



In today’s cultural debates, an expression frequently appears that sounds very respectable: **“Judeo-Christian values.”** Politicians, journalists, and commentators repeat it constantly. It sounds solid, conciliatory, almost sacred.

But when one stops to think about what it actually means, something surprising emerges: **it is a relatively recent expression, ambiguous, and often used without historical or theological rigor.**

This article is not intended to attack anyone or to show contempt for any religious tradition. The goal is **to explain clearly—through a Christian theological perspective—what relationship truly exists between Christianity and Judaism**, what fundamental differences exist between them, and why the expression “Judeo-Christian” can be misleading if used without nuance.

Understanding this is not merely an academic exercise. **It helps us better understand our faith, the history of salvation, and the place Jesus Christ occupies in God’s plan.**

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## 1. A Surprisingly Modern Expression

Many people believe the term “Judeo-Christian” comes from the early centuries of the Church. However, **this is not the case.**

The expression became popular mainly during the **20th century**, especially after the Second World War, when certain Western thinkers wanted to highlight the shared religious heritage of Europe and America.

It was used as a way of saying:

- that Western civilization has religious roots,
- that the Bible influenced culture,
- and that Jews and Christians share certain ethical elements.

But from a **strict theological point of view**, the expression can be problematic, because **Christianity and Judaism are not simply two branches of the same religion.**

The Christian faith affirms something radical: **Jesus Christ is the definitive fulfillment of**



### **God’s revelation.**

And that affirmation changes the entire picture.

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## 2. Christianity Was Born Within Judaism... But Did Not Remain Within It

Historically, something very important must be said:

**Jesus, the apostles, and the first Christian community were Jews.**

Christianity emerged within the people of Israel. This is a historical and biblical fact.

Jesus Himself says:

“*Salvation is from the Jews.*”  
(John 4:22)

For centuries, God prepared the coming of the Messiah through:

- the Law of Moses
- the prophets
- the history of Israel

The entire Old Testament points toward Christ.

But here lies the central point: **for Christianity, that history finds its fullness in Jesus.**

As the Gospel says:

“*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*”



| *(Matthew 5:17)*

The Christian faith affirms that **the promises made to Israel are fulfilled in Christ.**

For that reason, Christianity is not simply a continuation of Judaism.

It is its **transforming fulfillment.**

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### 3. The Historical Separation

After the preaching of Jesus, something decisive occurred.

Most of the religious authorities of Israel **did not accept Jesus as the Messiah.**

This rejection appears clearly in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles.

Saint John expresses it with dramatic words:

| *“He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.”*  
*(John 1:11)*

From that moment onward, a historical separation developed:

- Judaism continued to await the Messiah.
- Christianity proclaimed that **the Messiah had already come.**

This difference is not minor.

It is **the central difference between the two religions.**

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## 4. The Fundamental Difference: Who Jesus Is

Everything revolves around a single question:

### Who is Jesus of Nazareth?

For the Christian:

- Jesus is **the Son of God**
- the Word made flesh
- the Savior of the world
- the risen Lord.

As proclaimed in the prologue of the Gospel of John:

“*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*”  
(John 1:14)

For Judaism, on the other hand:

- Jesus is not the expected Messiah
- He is not divine
- He is not part of God’s revelation.

This difference is so profound that **it defines two distinct religions.**

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## 5. The New Covenant

Another central theological point is the concept of the **New Covenant.**

At the Last Supper, Jesus declares:



“This cup is the new covenant in my blood.”  
(Luke 22:20)

For Christianity, the death and resurrection of Christ inaugurate a new covenant between God and humanity.

This means that:

- salvation no longer depends on the Mosaic Law
- but on the grace of Christ.

Saint Paul explains this powerfully in his letters.

In the Letter to the Galatians he writes:

“A man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus  
Christ.”  
(Galatians 2:16)

This point generated great controversy in the early Church.

Some Christians wanted to maintain all the norms of Judaism.

But the apostles came to understand that **Christ had inaugurated something new.**

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## 6. The Universality of Christianity

Judaism is historically linked to the people of Israel.

Christianity, on the other hand, was born with a universal vocation.

Jesus sends His disciples with these words:



“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.”  
(Matthew 28:19)

Salvation is no longer directed to a single people, but to all humanity.

For that reason Christianity spread rapidly:

- throughout the Roman Empire
- throughout Europe
- throughout Asia
- throughout Africa.

The message was clear:

**Christ is the Savior of all.**

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## 7. Why, Then, Do People Speak of “Judeo-Christian Roots”?

Despite these differences, there is something that is certainly true:

Christianity **cannot be understood without the Old Testament.**

Christians venerate the Scriptures of Israel as **the Word of God.**

The Christian Bible includes:

- the Old Testament
- the New Testament.

The prophets, the psalms, and the history of Israel are part of divine revelation.

Saint Paul uses a very beautiful image in the Letter to the Romans: the **olive tree.**



He says that Christians have been grafted into the tree of Israel.

This means that **the history of salvation begins there**, although it reaches its fullness in Christ.

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## 8. The Risk of Superficial Language

The problem arises when the expression “Judeo-Christian” is used in a simplistic way.

Sometimes it is used to:

- dilute religious differences
- reduce faith to a generic ethical system
- present Christianity as merely a cultural evolution.

But Christianity is not simply a set of moral values.

It is above all **a living relationship with Jesus Christ**.

Saint Peter expressed this clearly before the Sanhedrin:

*“There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*

*(Acts 4:12)*

The center of Christianity is not a cultural tradition.

It is **Christ Himself**.

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## 9. Spiritual Applications for Christian Life

Understanding these issues is not merely theoretical.

It has very concrete consequences for spiritual life.

### 1. Rediscover the Center of Faith

Christianity is not simply a tradition inherited from the past.

It is a personal encounter with Christ.

### 2. Read the Entire Bible with a Christ-Centered Perspective

The Old Testament finds its full meaning when read in the light of Jesus.

The Fathers of the Church constantly repeated:

**The Old Testament announces Christ; the New reveals Him.**

### 3. Live the Faith with Clarity

In an age of religious confusion, Christians are called to understand their faith well and live it with coherence.

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## 10. Returning to the Heart of Christianity

The word “Judeo-Christian” may serve in certain cultural or historical contexts.

But from a theological point of view we must remember something essential:

Christianity is not simply another tradition within religious history.

It is the proclamation of a unique event:

**God has become man in Jesus Christ.**



And that event changed the history of the world.

For that reason, in the end, the decisive question remains the same one Jesus asked His disciples:

“*But who do you say that I am?*”  
(*Matthew 16:15*)

The answer to that question defines the entire Christian faith.

And it also defines the spiritual path of every believer.

Because being Christian does not simply mean belonging to a cultural tradition.

It means **following Christ, trusting in Him, and allowing His life to transform our own.**

That is the true heart of the Christian faith.