

Title: **“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”**
Text: Exodus 8:8; 9:27-28; and 10:16-20
Subject: *Repentance to be Repented Of*
Date: Tuesday Evening — July 24, 2007
Tape # Exodus 52
Readings: *Bobbie Estes and David Burge*
Introduction:

The Apostle Paul speaks of the sorrow of the world that produces a repentance to be repented of, a repentance not unto salvation, but a repentance that is unto death. I want to show you a picture of that repentance that is to be repented of, that repentance that is unto death. It is vividly set before us three times in Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

(Exodus 8:8) “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.”

(Exodus 9:27-28) “And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD *is* righteous, and I and my people *are* wicked. (28) Entreat the LORD (for *it is* enough) that there be no *more* mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.”

(Exodus 10:16-20) “Then Pharaoh called for

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. (17) Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only. (18) And he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the LORD. (19) And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt. (20) But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.”

Three times Pharaoh asked Moses to entreat the Lord for him. Three times, the king of Israel was so overwhelmed by the judgment of God that he repented, acknowledged that the Lord Jehovah is God indeed, and confessed his sin. Yet, his heart was hardened, he refused to repent, he refused to acknowledge God as God, and he refused to confess his sin. Pharaoh’s repentance was a repentance to be repented of, repentance that at last brought forth death, everlasting death under the wrath of God in the torments of hell. Oh, may God save you from such repentance, for Christ’s sake!

“Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me.” — Again, “Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Entreat the

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

LORD, for it is enough!” — And a third time, “*Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death!*” Is this the same Pharaoh that said, “*Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?*” Is this the same man who has been scoffing at God and his servants, and tormenting his people? Yes, it is, indeed, the same man, the same Pharaoh, the same rebel. He is terrified; but he is the same. Three times he begged for Moses to entreat the Lord for him, that God might take away his judgment. Three times Moses did so. But, as soon as the cause of Pharaoh’s terror was gone, he hardened his heart the more.

But what was wrong with Pharaoh’s repentance? He said the right things. He felt the judgment of God. He confessed his sin. He acknowledged Christ as the Lord God of heaven and earth. He acknowledged the necessity of worshipping and serving God by the sacrifice of Christ, as Moses had declared God must be worshipped and served by his people. He even acknowledged that only the Lord God who had brought judgment upon him could take it away. Yet, Pharaoh’s heart was hardened by the very act of repentance, and he is in hell today because of it. So what was wrong with his repentance?

AN UNREGENERATE MAN

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

The first thing I want you to see is the fact that Pharaoh’s repentance was the repentance of a natural, unregenerate man, a man without life and faith in Christ. True repentance, like true faith, arises from the gift of life by the Spirit of God. It is the result of the new birth, not a prelude to it. We turn to God in repentance, trusting Christ as our Savior and Lord, when we have been turned to God by the Spirit of grace. — *“Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth”* (Jeremiah 31:18-19).

“Repentance to salvation not to be repented of” (2 Corinthians 7:10) is not the cause of salvation, but the result. Christ is the captain, cause, and author of salvation. Repentance, like faith, is the means through and by which salvation is brought home to our souls in the sweet experience of grace; and both repentance and faith come to us by *“the gift of God”* the Holy Spirit in regeneration, flowing to us in the river of his sovereign grace by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:8). As he *“that believeth and is baptized,”* trusting Christ as his righteousness, is saved, so he that repents of sin *“shall be saved”* (Mark 16:16).

Repentance is the gift of the triune God, bestowed upon chosen sinners by grace. It is the covenant gift of God the Father to chosen sinners, who commands his

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

servants, in meekness, to instruct “*those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth*” (2 Timothy 2:25). It is bestowed upon us as gift of God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Mediator of the covenant, who is exalted as a Prince and Savior “*to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins*” (Acts 5:31; 11:18). And it is the gift of God the Spirit, who convinces redeemed sinners of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and works repentance for in them (John 16:8). In a word, repentance is the work and operation of God the Holy Spirit of God in omnipotent mercy and saving grace, “*who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth*” (Romans 9:18).

What tremendous words those are! — He “*hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth!*” If God has granted and grants us repentance, let us ever praise him and extol him for his free grace and sovereign mercy. Yet, we must not fail to see and acknowledge that “*whom he will he hardeneth,*” just as he did Pharaoh, whose heart he hardened with false repentance.

PHARAOH’S TROUBLE

Pharaoh’s repentance, like the repentance of countless multitudes in our day, was the mock repentance of a sinner terrified by a sense of divine judgment. Such repentance counterfeits the true repentance, but has

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

features by which it betrays itself. Three times in the texts we have read, we see Pharaoh visibly and deeply troubled. He was alarmed. He knew he was under the wrath and judgment of God. He confessed his sin. He promised obedience. But his repentance was unto death. There is a big difference between being in trouble and being humbled, between being alarmed and being awakened, between the fear of going to hell and knowing that you deserve to go to hell.

