

# Answers to Objections Regarding the Deliverance Ministry

(Note: emphasis supplied on some quotes)

The Lord Jesus Christ instructed His early disciples to carry out a genuine deliverance ministry (Lk.9:1). “Deliverance” is *not* a dirty word, although Satan has largely succeeded in slinging mud at it, which has stuck. Deliverance was not restricted to the apostles and pastors, but included converted laymen, as in the seventy whom Jesus sent out (Lk.10:1,17-20). James and Ellen White, and others in their day, also rebuked and cast out demons, as shall be discussed.

No doubt, Satan has indeed raised up some spurious deliverance ministries within the SDA church, which are fanatical and use false methodologies. These must be opposed by every loyal follower of Christ. I have opposed such people myself, and will continue to do so. Some have assumed that these fanatical, false ministries are the same as the genuine. This is exactly what Satan would want and is attempting to instigate, in order to discredit the true deliverance ministry within the SDA church.

There are some common misconceptions in relation to this subject that are widely held in the church, which are not based on facts from the Bible, the writings of Ellen White, nor even experience. Much of the criticism of the deliverance ministry within the SDA church, indeed, is by those who have had little or no actual experience in seeking to help those with demonic problems.

It is easy to be an “armchair scholar”. It is easy to “shoot down” with criticism those who are doing their best (and often succeeding) to help people with demonic problems. May I humbly give a challenge to the critics. Please show us the “right way”, if we are doing it the wrong way, not in mere words, but in actually rebuking and casting out devils as Jesus and His disciples did. If you have had success with demonised people, we would love to learn all we can from you. In that case, we are all ears! We wish to do the Lord’s will, and follow His example.

There is absolutely no evidence whatsoever that the aspect of the gospel commission of the Lord to cast out demons (Mk.3:14,15) would be “only for a time”, as has been stated by Roger Morneau. The Bible states that “these signs shall follow them that *believe*; In my name *shall they cast out devils*;...” (Mk.16:17). Ellen White wrote that “The Saviour’s commission to the disciples included *all* the believers. It includes *all* believers in Christ to the end of time” (DA 822). Those who smugly opt out of this aspect of the gospel commission of Christ, criticising it all as

mere fanaticism, would do well to look at God's pronouncement against this as "cowardice in His cause", and missing out on a "valuable experience which it was their privilege to have". Some SDA's are indeed, as Ellen White states, "more inclined to fight against the faithful soldiers of Christ than against Satan and his host" (3T 316)!

With that introduction, there are three common objections to the deliverance ministry within the SDA church, which I will attempt to answer now. Briefly, these objections are:

- (1) Baptised SDA Christians cannot become possessed!
- (2) We are forbidden to speak to demons
- (3) Genuine deliverance is instantaneous

**(1) *Baptised SDA Christians cannot become possessed!***

The demon possession of Christians, even baptised SDA Christians, is possibly the single most controversial aspect of spiritual warfare today. The very idea is absolutely preposterous in the eyes of many of our ministers and church leaders, who hold this view.

Why is it that many in the church are so sure that SDA Christians cannot be invaded by demons? Well, for one thing, it is a comforting thought! We know that God is all-powerful, quoting texts such as, "...greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." (1 Jn.4:4. See also Col.1:13 and Eph.2:1-10). The idea is widely held that the Holy Spirit within a believer cannot dwell with demons in the same body. Is this commonly held presupposition true?

It is well to point out at the beginning that those who categorically deny that SDA's cannot possibly be invaded by demons generally are those who have had little or no experience in deliverance. Their stance is largely theoretical "book knowledge".

Is it really so strange an idea that some Christians, and some of God's people in Old Testament times, can and did become harassed and even possessed? Scripture, Ellen White's writings, our church's history, and contemporary experience all teach this. The Bible offers us some classic case studies. However, to see how this can and does occur requires more than a superficial study of the subject. We can only scan briefly over this subject here.

Let us look at two examples from the Word of God. **King Saul** was a true believer. In fact, he was a prophet and king specially chosen by God (1 Sam.9:15-17), and anointed by the prophet Samuel (10:1). At the beginning, Saul had true humility (9:20,21;15:17). He was literally and demonstrably transformed by the Holy Spirit, made into another man, given the gift of

prophecy, and also a new heart (10:6-10). All those who knew Saul before his powerful anointing by the Holy Spirit were amazed at his spiritual transformation (10:11,12). Several specific acts of Saul show that his change was real (10:15,16,22-24; 11:1-13). He brought back the nation of Israel to God (11:14,15).

Before we see how Saul gradually became demonised, let me quote a few statements that will shed light on what cherished sin can do to *God's people*.

“When you decide that as Christians you are not required to restrain your thoughts and feelings you are brought under the influence of evil angels and invite their presence and their control” (5T 310).

“Even one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire persistently cherished, will eventually neutralise all the power of the gospel” (SC 34).

Sadly, this noble man of God became possessed by demons because he did not restrain his thoughts, and because he cherished sin. Saul's first serious mistake was in assuming Samuel's role as God's priest and prophet (13:9-14). A second serious backward step was taken in a rash and fanatical oath he made, in which he was willing to kill his own son (14:24-46). A third and most serious evidence of his declining spiritual life is found in his open rebellion against the clear word of the Lord, for which he was rejected by God as the king (15:1-35). When confronted by Samuel for his deliberate disobedience to God, Saul lied, saying that he had obeyed (1 Sam.15:20,21). Saul had never learned that “rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry” (15:23). Satan was gradually gaining increasingly more ground in Saul's heart and life. At this stage, however, the demons were only outside. A sin that Saul cherished, however, soon opened the doors to demonic entrance.

“Saul opened his heart to *the spirit of jealousy* by which his soul was poisoned” (PP 650).

He allowed thoughts and feelings of jealousy for David to sway his reasoning powers and to control his actions. When a company of women danced, singing, “‘Saul hath slain his thousands’, while another company took up the strain, and responded, ‘And David his ten thousands.’ *The demon of jealousy entered the heart of the king*....He allowed his impulses to control his judgment, until he was plunged into a fury of passion. He had paroxysms of rage, when he was ready to take the life of any that dared oppose his will. From this frenzy he would pass into a state of despondency and self-contempt, and *remorse would take possession of his soul*” (Ibid).

By this point, “the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him” (1 Sam.16:14). The Bible teaches that persistent cherished sin grieves the Holy Spirit away (Eph.4:25-31). Saul had cherished such jealousy and bitterness towards David that it turned to hatred. Hatred turned to thoughts and attempts to murder David in cold blood (19:1), and even to murder his own son Jonathan (20:30-33). Worse still, Saul murdered 85 priests of the Lord, and also those in their city, Nob (22:17-19). Today’s newspapers would describe King Saul as a megalomaniac, or a serial killer of the worst sort. Clearly, Saul was no longer a man of God, but belonged to the devil, led captive by Satan to do his will.

