc 297** applied the covenant to the land and to war today. What none of them did is step back and read Genesis as one book with one design. That is the work of this document.

I-C. The Question in the Tanakh's Own Terms

The word *torah* (*instruction / teaching*), תּוֹרָה, H8451, means teaching, not only statute.

Genesis is the first of the five books of the Torah, and the rest of the Tanakh never treats it as a separate book of tales. The question therefore becomes: what does Genesis *teach*, and how does it teach it? The answer of this study, tested below witness by witness, can be stated in one sentence from the book itself:

“For I have known him, so that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of Yahweh, to do righteousness and justice” (Genesis 18:19)

Genesis is the record of how **Yahweh** began a household that would “keep the way of Yahweh” — and an honest record of how often that household did not. Every finding below is graded. A finding is **Corroborated** when two or more independent Tanakh witnesses carry it (**Deuteronomy 19:15**). It is **Single witness** when only one text carries it. It is **Not in the text** when it is taught but the Tanakh does not say it.

II. THE WORD STUDY — WHAT THE HEBREW SAYS

The words below carry the pattern of Genesis. The table sets them out.

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
<i>toledot</i> (<i>generations / account</i>), תּוֹלְדוֹת	H8435	The heading that divides Genesis into its parts: <i>“These are the generations of ...”</i>	Genesis 2:4; 5:1; 25:12, 19; 36:1; 37:2

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
<i>berit (covenant)</i> , בְּרִית	H1285	A binding commitment sworn between two parties; Yahweh's covenant with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob	Genesis 9:9; 15:18; 17:7
<i>derekh Yahweh (the way of Yahweh)</i> , דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה	H1870	A road walked; the manner of life Yahweh approves	Genesis 18:19; Judges 2:22; Jeremiah 5:4
<i>tsedaqah u-mishpat (righteousness and justice)</i> , צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט	H6666; H4941	Right dealing and right judgment; the content of the way	Genesis 18:19, 25; Jeremiah 4:2
<i>mishmeret (charge)</i> , מִשְׁמֶרֶת	H4931	A trust to be guarded	Genesis 26:5; Deuteronomy 11:1
<i>mitsvah (commandment)</i> , מִצְוָה	H4687	A command given	Genesis 26:5; Exodus 20:6
<i>chuqqah (statute)</i> , חֻקָּה	H2708	A fixed, engraved decree	Genesis 26:5; Leviticus 18:4
<i>torah (instruction / law)</i> , תּוֹרָה	H8451	Teaching, direction, law	Genesis 26:5; Exodus 16:4
<i>ach (brother)</i> , אָח	H251	A brother; also a kinsman and a fellow man	Genesis 4:9; 9:5; 13:8; 45:4
<i>shomer (keeper)</i> , שֹׁמֵר	H8104	One who guards, keeps watch	Genesis 4:9; Genesis 18:19 (ve-shameru (that they keep))
<i>nevalah (outrage / folly)</i> , נֶבֶלָה	H5039	A shameful deed that breaks the moral order	Genesis 34:7; Deuteronomy 22:21
<i>anah (to afflict / humble)</i> , עָנָה	H6031	To press down, oppress, humble	Genesis 15:13; 16:6, 9; Exodus 1:11
<i>tsadaq (to be in the right)</i> , צָדִיק	H6663	To be righteous, to be in the right in a dispute	Genesis 38:26
<i>chashav (to think / plan)</i> , חָשַׁב	H2803	To devise, intend, reckon	Genesis 15:6; 50:20

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
<i>tamim</i> (<i>whole / blameless</i>), תָּמִים	H8549	Complete, without blemish; whole-hearted	Genesis 6:9; 17:1; Deuteronomy 18:13

Four lexical observations govern what follows.

First: Genesis tells its own structure. The heading *elleh toledot* (*these are the generations*) occurs eleven times (Genesis 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 36:9; 37:2). Ishmael's generations are given (Genesis 25:12) before Isaac's (Genesis 25:19), and Esau's twice (Genesis 36:1, 9) before Jacob's (Genesis 37:2). The line not chosen is recorded first and briefly; the line chosen is told at length. The book never erases the brother who was not chosen. It names him, counts his sons and his kings (Genesis 36:31), and moves on.

Second: The words of the law are already in Genesis. Yahweh says of Abraham, “*because Abraham listened to My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws*” (Genesis 26:5): *mishmarti, mitsvotai, chuqqotai, ve-torotai*, מִשְׁמַרְתִּי מִצְוֹתַי חֻקֹּתַי וְתוֹרוֹתַי.

Four of the Torah's own words for law, in one verse, before Sinai. Deuteronomy 11:1 uses the same group of words for what Israel must keep: “*keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments.*”

Third: The word *ach* (brother) is the thread of the book. In the account of Cain it occurs seven times in ten verses (Genesis 4:2, 8 twice, 9 twice, 10, 11), and Cain's question turns on it:

“*Am I my brother's keeper?*”, *ha-shomer achi anokhi*, הֲשֹׁמֵר אָחִי אֲנֹכִי (Genesis 4:9).

The answer comes in the next law given to all mankind: “from the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man” (Genesis 9:5).

Fourth: The word *shomer* (keeper) of Cain's question is the same root as *ve-shameru* (that they keep) in Genesis 18:19. Cain refused to keep his brother. Abraham was chosen to teach his children to keep the way of Yahweh. The whole book moves between those two uses of one verb.

Finding — Genesis divides itself into *toledot* (generations), records the line not chosen as well as the line chosen, and already uses the Torah's vocabulary of law. Corroborated (Genesis 2:4; 25:12, 19; 26:5; 36:1; 37:2; Deuteronomy 11:1).

III. GENESIS IS TORAH, NOT “JUST STORIES”

III-A. The Rest of the Tanakh Treats Genesis as Covenant

If Genesis were only a set of old tales, the rest of the Tanakh would not stand on it. But every major turn in Israel’s history is grounded in the covenant made in Genesis. The table sets out the witnesses.

MOMENT	TEXT	WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT GENESIS
The Exodus begins	Exodus 2:24; 6:2–8	<i>“Elohim remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob”</i> ; the Exodus is the keeping of a Genesis promise
The Name revealed	Exodus 3:6, 15	<i>“Yahweh, Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Abraham ... this is My Name forever”</i>
Mercy after sin	Exodus 32:13; Leviticus 26:42	Moses pleads the oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; Yahweh promises to remember it even in exile
Entry to the Land	Deuteronomy 1:8; 9:5	The land is given <i>“to establish the word which Yahweh swore to your fathers”</i>
The prophets	Isaiah 51:1–2; Micah 7:20; Ezekiel 33:24	Abraham held up as the pattern, and his name refused to those who abuse it
The songs and prayers	Psalms 105:8–11; Nehemiah 9:7–8	The covenant with Abraham sung and confessed as the ground of Israel’s life

Finding — The Tanakh grounds the Exodus, the revelation of the Name, mercy after sin, the gift of the Land, the prophets’ appeals, and Israel’s worship on the covenant recorded in Genesis. Corroborated (table).

