

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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A Study for Judaism • Christianity • Islam*

DOCUMENT 257

THE LIFE IS IN THE BLOOD

A Covenant Deep Dive into HIV and AIDS — Is It the “*Leprosy*” of Our Day?

Is AIDS the Same as What the Bible Calls Leprosy, Where Did It Come From, What Does the Tanakh Say About Disease Carried in Blood and Body, and What Can the Covenant Believer Do to Prevent It? — A Three-Religion Covenant Response

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The Message is Sent to the World

REACHING JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

✡ JUDAISM	✝ CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
The Torah guards the camp against uncleanness carried in bodily discharges (Leviticus 15) and in blood (Leviticus 17:11), and it commands faithfulness in marriage. Rabbinic teaching holds that saving a life sets aside nearly every other command. How does the written covenant speak to a virus carried in blood and body fluids?	In the 1980s some prominent preachers called AIDS God's judgment, while churches and missions became among the largest providers of HIV care in Africa. The U.S. program PEPFAR, launched in 2003 with strong church support, is credited by the U.S. government with saving millions of lives. The Tanakh speaks first on judgment, mercy, and protection.	Islam forbids <i>zina</i> (unlawful sexual relations) — “ do not come near zina ” (Q. 17:32) — and male circumcision is practiced almost universally among Muslims. Yet stigma keeps many from testing, and the Middle East and North Africa are among the few regions where new HIV infections have risen since 2010.

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 The Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority.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 is the companion to **Doc 256 (*Outside the Camp*)**, which examined the Torah's *tzara'at* (*skin affliction*) and Hansen's disease. It applies the sole authority of the written Tanakh to five questions about HIV and AIDS: whether AIDS is the same as the "*leprosy*" of the Bible or the leprosy of medicine, where the disease came from, what the Tanakh says about disease carried in blood and body, whether AIDS is a judgment, and what the covenant believer can do to prevent it. **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. Scripture references are bold, and every quotation is set in bold italic. Verse numbers follow the English version; where the Hebrew numbering differs, it is given in brackets. Scripture is rendered in a literal working translation from the Hebrew. Each finding is graded under the two-or-three-witness standard as **Corroborated**, **Single witness**, or **Not in the text**; medical claims are graded against the published research and marked Not corroborated where the research does not support them. Rabbinic literature, the New Testament, and the Qur'an and hadith appear only in the tables and the Three-Religion Audit, as comparative reference. The medical sections are covenant study, not medical advice.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Torah	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	Circumcision; the life in the blood; discharges and the camp; the plague at Peor; the wasting disease; the parapet; each for his own sin; choose life
Nevi'im (Prophets)	2 Samuel, 2 Kings, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Malachi	The discharge beside tzara'at; the one esteemed <i>“stricken”</i> ; each soul answers for itself; faithfulness to the wife of one's youth
Ketuvim (Writings)	Psalms, Proverbs, Job, 2 Chronicles	The body consumed at the end of unfaithfulness; the father of the fatherless; the friends who judged the sufferer; Uzziah struck by Yahweh

COMPARATIVE TEXTS CITED — HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE REFERENCE ONLY

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
New Testament	Matthew 25:36; James 1:27	Visiting the sick; caring for orphans and widows
Qur'an and hadith	Q. 17:32; 5:32	Zina forbidden; saving one life as saving all humankind
Rabbinic literature	Talmud Yoma 85b; Mishnah Zavim	Saving life overrides the commands; the laws of the zav
Earlier Library documents	Doc 256 (Outside the Camp); Doc 214 (Behold a Pale Horse); Brit Milah research study (June 2026)	Tzara'at and leprosy; the man-made-virus claim; circumcision and HIV
History of the epidemic	CDC MMWR, June 5, 1981; Serwadda et al. 1985 (Lancet, <i>“slim disease”</i>); Worobey et al. 2008 (Nature)	First reports in America and Africa; the origin of HIV-1
Medical and scientific research	UNAIDS 2025–2026 fact sheets; WHO/UNAIDS 2007 circumcision recommendation and trials; Wawer et al.	Africa, transmission, prevention, treatment, and the leprosy link

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
	2009 (Lancet); PARTNER studies; aidsmap on mother-to-child transmission; PURPOSE 1 and 2 (lenacapavir, FDA 2025); leprosy-HIV systematic review (PLOS NTD 2022)	

I. FRAMING THE QUESTION — THE LEPROSY OF OUR DAY?

I-A. The Questions as They Are Asked

When AIDS appeared in the early 1980s, it was quickly compared to leprosy. Both brought wasting, visible marks on the skin, fear, and exclusion; both were preached as judgment. **Doc 256** found that the Torah's *tzara'at* (*skin affliction*) is not the same as Hansen's disease. This document asks the next question:

First: is AIDS similar to, or the same as, what the Bible calls leprosy, or what medicine calls leprosy?