Then he even went another step further into the control of Satan by uniting himself with a spirit medium, or channeler, practicing the occult which he had himself once sought to destroy in Israel (1 Sam.28). Tragically, this ended in Saul’s total deception and his own suicide (31:4). Here is a clear Old Testament example of how a true believer can become demon possessed.

Now let us turn to the New Testament for a clear example of a Christian who became demon possessed – *Judas*. He was a normal person, like the other disciples. The disciples were keen for Judas to join the group, “a man who professed to be a follower of Christ...[and] believed Jesus to be the Messiah” (DA 293,294). Judas had the distinct advantage over the others in that he was well educated and highly intelligent. Thus, he was made the treasurer (DA 559). “He was of commanding appearance, a man of keen discernment and executive ability” (DA 294). Jesus did not turn him away, but accepted him as a disciple and apostle. “He gave him a place among the twelve. He trusted him to do the work of an evangelist. He endowed him with power to heal the sick and to cast out devils” (DA 717).

Cherished sin destroyed what could have been a noble and fruitful Christian experience, opening the doors to demonic control, and eventually to demonic entry. Like King Saul, Judas did not repel thoughts that were placed into his mind by Satan, nor did he resist temptation, and he refused to die to his carnal nature. When Christians thus give Satan ground, he is quick to take advantage of their weaknesses. Like many of us, Judas spurned the sanctification process. Let his demise forever be a warning to those who cherish sin.

“Instead of walking in the light, Judas chose to retain his defects. Evil desires, revengeful passions, dark and sullen thoughts were cherished, until Satan had full control of the man....He hardened his heart when his sins were pointed out....he would not confess and forsake his unrighteousness” (DA 295).

“He had fostered the *evil spirit of avarice* until it had become the ruling motive of his life. The love of mammon overbalanced his love for Christ. Through becoming the slave of one vice he gave himself to Satan, to be driven to any lengths in sin....Judas did not come to the point of surrendering himself fully to Christ. He did not give up his worldly ambition or his love of money....He felt that he could retain his own judgment and opinions, and he cultivated a disposition to criticise and accuse....Judas was blinded to his own weakness of character” (DA 716,717).

Some Christians think that Judas was different to the other disciples, that he was particularly evil, or open to demon possession. *He was no different to the others*, and in fact had great potential. “Judas had the same opportunities as had the other disciples....When he came into association with Jesus, he had some precious traits of character that might have been made a blessing to the church. If he had been willing to wear the yoke of Christ, *he might have been among the chief of the apostles*....All the disciples had serious faults when Jesus called them to His service” (DA 294,295).

If we cherish sin, something terrible happens within the human soul and to the will, and Satan is quick to take advantage of it.

“Every act of transgression, every neglect or rejection of the grace of Christ, is reacting upon yourself; it is hardening the heart, depraving the will, benumbing the understanding, and not only making you less inclined to yield but less capable of yielding, to the tender pleading of God’s Holy Spirit” (SC 32,33).

“Any willful violation of the righteous law of Jehovah exposes your soul to the full assaults of Satan. When you lose your conscious integrity your soul becomes a battlefield for Satan” (TMK 248).

The Bible states that as far back as a year before Judas betrayed Jesus, Jesus said of him, “Have not I chosen you twelve, and *one of you is a devil?*” (Jn.6:70) Satan was stealthily gaining ground in Judas’ life, moulding his character into his vile image. Judas was actually used by Satan as a medium to bring doubt, unbelief and perplexity into the lives of the other disciples. He had responded to the “demon of avarice” (DA 716) and the “demon of selfishness” (DA 294) so many times that he was under their control.

After Judas’ deliberate planning of his betrayal of Jesus, there were no barriers left for demonic entrance. Like Judas, there are far more demonised Christians in the church than many of us are willing to admit. The fact that none of the other apostles were aware of Judas’ demonised condition should jolt us enough to see the reality that demon possession is *not always obvious*. Judas did not

leave any trail of evidence, and in fact covered up his possession with pious language, deeds, and his place of authority within the church. Thus, much demon possession in the church goes unrecognised and is not dealt with for what it really is.

Satan felt that his triumph in the life of this apostle of Christ was so significant that he did not leave it to one of his lesser evil angels to possess him, but entered him personally. “Then entered Satan into Judas” (Lk.22:3). This is rare.

Thus we have two clear and detailed examples from the Word of God that *God’s people* can become possessed. Let us remember that Jesus sent His disciples firstly to God’s people, the professed followers of Jehovah, rather than to the Gentiles. Jesus gave them not only the commission to preach and heal the sick, but also to cast out devils (Mk.3:14,15) from these “lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt.10:6).

There are several other accounts, and much in Scripture which clearly implies that God’s people can become demonised, even to the point of possession. Other examples include regular synagogue attenders (Mk.1:21-28,39), and the “daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound”, who had a “spirit of infirmity” that caused her to be bent over (Lk.13:10-17). In her case, the demon manifested *physically*; she wasn’t a raving lunatic like the demoniac of Gadara (Mk.5). People who sat next to her in the synagogue would have felt sorry for her, but they likely would not have suspected that Satan had done this to her.

Certainly, many of the Scribes and Pharisees were demon possessed, to whom the Lord Jesus stated, “Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do” (Jn.8:44). Many of them manifested the same spirit of jealousy, hatred, and murder towards Jesus as King Saul had shown toward David. The evidence of Scripture reveals that if believers, even prophets and apostles, can give place to the devil (Eph.4:27), he can also bring them into demonic bondage (1 Tim.3:6,7;5:15; 2 Tim.2:26).

Another sad but clear indication that believers can become demonised is found in Matt.7:13-23. Jesus taught that *few* Christians walk on the strait and narrow road leading to life. *Most* take Satan’s easy road of compromise and cherished sin. Paul feared for the Corinthian believers, for they were willing to put up with preaching about a “different Jesus” and a “different gospel”, and with receiving a “different spirit” (2 Cor.11:3,4). If it is possible for Christians to receive a “different spirit”, as Paul clearly indicates, then Christians are able to receive an evil spirit. Paul warns against demonised false apostles and ministers (2 Cor.11:13-15), even mentioning specific names (1 Tim.2:19,20). Such Christians give “heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Tim.4:1).

Lying, cursing, bitter, jealous, selfish, ambitious, and arrogant Christians are referred to in James 3:9-15. This type of “wisdom” is “earthly, sensual, devilish”. In our attempts at political correctness, let us not forget that the Word of God differentiates clearly between those, both in the world *and in the church*, who are “the children of God...and *the children of the devil*” (1 Jn.3:10; 2 Thess.2:3-17; Rev.13).