Without question, when God the Holy Spirit works repentance in a sinner, he brings down his heart with labor, causes him to reel to and fro as a drunken man, and brings him to his wits' end with guilt and felt judgment in his soul because he knows he is justly condemned before the holy Lord God. His bones wax old through roaring. Day and night the hand of God lays heavily upon him. His moisture is turned into the drought of summer (Psalm 32:3-4). The guilty sinner has a sense of felt judgment. Hell in his soul!

But Pharaoh was not crushed with guilt, only with judgment; and **the judgment of God never brings repentance** (Revelation 16:8-11).

(Revelation 16:8-11) “And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. (9) And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.
(10) And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,
(11) And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.”

Let me be perfectly clear. I do not say that God never uses providential acts of judgment to arouse, impress, subdue and humble his elect and bring them to repentance. He often uses outward, temporal acts of judgment to graciously bring sinners to Christ (Psalm 107:1-31; Luke 15:11-20).

But I do say that Divine judgment, in and of itself, will never produce repentance in the heart of a man. The heart of man is so obstinate, proud and hard that even the torments of hell will never cause the damned to repent. They gnaw their tongues for pain. But they will not shed a tear for the cause of their pain. And if there is no repentance in hell, where God’s greatest judgments are executed, the lesser judgments of providence certainly will not change the sinner’s heart and produce repentance. Judgment does not soften the sinner’s heart, it hardens it. Wrath will never convert a man. It is grace that saves.

Any repentance that is produced by God’s acts of providential judgment or by legal fear is a false

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

repentance. Like Pharaoh, Cain, Herod and Judas all repented of the evil they had done, because they saw the judgment of God upon them. But they were not saved. They all perished under the wrath of God.

Only the revelation of Christ in the heart can produce true repentance (Zechariah 12:10). Repentance is the tear that drops from faith's eye (Job 42:5-6). No one will ever truly repent until he is converted by the grace of God, looks to and sees Christ crucified as his only, all-sufficient, sin-atoning Substitute. Repentance is the response of faith to the promises of God in the gospel (Isaiah 55:7; Jeremiah 3:11-13). Repentance is the result, not the cause, of God's converting grace. It is the fruit, not the root, of faith in Christ (Jeremiah 31:19).

PHARAOH'S REQUESTS

Now, let's look at the requests this terrified man made to Moses. Three times the king of Egypt called for Moses and cowered before him, begging him to entreat the Lord for him.

(Exodus 8:8) “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.”

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

The God of heaven made himself known to Pharaoh by the judgments he executed upon him. And Pharaoh now cowers, like a whipped pup, before God’s servant Moses, whom he had despised before, acknowledging that none but God could have brought the frogs and none but God could remove them. So he begs Moses and Aaron to intercede for him that the Lord might remove the plague of frogs from him and his people.

When men are in great distress they often greatly value and honor God’s servants, whom before they treated with contempt.

- When the man of God prophesied against the altar Jeroboam erected at Bethel, the king put forth his hand and said, *“Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him. The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD. And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again”* (1 Kings 13:3-6).
- When king Saul was forsaken and the Philistines threatened to destroy him, he went to the witch of Endor and said, *“Bring me up Samuel”* (1 Samuel 28:11).
- The rich man in hell, places a great value upon Lazarus, whom he despised upon the earth (Luke 16).

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

- The Philippian jailor placed great value upon Paul and Silas, when he was driven to utter despair and ready to kill himself (Acts 16).

Pharaoh begged God’s servant Moses to pray for him, when he thought God was about to kill him. Unlike preachers of our day, who bow and scrape before little men, and applaud them if they happen to mention God’s name in an honorable way, **Moses saw through Pharaoh’s show of humility and demanded that the king of Egypt glory over him before all the people.** Moses demanded that Pharaoh acknowledge publicly that he was indeed the prophet of the only true and living God. Pharaoh did as Moses demanded, and God removed the frogs. But Pharaoh hardened his heart (vv. 9-15).

(Exodus 8:9-15) “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? (10) And he said, To morrow. And he said, *Be it* according to thy word: that thou mayest know that *there is* none like unto the LORD our God. (11) And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only. (12) And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD because of the frogs which he had brought against

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

Pharaoh. (13) And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields. (14) And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank. (15) But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.”

When we get to chapter 9, after enduring the plagues of lice, flies, a grievous murrain, boils and blain upon men and beasts, pestilence and grievous hail, Pharaoh’s terrors were renewed and intensified. So he called for Moses and Aaron again. This time he made three confessions that are, in this day of easy-believism thought to be sure evidences of saving faith.

