

ONE MORE NIGHT WITH THE FROGS

One of the more interesting responses in scripture is found in Exodus 8:10. The setting entails God sending a series of plagues upon the land of Egypt because Pharaoh refused to let God's people go. The Hebrew children had been under Egyptian bondage for hundreds of years and God was ready to deliver them from this horrible bondage. So God called Moses through a burning bush and informed him that he would be the one, along with his brother Aaron, to lead these people out of Egypt. Moses then preceded though God's guidance to warn Pharaoh that if he did not let the people go, God would send plagues.

The first half of Exodus 8 consists of the second of these ten plagues. Moses warned Pharaoh that if he did not let God's people go so they could serve Him (v.1), then a plague of frogs would come into the land of Egypt in such abundance that they would cover the land border to border (vv.2-4). When Pharaoh refused, the plague took place. Frogs came in and covered the entire land of Egypt (v.6). In obvious disgust, Pharaoh was now willing (or so he said) to let the people go if God would remove this plague (v.8). In v.9, Moses told Pharaoh that he would entreat the Lord, that He may remove this plague of flogs. But he needed to know when. In other words, "*Pharaoh when are you willing to do what God has commanded, so that He will remove this plague?*" And v.10 gives us one of the saddest responses one could ever make regarding the question "when?" Pharaoh's response was "**tomorrow.**" Pharaoh shows an obvious lack of priority and urgency in fulfilling God's command. He had an opportunity to have a horrible plague removed from his life, yet he chose to spend one more night with the frogs.

We wonder why Pharaoh waited; yet it's more of a wonder why people today delay doing what they know they need to do. Many like Pharaoh, willingly choose to spend one more night with the frogs. Here we are in the 21st century and well aware that sin plagues the lives of all men (Romans 3:23), and until one is obedient to God and puts that old man of sin to death (Romans 6:3-4), sin will continue to plague his life. In essence, God has left man a choice as Moses did Pharaoh by asking "*when will you do God's will so that the plague of sin will be removed from your life?*"

You know, the book of Acts is often called, "The Book of Conversions." Although there are many conversion recorded there, there are also some sad instances of people not being converted. Felix and Agrippa are two examples. When the apostle Paul preached to Felix, (*Acts 24:25*) ... **he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.** As far as we know, no "*convenient season*" ever came for Felix, and he remained unconverted.

Then there was the time Paul was still in prison and was brought before King Agrippa. Asked to make his defense, Paul simply recounted the story of his own conversion to Jesus Christ. When he had finished, he said to King Agrippa, a Jew: **Believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest" (Acts 26:27).** Agrippa replied, **'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (v.28).** Like Felix, he was stirred by the message, but would not act in response to that message. We wonder why Felix and Agrippa failed to obey the Lord just as today we also wonder why people that have been taught do not obey the gospel. I want to suggest a few reasons why some people choose not to respond to God's word by saying 'tomorrow' or "at another time that is more convenient." In essence they are saying, I want to spend one more night with the frogs.

THEY FAIL TO RECOGNIZE THEY ARE SINNERS AND THUS LOST

Man is nearly always slow to recognize his own guilt. Adam, instead of admitting His sin to God, said, "**The woman you gave me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:12).** Some today don't see themselves as

sinner because they are living "good moral lives." They haven't committed murder or adultery; they are not thieves or liars. But they forget that there are sins of attitude, i.e. sins of the heart.

Notice if you will Cornelius in Acts 10. Cornelius was a good, moral man -- but he was still lost: (*Acts 10:2*) ***A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.*** By today's standard, we would describe him as a "good man." But the angel of God told him to send for Peter, ***"Who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved"*** (*Acts 11:14*). Imbedded in that statement is the fact that Cornelius was lost. In spite of his morality, he was still a sinner in need of the Savior. The truth is that all of us are sinners. (*Rom. 3:10*). ***There is none righteous, No, not one. (23). For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*** John writes: ***If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8).*** So let's all recognize the fact that we have a sin problem and need a savior.

You know, it is difficult to face up to our sins. When confronted by their sins, some try to shift the blame. That's what Adam did. He pointed to the finger toward the woman. In fact, he blamed God a little by saying the woman that you gave me.

Others reason by saying something like, "Everybody is doing it." And that may be true, but it still is no justification. When David had committed adultery with Bathsheba and then had her husband killed, the prophet of God made him face what he had done. David was big enough, and courageous enough, to face his sin. His response was ***"I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Sam. 12:13).*** It was this attitude, this willingness to face his sin and repent, that caused David to be, ***"A man after God's own heart."*** (*Acts 13:22*).

It's only when one faces the fact that he is a sinner and is lost that he sees the need for the salvation that Jesus Christ can offer. ***"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).*** The apostles declared the same thing, (*Acts 4:12*) ***Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*** Let us not fail to recognize the effects of our sins. Because of the sins of Adam and Eve, they were driven out from the presence of God (Gen. 3). The prophet Isaiah explains why, ***"The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that he cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear"*** (*Isa. 59:1-2*). Isaiah is telling us that a person can live his life such that God will hide his face from them and will not hear them.

To allow sin to separate us from the fellowship of God is a serious thing. It doesn't matter that, "Everybody is doing it," if what we're doing it is going to separate us from God. But so many people look around at others and reason, ***"I am as good as they are."*** And they may be right in that assessment, but in the judgment that will be poor consolation.