That Genesis is only a set of stories with no binding instruction is Not in the text.

III-B. The Way of Yahweh Before Sinai

Genesis shows that the way of Yahweh was known and walked before the law was written.

The text names it and shows it at work:

WHAT GENESIS SHOWS	TEXT	LATER WRITTEN IN THE TORAH
Murder is a sin that Yahweh requires	Genesis 4:10; 9:5–6	Exodus 20:13
Clean and unclean animals distinguished	Genesis 7:2; 8:20	Leviticus 11
Blood not eaten	Genesis 9:4	Leviticus 17:10–14
Adultery a <i>“great sin”</i> and a sin against Elohim	Genesis 20:9; 39:9	Exodus 20:14
A tenth given in honor	Genesis 14:20; 28:22	Leviticus 27:30
A brother’s widow raised up	Genesis 38:8	Deuteronomy 25:5–10
Foreign gods put away	Genesis 35:2–4	Exodus 20:3–5
The seventh day blessed and set apart	Genesis 2:3	Exodus 20:8–11

Two witnesses state it outright. **Yahweh** chose Abraham so that his household would:

“keep the way of Yahweh, to do righteousness and justice” (Genesis 18:19), and Abraham *“kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws”* (Genesis 26:5).

Rabbinic tradition goes further and teaches that Abraham kept the whole Torah, down to its later rabbinic details (Talmud Yoma 28b). That is comparative reference only.

The written text says Abraham kept Yahweh’s charge, commandments, statutes, and laws; it does not list them, and it records Abraham doing some things the later Torah forbids (Section V).

Finding — The way of Yahweh was known and kept in Genesis before the law was written at Sinai. Corroborated (Genesis 18:19; 26:5, with the table). That Abraham kept the whole later code in its rabbinic form is Not in the text.

III-C. Narrative Records; Law Commands

This is the key to reading Genesis rightly. A narrative tells what happened. A law tells what must be done.

The Torah never asks the reader to copy everything its people did; **it asks the reader to keep what Yahweh commanded.**

And Genesis does not leave its fathers' deeds uncommented. Again and again someone in the story stops and asks the guilty party the same question: *“What is this you have done?”*, *mah zot asita*, מַה־זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ.

WHO ASKS	TEXT	WHO IS ASKED, AND WHY
Yahweh Elohim	Genesis 3:13	The woman, after eating from the tree
Yahweh	Genesis 4:10	Cain, after murdering his brother
Pharaoh	Genesis 12:18	Abraham, who said Sarah was only his sister
Abimelech of Gerar	Genesis 20:9	Abraham again: <i>“you have done to me deeds that ought not to be done”</i>
Abimelech of Gerar	Genesis 26:10	Isaac, who told the same lie about Rebekah
Jacob	Genesis 29:25	Laban, who gave him Leah in place of Rachel
Laban	Genesis 31:26	Jacob, who fled in secret
Joseph	Genesis 44:15	His brothers, the cup found in Benjamin's sack

Note who does the asking. Twice it is a foreign king rebuking Abraham. Abimelech's words, *ma'asim asher lo ye'asu (deeds that ought not to be done)*, מַעֲשִׂים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יַעֲשׂוּ (Genesis 20:9), return almost word for word when Jacob's sons hear of Dinah: *“an outrage in Israel ... and such a thing ought not to be done”* (Genesis 34:7). Genesis holds its own fathers to a standard it expects even outsiders to know.

The narrator also speaks directly when he must: *“Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the eyes of Yahweh”* (Genesis 38:7); what Onan did *“was evil in the eyes of Yahweh”* (Genesis 38:10); and Jacob on his deathbed curses the anger of Simeon and Levi (Genesis 49:5–7).

Finding — Genesis records its fathers' deeds without approving all of them, and repeatedly marks wrongs by the question “What is this you have done?”, by the narrator's verdict, and by the consequences that follow. **Corroborated** (Genesis 12:18; 20:9; 26:10; 34:7; 38:7, 10; 49:5–7).

That a deed is approved because a patriarch did it is Not in the text.

IV. THE COVENANT PATTERN — SEVEN THREADS THROUGH GENESIS

Read as one book, Genesis weaves seven threads from its first family to its last chapter. Each one is carried by more than one household, and each one leads to the Torah given at Sinai.

IV-A. Thread One: Yahweh Carries the Promise by His Own Word

The line of promise is never carried by the merit of the men in it. Yahweh calls Abraham out of a family that *“served other gods”* (Joshua 24:2–3). He makes the covenant with Abraham asleep, passing alone between the pieces (Genesis 15:12, 17). He names the heir before the heir is born (Genesis 17:19; 25:23). And Moses tells Israel plainly why the promise held:

“Not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land ... but to establish the word which Yahweh swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob” (Deuteronomy 9:5)

Finding — The covenant line was carried by Yahweh’s word and oath, not by the righteousness of the fathers. Corroborated (Genesis 15:12–18; 17:19; 25:23; Deuteronomy 7:7–8; 9:5–6).

IV-B. Thread Two: Their Failures Are Recorded and Repaid in Kind

Genesis does not hide its fathers’ sins. It records them, and it shows them returning to the family that committed them, often in the same form.

HOUSEHOLD	THE WRONG	HOW IT RETURNED
Abraham	Calls Sarah only his sister, twice (Genesis 12:11–19; 20:2–13)	Rebuked by two foreign kings; his son Isaac repeats the same lie with Rebekah (Genesis 26:7–10)
Sarah and Abraham	Sarah <i>“afflicted”</i> Hagar, and Abraham allowed it (Genesis 16:6)	Strife in the house; Hagar flees; the brothers grow up apart (Genesis 16:6–12; 21:9–14)
Isaac and Rebekah	Each parent favors one son (Genesis 25:28)	A brother plans his brother’s death; Rebekah sends Jacob away (Genesis 27:41–45)
Jacob	Deceives his blind father with a brother’s garment and goats (Genesis 27:9, 15–16)	Deceived by Laban in the dark (Genesis 29:25); deceived by his sons with Joseph’s garment and a goat’s blood (Genesis 37:31–33)

HOUSEHOLD	THE WRONG	HOW IT RETURNED
Jacob	Loves Joseph more than his brothers (Genesis 37:3)	The brothers hate Joseph and sell him (Genesis 37:4, 28)
Judah	Says to his father, “ <i>Recognize, please</i> ” — the bloodied coat (Genesis 37:32)	Hears the same words from Tamar, holding his own seal: “ <i>Recognize, please</i> ” (Genesis 38:25)
The brothers	Sell their brother and hide it (Genesis 37:26–28)	Twenty years later: “ <i>We are truly guilty concerning our brother</i> ” (Genesis 42:21)

The garment and the goat run through three generations. Jacob dressed in Esau’s garments and covered his hands with the skins of *gedayei izzim* (*kids of the goats*) (Genesis 27:9, 16). His sons dipped Joseph’s coat in the blood of a *se’ir izzim* (*male goat*) (Genesis 37:31). And Judah, who brought that coat to his father and said *baker-na* (*recognize, please*), הָכֵר־נָא (Genesis 37:32), promised Tamar a *gedi izzim* (*kid of the goats*) (Genesis 38:17) and then heard her say *baker-na* over his own seal and staff (Genesis 38:25). The text does not need to say “*measure for measure*.” It shows it.

