



Media Spotlight

A BIBLICAL ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR MEDIA

SPECIAL REPORT

DELIVERANCE

DEMONIZATION AND THE CHRISTIAN

by Albert James Dager



God's Word gives ample evidence of His purpose to work in the lives of those who place their trust in Him in order to bring them into the full stature of godliness. This He accomplishes in spite of our sin nature which continually wars against the Spirit. He also works in spite of the attempts by Satan and his minions to destroy or seriously hamper our relationship to the Father which was gained through faith in Jesus Christ's atoning work on the cross of Calvary.

Those who accept the former premise while ignoring the latter may find themselves continually at a loss to explain why they cannot live a victorious life. That demons can and do afflict Christians is not merely a scriptural trivia, it is reality. And unless we are prepared to cope with the evil supernaturalism that threatens us, we cannot hope to serve God to the fullest degree.

The reticence of those raised in Western culture to acknowledge spiritual influences upon their lives has resulted in a Christianity that manifests a materialistic outlook. It's as if Christians are embarrassed to address the subject of spirituality not only in regards to their dependence upon God, but also in regards to the spiritual warfare that is raging around us.

Of late, however, there have arisen ministries devoted to waging spiritual warfare through deliverance from evil spirits. These deliverance ministries find diverse expression, some being more balanced than others.

However, in our research into various deliverance ministries we have found some problems with all of them— even the most balanced. Yet we do not wish to completely negate the positive aspects of deliverance. It is our purpose to analyze the problem areas and offer some scriptural guidelines to keep the subject in proper perspective.

There are certain issues which are primary to the deliverance question:

- What is the proper definition of demonization or "demon-possession?"
- Has the Lord given authority to all believers for all time to cast out demons?
- Can the Holy Spirit inhabit a person who is inhabited by demons?
- Can Christians be totally or partially controlled by demons?
- Is the solution to demonization for Christians and non-Christians deliverance or repentance?
- Is the casting out of devils a "sign gift?" What is the nature of the interaction between Satan and believers? Are Satan's attacks internal (e.g., placing thoughts into the mind?) or purely external? Does he know what people—particularly Christians—think? Does he know their inner personality and use their "unknown" weaknesses against them?
- Can a demon afflict a Christian without God's permission?
- Can a demon control a Christian without God's permission? Would God give a demon permission to do so?
- Can a person inherit demonization?
- Can deliverance be taught? Should everyone participate?

We will deal with these and other questions as we progress.

THE DELIVERANCE MESSAGE

It is becoming increasingly popular today to blame the devil for all our ills. Preachers rail against Satan. They work themselves and their audiences into a frenzy while claiming authority over terri-

torial spirits or while attempting to cast out devils from people to alleviate every minor ill. This phenomenon that is taking hold on the consciousness of Christians all over the world is called "deliverance."

Modern deliverance is said to be part of the restoration process of the Church. That is, the Church has been without certain vital elements for centuries, and now God is restoring these elements to perfect the Church before the Lord returns. (See *Vengeance Is Ours: the Church in Dominion*, [Sword Publishers] for a detailed account of Restorationism.)

Deliverance is based upon certain ideas: 1) every evil action (or just about every evil action) on the part of both the lost and the saved is the result of demonic activity from which every person must be delivered by the casting out of demons; 2) not only are evil actions the problem of demonic activity, but every sickness and every lack of the things that would make us fulfilled and mature Christians is a result of demonic activity; 3) every person is demonized and must be continually delivered from demons every time he sins or acts in an unwise or unscriptural manner, thus giving place to the devil; 4) salvation does not guarantee deliverance from demons, but is a prerequisite to deliverance; 5) deliverance is to be practiced only on Christians; it is not wise or scriptural to deliver the unsaved because they will only be re-inhabited by more demons and their condition will be worse than before.

DEMONIZATION OR DEMON POSSESSION?

One of the principle teachings of the deliverance ministers is that demon possession is an improper term not found in Scripture. The proper word to describe people afflicted by demons is "demonized" and this can mean everything from temptation to full-blown control by demons such as was the case with the Gadarene demoniac whom Jesus delivered. But what does it mean scripturally?

It is true that "demon possession" is not a scriptural term. There are two Greek words used to describe demonization: *daimonizomai* and *scheo*. The first, *daimonizomai*, means to be exercised or controlled by a demon. The second, *scheo*, means to hold, or possess, by either ownership or control.

The deliverance teachers generally teach that a Christian can be "demonized" even to the extent that an evil spirit may inhabit his body or his soul. Since the believer's spirit has been set free by Jesus, however, the demon cannot reside there. Yet at the same time, they deny that a Christian can be possessed by a demon. This is misleading, and based on an interpretation of "possessed" which is limited to ownership.

This argument, that a Christian cannot be possessed but can be demonized, rests on the proposition that since the Christian is owned by God (i.e., he is "possessed" by God), no devil can possess (i.e., own) him.

The assumption that the word possessed means only "owned" is erroneous. It has another meaning just as valid, and that is "controlled." One can control or hold in his possession what one does not own.

For instance, what we own we control; but not everything we control do we own. I may drive your car, but that doesn't mean I own it. Yet for the time being I possess it. When you drive your own car you both own it and control it. This is the meaning applied by the translators of English versions of the Bible.

In either case, the primary consideration is control, not ownership. That there can be degrees of control over humans by demons is conceded. And some cases of such control are more severe than others.

In addition, all Scripture references to demonization indicate that the demons dwell inside the body of the person afflicted, and thus had to be "cast out."

The term "demon-possessed," by virtue of its use in the English versions of the Bible, has become an accepted application to mean one who is demonized. Therefore the English translation of daimonizomai as "possessed" is valid. So when we use the term, "demon possessed," it will be in the same context as that used in the English Scriptures to mean inhabited and controlled, but not necessarily owned. The same definition will apply to the term demonized, for reasons that will become obvious as we continue.

I agree that a Christian cannot be owned by Satan or a demon. But is it possible for a Christian to be demonized to the degree of being controlled by a demon? And, if so, to what extent?

In order to be true to Scripture we must consider every instance in which the words daimonizomai and scheo are used, and see if they apply to born-again believers.

Daimonizomai

There are only thirteen instances where the word daimonizomai is used. Eleven times in the KJV it is translated "possessed." It is translated "vexed" once, and "hath a demon," once. Almost half the times (six) it refers to only one incident: the account of the Gadarene demoniac.

In only three other instances is the term used of individuals: Matthew 9:32-33 and 12:22 tell of two men "possessed with a devil," one of whom was dumb, the other blind and dumb." In Matthew 15:22 we find the daughter of a Canaanite woman "grievously vexed with a devil."

In the remaining instances the word is used generally in describing the ministry of Jesus in delivering from sickness and from demons "those that were possessed with devils." These are in Matthew 4:24, 8:16, and Mark 1:32.

In one instance (John 10:21) this word is used where some who heard Jesus speak defended Him against the accusations of his detractors that "he hath a devil."

While there are very few instances from which we may draw conclusions, in every individual case, we see that the people were clearly controlled by the demons. In two, the people were bound by blindness and muteness. In another, they were crazed. In yet another, we learn only that a daughter was "grievously vexed." But the word translated "vexed" in this instance is also daimonizomai. She was not merely troubled, she was demonized or demon possessed.

When we compare all the instances where this word is used, it means someone was controlled by a demon beyond that person's ability to resist.

Scheo

The word, "scheo" is used only two times, and is virtually synonymous with daimonizomai. It refers to the same condition described above: "possession" or control by demons. In Acts 16:16, it is used of the damsel who brought monetary gain to people who exploited her powers of divination. She followed Paul, Luke and Silas, proclaiming that they showed the way to eternal life, until Paul turned to her and commanded the demon to come out of her. The only other instance is recorded in Acts 8:7, and refers to "many that were possessed with" demons.

Pascho & Ochleo

There are two other words that relate to demonization similar to that which we've already cited above.

In two uses of the word "vexed," the Greek is a form of ochleo, or ochleomai, which means "tormented." These are general cases as recorded in Luke 6:18 and Acts 5:16. One individual case is a man's son who was "lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water." This is the one that Jesus' disciples could not deliver, for Jesus said that kind could be cast out only through prayer (Matthew 17:14-21). In this instance, the word translated "vexed" is pascho, which means "suffer." It is where we get our English word "passion."

Under Control

In view of the evidence of control revealed in every individual case, and since in every individual case a demon was cast out of someone, there is only one way of understanding the terms demonization and demon possessed from these Greek words: habitation and control by demons.

