

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

508(c)(1)(a) Free Church • Sole Tanakh Authority

A Study for Judaism • Christianity • Islam

DOCUMENT 203

THE GROUND AND THE COVENANT: GENESIS 3:17 AND THE MARRIAGE BOND

A Covenant Deep Dive on the Curse, the Marriage Covenant, and Biblical Versus Modern Marriage

July 2026

Elder Kepha Arcemont, Founder

miqdashbethel.org • miqdashbethel@gmail.com • 402-218-9530

PO Box 762, Pearl River, Louisiana 70452

☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☩ ISLAM
<i>Kiddushin</i> (קִדּוּשִׁין, sanctification/betrothal) frames marriage as a covenant of consecration, sealed historically by the <i>ketubah</i> (כְּתוּבָה, marriage contract) — obligations are written, witnessed, and enforceable.	Christianity draws directly on Bereishit (Genesis) 2:24 — 'one flesh' — reading marriage as a covenant sign of Messiah's union with His people (Ephesians 5:31–32), while affirming the Tanakh's prior order of headship and mutual duty.	Islam frames marriage (<i>nikah</i> , نِكَاح) as a solemn contract (<i>mithaqan ghalizan</i> , Qur'an 4:21) with mandatory <i>mahr</i> (bridal gift) — a structural echo of the Torah's כְּתוּבָה obligation.

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 The Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority.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 Devarim (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; Tehillim (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.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document applies the sole authority of the written Tanakh. Yahweh (Y) and Elohim appear in bold throughout. Hebrew book names are given with English in parentheses. Hebrew transliterations appear in bold italic with English meaning in parentheses at every occurrence. Scripture references are bold. Three audiences are addressed simultaneously: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Rabbinic commentary, New Testament texts, and the Qur'an are cited as historical and comparative reference — not as binding authority. The Written Tanakh governs all conclusions.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Torah	Bereishit (Genesis), Shemot (Exodus), Vayikra (Leviticus), Devarim (Deuteronomy)	Foundation of marriage covenant and the Genesis 3 rupture
Nevi'im (Prophets)	Malachi, Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah), Hoshea (Hosea)	Prophetic witness to covenant fidelity in marriage
Ketuvim (Writings)	Mishlei (Proverbs), Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs), Tehillim (Psalms), Rut (Ruth)	Wisdom and narrative witness to covenant love and loyalty

The verse most quoted about **Bereishit (Genesis) 3:17** is read as if it stands alone. It does not. It is the sentencing phase of a legal proceeding that began with the marriage covenant established in **Bereishit (Genesis) 2:18–24**, and its consequences fall directly onto that covenant. This study reads **Bereishit (Genesis) 3:17** in its full context — the man's part in the rupture, the structural curse on the *adamah* (אֲדָמָה, ground) — and then asks the question every generation since Eden has had to answer: what does the covenant of marriage look like after the rupture, and how does the modern institution of marriage compare to it?

I. BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 3:17 IN ITS COVENANT CONTEXT

I-A. The Text and Its Legal Structure

The full verse reads: "And to Adam He said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife (*ishtekha*, אִשְׁתְּךָ) and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed (*arur*, אָרוּר) is the *adamah* (אֲדָמָה, ground) because of you; in toil (*itsabon*, עֲצָבוֹן) you shall eat of it all the days of your life.'" (Bereishit [Genesis] 3:17, JPS 1985)

Two structural details govern everything that follows. First, **Yahweh** does not pronounce *arur* (אָרוּר, cursed) over Adam himself — the curse falls on the *adamah* (ground). The serpent alone receives a direct personal curse (**Bereishit [Genesis] 3:14**). This is a legal distinction, not a softening: Adam's covenant standing before **Yahweh** is not annihilated, but his labor — and by extension his role as provider within the marriage covenant — is now structurally resisted by the created order itself. Second, the reason given is explicitly relational: "**because you have listened to the voice of your wife.**" The judgment on the man is inseparable from the judgment on the marriage. This is not a marriage narrative with a curse attached to it — it is a covenant-rupture narrative in which marriage is the field on which the rupture occurred and the field on which its consequences will now play out.