I have already given the case studies of King Saul and Judas to show that cherished sin can open up the doorways to demonic entrance in believers. Another way that the tragic situation of demon possessed believers can occur is that they were demonised *before conversion*.

Believing in Jesus and accepting Him as one’s Saviour and Lord, and even having Bible studies, prayer and baptism, do not necessarily drive demons out of such people. Taking such people through the 27 fundamentals and their gaining of an intellectual assent to truth does not result in deliverance, if they had demonic problems prior to this. The demons may need to be cast out of such people so that they can be truly free in Christ. If this is not done, such Christians may become effective tools of the enemy within the church, wreaking havoc and unbelief, and lowering the standards in God’s church wherever they go. Such demonised Christians actually cannot be delivered, so long as they cherish sin in their lives, and refuse to confess and forsake their sins.

I have personally come across a number of baptised SDA Christians who are unable to pray and study the Bible, and who have uncontrollable urges of hate, lust, murder, bitterness, unbelief, drug addiction, profanity, lying, incest, homosexuality, and other depravities, some of which are so vile as to be unspeakable. They attend church from Sabbath to Sabbath, while bound by Satan in the cords of sin. Some, like Judas, live comparatively normal lives in other ways, and are respected church members in good and regular standing, deceiving themselves and the church. Others are living utterly wretched and tormented lives. Many ultimately attempt suicide, and some succeed. The demons are usually in hiding, concealing their presence. They surely must scoff at the weakness and ignorance of so many professed Christians, who should be able to recognise the wiles of the enemy and set the captives free.

Many of these tormented Christians want help desperately, knowing full well that they are demon possessed, but usually they do not find the help that they need in the SDA church. Often such people leave the remnant church in total discouragement. One such demonised SDA Christian came to a SDA pastor for help. He told the pastor that he had severe demonic problems, and wanted the demons cast out. The pastor was horrified, and said that we do not do “that kind

of thing” in our church, and pointed the poor soul to the Pentecostal church in town! So few of us, including our pastors, can correctly diagnose demonic problems. Even fewer have the knowledge, faith, and guts to go against the prevailing enmity of our church towards the valid deliverance ministry which is a vital part of the great gospel commission (Mk.3:13-15; Lk.9:1-3; 10:17-20).

Another important factor in this discussion about whether Christians can become possessed is that many Christians are *Christians in name only*. Many Christians are hardly different to worldly infidels in their tastes, their conversation, entertainment, dress, habits and beliefs. If the definition of a Christian is one who attends a Christian church, then certainly a Christian can become possessed. Many such “Christians” *practice* sin, and do not listen to the convicting voice of the Holy Spirit to repent. Let the Word of God answer the question of whether such carnal Christians belong to God: “For to be carnally minded *is* death...Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God...Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom.8:6-9). Jesus said to such Christians, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Lk.6:46)

“Satan takes control of every mind that is not decidedly under the control of the Spirit of God” (TM 79).

My definition of a Christian is one who has recognised the goodness, love, and forgiveness of God (Rom.2:4), which has led to a genuine repentance and reformation, a forsaking of all known sin (Rom.2:13; 6:6-14; 8:1-4,13,14). There is an earnest desire to please God in all things, and a hungering and thirsting for truth in God's Word and testimonies (Ps.119:14-16,97-105). There is a persevering wrestling with and death to self (Col.3:2-11), a putting on of “the whole armour of God” (Eph.6:10-18), the use of “the weapons of our warfare” (2 Cor.10:3-5), and a resisting of the devil (Js.4:6-10). There is a walking in the Lord's footsteps (1 Jn.2:3-6). Although imperfect, the Christian is growing in grace and the fruits of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet.1:1-11; Gal.5:22-25). Can *such* a Christian become possessed by demons? Absolutely not!!! The true and living God possesses such Christians (2 Cor.6:14-16).

But what if, like King Saul and Judas, the Christian does not avail him/herself of the believers' resources - the “full armour of God” (Eph.6:10-18), and the “weapons of our warfare” (2 Cor.10:3-5)? Many Christians would not even be able to name all the armour of God, let alone daily put the pieces on. How many would know what these “weapons of our warfare” are, and actually use them skilfully during temptation and demonic harassment? We are counselled that “So long as we live in this world of sin, we must engage in a *constant spiritual*



*warfare*” (20MR 170). Many SDA Christians, however, are totally ignorant about spiritual warfare, or look upon it with contempt. They know little about the devices of Satan. Many succumb easily to temptation and sin, giving Satan an advantage and ground in their lives (2 Cor.2:11; Eph.4:27).

The Bible teaches us to be sober, self-controlled, vigilant, and watchful, because Satan “walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may *devour*. Whom resist steadfast in the faith” (1 Pet.5:9). What if we ignore this counsel? What if we do not resist the devil, and ignore God’s counsel to “reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom.6:11)? What if we cherish evil thoughts that are planted into our minds by the devil, and even act them out, giving in to temptation *habitually*? What if the mind is not renewed progressively with the Word of God (Rom.12:2)? What if we give ground or place to the devil (Eph.4:27)? Christians can tempt the devil, inviting his presence and control, by purposely watching or listening to T.V. programs, videos, music, etc. that are in harmony with the principles and spirit of Satan, instead of guarding well the avenues to the soul. When spiritual laws are violated, as with physical laws, there comes a sure consequence. Christians who were once converted can become corrupted from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ (2 Cor.11:3). A double-mindedness develops (Js.1:8;4:8), which is frequently an enigma to those who know what these Christians profess. Satan does indeed *devour* many a converted Christian through these means.

Moreover, if a Christian is *indwelt* by the Holy Spirit, it does not necessarily follow that he/she is *controlled* by Him. God does not force the human will, but gives us our free choice. If a converted Christian listens and responds to the temptations of the devil, the Holy Spirit will convict of sin, but not control him/her against that person’s will. When Christians succumb to the “works of the flesh” (Gal.5:19-21), then they allow the carnal nature to rule. This carnal nature is totally in harmony with Satan and his principles.

The church in Ellen White’s day was positive in regard to spiritual warfare. Ellen White herself rebuked demons (2SM 353), and so did James White. She taught others to do this, such as A.G.Daniells. She instructed Daniells to cast out the demon from a SDA colporteur by the name of Nathaniel Davis. Read what she wrote about Davis to Daniells:

“Evil angels are all about him, and at times have control of him in a strange, revolting way....I have the word from the Lord that he is possessed of an evil spirit, and ‘has no power from the snare to go.’....As soon as possible, this demon tempter’s power must be broken....Satan must be rebuked as in olden

times, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth....Labor we must to have the man dispossessed” (Letter 39, Aug. 31, 1897, pp. 6, 7).

