

"The finger of God" Luke 11:14-28 Oculi 2023

Grace and peace in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Some of you will remember the story from the Bible of the ten plagues. Growing up, in Sunday school most of you were told the story of the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, of which the ten plagues are a part. God sent Moses to free his people, Pharaoh did not want to free the Israelites, God sent the ten plagues, then the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and much more in this long history.

But in the Old Testament reading, we find a phrase that we also find in our gospel: the finger of God. Exodus 7: 8-11 says, Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Show a miracle for yourselves,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and let it become a serpent.'" So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the Lord commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent. But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

Also with the first plagues, the plague of blood and the plague of frogs, the sorcerers duplicated the works of Aaron and Moses. But with the next plague, something changed:

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So the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.'" And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not.

The sorcerers of Pharaoh had the same work as sorcerers or sorcerers today: supposedly to control supernatural forces for their master. By tricks, they could imitate some of the miracles of the prophets of God. But, in this instance, no. They shouted, then, this is the finger of God.

Our gospel says thus: Jesus was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marveled. But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

Beelzebub is a name of the devil. It literally means "The Lord of the Flies," because the flies are in the excrement and the dead. Then, Beelzebub is the lord of decay, destruction and death.

But Jesus said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls. If

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Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub. And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

The sons of the Pharisees tried to cast the demons in the name of the Lord, so why did they denounce Jesus for casting demons successfully? Our Lord continued: But if by the finger of God I cast out demons, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Only God has dominion over demons. The Pharisees meant that Jesus cast out demons by the power of the devil because they did not want to believe in Jesus as the Son of God. They knew the Scriptures that pointed to Christ, but they did not want to believe in Him.

The term to cast out demons is exorcism. There is a well-known film called "The Exorcist". In this film, two priests confronted a demon and after a great fight, they threw him out. But in the accounts of the New Testament, a great struggle can not be found when Jesus Christ cast out devils. He only gave the order and it was so. This is evidence that Christ is our Lord and God. The sorcerers of this world do not have this power.

Moses lived about a thousand years before Christ, and we have now lived nearly two thousand years after Christ. However, there are

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still sorcerers. People are always looking for signs and wonders and by tricks the sorcerers fulfill their desires.

I met a man in university. He was Catholic, but not a faithful Catholic. After a few beers and whiskey, he would start speaking in tongues. First, to impress women. Second, to mock the Pentecostals. Because it was very difficult to distinguish between his spectacle and that of the Pentecostals who claim to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, St. Paul says no one should speak in tongues publicly if no one can interpret (1 Corinthians 14: 12-13). Because if someone speaks in an unknown language, how can we assess what he is talking about, or what spirit is speaking? According to St. Paul: But in the church I want to speak five more words with sense, so that I may also teach others, than ten thousand words in an unknown language. (1 Corinthians 14:19). To speak in tongues is not a sure sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Many of the sorcerers and spiritualists are more dangerous than my friend in university. They do not do their tricks to impress women or for mockery, but to deceive people for their money or to divert them from the Word of God. Most sorcerers are frauds, but if a spirit actually speaks through them, it is not the Spirit of God.

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The finger of God today is in the preaching of the Word and the sacraments. Baptism is the great exorcism. Those who have not received the new life in Christ are slaves to sin and the father of sin is the devil. Then the devil is his master. But in baptism, the Holy Spirit casts out the devil and frees us from the power of sin and Satan. Only God has this dominion over the devil. We are free from the condemnation of sin, the power of the devil and the fear of death for Christ's sake, his death and resurrection. There is no other name given to men. In this, we have peace that surpasses all understanding. Amen.