Long Branch Baptist Church

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Wednesday Word and Worship

Rev. Dr. Morris Oliver

**World Religions - Pt 80 Wicca #2**

July 28, 2021

Wednesdays 7:00-8:00 Dial-in (978)990-5290 access code 4423893#

 Wicca is essentially a **n**  religion, grounded in **r**  for planet Earth, which is seen as a manifestation of the Goddess or “Great **M** .” Wicca and neo-paganism are similar in many ways to the nature religions mentioned in the **B** , where many gods were worshiped and religions mixed. For example, the **f**  religions of Canaan led many Israelites astray and brought God’s wrath upon them (1Kings 14:22-24).

 Because there is tremendous diversity among neo-pagans, of which witchcraft is a part, it is hard to say specifically what all witches and other neo-pagans believe. In general, they are anti-authoritarian, refusing to have any **c**  authority. They are also against religious dogma; but in creating their own beliefs, neo-pagans mix and match various views and practices to build their own religion. Witchcraft and other kinds of neo-paganism draw heavily from personal **e** . Neo-pagans see truth as **s**  or relative; the only way you can know any kind of “truth” is through **f**  or intuition.

 The key ethical principle taught by neo-pagans is called the Wiccan Rede, which can be stated, “Do what thou will, but harm none.” Wiccans believe they must “follow their conscience.”

(Prov 14:12)

 **T**  is possibly the greatest virtue of neo-pagans and witches. They hold animosity toward Christianity for its exclusive claims to be the “only way to God.”

 Many neo-pagans believe in animism-the idea that the entire Earth is a living **o** . The view of some witches is that animism is “the heart and soul” of ancient witchcraft.

 Some neo-pagans even believe that inanimate matter is **a**  (e.g. rocks) and that all objects in the entire universe have some kind of inner or psychological consciousness. Polytheism, pantheism, and monism are also worldviews held by many neo-pagans. {**Polytheism** - belief in or worship of more than one god. **Pantheism** - the worship of all gods of different creeds, cults, or peoples indifferently. **Monism** -**a.** a view that there is only one kind of ultimate substance **b:**the view that reality is one unitary organic whole with no independent parts. Merriam Webster Dictionary}

 Witches celebrate eight primary holidays annually, called *sabbats*, all of which are centered around the **s**  cycles. Regular coven meetings of witches are called *esbats*. Activities include initiating new members into the coven, training and teaching in **w** (divination and magic) and practice of rituals. The esbat is often held during the **f**  or new moon. Witches also practice going into altered states of consciousness and **t** . When in a trance, a witch believes he or she is possessed by the Goddess. Common trance states are described as “drawing down the moon” or “drawing down the sun.”

 Divination, magic, and sorcery in psychic abilities are also part of the practices of many neo-pagans and witches. Many of them are also involved in spiritism-interaction with spirits.

**Homework**:

Continue reading the Wicca/Neo-Pagans “So What’s The Difference” section.

***Suggested References***:

"So What's the Difference?", Fritz Ridenour, Bethany House Publisher, 2014