Now read these excerpts from one of Davis’ letters to Ellen White, and I think you will agree with me that this man was a converted Christian, but nevertheless demon possessed, as Ellen White was shown by God:

“I cannot pray; it chokes me to attempt to sing. I am a living lie, and am ready to sink into utter despair. Yet in spite of all, and as base as I am, I love the truth; I love the Saviour. I desire to do right, God knows I do; and yet I wonder myself how I can, for my life is full of wrongdoing and contemptible motives” (Nathaniel Davis to Ellen White, 9.9.1896).

The experiences of a number of SDA pastors and laypeople, including myself, also indicate that SDA Christians can have demons. An excellent book to read by a SDA pastor, Vaughn Allen, called “Victory On The Battlefield” (1993, Teach Services, New York), mentions many such SDA’s delivered by the power of God. There are, in fact, so many cases of SDA’s who have been delivered from indwelling demons, that the burden of proof of its supposed impossibility lies with those who claim that it cannot be so.

To deny the possibility that demons can invade a SDA Christian is to do a great disservice to SDA Christians who have been invaded by demons. It misdiagnoses the problem, thus denying them the vital help which is available. It is actually cooperating with the wicked spirits who are working havoc in their lives!

Sadly, many SDA Christians will cling to unsound theological presuppositions, leaving invaded SDA Christians to continue on in bondage. Should we not instead follow the example of our Lord, the early disciples, Ellen White, and many other faithful Christians, using the weapons of our warfare to cast down Satan’s strongholds and set the captives free? How can we turn these people away and do nothing, ignoring the specific command of the Lord Jesus Christ to cast out devils, allowing the enemy to devour them?

## **(2) *We are forbidden to speak to demons***

This is another common objection to the deliverance ministry. The opposition to speaking to demons is based basically on the Bible’s ban on any of God’s people becoming involved with occult activities (Deut. 18:9-14, etc.). This ban is totally valid, and would be accepted by virtually every SDA who believes in the gospel commission to cast out demons, including myself.

Another aspect of the reasoning against any type of talking to demons is based on Ellen White’s injunction not to “parley” with Satan. She states clearly, “It is

unsafe to enter into controversy or to parley with him” (3T 483). This too, of course, is accepted by most SDA’s involved in the deliverance ministry, including myself.

Several issues are involved here, so let us take them one by one, and see what the Bible and the writings of Ellen White really do say. As in finding precious stones or gold, so too in finding the deeper truths of the will of God, you usually have to dig deeper than the surface level.

Firstly, many people assume that it is the same thing to *consult* demons, as is done, for example, in a séance or by a channeler, as *opposing* them in *rebuke* or *command* to drive them away. In both cases there is dialogue between people and demons. The two are actually *opposites*, however, as are fire and water, or darkness and light. The evidence for this is found in both the Bible and Ellen White’s writings.

Look, for example, at Mark 5:1-19. When Jesus and His disciples came ashore to Gadara, a madman met them, who looked as though he could tear them all to pieces. There are various degrees of possession, ranging from minor to extreme. This poor soul was in the extreme category, having a legion of demons inside him. Notice that *Jesus spoke to the demons*, saying, “Come out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit!” (5:8). The demon in charge spoke to Jesus (5:7). Clearly, there was dialogue between Jesus and a demon. Jesus then asked the demon the question, “What *is* thy name?” (5:9) The demon in charge answered His question, and continued to speak to Jesus, begging Him not to send them out of the country (5:10). Then Jesus allowed all the demons to talk to Him, begging Him to send them to the swine (5:12). Jesus again spoke to them, giving them permission to do so. It is clear that there was a considerable amount of dialogue between the Lord Jesus and these demons.

We cannot assume that this was the *only* dialogue between Jesus and these demons either. This is because Scripture was written to mention *briefly* some of the main things spoken or taught. For example, look at Jesus’ dialogue with Nicodemus in John 3:1-21. You can read it in two minutes or less. No doubt Nicodemus talked with Jesus for hours, but the whole content of their conversation was not placed into Scripture. See also John 21:25, which states that many of the things which Jesus did, and therefore said, are unrecorded. This has been called the principle of Scriptural brevity.

***We can trust the example of the Lord Jesus Christ.*** “He is our example *in all things*” (4T 42). I would never claim to live up to His glorious example in all things, but I certainly desire to. He has given us His example of speaking to

demons in order to resist, rebuke, and command them to leave. Now, note please how this is the *very opposite* of parleying with demons.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary's definition of the word parley is: "Conference for debating of points in dispute, esp. discussion of terms...(with enemy, etc)". In His dialogue with these demons, Jesus did not debate with them or discuss terms. In deliverance we make no deals with the enemy. We give them no leniency. They are the avowed enemies of Christ, and we treat them at all times as such. But as in the life of Christ, there can be *two way communication*. His speech with the demons, like ours in deliverance, consisted of *opposition*, as necessary, in order to get them out.

As is sometimes the case, Ellen White's writings are used to support an idea that she is actually not stating. This can be done by ignoring the context. If you read the context of her statement against parleying with Satan, she is actually admonishing us to *resist the devil*, particularly in the area of presumption. Here is her statement in context:

"It is unsafe to enter into controversy or to parley with him. For every advantage that we give the enemy, he will claim more. Our only safety is in rejecting firmly the first approach to presumption. God has, through the merits of Christ, given us sufficient grace to *withstand Satan* and be more than conquerors. *Resistance is success. 'Resist the devil. And he will flee from you.'* *Resistance must be firm and steadfast*" (3T 483).

Ellen White was not warning us never to talk with demons, but rather, that we must not make any presumptuous deals or compromises with the devil. Instead, we are to resist him firmly, steadfast in the faith. And it is this type of resistance that will bring us success in our warfare with Satan.

Ellen White actually went out of her way to teach us, over and over again, and in many places throughout her writings, *how* to resist Satan effectively by *talking to him out loud*. Very few SDA's are aware of this. This is done by rebuking Satan, and giving him your testimony of your love for Jesus and your trust in His merits, and by using truth to tear down Satan's lies, particularly using the Word of God like a sword. I will quote one such statement, and give some other similar references you may wish to follow up for your later study.