Finding — the wrongs of the fathers are recorded and returned to their households in kind.
Corroborated (table, and Hosea 12:2–4 [Hebrew 12:3–5], where the prophet says **Yahweh** will “*punish Jacob according to his ways*”).

IV-C. Thread Three: Brother Against Brother — and the Brother Who Keeps

Genesis opens with a brother asking “*Am I my brother’s keeper?*” (Genesis 4:9) and spends fifty chapters answering him.

Every generation has its brothers in conflict: Cain and Abel; Abraham’s herdsmen and Lot’s (Genesis 13:7); Ishmael and Isaac (Genesis 21:9–10); Jacob and Esau (Genesis 27:41); Leah and Rachel, two sisters in one marriage (Genesis 30:1, 15); Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 37:4).

And every generation is offered another way. Abraham, the elder, gives Lot the first choice of the land:

“*Let there be no strife between me and you, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers*” (Genesis 13:8)

The Hebrew is *anashim achim anachnu* (*we are men who are brothers*), אָנָשִׁים אַחִים אֲנַחְנוּ. The book closes with the answer to Cain’s question, given in two scenes. Judah, who once said “*What profit is it if we kill our brother?*” (Genesis 37:26), offers himself as a slave in place of his youngest

brother: *“let your servant remain instead of the lad”* (Genesis 44:33; compare 43:9). And Joseph, holding his brothers’ lives in his hand, says:

“You meant evil against me; Elohim meant it for good, to bring about, as it is this day, to keep many people alive ... I will provide for you and your little ones” (Genesis 50:20–21)

Finding — Genesis begins with a brother who refused to keep his brother and ends with a brother who offers himself for his brother and a brother who forgives and feeds the brothers who sold him. Corroborated (Genesis 4:9; 13:8; 44:33; 45:4–15; 50:19–21).

IV-D. Thread Four: The Brother Not Chosen Is Not Cast Off

Genesis chooses one line to carry the covenant, but it never curses the other line for not being chosen.

Hagar and Ishmael. The angel of Yahweh finds Hagar in the wilderness and says, *“Yahweh has heard your affliction”* (Genesis 16:11); she is the first in Genesis to give a name to Yahweh who spoke to her, Atah El Ro’i (You are the El who sees me), אַתָּה אֵל רֹאִי (Genesis 16:13).

Yahweh tells Abraham, *“As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him”* (Genesis 17:20).

When Ishmael is sent away, *“Elohim heard the voice of the lad”* (Genesis 21:17), and *“Elohim was with the lad”* (Genesis 21:20).

Esau. He receives his own blessing and land (Genesis 27:39–40; 36:6–8), and the Torah later forbids Israel to take it: “I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession” (Deuteronomy 2:5).

Lot’s sons, Moab and Ammon. Their lands are protected in the same way: *“I have given Ar to the children of Lot as a possession”* (Deuteronomy 2:9, 19).

The sons of Keturah. Abraham gives them gifts while he lives and sends them east (Genesis 25:5–6).

Finding — the brothers outside the covenant line are heard, blessed, and given lands of their own by Yahweh. Corroborated (Genesis 16:11–13; 17:20; 21:17–20; 25:5–6; Deuteronomy 2:5, 9, 19). That the brother not chosen is cursed or rejected by Yahweh for not being chosen is Not in the text.

IV-E. Thread Five: Return, Confession, and Reconciliation

The fathers sin, but Genesis shows them turning.

Judah, confronted with his own seal, says *tsadqah mimmeni (she is more in the right than I)*, **צִדְקָה מִמֶּנִּי** (Genesis 38:26).

The brothers confess, “*We are truly guilty concerning our brother*”, **אָבִל אֲשָׁמִים אֲנַחְנוּ** **עַל-אָחִינוּ** (Genesis 42:21).

Jacob, who grasped at his brother’s heel, wrestles through the night, leaves limping with a new name (Genesis 32:24–31 [Hebrew 32:25–32]), and then bows seven times before Esau (Genesis 33:3). Esau runs to meet him, embraces him, and they weep (Genesis 33:4).

Genesis also records covenants of peace made with neighbors:

1. Abraham with Abimelech at Beersheba (Genesis 21:22–32),
2. Isaac with Abimelech, after which “*they departed from him in peace*” (Genesis 26:28–31),
3. and Jacob with Laban at the heap of witness (Genesis 31:44–54).

Abraham pleads for the people of Sodom (Genesis 18:23–33) and prays for the household of the king who rebuked him (Genesis 20:17).

Finding — Genesis records confession, repentance, reconciliation between brothers, and covenants of peace with neighbors as the way the fathers’ households were restored. Corroborated (Genesis 21:27; 26:31; 31:44; 33:4; 38:26; 42:21; 50:17–21).

IV-F. Thread Six: The Land Is Bought, Not Seized

Yahweh promised the land to Abraham’s seed (Genesis 15:18), but the fathers did not take it by the sword.

Abraham refused even a thread or a sandal strap from the spoil of war (Genesis 14:22–23). When Sarah died, he paid “*four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant*” for the cave of Machpelah at Hebron, before the people of the land as witnesses (Genesis 23:16–18).

Jacob bought his plot at Shechem for a hundred *qesitah (pieces of money)* (Genesis 33:19). The one time the sons of Jacob took a city by the sword, their father said “*You have brought trouble on me, to make me stink among the inhabitants of the land*” (Genesis 34:30), and cursed their anger on his deathbed (Genesis 49:5–7).

Yahweh also tied the gift of the land to justice from the beginning:

Abraham’s seed would wait four generations, “*for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete*” (Genesis 15:16).

Leviticus warns that the same land would vomit out Israel if Israel did the same things (**Leviticus 18:24–28**).

Finding — the fathers acquired land in the promised land by honest purchase before witnesses, and the promise itself was bound to righteousness. Corroborated (Genesis 14:22–23; 15:16; 23:16–18; 33:19; Leviticus 18:24–28). That the promise to Abraham licenses taking land or life by force without regard to justice is Not in the text.

IV-G. Thread Seven: The Purpose — Blessing for All Families

The promise to Abraham is given five times in Genesis, and every time its goal reaches beyond Abraham’s own seed:

“in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:3; also 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14).

Abraham is told to *“walk before Me and be tamim (whole / blameless)”* (Genesis 17:1), as Noah was *tamim* in his generations (Genesis 6:9).

The prophet later states the condition on which the nations will be blessed:

“If you return, O Israel ... and you swear, As Yahweh lives, in truth, in justice, and in righteousness, then the nations shall bless themselves in Him” (Jeremiah 4:1–2)

Finding — The purpose of Abraham’s calling was that his household would keep the way of Yahweh in righteousness and justice, so that the blessing would reach every family of the earth. Corroborated (Genesis 12:3; 17:1; 18:18–19; 22:18; 26:4–5; 28:14; Jeremiah 4:1–2).