I-B. "Because You Have Listened to the Voice of Your Wife" — What This Does and Does Not Mean

This clause has been badly misused across religious history to argue that a husband must never receive counsel from his wife. That reading collapses under the Tanakh's own witness: **Mishlei (Proverbs) 31:26** praises the *eshet chayil* (woman of valor) who "**opens her mouth with wisdom.**" The failure in Eden was not that Adam listened to counsel — it was that he used his wife's voice as a substitute for his own accountability before **Yahweh's** direct command, given to him in **Bereishit (Genesis) 2:16–17** before אִשָּׁה was even formed. Adam was present and silent during the serpent's deception (**Bereishit [Genesis] 3:6** — "**she also gave some to her husband with her, and he ate**"). The rupture was covenant abdication — a husband failing to exercise the responsibility **Yahweh** had specifically entrusted to him — not an indictment of marital counsel itself.

I-C. Word Study: The Serpent (Nachash)

The Hebrew word translated "*serpent*" throughout **Bereishit (Genesis) 3** is *nachash* (נָחָשׁ), Strong's **H5175**, a masculine noun meaning a snake, traditionally derived from its hiss. The noun is built on the verbal root **H5172** (*nachash*), which does not mean simply "to hiss" but "**to practice divination, to observe signs, to whisper an enchantment.**" The related noun *nichush* (נִחוּשׁ, divination, omen-reading) comes from the same root and is condemned outright in **Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:26** and **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 18:10**. The name of the creature in **Genesis 3** therefore carries, at the root level, the very activity it will use against the woman: not open assault, but whispered suggestion, sign-reading, and the twisting of — rather than the outright denial of — what **Yahweh** had actually said.

The Arum/Arom Wordplay. Genesis binds the serpent to the humans by a deliberate pun that only appears in the Hebrew text. **Genesis 2:25** ends with the man and his wife described as *arumim* (עֲרוּמִים, *naked*) and unashamed. The very next verse, **Genesis 3:1**, opens: "**Now the**

serpent was more crafty (*arum*, ערום) than any beast of the field." *Arumim* (naked) and *arum* (crafty) share the same consonantal root (ערם), a wordplay every Hebrew reader would have caught immediately. The humans are *arum* in the sense of exposed, uncovered, without pretense; the serpent is *arum* in the sense of shrewd, calculating, covering his true intent. The narrative places transparency and cunning side by side using one root, then shows the cunning exploiting the transparency. *Arum* itself is morally neutral elsewhere in the Tanakh — **Mishlei (Proverbs) 12:16, 14:15** commend the *arum* (prudent) man who conceals his knowledge rather than blurting out folly. The serpent's fault in **Genesis 3** is not shrewdness itself but shrewdness placed in service of a direct contradiction of **Yahweh's** word ("You shall not surely die," Genesis 3:4, against **Yahweh's** own "you shall surely die," Genesis 2:17).

The Curse Reshapes the Creature. In **Genesis 3:14**, **Yahweh's** direct, personal *arur* (cursed) sentence — the only one of the three judgments in Genesis 3 spoken as an unmitigated curse rather than a structural consequence — changes the *nachash's* form: "**upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.**" The sentence presumes the creature previously moved and fed some other way; the text does not explain the prior form, and *Miqdash Bethel* takes no speculative position on it beyond what is written. What is written is a demotion — from whatever standing the *nachash* held among "**every beast of the field which Yahweh Elohim had made**" (Genesis 3:1) to the lowest posture of any creature named in Torah.

Nachash Elsewhere in the Tanakh. The same root recurs at decisive covenant moments. In **Bemidbar (Numbers) 21:6–9**, **Yahweh** sends *nechashim* (serpents) among the rebellious people, and Moshe is commanded to make a bronze *nachash* (later named *Nechushtan*, נְחֻשְׁטָן, in **2 Melachim [2 Kings] 18:4**, where King Hezekiah destroys it once Israel begins burning incense to it — a direct witness that even a Yahweh-commanded object can become an idol if venerated rather than merely obeyed). The related noun *saraph* (סָרַף, fiery/burning one), used for the serpents in Numbers 21:6 and for the throne-attendants in **Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 6:2**, links serpent imagery to the highest heavenly beings in Israelite literature, though the Tanakh nowhere states that the *saraphim* of Isaiah 6 and the Eden *nachash* are the same order of being. **Iyov (Job) 26:13** and **Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 27:1** speak of *nachash bariach* (נָחָשׁ בָּרִיחַ, the fleeing/twisting serpent) as a figure for chaos and hostile world-powers that Yahweh alone will judge — language the prophets use figuratively, not as commentary on the identity of the Eden serpent.

