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THE BIBLICAL HIGHWAY
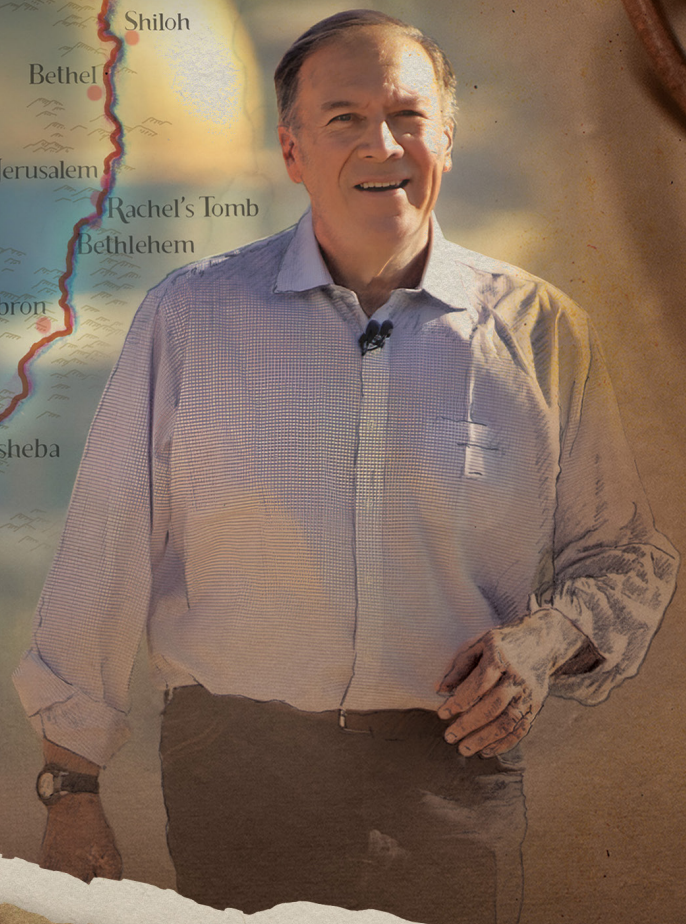
Mt. Ebal
Shiloh
Bethel
Jerusalem
Rachel's Tomb
Bethlehem
Hebron
Beersheba

UNDERSTANDING
JUDEO-CHRISTIAN VALUES

Understanding
Judeo-Christian Values

In the Holy Bible, the world's best-selling and most widely read book, we learn the story of God establishing for His chosen people the nation that would also be called "The Promised Land."

Israel is considered to be the cradle of Western civilization, also known as Judeo-Christian civilization. It's also the nation that housed the cradle where the Christ child lay at his birth in Bethlehem.

As uniquely aligned nations, the people of both Israel and America also embrace similar values and morals. America was birthed as a land of promise by a desire for religious freedom and the country's Founding Fathers framed our Declaration of Independence and Constitution using many of the Judeo-Christian values rooted in the Hebrew Bible.

Using the ideals for behavior set forth in The Ten Commandments by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob made Israel into a strong nation, and the same could be said for America and other great nations as well. Our roots are intertwined. While Christians and Jews have some religious beliefs in common, each faith has different theologies. But the same core values remain.

It's especially notable that for centuries now, the Judeo-Christian values established by God in His Word have helped humans live responsibly and create better communities in which to enjoy their own life and family.

To love the Creator of heaven and earth, to honor one's parents, and to love one's neighbor are just a few ideals that guide adherents to more peaceful and generous lifestyles.

History of the Term "Judeo-Christian" Ethic or Values

The term "Judeo-Christian" refers to something sourced in the common foundations of Judaism and Christianity. Since the Bible includes the Jewish Scriptures of the Old Testament, the moral foundations laid down in Judaism are upheld in Christianity.

The first use of the term "Judeo-Christian ethic" appears to be by the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in his 1888 book The Antichrist: Curse on Christianity. The early uses of the term "Judeo-Christian ethic" referred to the Jewish roots and identity of the early Christian church, but it wasn't used to speak of a common set of morals until much later.

Promoting the concept of the United States as a Judeo-Christian nation first became a political program in the 1940s, in response to the growth of anti-Semitism in America. The rise of Nazi anti-semitism in the 1930s led concerned Protestants, Catholics, and Jews to take steps to increase understanding and tolerance.

Judeo-Christian Values Today

John Adams, 2nd U.S. President and Signer of the Declaration of Independence, had a vision of what peace could look like if everyone lived by a strong moral code. He wrote, "Suppose a nation in some distant Region should take the Bible for their only law Book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there exhibited! Every member would be obliged in conscience, to temperance, frugality, and industry; to justice, kindness, and charity towards his fellow men; and to piety, love, and reverence toward Almighty God ... What a Utopia, what a Paradise would this region be."

