**INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM**

**Ancient Hebrews: Abraham and The Covenant**

Background:

A “**covenant”** is a special agreement between two parties (people or groups of people). In a covenant, each party agrees to do their part, and in exchange, the other party (person) will do their side of the agreement. In each of the following passages, there are specific actions that each party (in this case God and Abraham speaking for the Hebrew people) is promising to do.

According to Genesis, the first book of the Torah, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis tells of how God commanded a shepherd named Abraham from the city of Ur in Mesopotamia to move to Canaan, thought to be about 1900 B.C.E. God told him,

**“Go forth from your native land and from your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation.”** (Genesis 12:1-2)

Genesis tells how God brought this new nation into being, beginning with the descendants of Abraham, called the Hebrews. Both Abraham and Moses made an agreement with God, to believe in and worship only one God.

*As you read the text below, put a question mark by words that are unclear, and use a highlighter or underline to mark the actions that God and the Hebrew people are promising to each other.*

**I. As it says in the Torah:**

**Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said to him:**

**“I am God almighty, walk before Me and be blameless. And I will establish my covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.”**

**And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying,**

**“As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.**

**And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendents after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendents after you.** **(Genesis, Chapter 17)**

Use details from the reading to complete the chart below.

|  |
| --- |
| What would Abraham (and the Jews) need to do to receive the promises made by God? What were the promises God made to Abraham? |
| **God’s requirement(s) of Abraham:** | **God’s Covenant (agreement) with Abraham:** |
| 1.)  | 1.) |
| 2.)  | 2.)  |
|  | 3.) |
| 4.) |
| 5.) |
| 6.) |

**Moses and the Ten Commandments**

The Torah teaches that during the Exodus from Egypt, Moses climbed to the top of Mount Sinai, where God spoke to him and gave him a message to pass on to his people.

**“And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God demand of you, but only this: to revere the Lord your God, to walk only in his paths, to love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and soul, and to keep the Lord’s commandments and his statues which I am commanding you today for your good.”** (Deuteronomy 10:12-13)

Complete the chart below based on Deuteronomy 10:12-13.

|  |
| --- |
| **God’s message to the Jews from Moses** |
| 1.) |
| 2.) |
| 3.) |
| 4.)  |
| 5.) |

**Name:**

**EXIT QUESTION: Review God’s covenant with Abraham and the message God delivered to the Jews through Moses. How does Moses’ message to the Jews differ from the original Covenant between God and Abraham? *Write at least three sentences.***

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