



## I. What is the origin of Judaism?

- Judaism begins with God and his call to Abraham and Sarah.

*“Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” Genesis 12:1-3 (NIV)*

*He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness. Genesis 15:5-6 (NIV)*

- Twenty five years later, Abraham and Sarah have a son, Isaac.
- Isaac has a son, Jacob, who wrestles with his faith.
- God changes Jacob’s name to \_\_\_\_\_.
- Israel (Jacob) has twelve sons. The sons and their descendants become known as the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Over the years, God made covenants with Abraham, Moses, the Israelites, and King David promising His blessings and His love in return for their trust and obedience.
- Over and over through the generations they fell away from God, broke the covenants, cried out to God and God delivered them and renewed His covenant.

## II. Sacred Text and Writings

### I. The Hebrew Scriptures are called \_\_\_\_\_.

- The Torah:** First five books of our Bible
- The Nevi'im:** The Prophets (Jeremiah, Isaiah & others)
- Ketuvim:** The Writings (Psalms, Proverbs, Job & others)

### 2. \_\_\_\_\_

It contains the oral tradition interpreting the Law of Moses, and the Mishnah which are commentaries rabbis wrote over the centuries to help people interpret the Torah for their lives.

## III. Three Main Denominations of Judaism in the United States

### I. \_\_\_\_\_

They believe their Judaism is the religion given by God to the Jewish people. God directly gave the Torah and the Talmud to the Jewish people.

2. \_\_\_\_\_

They follow Jewish law and tradition, but believe the application of the law to people's lives changes over time. Torah was divinely given, but not necessarily the Talmud.

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Rabbi Laura Rappaport states "A Reform Jew is committed to Judaism as a living and evolving tradition that is in line with modern values and ideas." She further clarified that Reform Judaism is not a 'faith' but a 'morality.'

#### **IV. Two Common Questions Christians Ask**

##### **1. Are Jews still waiting on a Messiah?**

- Orthodox Jews: Yes and pray daily for the Messiah. The Messiah will restore the Jewish sacrificial system, tear down Islam's Dome of the Rock and rebuild the Temple.
- Reform Jews: No literal, human Messiah. They work toward a "messianic age" by living out Jewish values.

##### **2. Why do Jews not accept Jesus as the Messiah?**

- All followers of Jesus were Jews in the earliest days of Christianity.
- Personal opinion: Paul's understanding of the gospel as a "New Covenant" that was open to all people spread the church into the Gentile world. While Jewish Christians kept the law and tradition, Gentiles did not. With only minor exceptions, Gentiles were taught that they need only trust in Christ and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their attempt to live out the gospel life. The unfortunate result was a church with a great divide. This divide strengthened as Gentile converts increased and Jewish Christians fell marginalized.
- Jesus did not fulfill the messianic prophecies the way most Jews expected.

#### **V. Why I believe Jesus is the Messiah**

- I see Jesus throughout the pages of the Hebrew Scriptures.
- Genesis 14:17-20, Jesus is foreshadowed in the mysterious King of Righteousness, Melchizedek as he met Abraham and offered him bread and wine.
- Isaiah 53, the Suffering Servant would be wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities and yet, by his wounds we are healed.
- Daniel 3, in the story of the fiery furnace one who had "the appearance of a god" was with them and saved them.
- Jesus embodies the words of the prophet Ezekiel in Ezekiel 34.
- Many others examples