IV-H. The Seven Threads Together

#	THREAD	WHAT GENESIS TEACHES	WITNESSES
I	Yahweh carries the promise	The line stands on His word, not on the fathers’ merit	Genesis 15:17; 25:23; Deuteronomy 9:5
II	Failures repaid in kind	Wrongs are recorded and return on the household	Genesis 27:16; 29:25; 37:31; 38:25
III	The brother who keeps	From Cain’s question to Judah’s surety and Joseph’s forgiveness	Genesis 4:9; 13:8; 44:33; 50:20
IV	The other brother not cast off	Ishmael, Esau, Lot’s sons, Keturah’s sons heard and provided for	Genesis 17:20; 21:17; Deuteronomy 2:5, 9

#	THREAD	WHAT GENESIS TEACHES	WITNESSES
V	Return and reconciliation	Confession, repentance, brothers embracing, peace with neighbors	Genesis 33:4; 38:26; 42:21; 26:31
VI	Land bought, not seized	Honest purchase; a promise bound to justice	Genesis 23:16; 33:19; 15:16; 34:30
VII	Blessing for all families	The way of Yahweh , righteousness and justice, for the sake of the nations	Genesis 12:3; 18:19; 26:4–5

V. WHAT THE FATHERS DID, THE TORAH LATER FORBADE

This is the heart of Elder Kepha’s question. The fathers of Genesis did a number of things that the Torah, once written, forbids by name. The table sets them side by side.

WHO	WHAT GENESIS RECORDS	WHAT THE TORAH LATER COMMANDS	WHAT GENESIS SHOWS FOLLOWED
Cain	Murders his brother (Genesis 4:8)	“You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13); Genesis 9:6	A wanderer, afraid for his life (Genesis 4:12–14)
Noah	Drunk and uncovered in his tent (Genesis 9:21)	Wine that deceives (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29–35); priests forbidden wine at service (Leviticus 10:9)	Shame and a curse in the family (Genesis 9:22–25)
Abraham	Married his father’s daughter (Genesis 20:12)	Leviticus 18:9, 11; 20:17	No comment in the text; the law comes later
Abraham and Isaac	“She is my sister” (Genesis 12:13; 20:2; 26:7)	“You shall not ... lie to one another” (Leviticus 19:11)	Rebuked by foreign kings (Genesis 12:18; 20:9; 26:10)
Sarah	Afflicts Hagar the Egyptian (Genesis 16:6)	Do not wrong the stranger; love him as yourself (Leviticus 19:33–34; Exodus 23:9)	Hagar flees; Yahweh hears her affliction (Genesis 16:11)
Lot’s daughters	Lie with their father (Genesis 19:32–36)	Leviticus 18:6–7	Moab and Ammon, later at enmity with Israel

WHO	WHAT GENESIS RECORDS	WHAT THE TORAH LATER COMMANDS	WHAT GENESIS SHOWS FOLLOWED
Jacob	Marries two sisters (Genesis 29:23–30)	<i>“You shall not take a woman to her sister as a rival”</i> (Leviticus 18:18)	Envy and rivalry between Leah and Rachel (Genesis 30:1, 15)
Jacob	Loves one wife and her son over the others (Genesis 29:30; 37:3)	The firstborn of the unloved wife keeps his right (Deuteronomy 21:15–17)	Hatred among the brothers (Genesis 37:4)
Jacob	Sets up a <i>matsevah</i> (<i>standing stone / pillar</i>) to Yahweh (Genesis 28:18; 35:14)	<i>“You shall not set up for yourself a matsevah, which Yahweh your Elohim hates”</i> (Deuteronomy 16:22)	None recorded; the law is given for the land of idols
Rachel	Steals her father’s household idols (Genesis 31:19)	Exodus 20:3–5	Jacob orders all foreign gods put away (Genesis 35:2–4)
Reuben	Lies with his father’s concubine (Genesis 35:22)	Leviticus 18:8	Loses his preeminence (Genesis 49:3–4)
Simeon and Levi	Kill all the men of a city for one man’s crime (Genesis 34:25)	Each dies for his own sin (Deuteronomy 24:16)	Their anger cursed; scattered in Israel (Genesis 49:5–7)
Joseph’s brothers	Sell their brother (Genesis 37:28)	Man-stealing punished by death (Exodus 21:16; Deuteronomy 24:7)	Years of guilt; confession (Genesis 42:21)
Judah	Lies with his son’s widow; withholds his third son (Genesis 38:14–18, 26)	Leviticus 18:15; the brother’s duty (Deuteronomy 25:5–10)	<i>“She is more in the right than I”</i> (Genesis 38:26)

Three things follow from the table, and each must be kept in its place.

The first. The fathers lived before the statutes were written. The Torah never punishes them after the fact for laws not yet given.

Moses himself makes the distinction: *“Yahweh our Elohim cut a covenant with us at Horeb. Not with our fathers did Yahweh cut this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive this day”* (Deuteronomy 5:2–3).

The Sinai covenant, with its written statutes, was given to the generation that stood at the mountain and to their children.

The second. Once the law is written, no one may appeal to the fathers to set it aside.

Moses tells Israel not to live as they did before the law:

“You shall not do according to all that we are doing here this day, every man whatever is right in his own eyes” (Deuteronomy 12:8).

And the Psalm says why this history was told: *“that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation”* (Psalms 78:8).

The revealed things belong *“to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this Torah”* (Deuteronomy 29:29 [Hebrew 29:28]).

The third. In almost every case Genesis itself shows the harm the deed brought, long before the law named it.

1. Two sisters in one marriage become rivals;
2. favoritism breeds hatred;
3. the lie brings rebuke;
4. the massacre brings a curse;
5. the sale of a brother brings twenty years of guilt.

The Torah’s statutes read like the lessons of Genesis turned into law.

One case needs a careful word. Jacob’s pillar was raised to Yahweh, not to an idol, and later prophets still speak of a stone of witness (Joshua 24:26–27) and of a *matsevah* to Yahweh at the border of Egypt (Isaiah 19:19).

The law of Deuteronomy 16:21–22 was given for a land full of pillars to other gods. It is listed here because the Torah names it, not to accuse Jacob of idolatry.

Finding — several deeds of the fathers recorded in Genesis are later forbidden by name in the Torah. **Corroborated** (table). The Sinai covenant was cut with the generation at Horeb, not with the fathers (Deuteronomy 5:2–3), and from Sinai onward its written statutes govern (Deuteronomy 12:8; 29:29). **Corroborated.** That the example of a patriarch permits what the written Torah forbids is Not in the text.

VI. WHY DOES THE TORAH RECORD THE FATHERS' FAILURES?

If the fathers were meant to be models, why does the Torah expose them? Tanakh gives four answers.