Second: what is HIV, where did it come from, and what is it today, above all in Africa?

Third: what does the Tanakh say about disease carried in blood and bodily fluids?

Fourth: is AIDS a judgment from **Yahweh**?

Fifth: what can the covenant believer do to prevent it?

I-B. What HIV and AIDS Are

HIV, the human immunodeficiency virus, infects the white blood cells that direct the body's defense against infection, called CD4 cells, and destroys them slowly over years. AIDS, the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, is the late stage of untreated HIV, when the defense has collapsed and the body is overrun by infections and cancers it would normally resist. Without treatment, the passage from infection to AIDS commonly takes about ten years. With treatment begun early, a person with HIV can expect a near-normal life.

II. THE WORD STUDY — WHAT THE HEBREW SAYS

The Tanakh has no word for a virus. It has a precise vocabulary for disease, bodily discharge, blood, plague, and wasting. The table sets out the terms this study relies on.

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
<i>tzara'at</i> (<i>skin affliction</i>) צָרַעַת	H6883	The covenant condition of skin, cloth, and stone (Doc 256)	Leviticus 13:2
<i>zov</i> (<i>a discharge / flow</i>) זֹב	H2101	A flow from the body that makes a person unclean	Leviticus 15:2–3
<i>zav</i> (<i>one with a discharge</i>) זָב	H2100	The man with a discharge; paired with the one with <i>tzara'at</i>	Leviticus 15:4; Numbers 5:2; 2 Samuel 3:29
<i>dam</i> (<i>blood</i>) דָּם	H1818	Blood, which carries the life	Leviticus 17:11; Genesis 9:4
<i>nefesh</i> (<i>life / soul</i>) נֶפֶשׁ	H5315	The living self; “ <i>the nefesh of the flesh is in the blood</i> ”	Leviticus 17:11
<i>shachefet</i> (<i>wasting / consumption</i>) שָׁחַף־ת	H7829	A wasting disease that consumes the body	Leviticus 26:16; Deuteronomy 28:22
<i>kaddachat</i> (<i>fever</i>) קָדַחַת	H6920	A burning fever, named beside the wasting disease	Leviticus 26:16; Deuteronomy 28:22
<i>choli</i> (<i>sickness</i>) חָלִי	H2483	Sickness in general	Deuteronomy 7:15; 28:61
<i>maggefah</i> (<i>plague / blow</i>) מַגֵּפָה	H4046	A plague sent as a blow	Numbers 25:8–9
<i>zanah</i> (<i>to commit harlotry</i>) זָנָה	H2181	Sexual unfaithfulness, and covenant unfaithfulness	Numbers 25:1
<i>bagad</i> (<i>to deal treacherously</i>) בָּגַד	H898	To betray a covenant partner	Malachi 2:14–16
<i>ma'akeh</i> (<i>parapet / railing</i>) מַעֲקֵה	H4624	A guard built against foreseeable harm	Deuteronomy 22:8
<i>mul</i> (<i>to circumcise</i>) מוּל	H4135	The covenant cut in the flesh	Genesis 17:10–12; Leviticus 12:3

Three lexical observations govern what follows.

First, the Torah names *tzara'at* (*skin affliction*) and *zov* (*a discharge / flow*) as separate conditions, and names them side by side: “*every one with tzara'at, and every one with a discharge*” (Numbers 5:2; compare 2 Samuel 3:29). The Torah does not fold every disease into *tzara'at* (*skin affliction*), and neither should its readers.

Second, the Torah's *shachefet* (*wasting / consumption*) describes a body consumed. When AIDS was first described in Uganda in 1985, the people there already called it “*slim disease*” for the same reason. The likeness is in the description; the Tanakh does not name HIV, and the word is not a prophecy of it.

Third, *dam* (*blood*) and *nefesh* (*life / soul*) are joined in the covenant: “*the life of the flesh is in the blood*” (Leviticus 17:11). HIV is a disease of the blood and of the body's fluids. The covenant's reverence for blood is where the Tanakh's witness on this disease begins.