(Exodus 9:27-28) “And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD *is* righteous, and I and my people *are* wicked. (28) Entreat the LORD (for *it is* enough) that there be no *more* mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.”

- “*I have sinned this time.*” — It is as though he said, Moses, I know I was not sincere before, but this time I am really sincere. I know, this time, that I have sinned.
- “*The LORD* (Jehovah, the self-existent, eternal God) *is righteous.*” — I acknowledge that God’s judgment is

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

righteous and just. If he destroys us, he will only be doing that which is right.

- *“I and my people are wicked.”*

With that last confession, Pharaoh betrayed his insincerity. True repentance deals with personal sin, not the sins of others. Only a self-righteous man, pretending to be humble, merges his guilt with the guilt of others. In doing this, Pharaoh was saying, “I am a wicked man; but so is everyone else. Moses, you know we are all sinners.”

Then, the terrified king of Egypt begged Moses and Aaron again to pray for him. *“Entreat the Lord, for it is enough.”* — I’ve suffered enough. The hail, thunder, and lightning have convinced me. I’ve now heard God’s voice. If he will take away my punishment, *“I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer; go the three days’ journey into the wilderness.”*

But Moses knew Pharaoh’s hypocrisy. In verse 30 he said, *“I know that ye will not yet fear the LORD God.”* — *“And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses”* (vv.34-35).

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

- Pharaoh confessed that he had done wrong; but never confessed his sin. He never acknowledged the evil of his heart.
- He needed help; but he was not helpless. He still thought he was in control. He said, “If the Lord will take away this judgment, I will let Israel go. If he refuses my demand, I will continue to refuse his.”
- And Pharaoh sought mercy on the footing of works. He asked Moses (the law) to intercede for him, promising to do better. When he said, “*I have sinned this time,*” he was saying, “I promise to do better, if the Lord will take away his wrath. I will let you go.”
- Once the thundering and lightning and hail stopped, his fear subsided, he hardened his heart the more.

Then, in chapter 10, God sent the plague of locusts.

Armies of locusts marched in unbroken ranks through the land of Egypt at God’s command, until they covered the whole country. The swarms were so great that they darkened the sky, devoured every herb of the land, the fruit of every tree, and every green thing that grew in Egypt. Pharaoh was more terrified than ever. He was sure he was about to die. So he called for Moses and Aaron to pray for him again.

(Exodus 10:16-17) “Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. (17) Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat the LORD your God,

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

that he may take away from me this death only.”

- Pharaoh, terrified with the fear of imminent death, sent messengers in haste to fetch God’s prophet and priest to him.
- This time, his confession was more thorough. He said, *“I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you,”* but it was nothing but the ranting of a terrified man.
- *“Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin, only this once.”* — Pharaoh was pretending that he would never offend again, if the Lord would forgive him.
- He acknowledged that God sent the plague of locusts and that God alone could remove it. — *“Entreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only.”* Here, again, Pharaoh betrayed his heart. He wanted only to escape the death he feared. Once the fear was gone, his heart was hardened (v. 20).

(Exodus 10:20) “But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.”

PHARAOH’S KNOWLEDGE

As we have read these three passages and heard Pharaoh speak, it is obvious that he was convinced of many things and was informed of more.

- He knew that he had sinned.

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

- He was convinced that the Lord our God, the triune Jehovah, is God alone.
- He had been informed by Moses that God has a chosen people for whom he had made a covenant, a people he would surely deliver, and that he would be worshipped and served by them through the blood sacrifice of a sacrificial lamb.
- He knew that God had the power to save him or destroy him.

But Pharaoh’s knowledge was altogether carnal. He learned all those facts, but they were just facts.

- He knew he had sinned, but had no idea that he was a sinner.
- He knew that God is and that God is the sovereign Lord of the universe. He had no trouble with divine sovereignty, as a matter of fact. But the Lord God had not conquered his heart. — Instead, he hardened it.
- Pharaoh was terrified of God, but there was no fear of God before his eyes.
- He knew about God’s covenant with his people, but knew nothing of covenant mercy, love and grace.
- He knew about the lamb Moses spoke of, but did not know the Lamb.
- Pharaoh knew much; but he knew nothing in his heart. He knew nothing experimentally, knew nothing in his heart except fear.

DYING CONVICTIONS

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

Let me see if I can bring these things home to your soul. Pharaoh’s acts of repentance were acts of repentance to be repented of because the convictions from which they sprang were dying convictions.

- Once God took away the frogs, Pharaoh had no more need of God.
- Once the Lord removed the locusts, he was no longer terrified of judgment.
- Once God’s thunder silenced and the hail ceased, Pharaoh’s fears were silenced and his need for God’s mercy ceased.