VI-A. To Show That the Covenant Rests on Yahweh's Faithfulness

If Abraham had never lied, Jacob never deceived, and Judah never sinned, a reader might think the covenant was a reward for good men. Genesis makes that reading impossible. The promise held because **Yahweh** swore it (**Deuteronomy 7:8; 9:5**).

The prophet ends his book on exactly this note: *"You will give truth to Jacob, covenant-love to Abraham, as You swore to our fathers from the days of old"* (Micah 7:20).

Nehemiah's prayer adds one word about Abraham himself: **Yahweh** *"found his heart faithful before You, and cut the covenant with him"* (Nehemiah 9:8).

It was his heart, not his record, that was found *ne'eman* (faithful).

VI-B. To Teach by Consequence

Israel was commanded to remember the past and ask about it:

"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you" (Deuteronomy 32:7).

Psalms 78 explains that the history was handed down *"that they might set their hope in Elohim ... and not be like their fathers"* (Psalms 78:7–8).

A history that hides its failures cannot teach. Genesis teaches by showing what came of each wrong.

VI-C. To Show Why a Written Torah Was Needed

Genesis is honest about the human heart:

"every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the day" (Genesis 6:5),

and after the flood, *"the inclination of man's heart is evil from his youth"* (Genesis 8:21).

Even the best households, left to their own judgment, fell into rivalry, deceit, and violence.

The written Torah answers that need: it puts the way of **Yahweh** in words that every household can read, so that no one has to guess (**Deuteronomy 30:11–14**).

VI-D. To Show That the Way Back Is Open

Every major failure in Genesis is followed by a door back.

1. Cain is protected from vengeance (**Genesis 4:15**).
2. Judah confesses (**Genesis 38:26**) and becomes the one who offers himself for his brother (**Genesis 44:33**).
3. Jacob the deceiver is renamed (**Genesis 32:28** [Hebrew 32:29]) and reconciled with Esau (**Genesis 33:4**).
4. The brothers who sold Joseph are forgiven and fed (**Genesis 50:21**).

The message to every reader who sees himself in these failures is not *“do as they did,”* but *“turn as they turned.”*

Finding — The Tanakh records the fathers’ failures to show that the covenant rests on Yahweh’s faithfulness, to teach by consequence, to show the need for a written Torah, and to show that the way back is open. Corroborated (Deuteronomy 9:5; 32:7; Psalms 78:7–8; Micah 7:20; Genesis 6:5; 8:21; 38:26; 50:21).

VII. GENESIS MISUSED — STORIES TURNED AGAINST THE TORAH

Elder Kepha’s sheet names the danger: the stories of Genesis are used to justify deeds the Torah condemns. The table sets out the most common misuses, what the text actually says, and what the Torah commands.

THE MISUSE	WHAT THE TEXT SAYS	THE TORAH’S STANDARD	LIBRARY
Noah’s curse used to justify enslaving Africans	Noah, not Yahweh , cursed Canaan, not Ham, and named no color (Genesis 9:25)	Man-stealing punished by death (Exodus 21:16)	Docs 223, 307
The mark of Cain made a mark of race	The sign protected Cain from vengeance; its form is not named (Genesis 4:15)	One father of all (Malachi 2:10)	Doc 307
“Wild donkey of a man” used to cast Arabs as permanent enemies	Ishmael blessed and made a great nation; <i>“Elohim was with the lad”</i> (Genesis 17:20; 21:20)	Do not abhor the Egyptian (Deuteronomy 23:7 [Hebrew 23:8]); love the stranger (Leviticus 19:34)	This document, VII-A

THE MISUSE	WHAT THE TEXT SAYS	THE TORAH'S STANDARD	LIBRARY
"Cast out the bondwoman" used to justify expelling a people	A word for one household, after which Abraham gave bread and water and Elohim cared for the lad (Genesis 21:10–20)	<i>"One law shall be for the native and for the stranger"</i> (Exodus 12:49)	This document, VII-A
Jacob's deceit used to excuse lying for gain	Recorded and repaid in kind (Genesis 29:25; 37:31–33)	Leviticus 19:11; Hosea 12:2	Doc 267
Simeon and Levi used to justify collective reprisal	Their father cursed their anger (Genesis 49:5–7)	Deuteronomy 24:16; Genesis 18:23, 25	This document, VII-B
The land promise used as an unconditional title and a license to kill	The land bought before witnesses; the gift bound to justice (Genesis 23:16; 15:16)	Leviticus 18:24–28; Ezekiel 33:24–26	Docs 259, 297; this document, VII-C
The fathers' wives and concubines used to excuse a house without covenant duties	Rivalry and grief in every such house (Genesis 16:4–6; 30:1)	The wife's rights protected (Exodus 21:10); Deuteronomy 21:15–17; Leviticus 18:18	Docs 268, 305
"Jacob I loved, Esau I hated" used to hate a people	Spoken of two nations and of Edom's deeds (Malachi 1:2–4)	<i>"You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother"</i> (Deuteronomy 23:7)	Doc 267

VII-A. Hagar and Ishmael Read Fairly

Genesis 16:12 says of Ishmael, *pere adam (a wild donkey of a man)*, *"his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and al-penei kol echav yishkon."*

That last phrase can be read *"he shall dwell in the face of / in defiance of all his brothers"* or *"he shall dwell alongside / to the east of all his brothers."*

The Hebrew permits both, and this study presents both. Its fulfillment is recorded in **Genesis 25:18** with the same words, after Ishmael's twelve princes are named (**Genesis 25:16**). A wild donkey in the Tanakh is a picture of a free creature of the open country (**Job 39:5–8**). **Nothing in the verse curses Ishmael's descendants for all time, and the chapter around it is full of Yahweh's care for him.**

The verb of Sarah’s treatment of Hagar is *va-te’anneha* (*she afflicted her*), וַתַּעֲנֶה (Genesis 16:6). It is the same verb **Yahweh** had just used of what Egypt would do to Abraham’s seed, *ve-innu otam* (*they will afflict them*) (Genesis 15:13), and the verb used when Egypt did it (Exodus 1:11–12). The text does not say Israel’s bondage was a punishment for Sarah’s act, and this study does not say so either. The rabbinic commentator Ramban did draw that conclusion (on Genesis 16:6); it is comparative reference only.

The word link itself stands: the Hebrew mother afflicted the Egyptian woman, and the Egyptians later afflicted the Hebrews. And the angel told Hagar to return and *hit’anni* (*submit yourself*) — the same root — under Sarah’s hand (Genesis 16:9), so the text holds both women within **Yahweh**’s care.

The Torah drew the lesson for all time: “*you know the heart of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt*” (Exodus 23:9).

VII-B. Shechem Read Fairly

After Shechem took Dinah by force (Genesis 34:2), Simeon and Levi used the covenant sign of circumcision as a trap and killed every male in the city (Genesis 34:13–25). Some rabbinic teachers defended them: Maimonides held that the men of Shechem deserved death for failing to judge their prince (Laws of Kings 9:14), while Ramban answered that if so, Jacob would have done it himself (on Genesis 34:13). These are comparative witnesses only.