III. IS AIDS THE SAME AS LEPROSY?

III-A. AIDS and the Torah's Tzara'at

AIDS often shows itself on the skin: the purple or reddish patches of Kaposi's sarcoma, a cancer common in untreated HIV; fungal infections; and scaly, spreading rashes. Some of these would fit the kinds of marks **Leviticus 13** describes — reddish-white, scaly, spreading, with raw flesh (**Leviticus 13:10, 19, 24, 43**). But **Doc 256** found that *tzara'at* (*skin affliction*) was a covenant category covering many conditions, including cloth and house walls, and declared clean when it covered the whole body (**Leviticus 13:13, 47; 14:34**). HIV is a disease of the blood and immune system; its skin signs come from other infections and cancers that take hold because the defense has failed.

Finding — that AIDS is the *tzara'at* (*skin affliction*) of the Torah is **Not in the text**. Some AIDS-related skin conditions could have fallen under a priest's examination; the disease itself is not described there.

III-B. AIDS and Hansen's Disease

FEATURE	HANSEN'S DISEASE (LEPROSY)	HIV / AIDS
Cause	A bacterium, <i>Mycobacterium leprae</i>	A virus, HIV
What it attacks	Skin and nerves	The immune system's CD4 cells
How it spreads	Droplets from nose and mouth during long, close contact with an untreated person	Blood, sex, shared needles, and from mother to child in pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding

FEATURE	HANSEN'S DISEASE (LEPROSY)	HIV / AIDS
Not spread by	Brief contact, touch, sex, or pregnancy	Touch, hugging, sharing food or cups, toilets, insects
Time to illness	About five years, up to twenty	About ten years to AIDS without treatment
Cure	Yes: 6–12 months of multidrug therapy	No cure yet; daily treatment controls it for life
Death	Rarely fatal; disability if untreated	Fatal if untreated; 570,000 AIDS-related deaths in 2025
Stigma	Lifelong exile in past centuries	Shunning, and preached as judgment since the 1980s

The two diseases use nearly opposite routes. Leprosy spreads through the air in a shared household; HIV spreads through blood and sex, and ordinary household life does not pass it on.

III-C. Where the Two Diseases Meet in the Body

Unlike tuberculosis, which HIV makes far more dangerous and which is the leading cause of death among people with HIV, leprosy does not appear to be much more common in people with HIV. The link shows up in treatment. When a person with HIV starts treatment and the immune system recovers, a hidden leprosy infection can suddenly show itself. A 2022 review of cases over twenty years found this usually happened about two to two-and-a-half months after starting HIV treatment, most often as a sudden inflammatory flare of the skin patches; patients did well when both diseases were treated together (*PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, 2022).

Finding — that AIDS is the same disease as Hansen's disease is **Not corroborated**. They are different infections spread by different routes; they meet in the same patient, especially in Africa and Brazil, and HIV treatment can bring hidden leprosy to the surface.

III-D. Where the Real Likeness Lies

The strongest likeness is not in the body but in how the sick have been treated. Both diseases have been read as the direct judgment of **Yahweh**; both have led to shunning; and in both, the fear of being shunned has kept people from being tested and treated, which spreads the disease further. In the Torah's own pattern the one outside the camp was examined again and brought back (**Leviticus 13:4–6; 14:3, 14**). That pattern governs the covenant response to both.

IV. HIV IN THE DAYS OF OLD AND TODAY

IV-A. Where HIV Came From

HIV-1, the virus behind the worldwide epidemic, descends from a virus of chimpanzees in west-central Africa. A 2008 study in *Nature* (Worobey and colleagues), working from tissue samples preserved in Kinshasa in 1959 and 1960, dated the start of the main strain's spread in people to about 1908, within a range of 1884 to 1924. The best-supported account is that a hunter in southeastern Cameroon was exposed to chimpanzee blood while hunting or butchering, and the virus traveled down the river routes to Léopoldville, now Kinshasa, where it spread quietly for decades before exploding in the second half of the century. HIV-2, a milder and less common form found mainly in West Africa, came from a monkey called the sooty mangabey.

The Torah counts apes and monkeys among the unclean animals:

“whatever goes on its paws, among all the animals that go on all fours, they are unclean to you” (Leviticus 11:27).

It forbids eating blood and handling the carcass of an unclean animal (Leviticus 11:24–28; 17:10–14). The worldwide epidemic began, as far as science can trace it, when a person was exposed to the blood of an animal the covenant forbids. As in **Doc 256**, that is worth noticing; it does not show that the food law was given to prevent HIV, and the Torah does not say so.

Doc 214 (*Behold a Pale Horse*) examined William Cooper's claim that HIV was a man-made weapon and found it without evidence. The research above confirms that finding.

IV-B. The First Reports

On June 5, 1981, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control reported a rare pneumonia in five previously healthy young men in Los Angeles, the first published report of what would be called AIDS. In 1985, doctors in the Rakai district of Uganda described a new wasting illness that local people called *“**slim disease,**”* and linked it to the same virus. The virus was identified in 1983. The first drug, zidovudine, came in 1987, and in 1996 combination treatment turned HIV from a death sentence into a manageable condition.