It's not until man recognizes and accepts the fact that he has a sin problem and that it separates him from God, will he seek a solution. Once man acknowledges that he has a sin problem, then he should be concerned with how to fix it. The apostle John wrote, ***"(1 John 5:11 KJV) And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*** There is the key –THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON. As noted above, ***"In none other is there salvation" (Acts 4:12).*** If we are to be in fellowship with God, we must be in Christ. Notice what apostle Peter wrote: (*1 Pet 1:18-19 KJV*) ***Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, ...{19} But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:***

The meaning for "redeem" conveys paying a ransom. We have all seen movies where someone is held hostage for a ransom. This ransom is to be paid in exchange for freeing the person being held. That's the idea here. The price for our freedom from sin is the blood of Jesus, and it's only when people realize the effect of sin can they appreciate the great cost of their salvation! The price paid for the remission of sin was the blood of Christ,

but the act of removing those sins is baptism. That's why Saul was told *(Acts 22:16) why tarriest thou, arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.* That's how you get rid of the plague of sin – you wash them away through baptism.

Another reason for not obeying the truth is confusion by the Many Churches: Some say, *"There are so many churches, how can I know which one is right? They all can't be right."* I can understand the confusion, especially in the light that there are so many different religious organizations in the world today. There are many within twenty miles of us today teaching different doctrines.

Let's notice scripture and you make your decision from the evidence presented what the Bible says about the church. Jesus promised, *"I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18).* The Lord never authorized another church to be built! Notice some characteristics of the church he promised to build. It was purchased *"with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).* His church cost something; he paid for it with his blood. Since it is His; He is its CEO; He is *"the head of the body, the church" (Col. 1:18).* Notice that the church is also referred to as the body.

Turn with me to Eph. 4. After exhorting all to *(3) to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,* the apostle Paul goes on to explain why: *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (Eph. 4:4-6).* Notice that there is "One body" and "One faith" just as there is "One Lord" and "One God." Our religious climate offers a "choice" of churches (bodies), but God doesn't. Frequently you hear *"Go to the church of your choice,"* but you want read of such in scripture. Religion in general offers a choice of "gods," but the True God doesn't! There is "One" of each of those seven things named.

When division occurred in the church at Corinth, it was much like denominationalism today. Believers divided into groups following after different men, but listen to what inspired Paul told them: *Let there be no divisions among you... Is Christ divided?" (1 Cor. 1:10,13).* That kind of division was wrong then, it is wrong now. The Lord built His church, which He purchased with His own blood, and He prayed that all in it would be "One." We read of that one church within the pages of scripture. When you seek and find a church that teaches the terms and conditions of entrance, government, worship, and doctrine like the New Testament church, then you have found the church that is right.

A third reason some do not obey the truth is because they see no need to "Change Churches." When shown what the Bible teaches about the Lord's church, some reply something like: *"I don't want to change churches."* But we must recognize that it isn't simply a matter of "changing churches." It is a matter of following truth! Jesus said, *'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).* We must be willing to follow the truth that the Son of God has revealed, wherever it may lead us!

As you go on through the book of Acts, you will read of many conversions. Believers were the more being added to the Lord. When they were taught and believed, they responded. The gospel is *"the power of God unto salvation... to the Jew first and also to the Greek" Rom. 1:16).* When that gospel was preached, both Jews and Gentiles had the same problem. To be made free from their sins and be brought into fellowship with God, they had to leave the religion in which they had been reared and unite with Christ. The Jews left Judaism while the Gentiles left paganism. This principle hasn't changed. We are not just talking about "changing churches." We are talking about changing lives!

The apostle Paul shows that *"all spiritual blessings"* are *"in Christ"* (Eph. 1:3). He further shows how we reach those blessings and become children of God: *(Gal 3:26-27) For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. {27} For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (29) And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.* So it isn't about changing churches. It

is about leaving our former lives, and living “*for Christ*” and “*in Christ*.”

Many deceive themselves with the thought “*I have lots of time, yet.*” But the truth is, we just don't know how much time we have. ***Behold, now is the acceptable time; Behold, now is the day of salvation***” (2 Cor. 6;2). Go back and read through completely the book of Acts. Note what people were told to do. Then note this: **without exception, every one who became a Christian, did so when they first heard the gospel of Christ!** They didn't put it off and do it next week, or next month, or next year. They did it NOW. That is the only sensible course. You see, they didn't spend another night with the frogs.

There may be some already a part of the church and you too might be spending another night with the frogs. There are things you know you ought to do but you procrastinate. For instance, how often, when considering Bible study, have you said “*I will start doing that later when I have more time?*” How often, when pondering your attendance to worship, have you thought, “*I will do that more regularly when it is more convenient?*” Let us understand convenience was never a consideration by our Lord. In fact, he expects sacrifice. How often when thinking about visiting the sick, encouraging the lost, comforting those in the hospitals has you figured “tomorrow?” Why are you waiting? The lack of urgency and lack of commitment is really why Pharaoh chose to spend that one more night with the frogs?

Brethren, each and every day of our lives we have a choice. We can choose to watch TV or study our Bibles. We can choose to talk to others about sports, politics or grandchildren we can choose to talk to them about Christ crucified. We can choose to play or labor? We can choose to absorb all of our time in material things or balance it out so we can involve ourselves in spiritual matters as well. Which do you choose? What is your answer? Is it today or do you want to spend one more night with the frogs?