Yet two important questions remain: 1) did demons inhabit the flesh of the people mentioned in Scripture, or did they reside in the soul; and 2) were these people saved?

CASTING OUT DEVILS

The question of whether or not devils inhabit the bodies or the souls of individuals is difficult to ascertain. In several instances we see devils "cast out" of people, and in other instances we see that people have devils "in them." An elaborate system of deduction has been devised by deliverance ministers to es-

tablish their claims that Christians can be inhabited in the flesh or in the soul, but not in the spirit, whereas non-Christians can be inhabited in any element of their being. But the deductive reasoning behind these claims are not clearly supported by Scripture.

There is no evidence that demons can inhabit anything but a person's body; whether saved or unsaved is not the issue at this point. In every scriptural instance demonization means habitation within and control of one's body by an evil spirit.

Since demonization means control by an indwelling demon, the question still remains whether or not a Christian can be demonized, or inhabited by a demon. Another important question is whether or not the Holy Spirit can cohabit with a demon in someone's body.

CAN CHRISTIANS BE DEMON POSSESSED?

To support the idea that Christians can be demonized, deliverance advocates point to Paul's thorn in the flesh (II Corinthians 12:7), assuming that he had somehow opened himself up for a demon to enter his flesh. Thus, they say, even Paul was demonized.

Their argument for demonization of Christians is also predicated upon the idea that, since Jesus ministered primarily to the Jews, and since the Jews were God's people, they must have been "saved." Therefore, they represent "saved" people being inhabited by demons. As the reasoning goes, since they were saved spiritually, they were not inhabited in their spirits but in their bodies.

To use Paul as an example of a born-again person being demonized is to apply to the word a meaning different than Scripture applies to it. What, exactly, the "thorn in the flesh" was we cannot know for sure. All we know is that it was a "messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." What this messenger of Satan was can only be guessed at.

It is possible that Paul's infirmities were of a physical nature. But this does not mean he was inhabited by a demon. He might have been beaten by a guard filled with hatred against the Gospel Paul preached—a messenger of Satan that inflicted infirmities upon Paul's body. It may have been a demon that buffeted his body with afflictions at the behest of God in order to keep Paul humble. In any case, these would have been external, not internal, to Paul's being.

In view of Scripture's use of the words that describe demonization to mean bodily habitation and control by demons in every instance, it is improper to assign that term to Paul or to anyone else who may be tempted or tried by demonic spirits. Otherwise we would have to say that every apostle was demonized. In fact, we would have to say that Jesus was demonized. He was tempted in every way we are; certainly He was tempted by the master tempter while in the wilderness after His baptism.

Scripturally, demonization does not mean being tempted, tested, or even harassed by evil spirits. It applies only to being inhabited and controlled by evil spirits.

The bulk of deliverance messages deal with the need for Christians to be delivered from indwelling demons. There exists a plethora of materials far too numerous to cite. Some are more balanced than others; none are completely trustworthy.

If there is one area in which the deliverance ministries fail to make proper distinctions it is in their classifying of all demonic activity as demonization. Two examples offered by virtually all deliverance ministers as evidence of the demonization of Christians is, again, Paul's thorn in the flesh (II Corinthians 12:7), and Ananias' and Sapphira's hearts being filled by Satan to lie to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-10). But there is a vast difference between being tempted, influenced or even attacked by a demon, and being controlled by a demon. This lack of differentiation has resulted in erroneous teachings on the question of whether a true Christian can be demonized in the proper sense of the word—that is, inhabited and controlled by a demon.

If we allow the loose interpretation that sees demonization as any activity involving demons, then the deliverance proponents are correct in saying that every Christian is demonized and must continually submit to deliverance at the hands of a deliverance minister.

If, however, we apply the term demonization in its proper scriptural context to mean being controlled by demons, then the question of whether or not Christians can be demonized without God's permission comes into play. Equally important is the question of whether or not God would even allow his children to become controlled by demons in the first place.

This is critical to the issue of repentance versus deliverance. If we can be controlled, then we are not responsible for our actions other than committing some heinous sin that would prompt the Father to give us over to the control of Satan in the first place. On the other hand, if all our actions are ultimately within our own power, then we cannot blame the devil for our sins or for their consequences. We must blame ourselves and, in humble repentance, ask God's forgiveness.

While the Scriptures do not offer a single mention of the possibility of true believers being controlled by demons, they do speak clearly to this issue of our own responsibility for our sins and the need for repentance:

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (I John 1:5-10)

Temptation by Satan and/or his demons may afflict us, but so, too, do temptations of our own flesh. In neither case can we say that when we are tempted we are demonized. God has given us the grace to resist temptation from the enemy and from our own sin nature. But it is up to us to exercise our wills in deciding to resist that temptation.

In the case where we may be tempted by the devil we are instructed plainly to "resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). When we are tempted by the lusts that war in our members we are told to flee them and to follow after godliness (II Timothy 2:22).

According to Scripture, it is our own lusts that tempt us. If Satan tempts us it is primarily in those areas that constitute our secret desires for particular sins in the first place. He works on our own areas of lust. If we succumb, the solution is not deliverance but repentance.

Body, Soul or Spirit?

The reason for the idea that Christians can be demonized is the belief that Jesus delivered our spirits only—it is up to us to deliver ourselves from the demonic spirits until we have freed both soul and body. This entails a process of deliverance that Scripture nowhere addresses. It's as if the Lord has left us at the mercy of Satan, and now we must seek out a deliverance minister to truly set us free. The catch is that we will never be completely set free. Every ill that besets us in life will require renewed deliverance.

Most deliverance teachers affirm that Scripture does not say that Christians can be demonized. It is deduced from applying the deliverance theory to certain Scriptures and combining them with perceived experiences. And some of the experiences are truly remarkable if we can trust the deliverance teachers to be truthful.

There is no question, judging by the problems inherent in the Church today, that some pastors and leaders are demonized, as the deliverance ministers claim. Many of the messages heard from the pulpits are doctrines of demons propagated by men and women who are overt enemies of the cross of Christ.

Nor, for that matter, is there any question that some who claim to be Christians are demonized at least to some extent. A great number of people in the pews are nominal, not true Christians. But because someone has

made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, or has attained leadership in the Church, or can be credited with many good works, does not mean that he or she is a true believer.

The True Believer

In spite of Scripture's clear teachings on repentance while remaining relatively silent in regards to deliverance, most deliverance ministries deal with those whom they perceive to be Christians rather than with unbelievers. Thus there is cause for serious concern as to whether they even properly understand the definition of demonization or, for that matter, if they understand what constitutes a true believer in Jesus Christ.

The definition of a true believer in Jesus is one whose spirit has been regenerated by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, given at the moment of conversion. He is a saint, set apart from out of the world for the Father's use. His conversion is not predicated upon his "acceptance of Christ," for there is no such idea in Scripture. His conversion is predicated upon Christ's acceptance of him based upon the Father's choice in the administration of His grace (John 15:16; Ephesians 1:4; II Thessalonians 2:13-14; I Peter 2:4-9).

The true believer is holy (i.e., sanctified—set apart for God) even if not perfect, just as any vessel used in the service of God is holy yet not perfect. The imperfections will remain until we have put on the new body fashioned after that which the Lord Jesus inhabits as a result of the Resurrection.

The marks of a true believer in Christ are works of righteousness which grow out of obedience to God's call upon our lives. They are not works of self-righteousness, nor do they merit any favor from God apart from His grace, because perfection, even though we do not attain it, is our reasonable service. If we are to submit our bodies as living sacrifices, holy, and acceptable to God (Romans 12:1), then it goes without saying that our entire being—body, soul and spirit—must be submitted to God. Yet we will remain imperfect until we rise from the grave.

A person who does not grow in the grace of God, but after making a profession of faith continues in spite of instruction from the Scriptures to live according to his own will, has demonstrated that he lacks the faith necessary for salvation and sanctification.

Contrary to the many who teach otherwise, sanctification does not come subsequent to salvation. It is part and parcel of the salvation experience. Although it may be said that sanctification is an ongoing process which increases with knowledge of God's will and our surrender to His will, it began before the foundation of the world. For we who are Christ's were sanctified (i.e., set apart) from the foundation of the world:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3-12)

This entire passage speaks of God's children being set apart—or sanctified—from the foundation of the world. Yet if we were sanctified from the foundation of the world, then why are not all Christians living in obedience to God?

