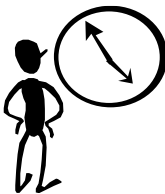


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## Time of Assembly



### **Sunday:**

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.

Worship 10:00 a.m.

### **Every other Sunday night:**

Worship 5:00 p.m.

### **Wednesday:**

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

## Suppose I Was Born a Muslim

By Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba

### *Introduction*

Several times during our evangelistic trips as gospel preachers, while moving from house to house in an effort to fulfill the Great Commission – a method known by some as “door-knocking” or “door-to-door,” we have approached people with a view to introducing the gospel of Christ to them and merely seeing the Bible in our hands, the response that usually welcomes us is “I am a Muslim.” Such a response is intended to stop the preacher from making any further effort to tell them anything about Christ. (It should be noted that not all Muslims behave in this manner as some would actually listen to you and ask questions).

Recently, while speaking to an ex-Muslim turned denominational church member on the necessity of baptism for salvation, and after showing incontrovertible passages of scriptures that teach baptism is for (in order to obtain) salvation, he concluded that I am teaching what I have been taught in “my church” and that if I was born a Muslim like he was, I would understand that it is not easy to have been converted from Islam to Christianity (Indeed, within the few years of his conversion from Islam, he had been taught and had swallowed the denominational sentiment that “faith alone” saves and that baptism is just an action to be done after one is saved). I hinted that the sincerity that made him dump Islam for another religion should make him see reasons to believe the word of God (the Bible) since he claims he is now a Christian.

Often Muslim folks have suggested that if I was born a Muslim, by now, I will be promoting Islam and that the reason why I am so zealous about the Christian religion is that I was born a Christian. Well, let us get down to business.

### *Natural/Physical Birth Does Not Make One a Christian*

In the first place, I do not believe that natural birth

makes one a Christian. By natural birth, we mean giving birth to a child by a pregnant woman who is due for delivery. And so, we are referring to someone who is physically given birth to and raised by Christian parents. It is true that I may have been born by Christian parents into a family of Christians but that in itself does not make me or anyone a Christian.

In John 3:3-5, Jesus taught that a man must be “born again” to be eligible to enter God’s kingdom. Nicodemus was confused about this birth and conflated it with the natural birth process but Jesus told him that this new birth involves two elements – water and the Spirit and except a man undergoes this birth process, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

All living people today came to the world through the first kind of birth but those who desired to come to God and have everlasting life at the end (thereby avoiding the second death – Revelation 21:8) must undergo the rebirth process once they reach the age of accountability and have heard the gospel. The choice is theirs to make. It is after one has gone through these steps that he can be said to be a Christian.

The name “Christian” is mentioned three times in the New Testament (Acts 11:26; 26:28 and I Peter 4:16) and it refers to a person or people who actually accepted Christ by obedience to the gospel. It refers to those who have believed the gospel, repented of their sins, confessed their faith in Christ, and are baptized in water for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38). Such would then be added to the church (Acts 2:36-47). Regardless of his age at the time of his baptism, when one is born again, the Bible calls such “*a newborn babe*” that should desire the sincere milk of the word that he may grow thereby (I Peter 2:2).

But it seems that certain world religions regard someone as a member or belong to such a religious group if and when such is born into such religion. Like Islam, it seems one born by Muslim parents and taught to recite the Shahada (I testify that there is no other god but Allah, and I testify that Muhammed is Allah’s messenger) is already considered a Muslim. But even if that is the case, the fact that one is born into a religion that recognizes one as a member without his or her own choice should not make one dogmatic. The Jews were so deep-rooted in Judaism and became legalistic that they were not ready to hear about another religion even when their own prophets had spoken about Christ and His work. One could wonder why King Agrippa said he was “almost persuaded” to become a Christian after hearing such an excellent and mind-blowing speech from Paul the apostle (Acts 26:28).

### *Parental Upbringing/Influence*

It is true that parental upbringing and the environment that one is bred could greatly affect the religion one practices. The training given to children will have a huge impact on them. The Bible says; “*Train up a child in the way he should go and when he*

*is old, he will not depart from it*" (Proverbs 22:6 cf. Ephesians 6:4). Indeed, if anyone follows this biblical instruction and brings up his child in the way he should go, such child, properly brought up will not depart. It appears that the Lord would see the parent as incompetent if the children are unruly, hence, a man whose kids are wayward cannot serve as an elder in the church of the Lord (I Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6).

A parent, whether Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Pagan, etc. who brings up his or her child properly will raise godly kids. Timothy's mother was a Jewess and his father was a Gentile (Acts 16:1). Yet, he had the proper upbringing (II Timothy 1:5; 3:15). Cornelius was not a Christian and he was neither a Jew. Islam was not in existence at that time, so he was not even a Muslim but he had been taught to fear God (Acts 10:1-3).

The same thing with religious values; a child who has been raised by Christian or Muslim parents and has been taught to follow such religious requirements is most likely to follow suit. However, a sense of reasoning is in every man as man was not made to be robotic but a free moral agent. In fact, such situations should make one search more and find out if such religion he finds himself is the right place to be. Like the Holy Book of God instructs; we are to "*prove all things*" and "*hold fast that which is good*" (I Thessalonians 5:21). One must examine if the faith he professes is the true one. A faith or religion that would not allow for its scrutiny is a faith not worth having in the first place. Indeed, an unexamined faith is not worth believing. When one is open-minded and not biased against another religion, learning could take place.