Judaism. Rabbinic sources are divided on how literally to read the *nachash*. *Bereishit Rabbah* 19 (cited as historical rabbinic commentary, not binding authority) describes the pre-curse serpent as upright and gifted with speech and reason, envious of Adam's standing. Other rabbinic and later kabbalistic sources read the *nachash* as a figure for the *yetzer hara* (the evil inclination) operating within the human heart rather than, or in addition to, an external agent. Both readings agree on the plain sense of the written text: the *nachash* is judged directly by Yahweh and its punishment is permanent and physical.

Christianity. The New Testament identifies the Eden serpent with *ba-satan* (the adversary): **Revelation 12:9** names "**that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan,**" and **2 Corinthians 11:3** warns that "**the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness.**" This identification is a later

interpretive development, not a claim the Torah text itself makes about the *nachash's* identity — cited here as comparative reference only, consistent with the Doctrinal Authority standard.

Islam. The Qur'an's account of the Garden (*al-Jannah*, Qur'an 7:19–22; 20:115–123) does not use a serpent at all in the text itself. The tempter is *Shaytan* or *Iblis*, who approaches Adam and his wife directly through *waswasa* (whispering, Qur'an 7:20; 20:120) rather than through an animal intermediary. Later hadith and tafsir traditions in some streams associate a serpent or peacock as a vehicle Iblis used to enter the Garden, but this is post-Qur'anic tradition, not the Qur'anic text, and is noted only as comparative background. The convergence across all three traditions is the method, not the form: divination, whispered suggestion, and the twisting of a prior word — exactly what the root *nachash* (H5172) already names in Hebrew before the narrative names the creature.

II. THE MARRIAGE COVENANT BEFORE THE RUPTURE — BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 2:18–24

II-A. Lo Tov Heyot HaAdam Levado — It Is Not Good for the Man to Be Alone

Before sin enters the narrative, **Yahweh** Himself makes the first negative evaluation in creation: **"It is not good (*lo tov*) that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper corresponding to him (*ezer kenegdo*, עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ)." (Bereishit [Genesis] 2:18)** The Hebrew *ezer* (עֵזֶר, helper) — Strong's **H5828** — is used elsewhere in Tanakh overwhelmingly of **Yahweh** Himself as Israel's helper (Tehillim [Psalms] 33:20; 121:2). It carries no connotation of inferiority; a helper can be stronger than the one helped. *Kenegdo* (כְּנֶגְדּוֹ) means 'corresponding to him' or '*opposite him, as his counterpart*' — someone who stands face-to-face as an equal counterpart, not beneath or behind.

II-B. One Flesh — Basar Echad and the Covenant Formula

The marriage institution is established in:

Bereishit (Genesis) 2:24: "Therefore a man shall leave (*ya'azov*) his father and his mother, and shall cleave (*dabaq*, דָּבַק) to his wife (*אִשָּׁה*); and they shall become one flesh (*basar echad*, בָּשָׂר אֶחָד)."

Three covenant verbs structure the institution: **leave** (a public, legal severing of the prior household's authority), **cleave** — *dabaq* (דָּבַק) Strong's **H1692** — the same verb used of Israel's covenant loyalty to **Yahweh** Himself (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 10:20, '*u-vo tidbaq*, and to Him you shall cleave'), and **become one flesh** — a binding union that is structural, not merely emotional. Marriage is thus given **covenant vocabulary** — the same root that describes Israel's bond to **Yahweh** — before the fall ever occurs. It is not a social convention; it is a *brit* (בְּרִית, covenant), confirmed explicitly in **Mishlei (Proverbs) 2:17**, which calls the abandoned wife's husband **"the covenant (*brit*) of her Elohim,"** and in **Malachi 2:14**, where **Yahweh** Himself is called **"witness between you and the wife of your youth... yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant (*brit*)."**

II-C. Peru U'Revu — Purpose Within the Covenant

The prior blessing, **Bereishit (Genesis) 1:28**, "be fruitful and multiply (*peru u-revu*, פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ)", is given to the man and woman together, not to the man alone. Marriage in the Tanakh is never framed as an individual arrangement for personal fulfillment first — it is framed as a joint covenant commission: image-bearing, dominion, and generational continuity carried out by the man and his woman, covenant partners functioning as *basar echad*.

