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Register on website: <https://afjicis.org/jews-and-christians-related-but-distinct/>

Jews and Christians – Related but Distinct

Jesus of Nazareth was an observant Jew who, based on the historical evidence, did not intend to become the founder of a new religion. Rather, like many Jews before and after him, he questioned some of the ways in which Judaism was being practiced in his day. After his death, his followers embraced a number of beliefs and practices which diverged from mainstream Judaism. Gradually, the two communities parted ways and evolved into two separate religious traditions, known as Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity. Ever since this early parting of the ways, both Jewish and Christian thinkers have grappled with the question of how to define and understand the relationship between Judaism and Christianity – not just historically but also within the framework of their respective theological traditions.

The study series will explore the writings of several exemplary thinkers who have proposed models for understanding the complex relationship between Judaism and Christianity. In addition, participants will study and discuss public declarations by both the Jewish and Christian communities which call for a reassessment of traditional views in light of the Shoah.

April 5 **Paul of Tarsus: New Branches grafted into an old Olive Tree**

Paul of Tarsus was a highly influential theologian in the formative stage of the Christian religion. He is the author of the majority of the texts in the Christian part of the Bible

Text: Romans 9-11, approx. 56 CE

April 19 **Gotthold Ephraim Lessing: Ethics as the Measure of Truth**

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing was a prominent German philosopher and author during the Enlightenment. Lessing was a close friend of the Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn

Text: 'The Parable of the Rings' in *Nathan, the Wise*, a play by G. E. Lessing, 1779

May 3 **Abraham Joshua Heschel: Parental Care and Filial Respect**

Abraham Joshua Heschel was one of the most eminent Jewish theologians of the last century. He was deeply engaged in the civil rights struggle and marched with Dr. Martin Luther King.

Text: "No Religion Is an Island," Abraham Joshua Heschel's Inaugural Lecture as Visiting Professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, 1966

May 17 **Nostra Aetate: Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions**

An official statement adopted by the largest Christian community, the Roman Catholic Church, in 1965 as part of a global leadership conference called the Second Vatican Council.

Text: "Nostra Aetate. Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions"

June 7 **Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians And Christianity**

A statement by Jewish rabbis and intellectuals published in 2000 in response to Nostra Aetate. The more than 200 signatories come from all branches of Judaism.

Text: "Dabru Emet. A Jewish Statement on Christians And Christianity," 2000

June 21 **To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven: Toward a Partnership between Jews and Christians**

A Statement published in 2015 by prominent Orthodox rabbis in Israel, the United States, and Europe. It has since gained over 60 signatories.

Text: "To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven. Toward a Partnership between Jews and Christians," 2015