The deliverance minister would say it's because we are demonized and unable to live in obedience to God until the demons are expelled from us. The Scriptures say it's because we are prone to sin unless we submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The true believer will receive correction from God's Word and will submit to the Holy Spirit (perhaps after some struggling), thus exhibiting spiritual growth toward conformity to the image of Christ.

Among the unbelieving there are those who claim Christianity but refuse correction. They continue in sin openly.

There are also among the unbelieving those who claim to be Christians but whose works are motivated by a religious spirit rather than by the spirit of God. These are they who attain positions of leadership through their own volition; their works are not submitted to the will of the Father, but are performed with the expectation that any good work is pleasing to God.

This isn't to say that true believers do not fall into these traps themselves. But their willingness to receive correction results in their consistently being conformed to the image of Christ. Those who continue in sin without repentance have not been regener-

ated by God's Spirit. This is why John could say that if we sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, who, if we confess our sins will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and yet a few verses later proclaim that those who are born of God do not sin (1 John 1:8-3:10).

In every case, it is repentance that sets us aright with God and enables us to live the sanctified life. Nowhere in Scripture is deliverance for the true believer established as a requisite to sanctification.

This being the case, how do we address the fact that deliverance ministries attain a degree of success in the apparent casting out of demons from Christians? In view of Scripture alone, we must conclude that these were not true believers, but merely professing Christians who, in their own consciences, would swear on a stack of Bibles that they are true believers. Among them are even pastors and teachers.

What the deliverance ministers are attempting to do, therefore, is cast demons out of non-believers, while thinking they are casting them out of believers. Remember, however, that we are not discussing affliction from demons, whether in the body or against the mind, but we are discussing control by demons—demonization in the true biblical sense of the word.

If we are to understand demonic influences in the Church, in the world, and in our own lives, we must not fail to make these distinctions.

No one disputes the fact that Christians can be tempted by external forces, whether natural or supernatural. Nor, for that matter, can one dispute the fact that Christians can suffer under trials and tribulations of life, and even be sorely harassed by demons. But demonization is more than these: it is, by all Scriptural evidences, control by a demon. So the real question is, can a true Christian be controlled by a demon? Does the Lord allow such a thing?

The Scriptures say no:

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. (John 8:36)

Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sin-

ners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.

Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. (James 4:5-10)

These and many other Scriptures tell us that we who are in Christ are free from the control of Satan. Those who are born again by the blood of Christ—who have been washed clean and established in the Kingdom of God by faith can resist the devil. And if we have the choice to resist, then we cannot be controlled. We cannot be demonized.

What we need, then, is constant washing by the Word of God which gives us the knowledge, wisdom and discernment to recognize the evil that besets us. Evil does beset us, but it is external to us; it is not internal, except insofar as our own flesh wars against the Spirit of God within us. This is why we are told to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. But this, again, is a choice we make.

So yes, there are those in the churches who do need deliverance. There are demonized people who need that ministry. But the true believer is not among them.

When we address the issue of true believers we must concede that demonic attacks are possible, not only against those who are disobedient to the will of the Father, but even against those whose lives reflect near-perfect obedience to His will.

In the case of those who are disobedient, such attacks may be permitted by the Father as a means of chastisement. This was the case with the man whose sin of incest scandalized the Corinthian Church, and whom Paul remanded to Satan in order that his body be destroyed that his soul might be saved (1 Corinthians 5:1-5). Since chastisement is the manner in which our Father corrects us for unrepentant sin, it should always lead to repentance in the true believer. In that case, since the Father's purpose has been achieved, the enemy would have to flee and the attack would cease.

In the case of those who are generally obedient, such attacks may be permitted by the Father for the purpose of testing, or to keep us humble, as was the case with Paul's thorn in the flesh. Here we must rely upon His grace to see us through.

In either case, the Scriptures do not point to deliverance but to repentance or to reliance upon His grace. Such reliance would cause us to be content in whatever state we find ourselves, provided we can, with assurance, say that we have not sinned to bring the attack against us, and we have been obedient in seeking and following the will of the Father.

If Christians resist the devil he will flee from them. This, again, is an act of one's will to surrender to God's will and to resist sin. To attempt to cast out a demon rather than ad-

dress the problem of sin will result in the sin remaining. Yet this is the general approach of the modern deliverance advocates. They are treating an imaginary disease and neglecting the real source of infection: the love of sin within the heart of the person. This can only be effectively dealt with through reproof, rebuke, and exhortation from God's Word, along with prayer and, in some cases, even fasting.

What If?

But suppose we do not make the right choice. Suppose we choose to enter into sin, or inadvertently find ourselves caught in deception. Do we need deliverance?

There is always the possibility that a Christian can enter into areas whereby satanic influences begin to manifest themselves in his life. He may take up some occult teaching or methodology, sometimes innocently and in the name of Christ. There are many winds of doctrine blowing about the churches—doctrines of demons which bind Christians because they lack understanding. Perhaps they believe a lie because their motives are less than pure.

There could be any number of reasons why Christians are led astray. But, again, the influences upon their lives are external. They are not internal. There is no demon controlling them, making them sit at the feet of false teachers.

In such cases, however, there may be times when, after having repented, they will have to command any evil spirits that have plagued them to depart in the name of Jesus. But repentance must take place in order to be able to exercise the authority of His name.

For the most part, the deliverance they need is provided through obedience to the Word of God. If they will surrender to the Word of God and its instructions in godliness and humility, they will be delivered from the false doctrines that have kept them bound. Those who remain in those doctrines do so because their hearts are not right or because they have not yet come to the knowledge of God's Word which will lead to the repentance that can set them free.

There are thousands who have come out of false teachings and, having washed their consciences in the water of the Word of God, have been set free to proclaim salvation from bondage to others still in that bondage. They did not have to have demons cast out of them.

Some Appeals To Scripture

What about the claims of the deliverance advocates that the Jews were God's chosen people and were therefore evidence of the saved being demonized or demon possessed? In particular, they point to Luke 13:11-16, where a woman whom Jesus called a "daughter of Abraham" was delivered from a spirit of infirmity. In defense of His ministry, Jesus asked the religious leaders,

And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath

bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? (Luke 13:16)

By all other appearances, this woman was not controlled by the demon except for her being "bowed together, and in no wise could lift up herself."

There are two possibilities, neither of which is made clear in Scripture, both of which add nothing to the argument of deliverance advocates.

The first possibility is that, although this woman was a daughter of Abraham after the flesh, she may not have been a true believer until she encountered Jesus. This also fits with the second possibility, which is that God, for the purpose of manifesting His grace and greatness through Jesus, allowed an evil spirit to bind this woman's flesh for a season. This would agree with Jesus' healing of the blind man in John 9:1-38. Here Jesus states that the man was blind not because he or his parents had sinned, but so that "the works of God should be made manifest in him."

In verses 35-38, we find that the man did not believe in the Son of God as yet, because he didn't know who He was.

Romans 2:28-29 says that one is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, that is, in the flesh, but one is a Jew by faith. Therefore, not everyone who was a Jew under the Old Covenant was a child of God, even though they could be called children of Abraham after the flesh.

When Jesus came, it was to the lost house of Israel. He came to save sinners and to point the way to eternal life. The former covenant was done away at the Passover supper when Jesus instituted the New Covenant in His blood. Shortly thereafter He was crucified for the sins of the world, and particularly for the sins of those who would believe in Him.

Now we who come to Him by faith under the terms of the New Covenant have crucified our own flesh with its affections (Galatians 5:24). We have been buried with Him in baptism, and raised to new life (Colossians 2:12). We have entered into His protection whereby He spoiled principalities and powers, making a spectacle of them openly, and triumphing over them (Colossians 2:15). We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). We have been predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29).

Yet there is one situation which must be addressed, and which is used by deliverance advocates to prove that a Christian can be demonized or demon possessed. It is Paul's instructions to the Corinthian church to deliver to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, one in their midst who was openly a fornicator.

Does this mean, then, that the Church should deliver people over to Satan for the habitation and control by demons? God forbid!

What Paul was saying was that the church should pray for the person caught in sin so that, if it were necessary to the salvation of his soul, his flesh might be destroyed. This could be through any number of means such as accident, sickness, and even death upon repentance. But these need not be caused by internal demonic spirits. They may be the result of external demonic influences. It would certainly be counter-productive to pray for the man to become demonized, or controlled by an evil spirit!