IV-C. The World and Africa Today

MEASURE	FIGURE	SOURCE AND YEAR
People living with HIV worldwide	About 41 million	UNAIDS, 2025

MEASURE	FIGURE	SOURCE AND YEAR
New infections worldwide	1.2 million	UNAIDS, 2025
AIDS-related deaths worldwide	570,000	UNAIDS, 2025
People receiving treatment	32.1 million	UNAIDS, end of 2025
People living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa	26.3 million (about 64% of the world)	UNAIDS, 2024
New infections in sub-Saharan Africa	650,000 (about half the world)	UNAIDS, 2024
Share of new infections in sub-Saharan Africa among women and girls	63%	UNAIDS, 2024
New infections among children in sub-Saharan Africa	About 98,000	UNAIDS, 2024

New infections worldwide have fallen by about 65 percent since the peak in the mid-1990s, and AIDS deaths by about 73 percent since 2004. Eastern and southern Africa carry the heaviest load, with 21.1 million people living with HIV. In Africa, HIV falls hardest on women and girls, many of them infected by a husband or partner.

V. WHAT THE TANAKH SAYS ABOUT DISEASE IN BLOOD AND BODY

V-A. The Life Is in the Blood

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls” (Leviticus 17:11)

The covenant treats blood as holy because it carries life. Blood is not eaten (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:10–14); blood that is shed is required of the one who shed it (Genesis 9:5–6). A disease carried in blood is a reminder of what the covenant already taught: blood is not common, and it is not to be handled carelessly. Shared needles, unscreened blood, and unsterile blades are the ways HIV travels by blood.

V-B. The Discharge and the Camp

Leviticus 15 governs the *zav* (*one with a discharge*), whose flesh “*runs with his discharge*” (**Leviticus 15:3**). The Torah traces how his uncleanness passes: to the bed he lies on, the seat he sits on, the one who touches his body, the one his spit falls on, and the vessel he touches (**Leviticus 15:4–12**). Those who touch, wash and bathe. When he is healed he counts seven days and brings an offering (**Leviticus 15:13–15**). The Torah pairs him with the one who has *tzara’at* (*skin affliction*) when it clears the camp (**Numbers 5:2**).

The Torah does not say what disease a *zav* (*one with a discharge*) had, and the text does not name HIV. Its reason is holiness: “*that they may not defile their camps, in the midst of which I dwell*” (**Numbers 5:3**). But it shows that the covenant drew careful boundaries around body fluids long before anyone knew what could travel in them.

Finding — that the covenant regulated contact with blood and bodily discharges is **Corroborated** (**Leviticus 15:2–12; 17:10–14; Numbers 5:2–3**). That the *zav* (*one with a discharge*) of **Leviticus 15** was HIV is **Not in the text**.

V-C. Unfaithfulness and the Body

The Tanakh does link sexual unfaithfulness with bodily ruin, in more than one witness.

Witness One — The plague at Peor. “*The people began to commit harlotry with the daughters of Moab*” (**Numbers 25:1**),

and the harlotry was joined to the worship of Baal of Peor;

“*those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand*” (**Numbers 25:9**).

The word is *maggefah* (*plague / blow*).

Witness Two — The body consumed. The father warns his son about the strange woman:

“*and you groan at your end, when your flesh and your body are consumed*” (**Proverbs 5:11**).

The young man who follows her goes:

“*as an ox to the slaughter ... till an arrow strikes through his liver*” (**Proverbs 7:22–23**).

Witness Three — The wasting disease. Among the curses for breaking the covenant are *shachefet* (*wasting / consumption*) and *kaddachat* (*fever*) (**Leviticus 26:15–16; Deuteronomy 28:22**). The Torah names these as consequences of national unfaithfulness, not as a diagnosis of any one person.

Against them stands the covenant's picture of faithfulness:

“Drink water from your own cistern ... rejoice in the wife of your youth” (Proverbs 5:15, 18),

and the prophet's charge to husbands:

“let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth” (Malachi 2:15).

The word is *bagad* (to deal treacherously). In Africa today, where 63 percent of new infections are among women and girls, the husband's faithfulness is the protection of his wife.

Finding — that the Tanakh links sexual unfaithfulness with bodily ruin and plague is **Corroborated** (Numbers 25:1–9; Proverbs 5:11; 7:22–23; Leviticus 26:16).

V-D. Does Yahweh Give AIDS as He Gave 'Tzara'at?