In Britain, another believing Christian had a similar thought. Margaret Thatcher, the late great Prime Minister, wrote: "The truths of the Judaic-Christian tradition are infinitely precious, not only, as I believe, because they are true, but also because they provide the moral impulse which alone can lead to that peace, in the true meaning of the word, for which we all long... There is little hope for democracy if the hearts of men and women in democratic societies cannot be touched by a call to something greater than themselves."

"As much as Jewish people rely on their commerce and their wits and their army and their intelligence, they rely upon the spiritual underpinnings of the Bible," said David Friedman. "And we can't lose that."

When we become untethered from these values and from the wisdom of God that accompanies it, we can lose our place as great nations. Traditionally religious Protestants, Catholics, Mormons, and Jews, wherever they live, seem aligned on almost every important social issue. It appears that when individuals and nations are guided by the following Judeo-Christian values, their lives and the stability of their countries will be rewarded with peace.

Ten of the Judeo-Christian Values

(from an opinion by Dennis Prager published in the North State Journal on February 26, 2023 - https://nsjonline.com/article/2023/02/prager-what-are-judeo-christian-values/)

No. 1: There is <u>one God</u>, the One introduced to the world by the Hebrew Bible — the source of one universal morality.

No. 2: The Hebrew Bible (the only Bible Jesus knew and which he frequently cited) introduced the most revolutionary moral idea in history: **There are objective moral truths just as there are mathematical and scientific truths.** <u>Without God as the source of moral standards, there is no moral truth; there are only moral opinions.</u>

No. 3: Because there are moral truths, <u>good and evil are the same for all people.</u>

No. 4: <u>**God**</u> — ***not man, government, popular opinion, or a democratic vote —*** <u>***is the source of our rights.***</u> As the American Declaration of Independence states: All men "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights..."

No. 5: **The human being is "created in the image of God."** Therefore, each human life is precious. Therefore, race is of no significance, since we are all created in God's image and God has no race.

No. 6: **The world is based on a divine order, meaning divinely ordained distinctions.** Among these divine distinctions are **God and man, man and woman, human and animal, good and evil, nature and God, and the holy and the profane.**

No. 7: **Man is not basically good.** Christians speak of "original sin" in referring to man's sinful nature; Jews cite **God Himself in Genesis: "The will of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Genesis 8:21).** They are not identical beliefs, but they are both worlds apart from the Enlightenment belief that man is basically good. And they come to the same conclusion: **We need God-based rules to keep us from our natural inclination to do evil.**

No. 8: **Therefore, we must not follow our hearts.** Both religious Jews and Christians are keenly aware of how **morally dangerous it is to be led by our emotions**. Those who reject Judeo-Christian values are far more likely to follow and promote the advice, "Follow your heart."

No. 9: **God gave us the Ten Commandments — the core of Judeo-Christian values.** Therefore, to apply but one of the Ten Commandments to our morally confused secular age, you must "Honor your father and mother" even if they voted for someone you loathe — meaning, at the least, remain in contact with them and do not dare deprive them of the right to be in contact with their grandchildren.

No. 10: **Human beings have free will.** In the secular world, there is no free will because all human behavior is attributed to biology and environment. **Only a religious worldview, because it posits the existence of a divine soul — something independent of biology and environment — allows for free will.**

Adherents of Judaism and Christianity Need Each Other

According to Dennis Prager, a nationally syndicated radio show host, author, and believing Jew, there is another important aspect to the term Judeo-Christian. **"The two religions need each other,"** he wrote. **"Without the Old Testament, there is no New Testament. Virtually every Christian moral principle derives from the Hebrew Bible — not only the 10 Judeo-Christian values enumerated here, but such basic moral principles as 'Love your neighbor as yourself' (Leviticus 19:18), 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart …' (Deuteronomy 6:5), and 'Love the stranger' (Deuteronomy 10:19)."**

He continued, "At the same time, Judaism needs Christians. It was Christianity that carried the Torah and the rest of the Hebrew Bible to the world…Thus, Jews and Christians share a common revelation in a way that Jews share with no other religious community."

America's Founders were Christians (some culturally, some doctrinally) who were rooted in the Hebrew Bible, so America has become established on Judeo-Christian values. As Christians, we should love what God loves. He has granted us an eternal inheritance and appointed us as caretakers, watchmen, and servants. The Judeo-Christian values are a guide to morality. Thankfully, He trusts that we will follow through with the privilege to love Him with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

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QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Which of the ten Judeo-Christian values listed here do you find the most difficult to embrace?

2. And which do you find to be the easiest?

3. Do you object to any of these values?

4. How do you think Americans are doing today in allowing these values to guide their lives?

5. What solutions can you offer that might help our nation return to these values?