

Episode: Other Letters Series No. 17

Narrator: Mary

Primary Scriptures: Exodus 8:16-19

Story Summary: The finger of God denotes God's power

Location: Israel

Time: circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Exodus 8:19

The Exodus stories of Moses, Pharaoh and the ten plagues are well known to any Bible reader. No matter how familiar they become, details sometimes slip by. One such detail is in Exodus 8:16-18 in the third plague of the gnats. The first two plagues were duplicated by the magicians of Pharaoh's court. You can imagine that Moses might have been a little embarrassed by that, and Pharaoh a little less than impressed by Moses and God.

In the third plague, the Lord turned the dust of Egypt into gnats which gnawed on all of the people and animals. In a desert land like Egypt, the amount of dust was immense, so the plague of gnats must have been disgusting beyond imagination. The wizards of the court could not duplicate the miraculous plague. Their answer to Pharaoh was, "This is the finger of God."

God is spirit, so he doesn't have physical fingers like human beings do. When the Bible uses the description of God's finger, fingers, or hands, it is using a metaphor for God's direct intervention and his power. This sort of analogy has been used by preachers throughout the centuries. One of the most famous sermons of all time was given by Jonathan Edwards in 1741, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."

Another use for the use of Finger of God is found by comparing parallel passages in Luke 11:14-20 and Matthew 12:22-37. These passages tell of the public rejection of Jesus by the Jewish leaders. Jesus is with the Pharisees and other religious leaders who have come to him from Jerusalem. A demon-possessed man is brought to him to be healed, and Jesus heals him. The crowd is astonished and some of them wonder if Jesus is the Messiah.

The religious leaders react by accusing Jesus of healing the man by being empowered by Satan. Jesus points out their illogical position by saying Satan would not drive out Satan, as well as pointing out their own people drive out demons. In Luke 11:20, Jesus ends his response by saying, "If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. In Matthew 12:28, Jesus says, "If it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." So, Jesus is equating the finger of God to be the Spirit of God...the Holy Spirit. Amazing!