"When Satan tells you that the Lord has forgotten you and will not regard you with favor, *tell him* you know in whom you believe; *say to him*, 'Get thee behind me, Satan. Jesus gave His own life for me. He suffered a most cruel death that He might save me from being overcome by your temptations. I believe in Jesus. I know my Saviour loves me, and I love my Jesus. I rest in His love, notwithstanding my imperfections. God has accepted His perfection in my

behalf. He is my righteousness, and I trust in His merits. I am His repenting, believing child. He has taken away my sin-stained garments and covered me with the robe of His righteousness. Clothed in this garment I stand before the Father justified. I am of that number who are addressed as the ‘elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit’ (1 Pet.1:2)” (12MR 34,35).

You may wish to check the following references, which similarly teach us how to resist the devil by talking to him directly in *opposition* in order to force him to leave: HS 132; 13MR 149,150; Testimonies on Sexual Behaviour 50; 1 Sermons & Talks 189; ST 8.18.1987, The Christian’s Privilege, pr.5; ST 3.18.1989, The Substance of Things Hoped For, pr.5; YI 7.8.1897, Soldiers for Christ, pr.2; RH 8.5.1890, We Should Praise God Now, pr.6; RH 9.20.1892, Walk Not in Darkness, pr.11.

There are many other such quotes. You may wish to see a compilation that I have written called, “What to Tell Satan”, with these and other quotes of Ellen White about this subject. After reading it, if you believe as I do that Ellen White is God’s last day messenger to this church, you will be convinced that you can and must learn how to resist and rebuke the devil like this, by speaking directly and in *opposition* to Satan in order to force him to leave. This is not parleying with the devil, but rather, *rebuking and resisting him steadfast in the faith*.

In a day when Satan has virtually complete control of this earth, and far too much control in our beloved church, faithful Christians would do well to take seriously what every demon knows:

“Satan related to his angels that Jesus had given His disciples power to cast them out, rebuke them, and heal those whom he should afflict” (1SG 79). If only we took that as seriously as the devils do!

### **(3) *Genuine deliverance is instantaneous***

The commonly held belief is that Jesus “cast out the spirits with *his word*”. (Matt.8:16). However you can’t find a single account in the Bible where Jesus literally said only one word to the devils and they left. In the case of the demoniac of Gadara, we have already seen that there was quite a dialogue between Jesus and the demons, which likely went on much longer than the written narrative. Nor did they leave immediately when *even the Lord Jesus Christ* rebuked them.

When Jesus questioned the leader of the demons about his name (Mk.5:9), a surface reading of the text may give the impression that He asked once and received an immediate answer. However, the Greek verb *asked* (eperotoa) is the

imperfect active, indicating either a continuous action or a repeated action. A more accurate rendering of the Greek would read, “And He *kept on* asking him, ‘What is your name?’ ” In a similar way, the demons begged Jesus *repeatedly* not to send them to the pit (Lk.8:31). In other words, a more careful examination of the internal evidence simply does *not* support the idea that the deliverance was instantaneous.

Those involved in the deliverance ministry have found that while it occasionally occurs that the demons will leave with a single command, this is the *exception* rather than the rule.

An example of this leaving quickly may be the case when Paul rebuked the demon of fortune-telling in the slave girl from Philippi. Paul had put up with Satan’s sophistries through this girl for many days, and finally he had had enough. “But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same *hour*” (Acts16:18).

***Notice in this text that Paul spoke directly to the demon.*** This was, mind you, after many days of the demon speaking directly to the disciples and others around them through this girl. Paul did not say only one word, either, but fourteen words. Once again, remembering the principle of Scriptural brevity, and that it could have taken nearly an hour, there may well have been other dialogue, which is not recorded.

**So why does it usually take so long?** Experience has taught us that it can take hours, even days. In some cases, the battle may continue over months (not all in one go, fortunately!) Here then are some of the reasons for the length of time.

**(1) Firstly, because in deliverance we have a *battle between the good angels and the evil angels.*** It is not merely a battle between God and the demons, which would, of course, end instantly. God does not simply command the devils to leave and it is done. It appears that God has chosen not to intervene directly in most cases. Instead, He works out His will in deliverance *through the angels.* And the devils, who are the fallen angels, don’t just meekly give up and march out!

“Could our eyes be opened and could each see the *conflict* of angelic agencies with the satanic confederacy what astonishment would come upon the soul....We should see *battles going on between the two armies,* as real as those fought by opposing forces on earth” (ST,Oct.10,1894).

“Satan will not yield one inch of ground except as he is driven back by the power of heavenly messengers” (GC 559).

Which earthly battles ever finished instantly? Battles imply prolonged fighting, manoeuvres and counter-manoevres. Strategy must be used. The enemy must be weakened by attacking the weak spots. There is pain and suffering. All these things must be present if these spiritual battles are “as real as those fought by opposing forces on earth”.

In our modern Western cultural mindset, we assume that it is a simple matter to evict demons from their human prey. After all, there are two good angels for every wicked one (Rev.12:4). But it is not so easy. They usually fight back, and resist fiercely!

“He [Satan] will not hesitate to engage all his energies and call to his aid all his evil host to wrest a single human being from the hand of Christ” (1T 301).

Put yourself into their shoes for just a moment. Mere mortals come along to cast them out of a person. They consider their prey as their “home” or “house” (Lk.11:24), so they’re not about to leave, any more than you would be if a thief came to your door and tried to evict you out of your home! Would you leave without a fight? Not likely! I have heard a demon cry out in utter anguish just before he left, “This is my home! This is my home!” If they are cast out, they know that they will have to meet either the dread, anger, and punishment of their demonic superiors (and believe me, there is no love lost between them!), or be forced ingloriously by God’s angels to the pit. The pit is a type of concentration camp for captured demons during the war, where they are confined. Naturally, they don’t want either of these alternatives.

When they are finally cast out in the name of Jesus, do they just give up, leaving their former victim alone in comfort and ease? Not at all. If they were not sent to the pit, they’re still in action. “The spirits of darkness will battle for the soul once under their dominion” (DA 259). Many of these demons are still deceived by Satan, sincerely believing his lies that he deserves to be the ruler of this earth. So they fight valiantly to regain what was taken from them. Jesus said that they go to dry places, seeking rest, but finding none, they return to their “home”. If the Holy Spirit has not taken their evacuated place, they can re-enter, bringing with them even more wicked spirits than themselves.

Sometimes the reason it takes so long is that after the demons have been cast out, they have returned. Through some wile of the devil, perhaps through some cherished sin or lack of surrender to God, they have found a crack and re-entered. Then the battle must be fought again for that person.

**(2) Secondly, it usually takes some time to *discuss* the situation with these demonised individuals.** When we pray for people with demonic problems, we

usually try to find out the nature of their problems, and get to know them. We rarely go into deliverance “cold turkey”, with no understanding of the person at all. We discuss how long it has been this way, how it began, the problems that have been encountered, the areas of sin in the person’s life, etc. This can be extremely helpful information, and can take hours in itself, especially if these people have been harassed by Satan for many years, and have much to explain. In the case of one person, though this is an exception, this step alone took two days! This step is normal practice in any type of counselling therapy, in which you get to know the person and the problems before you offer any solutions.