Doc 256 (Section VI) showed that the Tanakh names **Yahweh** as the One who puts *tzara'at* (skin affliction) on a person and on a house:

“and I put a plague of tzara'at in a house of the land of your possession” (Leviticus 14:34)

He struck Miriam when the cloud departed (Numbers 12:9–10), and Uzziah went out of the Temple ***“because Yahweh had struck him”*** (2 Chronicles 26:20). The question here is whether the Tanakh says the same of a plague that follows sexual sin. It does, in three witnesses.

Witness One — The plague at Peor.

When ***“the people began to commit harlotry with the daughters of Moab”*** (Numbers 25:1), ***“the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel”*** (Numbers 25:3), and a *maggefab* (plague / blow) struck the camp until twenty-four thousand had died (Numbers 25:9). The plague was stopped only when Phinehas acted against the open sin (Numbers 25:7–8). The text names both the sin and the One who sent the blow.

Witness Two — The wasting disease sent by His own hand. In the covenant curses **Yahweh** speaks in the first person, just as He does in the house law:

“I also will do this to you: I will appoint over you terror, wasting disease and fever” (Leviticus 26:16).

The words are *shachefet* (wasting / consumption) and *kaddachat* (fever), named again in **Deuteronomy 28:22**. When AIDS was first described in Uganda, the people called it ***“slim disease”***

because it wasted the body. The Tanakh does not name HIV. But it does name **Yahweh** as the One who sends wasting disease on people who break His covenant.

Witness Three — The body consumed. The father warns that the way of the strange woman ends *“when your flesh and your body are consumed”* (Proverbs 5:11), and that the one who follows her goes *“as an ox to the slaughter”* (Proverbs 7:22–23). The land itself, defiled by sexual sin, *“vomits out its inhabitants”* (Leviticus 18:24–28).

The medical record agrees on the path. Most HIV infections worldwide are passed through sex. The risk rises with each partner outside a faithful marriage. Two faithful partners who are both free of HIV cannot pass it to each other through sex. The covenant's standard of faithful husbands, and faithful wives, for life, is the strongest protection there is against this disease (Exodus 20:14; Proverbs 5:15–18; Malachi 2:15).

Where the text draws the line. The same Tanakh keeps three limits.

- **First, AIDS is not tzara'at.** It is a different disease, and the Tanakh does not name it (Section III).
- **Second, not every infection comes from the sick person's own sin.** About 98,000 children in sub-Saharan Africa were newly infected in 2024, nearly all from their mothers. Many wives are infected by unfaithful husbands. Others are infected by rape, unscreened blood, or a needle. *“Each shall be put to death for his own sin”* (Deuteronomy 24:16; Ezekiel 18:20). In the first years of the epidemic, before a test to screen donated blood came into use in 1985, thousands of people were infected through blood transfusions and through the clotting medicines given to people with hemophilia. Among them was Ryan White, an American boy with hemophilia whose infection was diagnosed in 1984 and who was then barred from his school out of fear. They received the virus through the very treatment meant to keep them alive.
- **Third, only the text or a prophet named Yahweh's stroke on a person.** Where the Tanakh says *“Yahweh struck,”* the sacred text or a prophet said so. No one today, without a prophet's word, may look at a person with HIV and declare that **Yahweh** has struck him (Isaiah 53:4; Job 42:7).

Finding —

- That **Yahweh** gives *tzara'at* (*skin affliction*) is **Corroborated** (Leviticus 14:34; Numbers 12:9–10; 2 Chronicles 26:20).

- That **Yahweh** sends plague and wasting disease as the consequence of sexual sin and covenant-breaking among a people is corroborated (**Numbers 25:1–9; Leviticus 26:16; Deuteronomy 28:22; Proverbs 5:11**).
- That HIV spreads mainly through sex, and that faithfulness in marriage protects against it, is **Corroborated** by the medical record.
- That AIDS is the *tzara'at (skin affliction)* of the Torah is **Not in the text**.
- That every person with AIDS acquired it through his or her own sexual sin is **Not corroborated**, and it contradicts **Deuteronomy 24:16**.
- That anyone may declare a particular person's illness to be **Yahweh's** stroke without a prophet's word is **Not in the text**.

VI. IS AIDS A JUDGMENT?

The question must be answered with the same care **Doc 256** gave to *tzara'at (skin affliction)*. The Tanakh shows that unfaithfulness can bring bodily ruin (Section V-C). It does not follow that every person with HIV is under judgment for his own sin, and the Tanakh itself forbids that conclusion. **Doc 256** (Section VI) found that the Tanakh names **Yahweh** as the One who puts *tzara'at (skin affliction)* on a person and a house, yet where it says “*Yahweh struck*,” the sacred text or a prophet said so. No one today, without a prophet's word, may look at a person with HIV and declare that **Yahweh** has struck him (**Isaiah 53:4; Job 42:7**).