III. HOW THE RUPTURE OF BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 3 REORDERS THE MARRIAGE COVENANT

III-A. Teshuqah and Mashal — Genesis 3:16

To the woman **Yahweh** said:

"Your desire (*teshuqah*, תְּשׁוּקָה) shall be for your husband, and he shall rule (*mashal*, מָשַׁל) over you." (Bereishit [Genesis] 3:16)

The same rare pairing of *teshuqah* and *mashal* recurs four verses later in **Bereishit (Genesis) 4:7**, where sin's "desire" is "for" Cain, and Cain is told he "must rule over it." Read against its only Tanakh parallel, *teshuqah* in **Genesis 3:16** describes a grasping, contesting desire — not simple affection — and *mashal* describes a rule that must now be actively asserted rather than a headship that flows naturally from a whole covenant partnership. What was, before the rupture, a face-to-face *ezer kenegdo* relationship of correspondence becomes, after the rupture, a relationship marked by contest and domination. This is diagnosis, not divine design for marriage — the Tanakh describes the consequence of covenant rupture, not the blueprint for covenant marriage given in Genesis 2.

III-B. The Man's Judgment Falls on His Covenant Role as Provider

Genesis 3:17–19 falls specifically on the man's provisioning function within the marriage covenant: the *adamah* resists him, thorns and thistles multiply, and bread is now earned "by the sweat of your face" (Bereishit [Genesis] 3:19). Marriage after Eden is marriage under structural friction on both sides: the woman's part strained by *teshuqah* and *mashal*, the man's part strained by resistant ground and exhausting toil. Neither curse falls on the *basar echad* bond itself — **Yahweh** does not revoke the one-flesh covenant of **Genesis 2:24**. He describes the conditions under which that covenant must now be kept.

IV. BIBLICAL MARRIAGE VERSUS MODERN MARRIAGE

The question every covenant community must answer honestly is not whether modern marriage differs from biblical marriage — it plainly does — but **where** it differs, and whether those differences represent a departure from the *brit* (בְּרִית) structure **Yahweh** established in **Genesis 2:24** or a legitimate development consistent with it.

IV-A. Covenant Versus Contract

Biblical marriage is consistently described using *brit* (covenant) vocabulary — **Malachi 2:14**, **Mishlei (Proverbs) 2:17**, **Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 16:8** ("I entered into a covenant (*brit*) with you", describing **Yahweh's** own bond to Israel using marriage as the picture). A covenant is a binding relational commitment with **Yahweh** as witness (**Malachi 2:14**), sustained by *chesed* (דֶּסֶד, covenant-loyalty) and intended as permanent. Modern civil marriage, particularly in its post-1969 American form, is structured primarily as a **private contract** between two individuals, dissolvable unilaterally by either party without demonstrated cause. This is a real structural shift, not merely a change in tone.

IV-B. Permanence: The Ketubah/Get Structure Versus No-Fault Dissolution

Historic Jewish marriage practice required a written *ketubah* (כְּתוּבָה) specifying the husband's financial and material obligations to the wife, and dissolution required a formal *get* (גֵּט, bill of divorce) under **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 24:1–4** — a documented, witnessed legal process, not a private decision. In American civil law, California's 1969 Family Law Act eliminated the requirement to prove marital fault, replacing it with dissolution on the basis of "irreconcilable differences." Every state adopted some form of no-fault divorce by 2010. The divorce rate rose from roughly 9.2 per 1,000 married women in 1960 to a peak of about 22.8 in 1979–81, before declining; current research places lifetime divorce risk for first marriages at roughly 40 percent. Biblical marriage's structural expectation of permanence was reinforced by written obligation and a formal legal exit process; modern marriage's structural expectation is now formally exit-at-will.

IV-C. Yahweh's Own Position on Divorce

The Tanakh does not present divorce as morally neutral. **Malachi 2:16** reads:

"For I hate divorce (*shalach*), says Yahweh, the Elohim of Israel, and him who covers his garment with violence... so guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not break faith."

This follows immediately from **Malachi 2:14–15**, which grounds the objection in covenant-breaking against **"the wife of your youth"** and the shared purpose of raising **"godly offspring."** **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 24:1–4** regulates divorce as an existing reality — permitting it under specific cause and forbidding remarriage to the same spouse after an intervening marriage — but regulation of a practice is not the same as endorsement of its ease. Modern no-fault structures remove even the regulatory friction Devarim 24 assumed.

