



ANOTHER NIGHT WITH THE FROGS

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Exodus 8: 5- *And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord. And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only? And he said, tomorrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the Lord our God.*

- Former President Ronald Reagan learned the need of making a decision early in his teens. A kind aunt had taken him to a shoemaker to have a pair of shoes custom-made just for him. The shoemaker asked, "Do you want a round toe or a square toe?"
- Young Ronald couldn't make up his mind. So the cobbler said, "Come back in a day or two and tell me what you want."
- A few days later the shoemaker saw Ronald on the street and asked what he had decided about the shoes. "I haven't made up my mind yet," he replied. "Very well," said the shoemaker, "your shoes will be ready for you to pick up tomorrow."
- When Reagan picked up the shoes...one had a round toe and the other a square toe. Mr. Reagan said, "looking at those shoes taught me a lesson. If you don't make your own decisions, somebody else makes them for you."

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- Decisions, decisions. Life is made up of decisions both large and small and everything in between. And while you are a teen, some of life's greatest choices must be made. Will I just finish school and get a job or do I go to college or a trade school? Who will I live my life with? What kind of a life will I live? Choices...decisions; they keep coming the rest of your life.

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- In the country of Guyana, 60 miles up the Essequibo River there is a village, Bartica, which serves as the supply center for the miners and prospectors working in the mountains further up the river. In the center of this village of a few thousand people there is a huge white monument placed on a concrete slab. It's impressive. Walk around the base and there is no inscription. Ask any of the citizens, and nobody knows why the monument was erected. Old-timers can't remember. Strange - a monument to nothing! A memorial that has no memory or meaning.

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- Could anything be more useless? Will your life become a monument to nothing? Right and timely decisions will play a very important part in how useful your life will be...how meaningful your life can become. I hope to continue to make the right decisions in a timely fashion in order for my life to count for something. How about you?
 - None of us like to make certain decisions. We'd rather ignore them; put them off; or have someone else do it for us. But life does not work that way.
 - The characters and stories of the Bible fascinate me. Some people call the Bible 'boring', but I don't see it that way. I have found some interesting stories in the Bible and the one I'm about to tell you is one that is full of

interesting details.

- It was written thousands of years ago, yet it describes with perfect precision how we respond to God today. One word in this story jumps out at me like you would not believe. I do believe it will jump out at you if you will only give me your attention for a few minutes.
- Israel has been enslaved by the Egyptians. They have been abused, hurt, whipped, and crushed. Some literally were killed by the task masters of Egypt. God has chosen Moses to lead his people out of captivity. His job is to petition Pharaoh, the Egyptian ruler, for the Israelites' release. And God gives Moses powerful negotiating tools. Moses is given the ability to bring down terrible plagues on the country of Egypt.
- In the first plague, every drop of the country's water is contaminated with blood. The stench is unbearable, illness spreads, and clean water is nowhere to be found for seven days. Yet the stubborn Pharaoh refuses to let the people go. The Israelites are simply too valuable to him as a cheap source of labor. This brings us to the part of the story that is so fascinating. In the midst of an escalating crises of blood-contaminated water, sickness, and thirst, God commands Moses to bring on another plague.
- Aaron is told to stretch out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and as a result frogs appear from everywhere. They cover the land. I'm not talking about lovable, adorable Kermit the frog. I'm talking about those slimy, stinking, wetting, wart producing frogs. Frogs appear from every source of water in Egypt. Frogs are in the house, at the job, at school, everywhere you turn.
- Pharaoh can't even back his chariot out of the garage without killing a hundred frogs. His pizza is covered with frogs. If his home is like most of those represented here, Mom and the older daughter is standing on chairs, screaming ever since the plague began. The younger daughter and brother has run out of jars in which to collect and accidentally suffocate them. Frogs are on the table, in the bed, taking a bath with you, resting on your recliner, beside you in the car, all over the ground...everywhere there are frogs.
- The Bible spells it out so clearly. The frogs will come up into your palace and your bedroom and onto your bed, into the houses of your officials and on your people, and into your ovens and kitchens.
- And then a dumb thing happens. Aaron obeys and commands frogs to come from the waters. And of all things the stupid magicians could not be outdone. They called up frogs also.
- Pharaoh then called for Moses and Aaron and asks them to pray that the Lord will remove the frogs. He needed relief. His wife was screaming, his daughter was fainting, the colleagues of his kingdom were complaining. Get rid of the frogs.
- So Moses offers to get rid of the frogs. But notice something strange. Moses said, 'Pharaoh, I'm going to defer the decision as to when the frogs leave to you. You make the decision. When do you want the frogs to leave?' You want to know what I would have said? Right NOW! Get them out of here. Skeddadle night now! Moses, hurry up and pray that these things can take up wings if necessary and fly out. Right now is soon enough.
- But that is not what Pharaoh said. The ruler, as smart as he was, missed this one. Pharaoh said, remove the frogs tomorrow! He must have really enjoyed frog legs. Does he enjoy the sound of his daughter shrieking? Or does he like sleeping alone? What could possibly motivate this man to want to wait until tomorrow if he could resolve the problem today? Why spend another night with the frogs?
- I don't think Pharaoh had any affection for frogs or screaming women. The ruler had an agenda. He had ambitious architectural goals and they required a labor force made up of Israelites slaves.
- If you look carefully, Pharaoh's behavior isn't really so unusual. I've been there myself as has many of others. Take a look. Cancer ward residents continue to smoke cigarettes through the tracheotomy hole cut into their throats. Why? Because they very habit that is killing them still provides a moment of pleasure.
- They settle for another night with the frogs.
- Intelligent people sacrifice reputation, health, and fortune to continue illicit relationships. They do this even they know they'll be found out. Even after the relationship turns sour; even after they've lost everything - they choose to spend another night with the frogs.