

# Overview of Wicca

## Key Person, Date, Location

Wicca does not trace its origins to a single founder, but its roots lie in 19th-century Britain. The movement was partly inspired by anthropologist Margaret Murray (1862–1963) and later organized by Gerald Gardner (1884–1964) during the 1930s to 1950s.

## Key Writings

Wicca has no universally recognized holy book. Many groups use the *Book of Shadows*, first compiled by Gardner and later expanded by him and other leaders. Other popular texts include *A Witches' Bible* and *The Spiral Dance*.

## Who Is God?

The supreme being in Wicca is often referred to as the Goddess, though some traditions honor both the Goddess and the God, or the Goddess and the Horned God—known together as the “Lord and Lady.” The Goddess may be viewed as a symbol, an impersonal force present in all things, or a personal being. Wiccans may be pantheists, polytheists, or both.

## Who Is Jesus?

Jesus is either rejected altogether or regarded as a spiritual teacher who taught love and compassion. He is not considered divine or central to Wiccan belief.

## Who Is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is not part of Wiccan theology. Some Wiccans may refer to “Spirit” as a kind of energy or life force.

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## How to Be Saved

Wiccans do not believe that humanity is inherently sinful or in need of salvation. Instead, they emphasize honoring and preserving nature, which they equate with the Goddess. Spiritual growth involves living in harmony with the earth and its cycles.

## What Happens After Death?

After death, the body replenishes the earth, fulfilling the Goddess's wish. Beliefs about the afterlife vary: some Wiccans are agnostic, others believe in reincarnation, and some envision a peaceful realm called Summerland.

## Other Facts, Beliefs, or Practices

Wiccans practice divination and spell-casting, with most rituals performed in a circle. Many belong to a coven (a local assembly), though others practice as "solitary" witches. Covens gather for rituals and seasonal holidays, including the eight major festivals such as the Vernal Equinox, Summer Solstice, and Beltane. Wicca is considered an occultic nature religion, but it is not Satanism.