

Cindy Cottone

# The Bible Corner



## The finger of God

"Just because our magical powers have disappeared, do you think that I've lost my other senses too?" cried Jannes, the court magician. "If Pharaoh doesn't have us killed first, he will certainly have us banished from Egypt forever."

Jambres, Pharaoh's other court magician, merely shrugged his shoulders and waited for the emotions to subside. "I see no other way, Jannes. Our magic is not effective against this God of the Hebrews. We must go to Pharaoh and tell him that their God is more powerful."

The two court magicians continued arguing all morning, until finally, a servant summoned them to appear before Pharaoh.

"I saw it with my own eyes," shrieked Pharaoh. "The Hebrew simply took his staff and struck at the dust of the earth." Pharaoh gestured wildly in mock imitation. "And immediately, the lice sprang forth on the very spot. Everywhere in Egypt now, the lice continue to run freely — in our homes, on our animals and on all of our

citizens." He stiffened at this last statement and nervously brushed at his own clothing.

"Your highness, we are painfully aware of this latest feat of the Hebrew God," Jambres began.

"So then why have you not done likewise?" Pharaoh interrupted angrily. "I hereby command you!"

"I do not wish to displease your majesty, but the truth of the matter is..." Jambres voice trailed off.

"Continue, continue!" Pharaoh said, scowling at them both.

"We have tried everything in our power, all of our secret arts, but we can neither create lice from dust, nor rid Egypt of this terrible plague. Sadly, we have concluded of this God of the Hebrews that His very finger is more powerful than anything we have ever seen."

"Get out!" Pharaoh snapped. "Get out of here at once! If you can't perform miracles, I'll find someone else who can."

It was Moses and Aaron who were finally called by Pharaoh to eliminate the lice from Egypt. Once again, Pharaoh promised that as soon as the plague was removed, he would allow the Hebrews to leave Egypt.

But, as soon as the lice were gone, Pharaoh quickly forgot all about his promise.

The next day, God sent a fourth plague into the land. This time, huge swarms of flies invaded all of the houses. They covered the ground like a thick blanket.

Meanwhile, Judith, a Hebrew slave in an Egyptian household, was making secret plans for herself and her son, David. She wasn't quite sure when the change had come over her, but Judith knew that she could no longer live in this house. The symbols of the false gods were everywhere and she felt as if they would suffocate her. She waited until the middle of the night for her chance to flee.

It was a dangerous choice Judith had made. She and her son were the property of the Egyptians. If they were caught trying to escape, they would be severely punished. But ever since the first plague, Judith's faith in the one true God had started to grow. She trusted God to protect her and David as they fled to the home of relatives in neighboring Goshen.

"Mother," David asked as they approached Goshen, "is the world going to end?"

"No, honey, I think that God is just putting things in order again."

"Well, do you think that He is almost done?" David continued.

"Yes," Judith said, giving him a hug. "I think a whole new world for us is just beginning."

When Judith and David reached Goshen, they were surprised to find that there were no flies anywhere. They had been spared of this plague. For as God had promised Moses, He would set His own people apart as a further sign in Egypt that He was the one true God.

Still, Pharaoh remained unconvinced and would not permit the Hebrews to leave the country. So God sent a fifth plague upon Egypt. This time, all of the cattle, horses, donkeys and sheep were struck with a disease and died. After this occurred, Pharaoh sent his spies to Goshen to check on the livestock of the Hebrews. Not one of their animals had died.

There were still five more plagues to come, and all because a foolish king thought himself to be more powerful than God.

**For discussion:**

1) Why did God keep sending more plagues on Egypt?

2) Each time a plague struck, Pharaoh called on Moses to pray to God to remove it, but as soon as He did, Pharaoh forgot all about his promise to let the Hebrews go. Do you only pray to God when you are in trouble?

3) Why did Judith leave the Egyptian household?

**For further reading:**

The story of the plagues of the lice, flies and livestock is found in Exodus, Chapter 8:16 - Chapter 9:7.

### SSJs mark anniversary with infirmary open house

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the opening of the convent and infirmary on the grounds of the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse, 4095 East Avenue, Rochester.

Sisters who reside at St. Joseph's Convent are proud of the activities and programs in which they are engaged — from writing letters for Amnesty International, to being entertained by the Rochester Gas and Electric Men's Chorus, to attending informal sessions designed to keep them up to date on the new projects being undertaken by members of the congregation.

As one infirmary resident remarked, "We

have a marvelous spirit here. People don't realize what good programs we have."

The convent and infirmary opened in 1961. That year, 25 sisters were transferred from an infirmary on the fourth floor of the motherhouse. Today, 75 members of the congregation reside in the facility.

St. Joseph Convent and Infirmary is a multilevel care facility accommodating the needs of residents who have some minimal health-care needs. The facility provides more complete care for sisters who have serious chronic or critical health problems. It also serves as a convalescent care facility for sisters who are recuperating from surgery or illness.

### St. Joseph's wellness day for priests, deacons nears

All priests and deacons are welcome to participate in a clergy wellness day on October 28 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at St. Joseph's Hospital, 555 E. Market St., Elmira.

The third annual wellness day, sponsored by the Clergy Health Board, carries the theme of "The Many Faces of Healing." The noted priest psychiatrist, Father George Freemesser, C.S.B., M.D., will be the featured speaker for two major presentations on holistic healing and self esteem. Father Freemesser is a practicing psychiatrist at St. Basil's College in Toronto.

In addition to Father Freemesser's program, Dr. Joseph Calderone, M.D., past president of the Chemung County Medical Association, will speak on the patient's responsibility in the healing process. Carolyn Hodges, a nutritionist from St. Joseph's Hospital, will give a practical talk on weight reduction.

The day is a combination of presentations on preventive health care as well as health screening opportunities such as blood pressure, lung function and blood glucose. There will also be exhibits of nutrition, fitness and cardiovascular health.

For information call Father James Schwartz at (716)461-2890.

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