

Pagan, Wiccan, Druid, Celtic, and other related groups -

Christians should distinguish key terms before labeling outside groups. (many are “jackalopes”)

Culture vs Religion, Doctrine vs Moral Values, **Belief vs Practice**,

Authority vs Government, **Rituals vs Traditions**, Evil vs Darkness,

Salvation vs improved behavior, Worldview vs isolated personal opinion (interpretation),

What separates Christianity from others? (Biblical Authority & Deity of Christ)

Exclusive claims (teaching outside of this is Heresy)

Worldview = 1. Origin, 2. Purpose, 3. Morality, 4. Destiny

The following info comes from Wikipedia 2016 -

Paganism is a term that first arose among the Christian community of southern Europe during [late antiquity](#) as a descriptor of religions **other than their own**, or the related [Abrahamic religions](#); i.e., [Judaism](#) and [Islam](#).

There has been much scholarly debate as to the origin of the term *paganism*, especially since no one before the 20th century self-identified as a pagan

Heathen - This may have been influenced by the Greek and Latin terminology of the time used for pagans. If so, it may be derived from Gothic [haibi](#) ("dwelling on the [heath](#)")

Wicca is a nature-based neo-pagan religion about whose origin there is much debate.. There are a number of theories concerning the origin of Wicca (Purkiss, 2006, Gage, 2008). Wicca as a belief came to the attention of the public in the 1950's. being popularised in 1954 by Gerald Gardner who referred to witchcraft as 'the Wica' (Gardner, 1954; 1959). The 'Wica' were the adherents to the tradition and craft rather than the religion itself. In theory witches and their craft were postulated to be the remnants of an ancient pre-Christian cult, with their god being the devil according to the Christian church (Murray, 1921; 1931). Etymologically the term *Wicca* may derive from the Indo-European root *weik* referring to magic or religion. This term is related to the German *wikk* also meaning sorcery or magic.

The neo-pagan religion of Wicca involves elements of animism, meaning the doctrine that phenomena in nature are due to spirits. Wicca is thus an immanent religion meaning it dwells or abides within. In Wiccan belief the goddesses and gods are the personification of the life-force present in animals and the environment. These deities can manifest themselves as an

aspect of fertility, the hunt, or the wilderness (Davy, 2006). Moreover, whereas most Wiccans are pagans it does not follow that all witches are Wiccans.

Wicca is a type of witchcraft that is derived from various magical and religious concepts. The umbrella of pagan belief and practice also encompasses a variety of faiths that may have no connection with witchcraft. Characteristic of Wicca is its moral and liberal code of ethics, its seasonal celebration of eight festivals or sabbats, and ritual use of magical practice. As a neo-pagan religion Wicca possesses its own distinct forms or ritual observances, as well as its religious and moral precepts. Wicca is also distinguished by its structural organization, secrecy and its system of initiation of novitiates.

The **Celts (Celtic)** were people in [Iron Age](#) and [Medieval](#) Europe who spoke [Celtic languages](#) and had cultural similarities, although the relationship between ethnic, linguistic and cultural factors in the Celtic world remains uncertain and controversial. Like other European Iron Age tribal societies, the Celts practiced a [polytheistic religion](#). Many [Celtic gods](#) are known from texts and inscriptions from the Roman period. Rites and sacrifices were carried out by priests known as [druids](#). The Celts did not see their gods as having human shapes until late in the Iron Age. Celtic [shrines](#) were situated in remote areas such as hilltops, groves, and lakes.

The Celts had hundreds of deities, some of which were unknown outside a single family or tribe, while others were popular enough to have a following that crossed lingual and cultural barriers.

A druid was a member of the educated, professional class among the [Celtic](#) peoples of [Gaul](#), the [British isles](#), and possibly elsewhere during the [Iron Age](#). The druid class included [law-speakers](#), [poets](#) and [doctors](#), among other learned professions, although the best known among the druids were the religious leaders.

Very little is known about the ancient druids. They left no written accounts of themselves, and the only evidence are a few descriptions left by Greek, Roman, and various scattered authors and artists, as well as stories created by medieval writers. While archaeological evidence has been uncovered pertaining to [the religious practices](#) of the Iron Age people, "not one single artefact or image has been unearthed that can undoubtedly be connected with the ancient druids." Various recurring themes emerge in a number of the Greco-Roman accounts of the druids, including that they performed [animal](#) and even [human sacrifice](#), believed in a form of [reincarnation](#), and held a high position in [Gaulish](#) society. Next to nothing is known for certain about their religious practices, except for the [ritual of oak and mistletoe](#) as described by [Pliny the Elder](#).