Witness One — Each for his own sin.

“The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children for the fathers; each shall be put to death for his own sin” (**Deuteronomy 24:16**).

“The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father” (**Ezekiel 18:20**).

About 98,000 children in sub-Saharan Africa were newly infected in 2024, nearly all from their mothers. They did nothing. **Doc 256** (Section V-A) applied the same two verses to the claim that people with leprosy today descend from Gehazi, and found that no curse passes down a bloodline by birth alone; the same holds for any claim that HIV is an inherited judgment.

Witness Two — The faithful spouse. A wife infected by an unfaithful husband has been dealt with treacherously (**Malachi 2:14**); the sin is his, not hers. The same is true of those infected by rape, by unscreened blood, or by a medical needle.

Witness Three — The wrong judgment of the onlookers. *“We esteemed him stricken, smitten by Elohim, and afflicted”* (Isaiah 53:4). Those who looked on the sufferer and saw judgment were wrong. Job’s friends made the same error and were rebuked by **Yahweh** Himself (Job 42:7).

Finding — that sexual unfaithfulness can bring disease and ruin is **Corroborated** (Section V-C). That every person with HIV or AIDS is under the judgment of **Yahweh** is **Not in the text**, and it contradicts **Deuteronomy 24:16, Ezekiel 18:20, and Isaiah 53:4**.

VII. WHAT CAN THE COVENANT BELIEVER DO?

The Torah commands a railing on the roof: *“you shall make a parapet for your roof, so that you do not bring blood upon your house if anyone falls from it”* (Deuteronomy 22:8). The *ma’akeh* (parapet / railing) is the covenant’s principle of guarding against foreseeable harm. Against HIV, the railings are known. The table sets out ten.

#	PRACTICE	WHAT IT MEANS	COVENANT BASIS
1	Keep the marriage bed faithful	One partner, for life; no sexual relations outside marriage. This is the covenant’s standard and the strongest protection there is	Exodus 20:14; Proverbs 5:15–18; Malachi 2:15
2	Know your status	Get tested, and test before marriage. Many people with HIV feel well for years and do not know they have it	Leviticus 13:2: the mark is brought to be seen
3	Take treatment early and without a break	Treatment that keeps the virus undetectable protects the person and prevents sexual transmission: the PARTNER studies found zero transmissions from partners with an undetectable viral load	Exodus 21:19; Deuteronomy 30:19
4	Protect the mother and the baby	Without treatment up to 43% of babies in Africa were infected; with treatment and an undetectable viral load the risk at birth falls close to zero. Keep treatment going while breastfeeding	Deuteronomy 24:16; Psalms 68:5
5	Guard the blood	Never share needles, razors, or blades; insist on sterile instruments and screened blood	Leviticus 17:11; Genesis 9:4

#	PRACTICE	WHAT IT MEANS	COVENANT BASIS
6	Keep circumcision	Three trials found 51–60% less HIV infection in circumcised men exposed through women. It is partial protection, it does not protect women directly, and it is not a license	Genesis 17:10–12; Leviticus 12:3
7	Use prevention medicine where risk is real	For a spouse whose partner has HIV, or others at high risk: PrEP pills, or the twice-yearly lenacapavir injection, which prevented every infection among 2,134 women in the PURPOSE 1 trial in Africa	Deuteronomy 22:8
8	Leave wild primates alone	Do not hunt, butcher, or eat apes or monkeys; the epidemic began with their blood	Leviticus 11:27; 17:10–14
9	Do not shun the sick	HIV does not pass by touch, hugs, food, or cups. Shunning drives people away from testing and spreads the disease	Leviticus 19:18; Isaiah 53:4
10	Care for the orphan and the widow	AIDS has left widows and orphans in every African country; the covenant places them in the care of the community	Deuteronomy 10:18; 14:29; Psalms 68:5

Two points need a word. On the sixth practice, the three trials in South Africa, Kenya, and Uganda found reductions of about 60, 53, and 51 percent in men acquiring HIV from women, and WHO and UNAIDS recommended circumcision in 2007 as one part of prevention, never the whole. A later trial in Uganda found that circumcising men who already had HIV did not protect their wives, and that resuming relations before healing raised the risk (Wawer and colleagues, 2009). The covenant sign is given for the covenant's own reason (**Genesis 17:11**); the protection that has been measured is real but partial.