Nor are we told that this person was a true believer at the time. Obviously he had not repented of his sin. It is also a fact that many in the churches are not truly born again by the Spirit of God. Yet as long as they are in the churches it is up to those who are spiritual to take whatever means are necessary to bring the person to repentance so that they may be delivered from their sins. This may or may not include the casting out of demons. In most cases it is sin, not demons, from which they must be delivered.

Interestingly, the deliverance advocates cite II Timothy 2:24-26 as a proof text to show that Christians can be inhabited by demons:

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

The deliverance teachers point to the fact that these people are taken captive by the devil at his will as evidence that Christians can be demonized. But, again, it is obvious that Paul was instructing Timothy in the teaching of all men, not just Christians, recognizing that in the churches there are unbelievers as well as believers. And what is Paul's solution? It is not the casting out of demons; it is repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. Nowhere did he say these people needed deliverance.

Experience

What about the experiences that proliferate among deliverance advocates? They point to pastors and good Christians having demons cast out with manifestations of strange voices, screaming, vomiting, and all manner of bizarre evidences. Mass deliverances are conducted in churches while pandemonium reigns.

If such things happen in churches among God's people, how can we say that Christians cannot be inhabited and controlled by demons?

There is an answer that will not satisfy those who follow after these "evidences," but which is compatible with the Bible's teach-

ings about demonization and about freedom in Christ for the believer.

Again, not all people in the churches are truly born again by the Spirit of God. Many—perhaps even the majority of—so-called “Christians” in our churches are nothing more than pagans who have exchanged one fetish or religious idol for another. To them Jesus is a source of magic—a god who will respond to their religious activities and methodologies just as the demon gods respond to incantations and rote prayers. They do not know the real Jesus.

The reason is that the majority of people who come into the churches do so on the basis of a false gospel. It is a gospel that talks about Jesus and allows for much in the way of truth: His virgin birth, His deity, His death and resurrection, the efficacy of His blood, and other important doctrines. But that is all these are—doctrines. These doctrines are believed, just as the devils believe the truth. But there has been no life-changing, regenerating experience of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, most who call themselves Christians obey the Word of God only up to the point that they agree with it; if they do not agree with it on some point, or find it difficult to adhere to (however minor it may seem in the overall context of salvation, regeneration, and sanctification) then they will not obey it.

There appears to be evidence of spiritual growth in their lives when, in fact, all they have really evidenced is a growth in religious consciousness and a sense of morality that often proves subjective.

They bring into the Church their idols of the heart, their self-love and self-will. They strive to serve God in their own strength rather than surrender their wills to allow God to use them in their weaknesses so that He will receive the glory. The deceitfulness and desperately wicked condition of their hearts is masked even to themselves by their religious service. To all outward appearances they are good Christians. But they harbor secret sins that plague them—sins they are not willing to give up. These may be anything from sexual sins to gossip. They may be nothing more than the proclivity to pick and choose to what degree they wish to obey the Scriptures. And it isn't these sins that set them apart from the true believer; it is their refusal to want to do anything about these sins in the manner prescribed by Scripture.

Rather than resist the devil, rather than surrender one's will and overcome temptation by the time-consuming and, yes, sometimes tedious method of studying the Scriptures, spending time in prayer and fasting, surrendering completely to God's Word and dying to self-will and self-love, they seek to have devils cast out of them. That, after all, is the easy way out. All one need do is vomit and he can believe he is sanctified. He can continue to shout, “Praise the Lord!” If he goes back to his old way of living he can al-

ways blame the devil for not letting go of him. Time for another deliverance session.

Admittedly, to bring one's flesh under control and to resist the devil takes more work than just screaming in order to release the demons. Amazingly, this simplistic course was never thought of by Jesus or the apostles in dealing with the truly demonized people they encountered.

The fact that so many chase after deliverance rather than choose to surrender to the control of the Holy Spirit is evidence that they are not born again by the Spirit, unless, of course, they are in ignorance for a season. There are believers who follow these things until they come to the maturity of the Faith and gain understanding.

The Spirit of God compels us to live godly lives. He gives us a hunger for God's Word and a desire to live in accordance with it. He does not allow for excuses that place the blame on the devil for the manifestations of our own evil hearts.

When we sin we need not chase after deliverers. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9). It is the blood of Christ that cleanses us from sin (vs. 7). And we have one mediator and advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, who ever lives to make intercession for us (I John 2:1; I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:24-25).

Yes, it may appear that Christians need deliverance, but in light of Scripture's teaching on demonization and the error propagated by those who practice wholesale deliverance, they are dealing with non-believers who may truly be demonized, or with Christians who lack proper understanding of God's Word and the real power that can set them free from their sins. In the former case, if there is any true deliverance, the person must be led to Christ by instruction in the true Gospel. In the latter case, the person must be instructed in righteousness and disciplined in the Faith. It takes reproof, rebuke, exhortation and encouragement to bring us into correction. Such things must be done in a spirit of humility and love, not forgetting whence we came ourselves.

To insist that true Christians undergo repeated deliverance sessions hampers their spiritual growth by diverting their attention from their sins to an imagined demon indwelling them. This may have a positive psychological effect, and the person may begin to act properly and even holy because of the placebo effect. But in most cases this will be temporary, and the need for deliverance will arise again. The spiritual effect of deliverance sessions for a true believer is minimal at best, because he has not repented of his sin. This, then, results in just the opposite result of that desired: outward holiness that masks inward corruption. Scripture allows for no other remedy for sin than repentance. Refusal to repent may eventually lead to a hardening

of the heart. This, in turn, may lead to apostasy—a willful turning away from the truth and trampling underfoot the blood of Christ by which one has been sanctified. Once that threshold has been crossed, Hebrews 6 and 10 indicate that there is no more repentance—no more hope.

DEPENDENCE

The loose application of the scriptural term for demonization where it does not apply can create a climate of fear among those who follow the deliverance ministers. Rather than look to their own flesh as the cause of their sins, they look to devils as the cause. They fear that if they make one slip, a devil will take them over and they will need to be delivered once again.

This is good for the deliverers; they keep a following of dependent souls flocking to support them in the same manner the word-faith teachers keep people dependent upon them. There is always a new revelation, a new technique, a new methodology, a new teaching on cassette tape or in books that one must purchase in order to be sure he has exhausted every avenue of escape from demonization.

Much of what the deliverance teachers espouse is true. They warn against involvement in the occult, pornography, and other evils in the world. In fact, I would say that some of their teachings on these things are among the best available. But they also imply strongly that even if one were to inadvertently touch something unclean or happen to see an obscene picture, they will fall under the devil's influence and will need to be delivered. That influence may be sickness in the body, mental torment or sliding into sin; it may be any number of adversities from which the person will need deliverance. There is a great lack of faith in the Lord's ability to keep us from the devil's clutches.

Without a doubt, we must live holy lives. And we should be aware of the influences that the evils of the world can have upon our minds to cause us to sin. But we alone are responsible for our sins. We cannot say, “the devil made me do it.”

CAN DEMONS AFFLICT CHRISTIANS WITHOUT GOD'S PERMISSION?

Even if Christians cannot be possessed by demons, the fact remains that demons can afflict us. Again, we point to Paul's thorn in the flesh as evidence. But just as well, we point to that thorn as evidence that God's will is at work in such cases. God's Word gives us assurance that nothing can befall us without our Father's attention, or in accordance with His will for our lives:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:28-31)

In all things we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus who loves us:

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

Christians who fear Satan—who think that they can become demon possessed at all, do not understand the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

It is true that God will allow and even use evil spirits to chastise His children; but chastisement does not include giving us over to Satan for his control. And if chastisement is the issue, then the solution is not deliverance, but repentance.

Should we be tested rather than chastised, as Job was tested, then the solution is patient endurance of our trials through faith in God's faithfulness. All attempts by today's deliverance ministers would have failed with Job. He would not have been delivered because the problem was not one of demonization, but one of testing according to God's sovereign will. Neither would Paul have been delivered, because the purpose of God was being implemented in perfecting Paul in righteousness.

The issue of whether God would allow His children to become controlled by devils is out of the question. Otherwise, we could say that we were tempted by God. But James 1:13-15 offers a caution:

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

If, then, evil spirits cannot exercise control over a Christian's circumstances, let alone his actions, unless God wills it, then the solution to all our problems lies in obedience to God's Word. Part of this obedience requires us to put on the whole armor of God in order that we be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6). This does not mean that we stand there saying, "now I'm putting on the breastplate of righteousness; now I'm putting on the helmet of salvation," and so on. We do not put on the armor and take it off at will. What it means is to walk in faith, constantly

clothed in the armor of God provided through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. This is not to say that failure to walk in the attributes of the armor will result in our becoming demonized, but that, unless we are walking in that armor, we will not be able to gain victory over sin and adverse circumstances.

