

How We Read the Text

Our Method

Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution holds the Tanakh — the Written Torah — as its sole binding doctrinal authority. We do not treat later councils, creeds, oral traditions, papal encyclicals, or hadith collections as sources of authority equal to or greater than the written covenant. Where any later tradition conflicts with the text, the text governs, without exception.

This means our starting point is always the Hebrew word itself — its root, its range of meaning, its use across the Tanakh — rather than a theological system built on top of it. Where a classical rabbi, sage, or scholar's observation happens to agree with the plain meaning of the text, we will note it as historical corroboration. It is never cited as a separate source of authority in its own right.

A Word About the Sages

None of this is meant to discredit the rabbis, scholars, and sages of history. Many of these men were sincere students of the text, and their close attention to it produced real insight. Our concern is not with their sincerity but with what accumulated around them over time: layers of ruling upon ruling, commentary upon commentary, until — in many cases — the commentary itself became what was followed, rather than the text it was originally meant to illuminate. Sincerity does not prevent a tradition from eventually standing between a reader and the text it was built to serve. Our aim is to keep returning to the text itself as the fixed standard beneath every tradition, including our own.

What This Does — and Does Not — Mean

We do not claim to read the Tanakh without any interpretation. No reader of any tradition does; the text itself contains law, narrative, poetry, and prophecy, and every honest reader has to decide how those pieces fit together. What we do claim is a method: we go to the Hebrew text directly, we test every conclusion against it, and we let it override tradition rather than the reverse. Our conclusions are offered as our best-faith reading under that method — held with conviction, not asserted as the only reading anyone could reach.

We would rather be judged as careful and honest about our method than as claiming a certainty the text itself does not hand us.