It is important to note that this counselling prior to deliverance, while it can take several hours, is *not* a confessional. In Roman Catholic practice, a sinner goes to a priest, confesses his/her sins to *him*, and is absolved by the priest. This is an abomination in the eyes of God. There is absolutely nothing resembling this in the SDA deliverance ministry. Any confession of sin is to God and God alone.

Discussing the problem with a sympathetic person who understands the supernatural realm can be extremely healing and comforting in itself to a demonised person. Most people with demonic problems have been misunderstood, condemned, ridiculed, and avoided in the SDA church, and they truly feel the rejection. How comforting for them to receive acceptance and understanding from those who understand the terrible torment which Satan has put them through. Sometimes these people weep for joy, because at last they have found someone who understands them and their situation.

**(3) There are some things which, when resolved before deliverance prayer begins, result in a quicker deliverance.** For this reason we try to lead the demonised person to such resolutions. For example, if the demonised person harbours unforgiveness or resentment, hatred, etc, for those who have harmed him/her, this can effectively prolong all our efforts at deliverance, and even negate it. The person needs to come to the point of seeing the perpetrators as victims of the enemy, like him/herself, and must forgive them (Matt.6:14,15).

As well as this, the person needs to make a genuine full surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. It may take time to get the person to that point. There may need to be some necessary changes to lifestyle so that the person is in harmony with the will of God. For example, one lady for whom we prayed reached an impasse, and when we probed a little, it turned out that she had amongst her belongings several occult books, a piece of furniture from Thailand that had carved figures in heathen worship poses, several books supporting the gibberish type of “speaking in tongues”, and also some marijuana joints. These items proved to be the key to her continued deliverance. She gladly surrendered the ground she had given to the devil through these items, and burned them (Acts 19:19;



Deut.7:25,26). The demons literally screamed in agony in her mind, as they watched their ground being burned before their eyes. After these abominations were burned, it amazed us how quickly and easily the demons were cast out.

The demoniac of Gadara, though he could not even speak his own words, made this surrender to God, and the “heart’s unspoken appeal was heard” (DA 258). The person may need to be led to Christ if he/she does not know Him at all, and has serious misunderstandings about the character of God or doctrine. Sometimes it is crucial to clear these things up before attempting deliverance. God is not in any type of partnership with the devil, and He will not set a captive free who will not make this unreserved surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ, whether he/she can speak it or not.

**(4) Another aspect to the length of time for deliverance is the person’s own will and choices.** As might well be expected for those who have long been controlled by the enemy, they may have times during their deliverance when they choose not to surrender themselves to Christ. They may cherish doubts, fear, and the various sins that have held them captive to the enemy. This effectively thwarts the efforts of the angels, for “God does not control our minds without our consent; but every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him” (MH 93).

I have heard demons say, “We don’t have to leave. He loves this sin, and won’t give it up.” At such times, I command the demon who is in manifestation to step back into the ranks, and let the person speak. Then I speak to the person about that sin, and how crucial to his/her freedom it is to ask God for forgiveness and cleansing for that sin (1 Jn.1:9,10), and the need to surrender that sin to God (Rom.6:11-14). This can take time, of course, especially if the person has a real battle with submitting it to God. It can hold up the deliverance for hours, days, even weeks and months. Cherished sin will prevent any further progress in that person’s deliverance. Even if the demons were successfully cast out in such a case, the cherished sin would only open the door again for demonic reinvasion (Lk.11:26). Thus, surrendering of the will and life to Christ is crucial both to deliverance and maintaining one’s freedom.

On the other hand, if such people humble themselves before God, confessing their sins to God, then God’s angels will continue to battle for them, and shall finally prevail over the forces of darkness. “Satan and his angels are unwilling to lose their prey. They *contend* and *battle* with holy angels, and the *conflict* is *severe*. And if those who have erred continue to plead, and in deep humility confess their wrongs, angels who excel in strength will prevail and *wrench* them from the power of the evil angels” (MYP 60).

“Every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him....Those who will consent to enter into covenant relation with the God of heaven are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature. They are invited by the Saviour, ‘Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me’ [Isa.27:5]. The spirits of darkness will battle for the soul once under their dominion, but angels of God will contend for that soul with prevailing power. The Lord says, ‘Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?...Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children’[Isa.49:24,25]” (DA 258,259).

We have found that the more active a role the person being delivered takes in personally confessing sin, and resisting and rebuking the powers of darkness, the quicker the deliverance. No doubt this is a similar situation to when we are under temptation. If we will not resist during temptation, then the angels of God leave us to our own choices. If, on the other hand, we actively resist the devil, which is part of our work in cooperating with God, the angels are legally able to fight for and with us, and to effect our victory.

“Those who have tempted the devil to tempt them will have to make *desperate efforts* to free themselves from his power. But when they begin to work for themselves, then angels of God whom they have grieved will come to their rescue” (1T 301).

Perhaps this is similar to the demonic harassment (not possession) of Ellen White. She went through a period of terrible depression, which was so intense that she began to doubt her own Christian experience. James interceded for her, but she was *not* instantly freed in answer to the prayer of faith. “He [Satan] would not yield until my voice was united with his for deliverance” (LS 136). The fact is that, whether we are speaking about harassment or possession, the battle is seldom quick or easy. Satan and his demons never were very good at instant obedience! Satan must be resisted by the person being harassed or possessed, and the will must be firmly planted on the side of Christ.

**(5) Another aspect to this time factor is *human failure on the part of those interceding for the demonised person.*** The delegated authority to cast out demons is not absolute, but conditional. The disciples had had success in casting out demons, but when they tried to cast out the demons from the young boy, they were going through a period of emotional and spiritual turmoil. They were wholly unsuccessful then.

Jesus told them that the reason they could not cast out the demon in the boy was “Because of your *unbelief*: for verily I say to you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matt. 17:20).

They were not complete unbelievers, for they were following Jesus and were His disciples. They had some degree of belief, but yet much remaining unbelief. The faith that they had was not strong enough to cope with these powerfully entrenched demons, which refused to leave at the command of the disciples in the name of Jesus Christ.

There are times like this in deliverance ministry when the demons will not go, and we do not understand what is happening. That is the time when there must be earnest prayer, fasting, humiliation of heart, confession of sin if necessary, seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit, and a strengthening of faith. There may be a cause for the delay or failure, and this cause must be sought out and rectified. Some cases are particularly difficult to work with, and there can be many complex, unknown pieces to the puzzle, which represents the history of the victim.