IV-D. Mutuality Then and Now

A frequent modern claim is that biblical marriage was purely hierarchical while modern marriage is purely egalitarian. Both halves of that claim oversimplify. The pre-rupture pattern of **Genesis 2:18–24** describes an *ezer kenegdo* — a face-to-face counterpart, not a subordinate — while **Genesis 3:16's** *mashal* describes a post-rupture condition, not the original design. At the same time, **Mishlei (Proverbs) 31:10–31** portrays a wife exercising independent economic judgment, property acquisition, and business authority within her household — a picture considerably more expansive than a purely hierarchical reading allows. Modern marriage's formal legal equality of the spouses corrects real historical abuses of *mashal*, but where it dispenses with covenant structure

altogether — with any binding, witnessed, permanent commitment — it moves past correction of the rupture’s distortion into the removal of the *basar echad* covenant framework itself.

IV-E. Companionship, Consumption, and the Ezer Kenegdo Standard

A further shift concerns marriage’s stated purpose. Biblical marriage’s purpose, as established before the fall, combines companionship ("**it is not good for man to be alone**"), joint dominion and generational continuity (*peru u-revu*), and covenant loyalty modeled on **Yahweh’s** own *chesed*. Contemporary Western marriage discourse frequently narrows this to individual emotional fulfillment alone — a marriage is framed as worth keeping only while it delivers personal happiness, and worth ending once it does not. **Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 4:9–12**’s picture of two who labor together and are not easily broken — "**a threefold cord is not quickly broken**" — describes a partnership built for endurance through hardship, not one contingent on continuous emotional satisfaction. This is the clearest point of departure: biblical marriage’s covenant structure was built to survive the very toil and friction **Genesis 3:16–19** describes; a marriage structured around continuous personal fulfillment has no built-in mechanism for surviving exactly that friction.

IV-F. Side-by-Side Comparison

ELEMENT	BIBLICAL MARRIAGE	MODERN (POST-1969 U.S.) MARRIAGE
Legal Nature	Covenant (<i>brit</i>) — witnessed by Yahweh, Malachi 2:14	Civil contract, dissolvable unilaterally without cause
Entry	<i>Ketubah</i> (written obligations); <i>qiddushin</i> (קִדּוּשִׁין, sanctification)	Marriage license; obligations largely undocumented between spouses
Exit	<i>Get</i> — formal, witnessed, cause-oriented (Devarim 24:1–4)	No-fault dissolution; “irreconcilable differences” sufficient
Stated Purpose	Companionship, joint dominion, generational continuity, covenant טוֹן	Frequently centered on individual emotional fulfillment
Yahweh’s Stated View	“I hate divorce” (Malachi 2:16	Not addressed by civil law; treated as a private matter

V. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — MARRIAGE AFTER THE RUPTURE

ELEMENT	JUDAISM	CHRISTIANITY	ISLAM
---------	---------	--------------	-------

Covenant Structure	Retains written <i>ketubah</i> and <i>get</i> procedures rooted directly in Devarim 24	Reads Genesis 2:24 through Ephesians 5:31–32 as a picture of Messiah and the assembly; historically the strongest permanence emphasis of the three	Nikah as a contract (<i>mithaqan ghalizan</i>) with mandatory <i>mahr</i> — structurally closest surviving parallel to the <i>ketubah</i>
Departure Risk	Civil-law adaptation in diaspora communities can bypass <i>get</i> procedure, producing the <i>agunah</i> (chained wife) problem	Doctrinal disputes over the scope of the exception clause in Matthew 19:9 have produced widely divergent practice on remarriage	Regional customary practice sometimes treats <i>talaq</i> (unilateral repudiation) more permissively than the Qur'an's own procedural safeguards (Qur'an 4:35; 65:1–2) intend
Convergence	All three traditions require some documented, witnessed process for both entry and exit — none treats marriage as informally dissolvable, in contrast to no-fault civil practice		

VI. SEVEN COVENANT DECLARATIONS ON MARRIAGE

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
I	Marriage was established by Yahweh before sin entered creation, as a covenant (<i>brit</i>) of leaving, cleaving, and becoming one flesh (<i>basar echad</i>) — not as a human social convention.	Bereishit (Genesis) 2:24
II	The wife is created as an <i>ezer kenegdo</i> — a helper corresponding to her husband, a face-to-face counterpart, not an inferior.	Bereishit (Genesis) 2:18