There are multitudes just like Pharaoh in this world. I have no doubt at all some of you have been exactly like him: often trembling but never turned, often convicted but never converted, often bent but never broken, often looking to God in fear but never looking to Christ in faith. You are described in Hosea 6.

(Hosea 6:4-5) “O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness *is* as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away. (5) Therefore have I hewed *them* by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments *are as* the light *that* goeth forth.”

Multitudes, upon hearing the gospel preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, experience deep religious convictions which soon die away, like the morning dew.

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

Lot’s wife (Genesis 19:15-16), — Israel at the Red Sea (Exodus 15:2, 22-24), the rich young ruler (Luke 18:18-23), Felix, the Roman Governor (Acts 22:24-25), and King Agrippa (Acts 26:28), all heard God speak and were moved toward repentance by the Word, just like Pharaoh. But, like Pharaoh, their convictions did not last long. Many others went further than these. Under deep conviction, Ananias and Sapphira, Simon Magus, Demas, and Diotrefes professed faith in Christ, united with his people, and served his cause for a while. But in time their convictions died.

Most people who sit under the sound of the gospel are, at one time or another, moved by it. I doubt there is anyone in this building who has not been convicted, in some measure, and moved toward repentance by the Word of God. God has spoken to you by his Word. Has he not? You have heard his voice in the gospel. Yet, you harden your heart. You lay aside the claims of Christ in the gospel, like Felix, saying, “*At a more convenient season I will call for thee.*” But, like the morning dew before the rising sun your convictions die away. Be warned, my friend. The road to hell is paved with good intentions. There are multitudes in hell who once wept and prayed over their souls. (Read Proverbs 29:1).

(Proverbs 29:1) “He, that being often reprov’d hardeneth *his* neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

How many there are who once stood as pillars in the visible church of God whose convictions died away in time. They began well. But they are no longer among us. They did much, moved by conviction. They gave much, moved by conviction. But, where are they now? What happened? The convictions they once felt so strongly died altogether.

Why do the convictions of many die? I have preached to many who wept, but repented not. And I have preached to many who appeared to be truly penitent, who appeared to be men and women of strong, firm conviction, whose convictions faded away like the morning dew before the sun. How does this happen? Why do the convictions of many die? Here are four answers to those questions:

1. They never knew their own guilt, depravity, sin, and helplessness before God. You may see the doctrine of total depravity very clearly, without having any personal knowledge of inward corruption.
2. They never saw the beauty, glory, and fulness of Christ. Many know the doctrine of Christ who never embrace Christ. Many see his doctrine who never see him. Many love his doctrine who never love him.
3. They never bowed to the rule and dominion of Christ as their Lord. Many want a Savior to keep them out of hell who refuse to bow to Christ as Lord to rule over them. But Christ will not be your Savior if he is not your Lord.

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

4. They still love the world. If you love the world, the love of God is not in you. Nothing is more deadly than the cares and pleasures of the world and the deceitfulness of riches. Sooner or later, the love of the world will cause conviction to die. Materialism will destroy conviction.

Dying convictions are natural, legal convictions. Saving faith is the result of Holy Spirit conviction (John 16:8-11). But dying convictions are seldom corrected. God will not always speak to those who refuse to hear. He will not always call those who refuse to obey. There is such a thing as judicial reprobation. Pharaoh was reprobate. God hardened his heart. God fixed it so that he could not repent. And God has not changed. — *“He hath mercy on whom he will; and whom he will he hardeneth!”*

God almighty will fix it so that those who will not obey the gospel cannot obey. If you harden your heart, God will harden your heart (Proverbs 1:23-33; Luke 13:23-27). Be warned! Take heed! If you reject the gospel, you reject life. Convictions that are put off tend to make the heart harden. Just as iron is hardened by being melted and cooled again, so is the heart of man.

HARDEN NOT YOUR HEART

“Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”
— *“Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your*

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” — “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” — “Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”

O sinner, the day of darkness and judgment is coming. It is rapidly coming. In that day, your sin and guilt will be too heavy for you to bear! In that day, men will pray. What a strange prayer meeting will take place on the day of judgment!

(Revelation 6:12-17) “And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; (13) And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. (14) And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. (15) And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; (16) And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: (17) For the great day of his

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”

Flee away to the only Refuge there is for your guilty soul! Flee to Christ. Go not to Moses or Aaron. Go not to a preacher or a priest! Go straight to Christ and straight to God by him. Go at once to the Savior. Go, with all your sins, all your guilt, all your helplessness. Go now! He will receive you, and save you. He has said, “*Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out!*” Oh, may God grant you repentance not to be repented of, for Christ’s sake!

Amen