Ellen White, in her typically brilliant, insightful manner, elaborates on this delay in the boy’s deliverance this way:

“Their unbelief, that shut them out from deeper sympathy with Christ, and the carelessness with which they regarded the sacred work committed to them, had caused their failure in the conflict with the powers of darkness. The words of Christ pointing to His death had brought sadness and doubt. And the selection of the three disciples to accompany Jesus to the mountain had excited the jealousy of the nine. Instead of strengthening their faith by prayer and meditation on the words of Christ, they had been dwelling on their discouragements and personal grievances. In this state of darkness they had undertaken the conflict with Satan.

In order to succeed in such a conflict they must come to the work in a different spirit. Their faith must be strengthened by fervent prayer and fasting, and humiliation of heart. They must be emptied of self, and be filled with the Spirit and power of God. Earnest, persevering supplication to God in faith, - faith that leads to entire dependence upon God, and unreserved consecration to His work, - can alone avail to bring men the Holy Spirit’s aid in the battle against principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and wicked spirits in high places” (DA 430).

Continuing along this line of reasoning, that success in deliverance comes with the *exercise of genuine faith*, and failure with unbelief, she states:

“If you have faith like this, you will lay hold upon God’s word, and upon all the helpful agencies He has appointed. Thus your faith will strengthen, and will bring to your aid the power of heaven. The obstacles that are piled by Satan across your path, though apparently insurmountable as the eternal hills, shall disappear before the demand of faith. “Nothing shall be impossible unto you” ” (DA 431).

Analysing these paragraphs from the pen of inspiration, we see two reasons why deliverance can be delayed, or even result in failure, as in the case of this boy.

The powers of darkness do not leave when Christ’s disciples harbour unbelief, carelessness in relation to God’s sacred work, discouragement, sadness, doubt, jealousy, or when they are dwelling upon their personal grievances. In such a “state of darkness” or negativity themselves, the disciples could not possibly succeed against Satan and his demons. Demons do not leave when Christ’s disciples lack faith that is strengthened by fervent prayer and fasting, humiliation of heart, an emptying of self, an infilling with the Spirit and power of God, an entire dependence upon God, and an unreserved consecration to His work. When these things are lacking, we do not receive the Holy Spirit’s aid in the battle against the enemy.

**(6) Another reason that deliverance is not necessarily instantaneous is stated by Jesus: “Howbeit *this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.*”** (Matt.17:21). Scripture, history, and experience teach that some demons are more difficult to deal with than others.

At impasses in deliverance, there are times when there is no alternative than to spend time in earnest prayer. Perhaps there are problems in the lives of those praying, such as the disciples had when they failed. At these times there needs to come from their lips the sound of deep repentance, and confession of sin and unbelief.

I once heard about some SDA pastors who came to set a captive of the enemy free, who were met by the accusations of a demon in manifestation. The demon knew about their private, cherished sins, and mocked them. At their command the devils simply refused to go, and their reason was the sins of these pastors.

This teaches us how important it is to be right with God at all times. Cherished sin gives the devil ground in the lives of Christians, opening them up to the full assaults of Satan (TMK 248). It can also rob them of their authority in Christ.

What would you do if you were in the pastors' shoes, and the deliverance was delayed because of demonic accusations? What should the pastors have done? I believe that they should have admitted to the demons the truth about their sins, and then immediately got down upon their knees to God in earnest confession, repentance, and humiliation of heart. They should have claimed the promise of forgiveness (1 Jn.1:9), and claimed the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to cover their sins (Rev.1:5). Then they could meet the enemy in the imputed righteousness of Christ, for "this alone makes you able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (SD 346). Then they could effectively and with authority "attack Satan and take his strongholds" (3T 316).

Fasting may also be required on the part of those praying, and if possible, by the person being delivered. This aspect of unreserved consecration to God and self-denial will often be the key to breaking the demonic stronghold.

**(7) Sometimes those praying need to stop the deliverance because of an impasse.** For example, sometimes the people we have prayed for have said that they know why the demons aren't leaving. Usually the problem is cherished sin that has not been surrendered to God, or some type of occult object, or something connected to false worship. In one case, the person had in his possession a Masonic emblem, which was unrecognisable as such until it was spinned. We usually stop the deliverance, taking time to discuss each of these problems. When such things are surrendered to God, there is usually a breakthrough.

Sometimes when a demonised person actually believes the demons' lies this also lengthens the deliverance, because it gives them legal ground to stay, and it takes time to straighten this out through the truth in the Word of God. When that person consents to the truth, suddenly the demons' strength is broken.

**(8) Another reason for longer deliverances is the limited experience or knowledge of those praying.** Things just take longer when you first begin practicing anything, and practice improves and speeds up the results. As you gain experience in this ministry, you learn what works and what doesn't work. You no longer waste time doing what doesn't work. It is the same with any newly learned task or the exercise of our spiritual gifts. Those involved in this ministry do not claim to be experts, for indeed there are no experts, since it seems that every case of demonisation is unique. We are learners in the school of Christ. As much as we love and revere the Lord Jesus Christ, we are not Him. He carried out deliverance perfectly; we cannot. Neither are we the apostle Paul, or the early disciples, who were personally trained in deliverance by the Lord Jesus. We admit that we make mistakes, but we seek to work effectively.

**(9) Deliverance can be delayed because of the presence of unbelievers.** Anyone who has had a few years of experience in deliverance ministry knows the difference in success if even one person is present who has a carnal, sensual, unsympathetic, or critical spirit. This is what the disciples faced when they were unsuccessful in casting out the evil spirits from the young boy, only this time the problem was with themselves. If the spirit of those praying for deliverance is not in harmony with the Holy Spirit, what else can be expected?

**(10) Another reason for this time factor is that frequently the demons manifest *one by one*.** Like Jesus, we ask their names, and thus usually know their work assignments. A knowledge of their assignments in that person can be very helpful in evicting them. Perhaps this is why God instructed Ellen White so much about these demonic names/assignments. Some of these demonic names/assignments are: “demon of intemperance” (Te 176), “demon of strife” (AH 106), “demon of selfishness” (DA 294), “demon of passion” (PP 668), etc.

They nearly always resist departure, but through the use of the weapons of our warfare, which are mighty through God to the pulling down strong holds (2 Cor.10:3-5), they do usually go. However, all this takes time. I certainly wish that the demons would leave instantly with just one quick command, but this simply does not concur with practice.

