

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mr. Brown, Mr. Dowling, Mr. Garner, Mr. Hadley, Ms. Donna Law, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Lamar Mathis, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mr. Nolan, Mrs. Owens, Ms. Ward, Mr. Winns.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website: www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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“Born a _____, and will die a _____”

By Derek Long

Have you ever encountered someone who made a statement like the following, “I was born a (supply a religious affiliation), and I will die a (supply a religious affiliation)”? Several weeks ago a person was telling me about their life and their religious background came up. The individual made a statement to the effect of, “I was born a Catholic, and I will die a Catholic.” How might a person respond to someone who makes a statement such as this? After I had finished my discussion with this individual, I began to think about what I might could say to someone who had this attitude. Here are some things it might be helpful to try to get an individual who says something like this to think about:

- God's word demonstrates for us how many people had to change from the religion they were “born into” in order to be pleasing to God. Rahab was not born into the nation of Israel but was among the idolatrous inhabitants of the land of Canaan when the Israelites were about to invade the land. Rahab changed from what she most likely was brought up around and sided with the people of God (Joshua 2:1-21). The New Testament will speak highly of the faith of Rahab (Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25). Her faith was one which led

her to change from what she had grown up around though. All the early Christians would have had to change from the religion they were “born into.” Those three thousand who were saved on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1, 38-41, 47) were people who previously had been devout Jews (Acts 2:5). They had to leave behind their Judaism and become Christians in order to be right with God. Others in the first century who became Christians had to leave behind the idolatry they were born into. Paul writes about how the Thessalonians had, “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Thessalonians 1:9, NKJV). In Acts 6:5 we read about Nicolas, who was one of the seven chosen to serve in the daily distribution to the widows, being, “a proselyte from Antioch” (NKJV). If he was a proselyte, he left whatever religion he was previously a part of to become a Jew. After he had become a Jew earlier in life, he had to go from being a Jew to becoming a follower of Christ. If a person is “born into” a false religion, such a person must leave behind the false religion to be a follower of God like these individuals in the first century had to do.

- Many of the people we encounter who make the following argument would probably believe some people would need to change from the religion they were born into in order to be saved. The individuals mentioned earlier who is a Catholic would probably think a person who was born into a Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, or Atheistic family would have to change their religion in order to be saved. If an atheist should leave behind his atheism because it is wrong, why would a person not be willing to leave behind their religious persuasion like Catholicism if it is wrong?

- Instead of focusing on what religion we were “born into,” we need to be more focused on what religion is true and from God. Jesus tells us the truth is able to set us free from bondage to sin (John 8:31-34), sanctify us (John 17:17), and He is the source or embodiment of such truth (John 14:6). If one is “born into” a religion which does not follow the truth, then they are part of a religion which cannot set them free from sin, sanctify them, or give their access to the Father.
- Connected with the previous point, our allegiance to the truth must be greater than our loyalty toward our parents, family heritage, ancestry, etc. Truth must be important to us in order for us to be saved (Proverbs 23:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). Our loyalty to family and human traditions must not be greater than our loyalty to the truth. Jesus plainly says, “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me” (Matthew 10:34-37, NKJV). The apostle Paul like many others since him had to leave behind the traditions of his father in order to be pleasing to God (Galatians 1:13-17). God does not want us to blindly accept whatever religion our parents were part of. God wants us to test all things (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; 1 John 4:1; Acts 17:11). If our parents were following the truth of God’s word, we can imitate their example. We imitate their example though not because we are going to remain in whatever religion we were “born into” but because we are going to follow the teachings of God found in the Scriptures (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15).