On the seventh practice, the Tanakh's standard is faithfulness, and nothing in this table sets it aside. But the Torah also commands the railing on the roof. Where one spouse already has HIV, treatment, prevention medicine, and barrier protection guard the other spouse's life, and that guard is the *ma'akeh* (*parapet / railing*) principle applied inside a faithful marriage (**Deuteronomy 22:8**).

Finding — faithfulness, testing, early treatment, protection of mothers and babies, care with blood, circumcision, prevention medicine where risk is real, and refusal to shun the sick are each supported

both by the Tanakh's principles and by the medical record. **Corroborated.** That any single practice, circumcision included, gives full protection by itself is **Not corroborated.**

VIII. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — HOW EACH TRADITION HAS MET HIV AND AIDS

The table sets the three traditions against the Tanakh's own findings. Comparative texts are cited as historical reference only, in keeping with the standing rule of this document.

ELEMENT	☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☉ ISLAM
Teaching and practice	Rabbinic law holds that saving a life sets aside nearly every command (Talmud Yoma 85b). Circumcision on the eighth day is near-universal. The laws of the zav (Mishnah Zavim) are not applied today, and HIV is treated as a medical matter.	Churches and missions became among the largest providers of HIV care in Africa, and PEPFAR (2003) drew strong church support. In the 1980s some prominent preachers declared AIDS the wrath of God on those who had it. Debate over condoms has divided church bodies.	The Qur'an forbids approaching zina (Q. 17:32) and says that saving one life is as saving all humankind (Q. 5:32). Male circumcision is nearly universal. Studies have linked lower HIV rates in some Muslim communities to circumcision and to sexual norms.
Covenant strength	The priority of life matches Deuteronomy 30:19 and the parapet of Deuteronomy 22:8 ; circumcision keeps Genesis 17 .	Care for the sick, the widow, and the orphan (Matthew 25:36; James 1:27) carries out Deuteronomy 14:29 and Psalms 68:5 .	The ban on zina and the practice of circumcision match Exodus 20:14 and Genesis 17 .
Covenant departure	Silence about sexual behavior in some communities can delay testing — a failure of practice, not of the text.	Declaring every person with AIDS under judgment contradicts Deuteronomy 24:16 and Isaiah 53:4 . Many churches left the practice of circumcision behind (Acts 15), which Genesis 17:13 calls " <i>an everlasting covenant</i> ."	Stigma and shame keep many from testing; the Middle East and North Africa are among the few regions where new infections have risen since 2010.
Covenant witness	Placing life above nearly every other duty is the	Read from the Tanakh outward, the call to visit the	Saving one life as saving all humankind echoes the value

ELEMENT	☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	✱ ISLAM
	parapet principle carried into law.	sick is the Torah's care for the one outside the camp.	of one life in Genesis 9:5–6 .

IX. CORRECTIONS TO EARLIER LIBRARY MATERIAL

The Library's rule is that its own earlier work is tested by the same standard as everyone else's.

Correction 1 — the Brit Milah research study (June 2026), the HIV trials. That study says each of the three trials “*demonstrated that male circumcision reduced heterosexual HIV acquisition by approximately 60%*” and lists the *New England Journal of Medicine* among their sources. The trials reported reductions of about 60 percent (Orange Farm, South Africa, *PLoS Medicine* 2005), 53 percent (Kisumu, Kenya, *Lancet* 2007), and 51 percent (Rakai, Uganda, *Lancet* 2007). None was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The protection measured is for men acquiring HIV from women; a 2009 trial found that circumcising men who already had HIV did not protect their female partners. The study's main finding, that circumcision gives real, partial protection, stands; the figures and sources should be refined.

Confirmation — Doc 214. *Behold a Pale Horse* found no evidence that HIV was man-made and traced it to transmission from animals in central Africa in the early twentieth century. Section IV-A confirms that finding and adds the date range of 1884 to 1924.

X. SEVEN COVENANT DECLARATIONS ON HIV AND AIDS

Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, no doctrine may stand on a single text. Each declaration below draws on more than one witness.