***Why does God allow them to take so long in departure?*** Yet another reason is that many of these captives to the enemy are not aware of the sources of their bondage. The source could be cherished sin, or doors that they have opened to the devil through occult involvement. Such doors may seem quite insignificant to many of the victims, such as T.V. addiction, or watching certain movies, listening to certain types of music, listening to the enemy’s implanted thoughts, such as fear, jealousy, hatred, etc. In His kindness and desire to help the victim know the sources of their bondage, the good Lord reveals to them their various points of bondage – *one by one!*

This way, they can see clearly each point of surrender that is needed, and what they must scrupulously avoid in the future to prevent reinfestation with demons. This fact should not be a problem for Christians. If those who insist that the demons all have to leave together instantly would show us from example and practice that this is the norm, we are more than happy to learn how it can be done. As yet, though, we have not found it to be so.

**(11) Satan has actually *increased* his power and control over people tremendously over the last two thousand years.** “Satan has the same power and the same control over minds now, only *it has increased a hundredfold* by

exercise and experience” (3T 328). This is very significant in relation to the time factor.

There were no porno shops 2000 years ago. Sensuality was not glaring at you from almost every newsagency, magazine stand, advertisement, video and T.V. program. Violence and other sins are classed as entertainment for adults and even children. We live in an age of corruption from almost every area of life. This makes it much more easy for Satan and his demons to gain an entrance into peoples’ lives, and to maintain their strongholds.

Most of the people we pray for have *many* strongholds of the devil in their lives, which each have to be broken and surrendered to God. Is it hard to believe that it takes time to deal with these? Many of these sins have incredibly strong emotional attachments to the person as well, and sometimes the deliverance must be “put on pause” while some of these issues are sorted out. To deal with these issues can be extremely painful to the victim, and time-consuming for us. Often these things cannot be ignored for progress to continue.

**(12) Yet another reason it can take time is that deliverance means a decided warfare against the powers of darkness.** “In every age the true church of God has engaged in *decided warfare* against satanic agencies” (ST, Series B, No.2, p.5).

As Jesus mentioned, some demons are more wicked than others (Lk.11:26). As well as this, some are more powerful than others. There are principalities, powers, and also the more common demons, among whom some are weak and others strong. If we are dealing with particularly strong and evil demons, the process of deliverance may be slowed down. This can also be the case if demons have been entrenched in that person’s life for a long time, even for generations in that family line. The deeper the roots in trees, usually the more difficult it is to uproot the tree. Powerful demons that have been entrenched in a family for decades, and some for even hundreds of years, resist eviction much harder. A demon, after a prolonged battle, cried out in sheer misery, anguish and terror, “The chain is broken! The chain is broken!”

Some demons tremble at the name of Christ, and at the exercise of genuine faith by the disciples of Christ. When such weaker demons manifest, the person being delivered can literally shake from fear on the part of the demon. On the other hand, some are incredibly arrogant and resistant, boldly refusing to leave, even blaspheming the name of Christ, and declaring their undying hatred for Him and everything He stands for. They tell us in no uncertain terms how much they also hate us and want to kill us. Thank God for the protection of His holy angels! The demons’ resolve may need to be broken down progressively by (a)

prayers of faith, and (b) confident opposition to them with the Word of God, and (c) songs of praise to God. All this, of course, takes time.

(a) “The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (Js.5:16). “Souls possessed with evil spirits will present themselves before us. We must cultivate the spirit of *earnest prayer*, mingled with *genuine faith* to save them from ruin, and this will confirm our faith” (Spaulding-Magan 89).

(b) By what means did He [Christ] overcome in the conflict with Satan? By the word of God” (DA 123). “Are we prepared to resist them [evil angels] by the word of God, the only weapon we can use successfully?” (1T 302) Recently we heard a demon admit, “You are *weakening* me!” through the reading of powerful passages of Scripture.

(c) “God desired that the whole life of His people should be a life of *praise...These exercises drive back the power of Satan*. They expel the spirit of murmuring and complaint, and *the tempter loses ground*” (COL 299,300).

In Daniel 10:12-21, the archangel Gabriel explains to the beloved Daniel that he had been fighting with the strong demonic princes and kings of Persia and Greece. These high level powers of darkness had managed to resist Gabriel for three whole weeks, and the situation was not resolved till “Michael your prince” (the Lord Jesus) personally intervened. Further light on this situation is found in PK 571,572, if you wish to look at it in more detail. With this in mind, is it so hard to believe that powerful demons are able to thwart deliverance for a time?

Well, I have noted various reasons for the time it often takes in deliverance. There are other reasons, too, but this should be enough for any sincere seeker for truth to realise that what is involved is not merely “one short, sharp command, and the demons all run like scared rabbits”, as a pastor once declared to me.

It can take much prayer, many rebukes and commands to leave, the effective use of the weapons of our warfare, such as the reading of the Word of God in faith, the singing of songs of praise, personal testimony about the blood of the Lamb, and strong faith in His power and authority. The person being delivered has to place his/her will persistently on the side of Christ, and surrender to Him and the principles of the kingdom of God. It sometimes takes time to achieve a breakthrough when there is spiritual failure on the part of those praying. These and the other factors mentioned all result in deliverance usually taking some time. Let this time factor not be a stumbling block to any sincere servant of God.



## ***Conclusion***

I have gone to considerable lengths to answer the three main objections to the contemporary deliverance ministry within the SDA church. I hope you have found the discussion of these issues helpful and enlightening. There are several other problematic areas, which deserve further study and discussion. My prayer is that our church leaders will look candidly and with open minds upon these issues. Our pastors must come to the point where this subject is brought out into the open for honest discussion and study. Let the condemnation and suspicion cease over this subject between brothers and sisters in Christ. At college level, this subject should be taught, so that our ministers leave college with an understanding of the symptoms of demonisation, and a knowledge of how to help those possessed by evil spirits.

Even if there is disagreement about the specific methods of deliverance, and some unresolved issues, we must reach the point where these issues can be openly discussed in a loving, Christlike spirit. Such discussion results in real spiritual growth and change. If mistakes have been made by those involved in the deliverance ministry, these need to be pointed out. This must not be done in a dictatorial manner, arguing from mere human opinions, but from clear directions from the Bible and the writings of Ellen White. Any proven faults must be faced humbly and recognised. Genuine repentance and growth in the truth are hallmarks of true and untainted religion, which is precious in the eyes of God.

There is a quote that I have memorised, which I count very dear to my heart. It goes like this: “Henceforth Christ’s followers are to look upon Satan as a conquered foe. Upon the cross Jesus was to gain the victory for them; that victory He desired them to accept as their own” (MH 94). I look forward to the day when my beloved church, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, moves forward, not just in preaching the gospel and healing the sick, but also in the deliverance of the demonised, “mighty and a terror to her enemies” (EW 227).

Written by Steve Koncz,