Does this mean that we will have given Satan control? Of our circumstances, yes; of our bodies and wills, no. Deliverance is not the answer for the believer except in circumstances of external harassment due to our having given place to the devil. And even then—whether or not deliverance is employed—it is only part of the answer. Repentance from sin and obedience to God are the primary answers. Without these, deliverance accomplishes nothing.

Only the non-believer can be controlled or demon possessed. And even in the non-believer's case, after deliverance is accomplished, there is still the need for repentance, or else his latter state will be worse than his former state (Matthew 12:43-45). In this the deliverance advocates are correct.

CAN THE HOLY SPIRIT COHABITATE WITH A DEMON?

Many who challenge the deliverance ministry say that it is impossible for the Holy Spirit to cohabit with an evil spirit—evil cannot exist in the sight of holiness. This being stated with all good intentions, it is not exactly true. The deliverance ministers are correct in pointing out that our own flesh is sinful, and the Holy Spirit must contend with our carnal minds. And, certainly, God can dwell where He chooses.

There is a certain rationale to suggest that God's Spirit was in His prophets, such as Balaam, and even King Saul, but that evil spirits also took up residence within them. But the fact that they were judged for their sins indicates that they were responsible; they were not controlled by any demons.

If there is any valid argument against the idea of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the same body as a demon, it might be that the evil spirit cannot dwell in the presence of God's holiness. The question of the Holy Spirit's ability to dwell in the presence of demons is rather moot. Of course He can dwell in the presence of demons; He dwells in the presence of sin in our own flesh and in our minds. It isn't a matter of the Holy Spirit's ability to dwell in the presence of demons, but of the demons' ability to dwell in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Scripture records the reaction of demons to the presence of Jesus: one of terror and fear. Why should God flee? It is the demons that must flee at the presence of God. But, again, this is a moot point. No one can answer this question one way or the other with empirical evidence, which Scripture does not offer.

And no real purpose is served by trying to dispute the mechanics of this proposition, so it is best to simply remember that a born-

again Christian cannot be indwelt or controlled by an evil spirit at all. He can be greatly tempted, harassed, and even afflicted in his body by a demon; but he cannot be controlled.

INHERITANCE

An area in which deliverance advocates appear to be correct is in the possibility of inheritance of demonic possession.

How this occurs is only guessed at, but a demon-possessed person may actually transfer demons to their offspring. While this is only theory, it is not implausible in light of certain Scriptures:

I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. (Exodus 20:5)

And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. (Genesis 6:12)

Exactly how God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon their descendants is not stated. But there are evidences that those involved in false religious systems pass their blindness onto their children. Whether or not this is transference of spirits is unclear, but it is not implausible. The problem is that some wish to build doctrines upon these theories which they use to validate their deliverance ministries.

The teaching of deliverance insists that, if anyone in your family line practiced any form of occultism, you will need to be delivered from the inherited demons. Since no one really knows who in their family line may have been involved in the occult, it is necessary for everyone to undergo deliverance from familial demons, just in case. If there are none, of course, then the person is no worse off than had he not undergone the deliverance session.

This is a fallacious argument which, like all religious activity that stems from the imagination of man, supposes that the power of God can be activated through formula prayer and/or incantation. There is no regard for the leading of the Holy Spirit through discernment.

In the event of genuine demonic activity, the Holy Spirit will reveal the need for deliverance if it is the will of the Father. To enter into a deliverance process without the leading of the Holy Spirit is a grievous sin. It is presumptuous and therefore is equivalent to offering strange fire. Presumption is self-will and is likened in Scripture to witchcraft and idolatry (1 Samuel 15:23).

CAN SATAN READ OUR THOUGHTS?

In view of Acts 5:1-10, where Peter asks Ananias, "why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost," there is reason to believe that Satan can influence even the thoughts of true Christians.

These Scriptures are used to “prove” that Christians can be demon possessed. Satan entered Ananias’ heart and put thoughts in his mind. But this doesn’t mean that Satan took up physical residence in his physical heart. It merely means that Satan filled Ananias’ heart with temptation. If, in fact, Satan filled Ananias physically and took control of him, then Ananias was not responsible.

Yet, even allowing for that possibility, why did Peter continue by asking Ananias, “why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart?”

Regardless of where the thought in his mind originated, Ananias conceived within his own heart the plan to defraud God. Satan then filled his heart up by encouraging the evil intent toward completion. It was Ananias’ choice to resist the devil or not to resist. Evidently he did not resist, and paid the consequences for his sin. The mere fact that he had a choice is evidence that he still had control. Therefore, he was not demonized.

Whether or not Satan can place thoughts into our minds is only one side of a two-sided coin. The other side asks the question whether or not Satan can read our thoughts.

While there are no Scriptures that say he can, there are none that say he can’t. Many Christians testify that some who practice occult science (some in Jesus’ name) have been able to read their minds, telling them details about their lives that only they know.

Again, however, no enemy has access to our minds unless God allows it or causes it for His eternal purposes. The only other possibility is that we give Satan place in our lives by our refusal to repent and conform our thoughts to the Word of God. In any case, we are still under God’s protection. We must be careful not to be taken in by impressive feats and assume that, if something is true or supernatural, it must be of God. We should not seek out such experiences to get direction in our lives. To do so is no different than seeking consultation from a fortune teller.

If we refuse instruction from God’s Word, we do not need it from some person who claims to have special access to God’s mind. God’s Word is His mind. And it contains all we need for growing in wisdom and knowledge, and in maturing toward the stature of Christ.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (II Timothy 3:16-17)

If we seek counsel for our lives it must be through those who apply God’s Word to our situation, not psychological theory or human wisdom (the profane and vain babblings of which Paul warned Timothy). Ultimately, we each should be students of God’s Word in order to show ourselves approved, workmen

that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15).

Of course, study of the Word takes time and effort. It is far easier to seek out fortune tellers and assuage our consciences with the rationalization that it is alright as long as the person tells us in the name of Jesus Christ what we want to hear.

A PRIESTHOOD

The deliverers after whom multitudes flock for relief from their problems have usurped the position of Christ. They stand as mediators between the people and God, and unless one is willing to submit to these priests’ methodologies, they are looked upon as lesser Christians. They have not been “delivered.”

Since it is believed that everyone needs deliverance, if someone rejects their deliverance, and continues in God’s Word as the means to spiritual growth and deliverance from his own sins, it is claimed that the devil has blinded his eyes. Since he does not see his need for deliverance, it is obvious (to the deliverers, anyway) that this person is demonized. The devil in him is resisting the power of God. This creates in the weak-willed the inclination to follow the deliverer to the ends of the earth if necessary, and to expend every penny in support of the deliverer, in order to assure their deliverance. And the deliverance must take place on a continual basis. There will be no release from the need to be delivered until one dies.

Jesus warned that in the last days many false teachers would arise in the Church who would work wonderful miracles. They would heal the sick and cast out devils in Jesus’ name (or at least claim to do these things). But He does not know them. Nor do they really know Him. God’s Word offers us valuable insight into just how subtle Satan is in presenting himself as an angel of light and his ministers as ministers of righteousness.

Where, then, does truth reside? Who can we trust if not those who live outwardly holy lives and preach holiness from the pulpit? The answer is in Jesus alone. It is not in me; it is not in any man or woman. Everything we hear must be tested by the Word of God through our own study, not by rehashing the proof texts of those from whom we learn.

Any clever person can cite Scripture to prove their false doctrine, and the masses will read those Scriptures and nod their heads in agreement. But were they students of the Word—were they to study the Scriptures with honest hearts and humble, contrite spirits—they would be able to discern when something is amiss.

A MOST IMPORTANT GIFT

How often discernment is neglected as a gift to be sought. Much of the Church believes that the “full Gospel” includes the gift of tongues, being “slain in the Spirit,” miracles, signs, and wonders. But one of the most

important gifts, without which, all these others can lead one into deception, is the gift of discernment. How few pray for that gift. Yet it is the one gift that can save them from years of following after every wind of doctrine. It is the one gift that can help them see the difference between the anointing of God upon a man and the self-anointing that lords it over the flock.