The Tanakh’s own verdict is given by Jacob, twice: “*You have brought trouble on me*” (Genesis 34:30), and “*Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel*” (Genesis 49:7).

Abraham had already asked the question that judges every collective reprisal: “*Will You sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ... Shall not the Judge of all the earth do justice?*” (Genesis 18:23, 25).

And the Torah makes it law: “*each shall be put to death for his own sin*” (Deuteronomy 24:16).

VII-C. The Land Promise Read Fairly

The promise of Genesis 15:18 is real, and this Institution does not deny it. But the Tanakh itself refuses the claim that descent from Abraham secures the land while bloodshed continues. Ezekiel heard exactly that argument from the people left in the ruins:

“Abraham was one, and he inherited the land; but we are many; the land is given to us as a possession ... Thus says Adonai Yahweh: You eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes to your

idols, and shed blood; and shall you possess the land? You stand upon your sword, you commit abomination ... and shall you possess the land?” (Ezekiel 33:24–26)

The Hebrew of verse 26 is *amadtem al-charbekhem* (*you stand upon your sword*), עֲמַדְתֶּם עַל-חַרְבְּכֶם. Abraham bought his grave with silver; his self-proclaimed heirs stood on the sword. Yahweh’s answer was that a claim to Abraham made with blood is no claim at all. Doc 259 and Doc 297 applied this standard to the present day; this study confirms it from Genesis.

Finding — The stories of Genesis most often used to justify slavery, racial contempt, hatred of Ishmael or Esau, deceit, collective reprisal, and the taking of land by bloodshed do not support those uses when read in their own words. Corroborated (table and Genesis 15:16; 17:20; 21:20; 49:5–7; Ezekiel 33:24–26; Deuteronomy 23:7; 24:16).

VIII. THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM TODAY — ONE FATHER, MANY SWORDS

VIII-A. Who Abraham’s Sons Were

Yahweh renamed Abram *Avraham*, because *“I have made you av hamon goyim (a father of a multitude of nations)”*, אֲבִי הָמוֹן גּוֹיִם (Genesis 17:5).

Genesis names eight sons:

1. Ishmael by Hagar (Genesis 16:15),
2. Isaac by Sarah (Genesis 21:2–3),
3. and six by Keturah (Genesis 25:1–2).

Through Isaac came both Jacob and Esau. Today Jews trace their descent through Jacob; most Arab peoples have long counted themselves sons of Ishmael; and Christianity and Islam each call Abraham their father in faith. Very many of the people who are now fighting over his land can claim him, by blood or by belief.

VIII-B. Two Graves, Two Reconciliations — and Hebron Today

Genesis twice brings estranged brothers together at their father’s grave. *“And Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah”* (Genesis 25:9).

Ishmael, who had been sent away, came back for his father’s burial and stood beside Isaac. And when Isaac died, *“Esau and Jacob his sons buried him”* (Genesis 35:29). The father’s grave was where the brothers met in peace.

That same cave at Hebron, the one place in the land Abraham owned by purchase, has in modern times been a place of brothers' blood.

In August 1929, Arab rioters killed 67 Jews in Hebron, while some Arab families in the city hid their Jewish neighbors and saved them.

On February 25, 1994, a Jewish settler and physician, Baruch Goldstein, opened fire on Muslim worshippers at prayer in the Cave of the Patriarchs and killed 29 of them before he was overpowered and killed.

After the Israeli commission of inquiry headed by Justice Meir Shamgar, the building was divided into separate Jewish and Muslim sections. The burial place where Isaac and Ishmael stood together is now split by walls and locked gates between their children.

These events are recorded here as history, not as a verdict on any people.

Both communities have buried innocent dead at Hebron, and both have also had men and women who protected their neighbors.

The covenant judges the deed: every one of those killings was the shedding of a brother's blood, which Yahweh said He would require *"from the hand of every man's brother"* (Genesis 9:5).

VIII-C. What Makes a Child of Abraham

Tanakh answers this question directly, and its answer is not blood alone.

Three witnesses:

Witness One — Genesis. Abraham was chosen so that his children would *"keep the way of Yahweh, to do righteousness and justice"* (Genesis 18:19). Abraham's children, by Yahweh's own definition, are those who keep that way.

Witness Two — Isaiah. The prophet calls Abraham's true descendants by what they do:

"Listen to Me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek Yahweh: look to the rock from which you were hewn ... look to Abraham your father" (Isaiah 51:1–2).

And Israel, in its own prayer, confesses that Abraham's name is not enough: *"For Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; You, Yahweh, are our Father"* (Isaiah 63:16).

Witness Three — Ezekiel. Those who claimed Abraham's inheritance while shedding blood were refused it (Ezekiel 33:24–26, Section VII-C).

The New Testament and the Qur'an each repeat the same point in their own way:

“If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill me” (John 8:39–40);

and *“My covenant does not reach the wrongdoers”* (Q. 2:124).

Where they agree with the Tanakh here, they stand on its authority.

Finding — A child of Abraham, in the Tanakh’s own terms, is one who keeps the way of Yahweh in righteousness and justice; descent alone does not secure his name or his inheritance, and bloodshed forfeits the claim. Corroborated (Genesis 18:19; Isaiah 51:1–2; 63:16; Ezekiel 33:24–26).

VIII-D. One Father, Different Beliefs

Elder Kepha asks how people can claim one father and hold different beliefs.

Genesis shows who Abraham’s **Elohim** was. Abraham was called out of a house that *“served other gods”* (Joshua 24:2–3).

He swore by *“Yahweh, El Elyon, Possessor of heaven and earth”* (Genesis 14:22).

He sent for a wife for Isaac by an oath *“by Yahweh, the Elohim of heaven and the Elohim of earth”* (Genesis 24:3).

The covenant was *“to be Elohim to you and to your seed after you”* (Genesis 17:7).

To claim Abraham as father and leave the way of his Elohim is to claim the man and refuse the covenant that made him Abraham.

Joshua put the choice to Abraham’s descendants in the very place Abraham first built an altar: *“choose this day whom you will serve”* (Joshua 24:15).

And the Tanakh answers the deeper question too. The quarrel among brothers is answered by remembering whose children they are:

“Have we not all one father? Has not one El created us? Why do we deal treacherously, every man against his brother?” (Malachi 2:10; Doc 307).

VIII-E. The Way Back for the Sons of Abraham

Genesis has already written the way back.

Abraham said to his kinsman, *“we are brothers”*, and gave him the first choice (Genesis 13:8–9).

Isaac made a covenant with those who had driven him from his wells and sent them away *“in peace”* (Genesis 26:31).

Jacob bowed seven times and Esau ran to embrace him (**Genesis 33:3–4**).

Joseph forgave and fed the brothers who sold him (**Genesis 50:21**).

Ishmael and Isaac stood together at their father’s grave (**Genesis 25:9**).