### *One Could Be Zealously Religious While in Error*

It is also true that one could be zealously religious without having the truth and such would continue to progress in error except for someone with the truth guides him. Apostle Paul spoke of Israel as a people having a zeal for God but not according to knowledge (Romans 10:1-3). The same Paul, at a time, was zealously religious in Judaism that he persecuted the Christians for a while before he was converted. In his words; "*I persecuted this Way unto death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women*" (Acts 22:4). He actually thought he was fighting a good cause for God but he was actually trying to fight against Him and it was really difficult for Paul to "*kick against the pricks*" (Acts 9:5, KJV).

Furthermore, I have known and read of certain individuals who were devoted Muslims and who have served "Allah" for many years but later accepted Christ and came out publicly to declare that they are now Christians through their writings and other publications. Some of these individuals risked their lives and lost physical or material benefits that should come while others were even disowned by their parents simply because they left Islam and embraced Christianity. These individuals took their decisions after much patient learning/study of the Bible in contrast with what they have believed.

### *Conclusion*

Sincerity is demanded from everyone! One could be convinced of a particular

thing if and when he is open-minded. The Ethiopian eunuch was sincere enough to admit that he did not understand the scriptures he was reading even when he was a religious man ([Acts 8:27-31](#) – he had come to Jerusalem to worship). He was also sincere enough to listen to Philip as he preached Jesus to him beginning from that same scripture he was reading (vs. 35). He was sincere to point to water and made a request to be baptized ([Acts vs.36-37](#)). Why then should anyone not be sincere enough to listen to God’s message when it is being preached to him simply because he thinks he already knows it?

Not many people have the fortitude to swim against the swelling current of mediocrity and the status quo. They are already satisfied with their state and religion and feel they do not need anything else. Once a person’s mind is closed about a thing, he would hardly welcome other ideas but once one is open-minded, he will be able to see the truth when presented. Let us be open-minded. Meanwhile, suppose I was born a Muslim and I have the opportunity to listen to God’s word taught by faithful Christians and I am receptive to understand it, I will become a Christian. The gospel is God’s power to save man ([Romans 1:16](#)) and it is still living and active ([Hebrews 4:12](#)).

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## Drifting Away

By Matthew W. Bassford

[Hebrews 2:1](#) contains one of the most sobering warnings in the entire Bible: “*For this reason, we must pay attention all the more to what we have heard, so that we will not drift away.*” A couple of verses later, the writer uses a rhetorical question to make the point that if we neglect the great salvation we have been given, we will not escape. Nobody turns their back on Jesus and gets away with it!

This is deeply relevant to us for a couple of different reasons. First, it shows that falling away is possible. This truth is bound up in the very language of the text. It is impossible to drift away from a place where you aren’t, and it’s impossible to neglect a salvation you don’t have. Those who teach, then, that true Christians can’t fall away are misguided. We can be in a state of grace now and fall from it later.

Of course, this concept is significant not merely in an abstract, doctrinal sense, but in a personal, concrete sense. I can fall away. You can fall away. The godliest Christian any of us know, the distinguished preacher, the elder of the church, or the devout widow, all of these can fall away.

The fault here is not in Jesus. He has promised that no one will snatch us out of His hand. We are immune to danger from outside forces, but we are not immune to danger from within. We can willingly abandon the safety from which no one can remove us. Indeed, unless we acknowledge the risk and humbly resolve to remain faithful, we infallibly will bring this disaster upon ourselves.

Second, the writer’s word choice also tells us how the disaster will arrive. Drift-

ing away is not a sudden, violent activity. Instead, it happens gradually, slowly, wavelet by wavelet.

Neither is neglect. Neglect is the result of failing to make an effort when the need to act doesn't seem pressing or important. The lawn doesn't look much worse today than it looked yesterday, it's hot out there, and I'd rather spend my Saturday in the woods than behind a lawnmower anyway. However, if I continue to defer exertion, soon the front door is covered in nastygrams from the HOA, and they're filming episodes of Tarzan in my front yard!

Spiritual disaster advances upon us in the same slow, subtle way. It is the fruit of coming home from a long day of work on Wednesday and deciding that it's too much effort to round up the kids and get everybody out to Bible class. It is the result of closing our eyes metaphorically to the trashy side of that TV show we love to watch—but not closing them literally. It is the outcome of a thousand tiny enticements to depart from Jesus in a way that still seems safe. Nobody's going to lose their soul over a Wednesday night or a Netflix drama, are they?

The problem is, though, that the more we draw away, the more reasonable extreme departures become. Maybe a steamy period romance isn't that far away from godliness, but neither is pornography that far away from steamy romances, nor an affair from porn. It's extremely easy for us to find ourselves in a spiritual position where we never intended to be. The only way to make sure that we don't drift away is to make sure that we don't drift.

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## We Were All Baptized

By Doy Moyer

One of the most significant arguments for baptism that I believe is under-utilized is the fact that the epistles, written to those who are already Christians, assume that the believers were all baptized. Look at passages like [Romans 6:3-6](#); [1 Corinthians 1:13](#); [12:13](#); [Galatians 3:27](#); [Colossians 2:10-13](#); etc. These are not written to unbelievers to try to persuade them to be baptized. These were written to those who already were baptized, reminding them of what they did and what it meant when they were baptized. If baptism were not expected, necessary, or the norm for all Christians then, why is there a pervasive indication that all the believers in these churches were baptized? There is no distinction being made in the epistles between baptized saints and unbaptized saints. "*For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...*" ([1 Corinthians 12:13](#)). In other words, the epistles were not written to the unbaptized.

But let's not lose sight of this: again, these were written to remind believers of the significance of their baptism and how that should affect their living for the Lord.

How is your baptism affecting your walk with the Lord?