It allows for understanding that lording over someone also takes the outward form of servitude which is a counterfeit of the real thing. Outward piety can be used to gather followings and enslave minds as surely as can outward abuse. Every person on earth is subject to deception unless they have the discernment to recognize the truth of God from the lie of Satan. And the greatest safeguard we have is not to esteem anyone above the Word of God—not to trust that that person would never lead us astray. Without the constant washing by God’s Word and continual growth in sanctification we are all capable of leading others astray from the vital life that is found only in the Lord Jesus Christ.

DELIVERANCE SESSIONS

Is the deliverance practiced today the same as that practiced by Jesus and the apostles? If we look at the scriptural instances of deliverance from demonic spirits, we find a simple, uncomplicated situation: the Lord or the apostle spoke to the demon and said, “Come out.” There was no need to instruct the person on how he must participate in his deliverance. There was no need to continue for hour after hour of confusion and screaming. There was no need to sell books and tapes, requiring people to purchase the knowledge they would need to be delivered.

Nor can someone learn how to deliver from demons any more than one can learn how to perform miracles, signs and wonders, as is assumed by many today. Either the Holy Spirit is at work in a humble vessel to accomplish the will of the Father, or the person who thinks he can learn and then put into practice certain methodologies is blowing in the wind of false doctrine. Such methodologies are akin to occultic practices of exorcism—the casting out of demons by incantation.

What deliverance advocates practice is not the casting out of demons in a manner demonstrated in Scripture, but a form of exorcism—a term they themselves use.

The difference between exorcism and the pattern established in Scripture is that Jesus and the apostles cast demons out of people by command. It was done instantly. Exorcism, on the other hand, is a process that involves sessions that can last anywhere in time from several minutes to several months. The process of exorcism often requires cooperation by the person being “delivered.” In fact, it is a tenet of deliverance that, in many cases, if not most cases, the person needing deliverance should deliver himself at the prompting of the deliverance minister.

There are all sorts of ploys used by deliverance ministers to control their subjects. They will say that demons will begin to manifest themselves while the minister prays or gives instructions. These manifestations include coughing, sneezing, retching, vomiting, screaming, and other bizarre acts. Of course, if one has a tickle in one's throat, he is preconditioned to think he has a demon that must be expelled. As soon as one person coughs even a little, it tends to set off a chain reaction in a crowd. Soon, everyone is seen to have a demon just by coughing. Even those who don't believe in what's going on will be reticent to clear their throats for fear the preacher will pounce on them and begin to cast an imaginary demon out of them.

Soon the whole audience, under the power of suggestion, is writhing in fits of coughing, retching, and sundry other demonstrations prompted by the deliverance minister. There is no biblical precedent for such actions, particularly when induced by the person being delivered. With such antics it may take hours before someone "feels" delivered.

One preacher instructs his followers not to pray in tongues or say the name of Jesus while being delivered. These are so powerful, he says, that the demons will come up, bounce against the words, and fall back into the person.

Such fanciful notions are not scriptural; but who said false teachings need to be scriptural to be believed?

The deliverance minister often requires the person perceived as demonized to recite rote renunciations of every kind of sin. For example, he is told to repeat, "I renounce you spirit of anger; I renounce you spirit of unforgiveness; I renounce you spirit of witchcraft," etc. The process is formalized and virtually every ill known to man is included so that no spirit that may be lurking in the remotest recesses of one's being will be overlooked.

This process, of course, assumes that such sins are the result of demons rather than of one's sin nature. In fact, it is said that the sin nature becomes the "whipping boy" for those who do not understand deliverance when the problem is really demonization.

The truth is, demons may tempt us to sin, but they cannot force us to sin.

Other evil spirits ostensibly dealt with include infirmities of the body: the spirit of cancer, the spirit of nose bleeds, the spirit of athletes' foot, and so on.

There are spirits to blame for every adverse human condition from obesity to the grossest of sins. And the reason the Church is in such terrible shape is not because Christians do not confront their own fleshly desires; it is because of demons who keep them in bondage.

But what does God's Word say?

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Do not err, my beloved brethren....

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. (James 1:12-22)

It is incumbent upon Christians to endure temptation and to resist it through an act of our own will—the will to give God's Word preeminence. It is the Word of God, engrafted into our spirits, that delivers us.

The "Hosts of Hell"

There are many books and tapes offered by deliverance ministers which imply that our battle is with the "hosts of hell." Some, by one prominent deliverance preacher, carry such titles as *Battling the Hosts of Hell*, *Demolishing the Hosts of Hell*, *Smashing the Hosts of Hell*, *Annihilating the Hosts of Hell*, and other dramatic titles.

The basic premise for such titles is that Satan and his minions are the rulers of hell. But this is an erroneous concept held not only by deliverance ministers, but by the Church in general. The concept is pagan in its origins; it is not biblical. Satan and his demons are not the hosts of hell. One day they will become the victims of hell. Satan does not rule or control hell; God controls hell, and He created it for the devil and his followers.

Another consideration is the impossibility of "demolishing," "annihilating" or "smashing" Satan and his evil spirits. We certainly do battle them, but they will never be utterly destroyed until they are cast into the lake of fire by the Lord Himself. Such euphemisms stir up militant emotions, but have no real meaning in terms of genuine spiritual warfare.

I mention this as a caution not to quickly accept notions based on fables. This isn't to say that all deliverance teachings have no merit; there is much truth in them, particularly warnings to keep oneself from the evils that plague the world. But there are several erroneous suppositions upon which the deliverance message is based.

GENUINE DELIVERANCE

This said, I do not want to leave the impression that there is no place for genuine deliverance from demons. There are times

when it may be necessary to command a demonic spirit to leave in Jesus' name. But these situations are rare, and must be handled with wisdom. The models for such deliverance are Jesus and the apostle Paul, for they are the only ones whose deliverance of others is described.

In their ministries the final manifestations of demons leaving a person were the release from control by the demons. They were accompanied by the crying out with a loud voice (Mark 1:26), and the entering into a herd of swine upon the granting of permission by Jesus (Mark 5:11-13). But crying out is not the final evidence; release of control is the final evidence.

Today, people are instructed to induce coughing, screaming, vomiting, and other manifestations. It is true that such manifestations may or may not be genuine evidence of release from a demon. But one cannot spit up a demon at will. Release from control is the only genuine evidence that someone has been truly delivered from an evil spirit. If the control persists, then the person was not delivered.

Here we must consider a vitally important question: has the Lord given authority to all believers for all time to cast out demons? Or is the casting out of demons a "sign gift" to Israel—one which applied only to the apostles and died with them? If so, then there is no hope for the demonized today. The Church is impotent to deal with them beyond praying for them. This, of course, makes things a lot less unpleasant for Christians. We don't have to get our hands dirty or enter into those areas that would make us squeamish. Just pray; if God doesn't deliver them, then there's nothing we can do about it.

Obviously, we cannot limit God to do what He wants to do by whatever manner He chooses to do it. But this is true for both sides of the question, whether or not one believes in the Holy Spirit using believers to effect deliverance. Frankly, the Word is not clear that the gifts of the Spirit were done away after the first century. I realize there are some fundamentalists who would disagree, but their argument rests primarily on one Scripture verse, I Corinthians 13:8: "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." But it does not say when these things will cease; nor does it mention all the gifts of the Spirit. It is not conclusive enough to form the basis for an irrefutable doctrine.

Lacking any such clear teaching from Scripture, we must allow for God's sovereignty in all things. If the fundamentalists are wrong on this point, the charismatics are equally wrong in assuming that every time they snap their fingers God is going to manifest Himself in their utterances. For the most part, what we witness in charismatic

churches is not the manifestation of the Holy Spirit or the manifestation of Satan (as some would contend). It is the manifestation of human flesh.

Scripture does not give conclusive evidence that deliverance from evil spirits has ceased. Nor, for that matter does it tell us that only the apostles could deliver someone from evil spirits. The seventy disciples were empowered by Jesus to cast out devils and they did so. They were not all apostles, nor had the Holy Spirit been given to the Church as a whole.

The power of the Holy Spirit is available through every true believer. Only it is at the volition of the Holy Spirit acting upon the sovereign will of God. We cannot summon the power at our own command. To attempt to do so is witchcraft.

If, in the course of our service to God, we are brought into confrontation with evil spirits manifesting themselves in someone, we would have to seek wisdom as to what to do. We would need the faith to act upon the knowledge that God gives us. All things are possible to those who believe. But belief entails trust in God to work His will, not ours, in any given situation. If He doesn't will that the mountain be moved, all our demands upon the mountain will result in hollow echoes rounding to our own ears.