And the prophet saw the day when the old enemies of Abraham’s house would be blessed together:

“In that day Israel shall be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom Yahweh of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance” (Isaiah 19:24–25)

Finding — The way of reconciliation among the sons of Abraham is already written in Genesis and promised by the prophets. Corroborated (Genesis 13:8; 25:9; 26:31; 33:4; 50:21; Isaiah 19:24–25; Psalms 133:1). That killing in Abraham’s name honors Abraham is Not in the text.

IX. FROM GENESIS TO SINAI — HOW THE PATTERN LEADS TO THE TORAH

Genesis ends with Joseph’s bones in a coffin in Egypt and a promise: *“Elohim will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here”* (Genesis 50:25).

Exodus opens by remembering the covenant (**Exodus 2:24**) and closes the circle when Moses carries Joseph’s bones out (**Exodus 13:19**). Between Egypt and the land stands Sinai, where the lessons of Genesis are given as law. The table pairs the problem Genesis shows with the instruction the Torah gives.

WHAT GENESIS SHOWS	WHAT THE TORAH INSTRUCTS	TEXT
A brother who will not keep his brother (Genesis 4:9)	Do not stand by your neighbor’s blood; love your neighbor as yourself	Leviticus 19:16–18
A slayer afraid of the avenger (Genesis 4:14)	Cities of refuge, and justice by witnesses	Numbers 35:9–30
Brothers who hate in their hearts (Genesis 27:41; 37:4)	<i>“You shall not hate your brother in your heart”</i>	Leviticus 19:17
Revenge on a whole city (Genesis 34:25)	No vengeance, no grudge; each for his own sin	Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 24:16

WHAT GENESIS SHOWS	WHAT THE TORAH INSTRUCTS	TEXT
A stranger afflicted (Genesis 16:6)	Love the stranger; you know his heart	Leviticus 19:33–34; Exodus 23:9
Favoritism among sons (Genesis 25:28; 37:3)	The firstborn's right cannot be moved by preference	Deuteronomy 21:15–17
Two sisters as rivals (Genesis 30:1)	Not a woman to her sister as a rival	Leviticus 18:18
A brother sold for silver (Genesis 37:28)	Death for man-stealing	Exodus 21:16
A brother's widow left waiting (Genesis 38:11)	The brother-in-law's duty, and its public refusal	Deuteronomy 25:5–10
Deceit with garments and goats (Genesis 27:16)	Do not lie or deal falsely; just weights and measures	Leviticus 19:11, 35–36
Household idols (Genesis 31:19; 35:2)	No other gods; no images	Exodus 20:3–5

Finding — the Torah given at Sinai answers, point by point, the failures Genesis records in the households of the fathers. Corroborated (table). Genesis diagnoses; Sinai prescribes.

X. HOW THE COVENANT BELIEVER READS GENESIS TODAY

Genesis is not a book of permissions. It is a book of patterns. The believer reads it with the Torah in hand and follows what the fathers did when they walked in the way of **Yahweh**. The table names what to follow.

FOLLOW THE FATHERS IN	WHAT THEY DID	TEXT
Faith	Abraham trusted Yahweh 's promise	Genesis 15:6 (Doc 219)
Obedience	Abraham kept Yahweh 's charge, commandments, statutes, and laws	Genesis 26:5

FOLLOW THE FATHERS IN	WHAT THEY DID	TEXT
Peacemaking	Abraham gave Lot the first choice: <i>“we are brothers”</i>	Genesis 13:8–9
Integrity with wealth	Abraham took no spoil; paid full price for Sarah’s grave	Genesis 14:23; 23:16
Intercession	Abraham pleaded for Sodom and prayed for Abimelech	Genesis 18:23–33; 20:17
Hospitality	Abraham ran to serve three strangers	Genesis 18:2–8
Confession	Judah: <i>“She is more in the right than I”</i>	Genesis 38:26
Standing surety for a brother	Judah offered himself for Benjamin	Genesis 44:33
Purity under pressure	Joseph refused his master’s wife: <i>“how can I ... sin against Elobim?”</i>	Genesis 39:9
Forgiveness	Joseph forgave and provided for his brothers	Genesis 50:19–21

And the believer refuses to follow the fathers where the Torah has since spoken: in the lie, the favoritism, the rivalry of two sisters, the affliction of the stranger, the sword at Shechem, and the sale of a brother.

The plumb line is simple: where a story and a statute seem to pull apart, the written statute governs.

Finding — The covenant believer follows the fathers where they kept the way of Yahweh, and follows the written Torah where they did not. Corroborated (Genesis 18:19; 26:5; Deuteronomy 5:2–3; 12:8; 29:29).

XI. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — HOW EACH TRADITION READS THE FATHERS

The table sets the three traditions against the findings of this study. Comparative texts are cited as historical reference only.

ELEMENT	✧ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
How the fathers are read	The deeds of the fathers are a sign for the children (Ramban on Genesis 12:6). Some rabbis defend every act of the fathers; others, like Ramban, name their sins (in Genesis 12:10; 16:6).	The fathers are heroes of faith (Hebrews 11:8–22), and Genesis is often read either as background to the New Testament or, in much modern teaching, as myth.	Abraham is a prophet and <i>hanif</i> (<i>one devoted to the One Elobim</i>), neither Jew nor Christian (Q. 3:67). The prophets are generally held to be protected from grave sin, so many Genesis failures are not told or are retold without them.
Covenant strength	Avot 5:19 defines Abraham’s disciples by character — a good eye, a humble spirit, a modest appetite — which matches Genesis 14:23 and 18:19 .	John 8:39–40 measures Abraham’s children by Abraham’s works, matching Isaiah 51:1 and Ezekiel 33:24–26 .	Q. 2:124 refuses the covenant to the wrongdoers among Abraham’s seed, matching Ezekiel 33:24–26 . Islam’s honor for Ishmael matches Genesis 17:20 and 25:9 .
Covenant departure	The teaching that Abraham kept the entire later code (Yoma 28b) goes beyond Genesis 26:5 . Defending Simeon and Levi (Maimonides, Laws of Kings 9:14) sets aside Jacob’s curse (Genesis 49:7).	Reading Genesis as “ <i>just stories</i> ” cuts off the covenant the whole Tanakh stands on (Exodus 2:24). The Sarah–Hagar allegory (Galatians 4:30) has been used to cast out the Jewish people; the curse of Canaan was used to defend slavery (Doc 223).	Removing the fathers’ failures from the record removes the lesson Genesis teaches by them (Psalms 78:8). The binding of the son is told without naming him (Q. 37:102–107), and later tradition’s naming of Ishmael differs from Genesis 22:2 .
Covenant witness	A tradition that still prays to “ <i>the Elobim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob</i> ” keeps Exodus 3:15 .	Read from the Tanakh outward, the call to do Abraham’s works is the call of Genesis 18:19 .	Read from the Tanakh outward, Ishmael and Isaac at Abraham’s grave (Genesis 25:9) is the scene all three traditions can share.