II I	The contest and domination described in <i>teshuqah</i> and <i>mashal</i> are consequences of covenant rupture, not the original design for marriage.	Bereishit (Genesis) 3:16
I V	The man's judgment in Genesis 3:17 falls on his provisioning role within the marriage covenant, not on the marriage bond itself, which Yahweh does not revoke.	Bereishit (Genesis) 3:17–19
V	Yahweh states plainly that He hates divorce; marriage is not a contract to be exited at will but a covenant witnessed by Him.	Malachi 2:14–16
V I	Where marriage is regulated for dissolution in the Torah, the regulation presumes documented cause and formal process — not unilateral, causeless exit.	Devarim (Deuteronomy) 24:1–4
V II	Marriage's covenant purpose — companionship, joint dominion, and enduring partnership through hardship — is structurally suited to survive toil and friction, not merely continuous emotional satisfaction.	Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 4:9–12

VII. THE COVENANT RESPONSE

The comparison between biblical and modern marriage is not an argument for nostalgia. It is a covenant audit. Where modern marriage has corrected real historical abuses of *mashal* — legal subordination, denial of property rights, forced unions — it has moved **toward** the *ezer kenegdo* standard of **Genesis 2**, not away from it. Where modern marriage has replaced documented, witnessed, cause-based covenant structure with a private contract dissolvable at will, it has moved away from the *brit* (בְּרִית) standard **Yahweh** Himself set as witness in **Malachi 2:14**. The covenant community's task is not to romanticize the ancient world's failures, nor to accept every modern development uncritically, but to test both against the fixed standard: does this practice draw the marriage covenant closer to *basar echad* and דָּוָד, or does it dissolve the covenant structure **Yahweh** established before the rupture ever occurred?

SCRIPTURE INDEX

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
-----------	---------	---------

Bereishit (Genesis) 1:28	Peru u-revu — be fruitful and multiply, given jointly	II-C
Bereishit (Genesis) 2:16–17	Yahweh's direct command to Adam, prior to Eve's formation	I-B
Bereishit (Genesis) 2:18	It is not good for man to be alone — ezer kenegdo established	II-A
Bereishit (Genesis) 2:24	Leave, cleave, one flesh — the marriage covenant formula	II-B
Bereishit (Genesis) 3:6	Adam present and silent during the deception	I-B
Bereishit (Genesis) 3:14	Direct personal curse on the serpent, contrast to 3:17	I-A, I-C
Bereishit (Genesis) 3:16	Teshuqah and mashal — contest and domination as rupture consequence	III-A
Bereishit (Genesis) 3:17–19	Curse on the ground; man's provisioning role under toil	I-A, III-B
Bereishit (Genesis) 4:7	Teshuqah/mashal parallel — sin's desire for Cain	III-A
Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:20	Dabaq — cleave to Yahweh, same root as marital cleaving	II-B
Devarim (Deuteronomy) 24:1–4	Regulated divorce procedure — documented cause required	IV-B, IV-C
Mishlei (Proverbs) 2:17	Husband called the covenant (brit) of her God	II-B
Mishlei (Proverbs) 31:10–31	Eshet chayil — independent economic and household authority	IV-D
Malachi 2:14–16	Yahweh as witness to marriage covenant; “I hate divorce”	IV-A, IV-C

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 16:8	Yahweh's covenant (brit) with Israel pictured as marriage	IV-A
Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 4:9–12	Threefold cord not quickly broken — enduring partnership	IV-E
Bereishit (Genesis) 2:25	Arumim — naked and unashamed; sets up the arum wordplay	I-C
Bereishit (Genesis) 3:1	Nachash more arum (crafty) than any beast of the field	I-C
Bereishit (Genesis) 3:4	Nachash's direct contradiction of Yahweh's word	I-C
Bemidbar (Numbers) 21:6–9	Fiery serpents (saraph) and the bronze nachash (Nechushtan)	I-C
2 Melachim (2 Kings) 18:4	Hezekiah destroys the Nechushtan once it becomes an idol	I-C
Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 6:2	Saraphim — same root as the fiery serpents of Numbers 21	I-C
Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 27:1	Nachash bariach — the fleeing serpent, figure for hostile world-powers	I-C
Iyov (Job) 26:13	Nachash bariach paired with the eclipse-dragon	I-C
Mishlei (Proverbs) 12:16, 14:15	Arum (prudent) used positively of the wise man	I-C

“Let marriage be held in honor among all... for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 24 and Malachi 2:14–16 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

Document 203 • The Ground and the Covenant: Genesis 3:17 and the Marriage Bond • July 2026
 miqdashbethel.org • miqdashbethel@gmail.com • 402-218-9530 • PO Box 762, Pearl River, Louisiana 70452
 508(c)(1)(a) Free Church • Sole Tanakh Authority • Reaching Judaism, Christianity, and Islam