Again, this is not to say that all deliverance ministry is invalid. Every believer, because he is indwelt by the Spirit of God, has the potential to administer deliverance to one bound by Satan. But those who establish themselves as deliverers to whom the masses must come for release from Satan are merely substituting one form of bondage for another. They may or may not be releasing someone from demonic influences (they may be prompting psychological inducement of symptoms), but they are putting them under their own domineering spirit.

CASTING SPIRITS OUT OF OBJECTS

Part of the deliverance message involves the need to cast demons out of buildings, statues, or other objects, particularly those that have been used for the purposes of witchcraft or other occult activities.

Scripture speaks of the "gods" of the nations, which are demons associated with specific cultures. In the worship of those demons people invoke spirits into their presence, whether knowingly or not. Some objects used in the ceremonies of pagan worship are fetishes to which demonic spirits are attached. Should those spirits be cast out? And if so, by what method?

If we take the scriptural example, in most cases the idols and fetishes were destroyed; they were not merely cleansed from demonic presences. In normal circumstances, Christians should be careful not to have any objects in their possession which may have been used for pagan ceremonies, or are associated with occult religious systems.

Statues of pagan deities have no place in a Christian home as they are an affront to God. This doesn't mean that every idol has a demon attached to it, but our service to God requires that we keep our homes pure from anything that may give the enemy a foothold.

Music, regardless of the type (whether pop, rock, country-western, classical, etc.) may contain messages that glorify sin or pagan deities. They can open our minds to evil and give place to the devil whether or not there are demons attached to them.

In the event we come in contact with an object that has a demonic presence, and destruction of the object is not feasible (such as a building or other object not specifically dedicated to pagan deities), we should act in the same manner as when we come in contact with a demonized person. Prayer and seeking God's will is primary. If we are led by God's Spirit to confront the demonic presence we may speak to it and command it to leave in the name of Jesus.

Just as with all our service to God, there are no automatics in the confrontation of evil spirits. Each case must be taken on its own merit. And, as in all our service to God, we must be sure that our hearts are pure, and that we are not living in sin.

Whether dealing with evil in other people, in material objects, or within our own presence, our first reflex must be repentance from our own sins and reliance upon God's Word and His power. True deliverance, like salvation, is a gift of God given as a measure of His grace.

We must really seek the Lord in this regard. Whom the Son sets free is free indeed. Whatever we do, we cannot act presumptuously, or we will receive nothing from God but correction. ✓

CONCLUSION

Other questions pertaining to demonic activity are dealt with in our special report on Frank Peretti's books, *This Present Darkness* and *Piercing the Darkness*. It deals with the ideas of angelic hierarchies, territorial spirits, the effect of prayer on spiritual warfare, whether or not Christians should rebuke spiritual powers, and other important issues. If you have not read this report, it is suggested that you do so as a supplement to this article.

APPENDIX

SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCES OF DEMONIC INFLUENCE CONTROL AND DELIVERANCE

This Appendix is offered for those who wish to see what Scripture says about these subjects. They may determine whether or not the deliverance teachings they hear are valid.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 17:7; Deuteronomy 32:17: Israel is no longer to offer sacrifices to devils as they had in the past.

Leviticus 20:6: Those who turn to familiar spirits will be cutoff.

Leviticus 20:27; Deuteronomy 18:11: A person with a familiar spirit is to be put to death.

Numbers 5:14; 30: Speaks of a spirit of jealousy. Most likely it is the man's suspicion of his wife's infidelity. There is no clear indication that this is a demon.

Judges 9:23: God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem in order to avenge Abimelech's guilt for shedding the blood of Jerubbaal's ten sons, and the men of Shechem's part in the murders. No deliverance.

I Samuel 16:14-23; 18:10; 19:9: An evil spirit from God vexed Saul. No deliverance.

I Samuel 28:3-9: Saul seeks help from a woman with a familiar spirit after the Spirit of God would not answer him. No deliverance.

I Kings 22:20-23; II Chronicles 18:20-22: A spirit goes before God to offer to be a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets and lead him to his death at Ramoth-gilead. The Lord uses the evil spirit to accomplish that task. No deliverance.

II Kings 1:2-16: Ahaziah sends his messengers to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron whether he would recover from his injuries. Elijah rebukes him and pronounces God's judgment of death upon him for his seeking help from a pagan god. No deliverance.

II Kings 21:6; II Chronicles 33:6: Manasse dealt with familiar spirits and engaged in idolatry. God brought judgment against Jerusalem and Judah. No deliverance.

II Kings 23:24: Joshua put away those who had familiar spirits and practiced idolatry.

I Chronicles 10:13: Saul died for his transgressions, including seeking counsel from one who had a familiar spirit. No deliverance.

I Chronicles 21:1: Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel. No immediate deliverance. David paid the price by having to choose between two punishments.

II Chronicles 21:16: God stirred up the spirit of the Philistines and of the Arabians to destroy Judah because of Jehoram's evil deeds. No deliverance.

Job 1:6-12; Job 2:1-7: Satan asks permission to afflict Job. No formal deliverance. But Job's faithfulness brings God's reward.

Psalms 109:6: David invokes God's judgment against his enemies, calling for Satan to stand at their right hand.

Isaiah 14:12 (Lucifer fallen)

Isaiah 19:3: The spirit of Egypt shall fail.

Isaiah 19:14: The Lord mingled a perverse spirit in the midst of Egypt.

Zechariah 3:1-2: "And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee."

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:2-13: Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. He is tempted by the promises of the Word: He responds with the proper application of the Word. Satan leaves.

Matthew 4:24; Matthew 8:16-33: Many sick and demonized. Jesus healed all who were brought to him with diverse diseases and torments (mental agony?), the lunatics (insane), the palsied (paralyzed or without motor control), and the demonized in order to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 53:4-5: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows [infirmities and sicknesses]: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

Matthew 7:22-23: False apostles and disciples will claim to cast out demons in Jesus' name. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Matthew 9:32-34: A dumb man demonized. Healed by Jesus. Jesus casts a devil out of a dumb man, giving him his speech. He is accused by the Pharisees of casting out devils through the power of Satan the prince of devils.

Matthew 9:35: Many sick healed by Jesus. "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."

Matthew 10:1; Mark 3:13-15: Jesus gives his power to his disciples. "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease."

Matthew 12:22-28; Luke 11:14-15: A blind and dumb man (Luke speaks only of his being dumb) possessed with a devil. Healed by Jesus. The people ask if Jesus might be the Messiah, but the Pharisees again accuse Him of casting out devils by the power of Satan.

Matthew 12:43-45; Luke 11:24-26: Jesus tells of how an unclean spirit leaves, then returns with seven others more wicked than himself. Not sufficient details to draw definite conclusions of whether the man was saved or not, but he was clean.

Matthew 13:39: The parable of the tares and the wheat. Satan sows his children (demons & men?) among the children of God.

Matthew 15:22-28; Mark 7:25-30: A woman of Canaan sought deliverance for her daughter who was vexed with a devil. Her daughter was made whole, which implies that the devil had possessed her body and afflicted her with some illness. The woman was not of Israel, but she had faith in Jesus.

Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33: Jesus rebukes Peter for telling Him He would not be killed: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Some say that the implication is that Satan had put it in Peter's mind that the Lord would not be killed. But this is inconsistent with the fact that Satan entered Judas to betray Jesus. Most likely Jesus was calling Peter "Satan" because his words reflected a spirit of rebellion against his Master's teaching described in verse 21: "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." There is nothing here to suggest that Peter had become demonized or that Satan had taken control of his mouth or mind.

Matthew 17:15-18; Luke 9:38-42: A man came to Jesus on behalf of his son whom he believed to be a lunatic. Jesus rebuked the devil that was in the boy. KJV relates that Jesus said this kind come out only through fasting and prayer, because His disciples could not cure the boy.

Mark 1:39: "And he [Jesus] preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils."

Mark 3:11-12: (While speaking to the multitudes by the seashore.) Unclean spirits fell down before Jesus and testified of His being the Son of God. No record that he cast them out of anyone, but only that He charged them not to reveal that to others.

Mark 3:14-15: Jesus ordains the twelve, including Judas Iscariot, to preach, to heal, and to cast out devils.

Mark 4:15; Luke 8:12: A parable of a sower (different from Matthew 13:39) describes how Satan takes away the word that was sown in the hearts of those who received the seed by the wayside.

Mark 3:22-30: Jesus accused of having an unclean spirit. This He called blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (to call the Holy Spirit unclean and equate Him with a devil).

