

Webster's 1828 Dictionary

The word "Heathen"

HEATHEN, n. [Gr. from heath, that is, one who lives in the country or woods, as pagan from pagus, a village.]

1. A pagan; a Gentile; one who worships idols, or is unacquainted with the true God. In the Scriptures, the word seems to comprehend all nations except the Jews or Israelites, as they were all strangers to the true religion, and all addicted to idolatry. The word may now be applied perhaps to all nations, **except to Christians** and **Mohammedans**.

Heathen, without the plural termination, is used plurally or collectively, for Gentiles or heathen nations.

Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance. Psalm 2:8.

Heathen, however, has a plural, expressing two or more individuals.

If men have reason to be heathens in Japan--

The precepts and examples of the ancient heathens.

2. A rude, illiterate, barbarous person.