



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.**

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.

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.**

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.**



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.**

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.**

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.

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.

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**.



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.

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.