Mark 5:2-18; Luke 8:27-38: A man with an unclean spirit, living among the tombs in the country of the Gadarenes. Jesus delivers him of the unclean spirits "Legion." The spirits came out of the man and entered a herd of pigs, driving them into the sea.

Mark 6:1-6: In his own town, Jesus met with unbelief. He could not do any mighty work except heal a few sick folk by laying His hands upon them.

Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1: Jesus again ordains the twelve and sends them out in pairs, giving them power over unclean spirits. They preached repentance, cast out many devils, and healed many by anointing them with oil.

Mark 9:38-40; Luke 9:49: John reports to Jesus about a man who was casting out devils in Jesus' name, but was not following them. Jesus replied: "Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can

lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part." This implies that the man had faith in the name of Jesus, and that Jesus knew of his faith personally. He would not have fallen into the category of those at the Judgment whom Jesus will say He never knew (Matthew 7:22-23).

Mark 16:9-17: (Questionable if written by Mark; most likely a later addition by a scribe. Roman Catholic scholarship attributes verses 9 through 20 to Ariston the Presbyter.) Verse 9 indicates that Jesus had cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene. Verse 17 has Him saying, "And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." It is not clearly stated that "everyone" who follows Him will do these things. Apart from this questionable portion of the KJV, there is no evidence that anyone besides Jesus, other than the apostles did miracles, signs, and wonders. However, we must remember that one man, who was not among the twelve or the seventy-two, did cast out devils in Jesus' name and He honored that service (Mark 9:38-40).

Luke 4:33-41: (At Capernaum in Galilee.) "And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, Saying Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God." Again, as with the devils by the seashore, Jesus made them stop testifying of Him. This time it is recorded that He cast them out of the man they possessed.

Luke 6:18-19: (In the plain among Judaea and Jerusalem, and Tyre and Sidon.) Jesus healed the sick and those that were vexed with unclean spirits. Verse 19 speaks of "virtue" (power, NAS) that went out from Jesus to all who touched Him.

Luke 7:20-23: John's disciples came to Jesus to ask if He was the Messiah. He was curing many of infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits. This, He said, was His testimony to John of His anointing.

Luke 8:2: As Jesus went through every city and village with the twelve there were also certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, including Mary Magdalene out of whom went seven devils.

Luke 10:1 & 17-20: Jesus appoints seventy other (besides the twelve) and sends them out in pairs. (Vss. 17-20): "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name."

Luke 10:18: Jesus says, "I beheld Satan as lighting fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

Luke 13:10-16: A woman bound by Satan (vs. 16) for eighteen years with a spirit of infirmity. Jesus healed her on the Sabbath and rebuked the ruler of the synagogue for his hypocrisy.

John 13:2: Satan had put it into Judas' heart to betray Jesus.

Luke 22:3; John 13:27: Satan enters Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus.

Luke 22:31: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon; behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." This indicates that Peter was not yet converted fully, but would be. It was before Jesus' death.

John 8:31-59: Jesus accuses the Jews who believed on Him (vs. 31) of being children of the devil. This demonstrates that initial belief counts for nothing if the harder things to receive are not believed. Within the course of this conversation they turned from believers to accusers that He had a devil.

Acts 5:3: Satan had put it in Ananias' heart to lie to the Holy Spirit.

Acts 5:12-16: By the hands of the apostles, many are healed and devils are cast out of many so that all who came to them were healed.

Acts 8:5-7: Philip preached Christ and did miracles, healing the sick and casting out devils.

Acts 10:38: Peter testifies of Jesus "who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him."

Acts 13:6-11: Paul accuses Bar-Jesus (Elymas), a false prophet and a sorcerer, of being a child of the devil, and causes him to become blind.

Acts 16:16-18: A demonized woman follows the apostles, testifying that they show the way of salvation. After many days, Paul commands the spirit to come out of her. Note, he did not act immediately or presumptuously.

Acts 19:11-12: "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." This is the only account of such an occurrence.

Acts 19:13-16: Vagabond Jews who were exorcists tried to call out devils in the name of Jesus, but were set upon by the devils and fled naked and wounded.

Acts 26:18: Paul recounts how Jesus commissioned him to deliver the Gentiles from the power of Satan unto God. This does not necessarily infer casting out of devils, but turning them from darkness to light, or conversion of their souls.

Romans 8:15: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Referring to those who are led by the Spirit of God and thus are sons of God (vs. 14). This "spirit of bondage" is not necessarily a devil, but an attitude. However, nothing dogmatic can be said in this regard.

Romans 11:8: Israel is said to have been given a spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear. Whether this is a spirit that oppresses the nation until the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled is not definite, but it is a possibility.

Romans 16:20: Paul says that the God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly. It is God who will crush Satan, not man. And that will be accomplished with the return of Jesus.

I Corinthians 2:12-16: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God: that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." The "spirit of the world" is not necessarily a devil, but an attitude of worldliness and carnality—the unregenerate spirit of man.

I Corinthians 5:3-5: It is necessary that a sinning brother at Corinth be delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

I Corinthians 7:5: The husband and wife are to mutually satisfy each others sexual needs and not withhold, except by mutual consent for a short time so that Satan not be able to tempt them.

II Corinthians 2:10-11: Forgiveness is necessary lest Satan should get an advantage of us.

II Corinthians 11:4: It is possible to receive another Jesus or another spirit, or another gospel. The spirit spoken of here is not necessarily a devil, although it could be a devil that comes in the person of a false prophet. It could also be the spirit of a rebellious person who preaches another Jesus or another gospel.

II Corinthians 11:14: Satan is transformed into an angel of light, and his ministers into ministers of righteousness.

II Corinthians 12:7: Paul's thorn in his flesh: a messenger of Satan to buffet him lest he become proud of his accomplishments. Paul was either suffering from temptation as a reminder that he is only flesh and a sinner saved by grace, or by a person who harassed him for his faith. Illness, poor eyesight, some persecutor, would not keep one humble as well as temptation to sin.

Ephesians 2:2: There is a prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience. (Satan?)

Ephesians 4:17-32: Do not give place to the devil (vs. 27) by sinning. It is not Satan that causes us to sin by our being demonized. We can become demonized by not repenting of sin.

Ephesians 6:16: The shield of faith quenches the fiery darts of the wicked.

I Thessalonians 2:18: Satan hindered Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy from going to Thessalonica. How they were hindered is not stated, but it's clear from other Scriptures that Satan cannot work against God's children without His permission.

II Thessalonians 2:9: Revelation 16:13-14: When the Wicked is revealed (anti-Christ or the false prophet) his coming will be with power, signs, and lying wonders to deceive the nations.

I Timothy 1:20: Paul delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan so that they learn not to blaspheme (by making their faith and possibly the faith of others shipwrecked).

I Timothy 3:6-7: An elder is not to be a novice lest he be lifted up with pride and fall into the condemnation of the devil.

I Timothy 4:1: Seducing spirits will preach doctrines of devils leading some astray from the faith.

I Timothy 5:15: Paul infers that a young widow who does not remarry will most likely fall into sin and turn aside after Satan.

II Timothy 1:7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." The spirit of fear may be a devil or it may be our own faithlessness.

II Timothy 2:26: Paul instructs Timothy to instruct with meekness those who are straying so that they may escape the snare of the devil who had taken them captive at his will.

Hebrews 2:14-15: Jesus partook of death to destroy him that had the power of death, the devil, and to deliver those who, through fear of death were subject to bondage.

James 3:15: Human wisdom is of the devil, not of God.

James 4:5-7: Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

I Peter 5:8: The devil, as a roaring lion, goes about, seeking whom he may devour.

I John 3:8-10: He that commits sin is of the devil. This is willful sin, practiced without repentance.

Jude 9: Michael the archangel dared not bring a railing accusation against the devil but merely said, "The Lord rebuke thee."

Revelation 2:9; 3:9: The Jews who opposed the Gospel were of the synagogue of Satan.

Revelation 2:10: The devil (through human agents) will cast some into prison and persecute the saints. How does this fit into the deliverance message?

Revelation 2:13: Pergamos is where Satan dwells and where his seat is (or was).

Revelation 12:9-12: Satan will be cast out of heaven permanently.

Revelation 20:2-10: Satan will be bound for a thousand years to deceive the nations no more, but the evil hearts of men will cause them to rebel anyway, and will prepare them for his release. This demonstrates that Satan does not cause men to sin; sin is in our hearts already.

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