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
I	AIDS is not the <i>tzara'at</i> (<i>skin affliction</i>) of the Torah, and it is not the same disease as leprosy; it is a different infection, spread by different routes.	Leviticus 13:13, 47; 14:34; Numbers 5:2
II	The life of the flesh is in the blood; the covenant's reverence for blood and its boundaries around bodily discharges are a lasting guard for the body.	Leviticus 15:2–12; 17:11; Genesis 9:4
III	Sexual unfaithfulness can bring plague and ruin to the body; faithfulness in marriage is the covenant's first protection.	Numbers 25:1–9; Proverbs 5:11, 15–18; Malachi 2:15

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
IV	No one may call a person with HIV accursed: children, faithful spouses, and the wronged bear no guilt for another's sin.	Deuteronomy 24:16; Ezekiel 18:20; Isaiah 53:4
V	Building a railing against foreseeable harm is a covenant duty: testing, treatment, care with blood, and prevention are that railing.	Deuteronomy 22:8; 30:19; Exodus 21:19
VI	The covenant sign of circumcision was given for the covenant's own reason; the partial protection medicine has measured is a second witness, not the reason for the command.	Genesis 17:10–13; Leviticus 12:3
VII	The covenant community cares for the sick, the widow, and the orphan, and does not leave them outside the camp.	Deuteronomy 10:18; 14:29; Psalms 68:5; Leviticus 14:14

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

Behind the question whether AIDS is the leprosy of our day there is usually fear: of the disease, of those who have it, or of what it says about them. Tanakh's answer is fivefold.

First: call it by its right name. AIDS is not the Torah's *tzara'at* (*skin affliction*) and not the leprosy of medicine. It is a disease of the blood and the immune system, and it is known how it spreads and how it is stopped (**Leviticus 17:11**).

Second: keep the covenant of marriage. Faithfulness is the first and strongest protection, and a husband's faithfulness with his wife, or wife's protection (**Proverbs 5:15–18; Malachi 2:15**).

Third: build the railing. Get tested, take treatment, protect mothers and babies, guard the blood, and use the protection medicine now offers where the risk is real (**Deuteronomy 22:8**).

Fourth: do not judge the sick. The child born with HIV, the faithful wife, and the one wronged bear no guilt for another's sin (**Deuteronomy 24:16; Ezekiel 18:20**). Those who saw the sufferer as stricken by **Elohim** were wrong (**Isaiah 53:4**).

Fifth: choose life. The covenant sets life and death before every person and every community, and commands the choice of life.

“I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live” (**Deuteronomy 30:19**)

SCRIPTURE INDEX

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
Genesis 9:4–6	Blood not eaten; life required for life	V-A; VII; VIII; X
Genesis 17:10–13	The covenant of circumcision	II; VII; VIII; X
Exodus 20:14	You shall not commit adultery	V-D; VII; VIII
Exodus 21:19	He shall surely cause him to be healed	VII; X
Leviticus 11:24–28	Unclean animals on paws; carcasses	IV-A; VII
Leviticus 12:3	Circumcision on the eighth day	II; VII; X
Leviticus 13–14	Tzara'at; examined and brought back	II; III; X
Leviticus 14:34	“I put a plague of tzara'at in a house”	V-D
Leviticus 15:2–15	The discharge; how uncleanness passes; cleansing	II; V-B; X
Leviticus 17:10–14	The life of the flesh is in the blood	II; V-A; VII; X; XI
Leviticus 18:24–28	The land vomits out its inhabitants	V-D
Leviticus 19:18	Love your neighbor	VII
Leviticus 26:15–16	Wasting disease and fever	II; V-C; V-D
Numbers 5:2–3	Tzara'at and discharge sent from the camp	II; V-B; X
Numbers 12:9–10	Miriam struck when the cloud departed	V-D
Numbers 25:1–9	The plague at Peor	II; V-C; V-D; X
Deuteronomy 7:15; 28:61	Sickness	II
Deuteronomy 10:18; 14:29	Care for the fatherless and the widow	VII; VIII; X
Deuteronomy 19:15	The two-or-three-witness standard	Opening; X
Deuteronomy 22:8	The parapet on the roof	II; VII; VIII; X; XI

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
Deuteronomy 24:16	Each for his own sin	V-D; VI; VII; VIII; X; XI
Deuteronomy 28:22	Wasting disease and fever	II; V-C; V-D
Deuteronomy 30:19	Choose life	VII; VIII; X; XI
2 Samuel 3:29	The discharge beside tzara'at	II
Isaiah 53:4	<i>“We esteemed him stricken”</i>	V-D; VI; VII; VIII; X; XI
Ezekiel 18:20	The son shall not bear the father's iniquity	V-D; VI; X; XI
Malachi 2:14–16	The wife of your youth	II; V-C; V-D; VI; VII; X; XI
Psalms 68:5	Father of the fatherless	VII; X
Proverbs 5:11, 15–18	The body consumed; rejoice in the wife of your youth	V-C; V-D; VII; X; XI
Proverbs 7:22–23	As an ox to the slaughter	V-C; V-D
Job 42:7	Job's friends rebuked	V-D; VI
2 Chronicles 26:20	“Because Yahweh had struck him”	V-D

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life.”

Leviticus 17:11 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh

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