XII. CORRECTIONS TO EARLIER LIBRARY MATERIAL

Under the standing rule of October 2, 2026, every correction found while preparing this document is listed here. Corrections marked **Made** have been entered in the affected Google Doc so the website copy can be replaced. Those marked **for Elder Kepha's decision** were left unchanged.

Correction 1 — Doc 307, Section III-B (Sheba and Dedan). Made. Doc 307 said that Sheba and Dedan appear among the sons of Cush (**Genesis 10:7**), again among the sons of Shem (**Genesis 10:28**), and again among Abraham's sons by Keturah (**Genesis 25:3**). **Genesis 10:28** names Sheba among Shem's descendants but not Dedan, and **Genesis 25:3** names them as Abraham's grandsons through Jokshan. The sentence now reads that the name Sheba appears in Cush's line and again among the sons of Shem, and that Sheba and Dedan, both of Cush's line, appear again among Abraham's grandsons by Keturah. The point of the paragraph is unchanged.

Correction 2 — Doc 245, Section III-A (verse number). Made. Doc 245 cited **Exodus 22:23** for the cry of the widow and orphan without the Hebrew number. In the Hebrew Bible that verse is 22:22. It now reads **Exodus 22:23** [Hebrew 22:22].

Correction 3 — Doc 245, title page and closing block (website). Made. Doc 245 still gave the old address miqdashbethel.org. Both places now read miqdashbethel.ai (MLI v60, Open Item 12).

Correction 4 — Doc 245, throughout (personal names). For Elder Kepha's decision. Doc 245 was built on September 25, 2026, three days before the rule that personal names appear in English. It uses Hebrew forms such as Kayin, Hevel, Noach, Yosef, Yehudah, Moshe, Yehoshua, Avigail, Yehonatan, Yoav, Avner, Uriyah, Natan, Navot, Izevel, Eliyahu, and Yehu. Changing them touches nearly every section, so it is left for your decision.

Correction 5 — Doc 245, Section III-A (the cry of Exodus 3:7). For Elder Kepha's decision. Doc 245 says the verb *tsa'aq* (*to cry out*) is used of Israel crying out in Egyptian bondage at **Exodus 3:7**. That verse uses the noun from the same root, *tse'aqah* (*cry*): *"I have heard their cry."* The point stands; a light fix would read *"its noun is used of Israel's cry in Egyptian bondage."*

Checked, no correction needed — Doc 267. Its treatment of the birthright, the blessing, Jacob's deceit, the younger before the elder, and Esau agrees with the findings here, and Section IV-B of this document adds to it rather than correcting it.

XIII. SEVEN COVENANT DECLARATIONS ON THE PATTERN OF GENESIS

Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, each declaration below rests on more than one witness.

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
I	Genesis is the first book of the Torah and the covenant foundation of the whole Tanakh, not a collection of stories without instruction.	Exodus 2:24; 3:15; Leviticus 26:42; Deuteronomy 9:5; Psalms 105:8–10
II	The way of Yahweh , righteousness and justice, was known and kept before Sinai, and Abraham was chosen to teach it to his household.	Genesis 18:19; 26:5; Nehemiah 9:7–8
III	Genesis records the fathers' failures without approving them, and shows each returning to their households in kind.	Genesis 20:9; 29:25; 37:31–33; 38:25; 49:5–7; Hosea 12:2
IV	What the fathers did before the law cannot be used to set aside the written Torah; the covenant at Horeb was cut with the living, and its statutes govern.	Deuteronomy 5:2–3; 12:8; 29:29; Psalms 78:8
V	The brother not chosen is not cast off: Yahweh heard Hagar, blessed Ishmael, and gave lands to Esau and to the sons of Lot.	Genesis 16:11–13; 17:20; 21:17–20; Deuteronomy 2:5, 9, 19
VI	A child of Abraham is one who keeps the way of Yahweh ; descent alone does not secure his name, and those who stand on the sword forfeit the claim.	Genesis 18:19; Isaiah 51:1–2; 63:16; Ezekiel 33:24–26
VII	Genesis ends with brothers reconciled and forgiven; that is the pattern the sons of Abraham are called to follow, so that the blessing reaches every family of the earth.	Genesis 12:3; 25:9; 33:4; 50:19–21; Isaiah 19:24–25; Malachi 2:10

XIV. THE COVENANT RESPONSE — WHAT THE TANAKH SAYS TO THE ONE WHO ASKS

Behind Elder Kepha's question there are usually two kinds of people: one who has been told that a patriarch's example permits what the Torah forbids, and one who grieves that the children of Abraham are killing one another.

Tanakh's answer is fivefold.

First: Read Genesis as Torah. It is the foundation of the covenant, and the rest of Scripture stands on it (Exodus 2:24; Deuteronomy 9:5). Do not let anyone tell you it is “just stories.”

Second: Read the narrative by the law. Where a father of Genesis did what the written Torah later forbids, do not copy him; learn from what it cost him. “*You shall not do ... every man whatever is right in his own eyes*” (Deuteronomy 12:8).

Third: Follow the fathers where they walked in the way. Trust like Abraham (**Genesis 15:6**), keep **Yahweh’s** charge like Abraham (**Genesis 26:5**), confess like Judah (**Genesis 38:26**), and forgive like Joseph (**Genesis 50:21**).

Fourth: If you claim Abraham, do the works of Abraham. He made peace with his kinsman, refused plunder, paid for his land before witnesses, and pleaded for the lives of strangers (**Genesis 13:8; 14:23; 23:16; 18:23–33**). A claim to Abraham made with a brother’s blood is refused by **Yahweh Himself** (**Ezekiel 33:24–26**).

Fifth: Be your brother’s keeper. The question Cain refused to answer (**Genesis 4:9**) is the question the whole of Genesis answers. Stand with your brother at your father’s grave, as Isaac and Ishmael did (**Genesis 25:9**). “*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity*” (Psalms 133:1).

SCRIPTURE INDEX

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
Genesis 2:3; 2:4	The seventh day blessed; the first <i>toledot</i>	II; III-B
Genesis 3:13; 4:2–15	“ <i>What is this you have done?</i> ”; Cain and his brother	II; III-C; IV-C; V; VI-D; IX; XIV
Genesis 6:5, 9; 8:21	The evil inclination; Noah <i>tamim</i>	IV-G; VI-C
Genesis 7:2; 8:20; 9:4–6	Clean animals; blood; every man’s brother	II; III-B; VIII-B
Genesis 9:21–25	Noah’s drunkenness; the curse of Canaan	V; VII
Genesis 12:3, 11–19	All families blessed; “ <i>she is my sister</i> ”	III-C; IV-B; IV-G; V; XIII
Genesis 13:7–9	“ <i>We are brothers</i> ”	II; IV-C; VIII-E; X; XIV
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REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
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Genesis 18:2–8, 18–33	Hospitality; the way of Yahweh ; Abraham pleads for Sodom	I-C; III-B; IV-G; VII-B; VIII-C; X
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“For I have known him, so that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of Yahweh, to do righteousness and justice, so that Yahweh may bring upon Abraham that which He has spoken concerning him.”

Genesis 18:19 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh

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