

Jude 9 “The Lord Rebukes You”: A Pastoral Perspective on Exorcism Within the Context of the Indian Evangelical Church in South Africa

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There are two equal opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devil [demons]. One is to disbelieve their existence. The other is to believe and feel an unhealthy interest in them.
– C.S. Lewis

1. Introduction

The challenge facing many in pastoral ministry within the Indian context and possibly in the wider context of the Evangelical faith concerns the issue of “deliverance ministry” or “exorcism”. In this article the researcher’s intention is not to focus on whether a Christian can be possessed or not, but rather the focus is on how to minister biblically to a person who is possessed or oppressed by demons, so that healing can take place. Even though we have over 35 years of collective ministerial experience within this context, we are like dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants learning from the experience of ministers who have preceded us. It is not the intention of the researchers to “glorify” the work of the devil, but at the same time we do not want to deny the existence of his work or diagnose it as merely some mental or psychological illness. Since the rise of modern secularism in the 18th century “Enlightenment” arguments have been put forward to limit the range of happening to the “natural” as opposed to the supernatural. Commonly these arguments are based on the assumption as to the character of natural and physical laws that apply everywhere. Blackstone (1963: 157) following in the tradition of the philosopher David Hume gave the classical formulation when he wrote: “A miracle or a [supernatural event] is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a supernatural event from the very nature of the fact is as entire as any argument from experience can be possibly be imagined. The elimination of the miraculous has been considered definitive by a host of writers from his day to the present by interpreting miraculous events in Scripture as symbolic or even metaphorical. The historical-grammatical reading of Jude 9 enables the authors to apply this into the praxis when a demon-possessed person confronts one. The phrase “the Lord rebukes you” in Jude 9 becomes the term Indian ministers use to “rebuke” the demon/s who possesses individuals. The phrase used by the angel Michael in Jude 9 depicts the reality that it’s the Lord himself who brings judgment and in the context of the one who is possessed by a demon(s) depicts that the Lord himself does the work of deliverance. In the context of pastoral ministry the fight with the devil or demon(s) are not over the bones of Moses but a fight against demon(s) themselves. As the heavenly angel Michael who did not dispute with Satan, but left all judgment in God’s hands, so we who are engaged in ministering to those

who are demon-possessed do not wage war against the devil but leave the judgement in the hands of God.

While we are not to “look for demons under every rock,” this article seeks to demonstrate how those who are possessed by a demon(s) within the context of the Indian Evangelical Church are ministered to. We will briefly address the differences between “oppression” and “possession”. Mark 4:35-41 will serve as a model for dealing with the subject of exorcism, the practice of it and the need for such a practice. Further, the spiritual worker and the preparations required for deliverance from demons will be examined and key elements constituting the exorcism process are also explained. The concluding section describes broadly the procedure of exorcism as practiced in the context of Indian Evangelical Churches³ in Kwazulu Natal

2. The Nature of Oppression and Possession

A brief definition of oppression will be given, while a more detailed discussion on demonic possession will follow.

2.1 Oppression

Oppression carries the meaning of ‘to exercise power over’ (Vines 1979:143). In the spiritual realm oppression is not associated with fellow humans against each other but with forces of darkness or the demons and their influence over humankind.

2.2 Demonic Possession

Anderson (2000:186) states that the term ‘demon-possessed’ has raised controversy in ecclesiastical circles. The chief problem is that the word ‘possessed’ has neither origin nor existence in the Greek text. He continues that the term ‘demon possessed’ only translates the Greek word *daimonizomai* (demonized) and that this word had evolved in meaning. Unger (1952:56-57) explains the evolution of the word *daimonizomai*. In the first stage ‘*daimon*’ was associated with ‘God’. It was used in Greek mythology as a term for a minor deity. The word included ‘gods’ and the whole personality as defined in the context of cults and mythology. The second stage viewed demons as intermediaries between God and humans. In the third stage, the Greeks saw demons as imperfect beings. Like humans, they possessed character traits in the form of good and evil. The final stage classified demons as evil and members of Satan’s kingdom. To be ‘demonized’ or demon-possessed means to be under the control of one or more demons (Anderson 2000:186).

3. The Example from Scripture (Mk 4:35-41)

3.1 The Context

The narrative is found in two other passages in the Gospels, Matthew 8:28-34 and Luke 8:26-39. The primary emphasis for the insertion of this episode is to demonstrate the power of Jesus and his ability to bring change in circumstances when all else had failed. After calming a storm while out at sea (Mk 4:35-41), Jesus and his disciples arrived at Gerasenes (or commonly known as Gerasa) in the district of Gadara. This village was located about 35 miles South East of the Sea of Galilee (Barker *et al* 1983:1533). On their arrival a man who was possessed by demons confronted them.

3.2 The Nature of Possession

The best way to explain the condition of this man is by describing him as being demonically possessed. Attesting to this are a few symptoms that provide a strong case for possession. This is apart from Scripture mentioning in Mark 5:2, '...that a man with an evil spirit came...'. This verse states that he came out from the tombs while verse 3 states that he made his living in the tombs. He possessed unusual power (Mk 5:3-4). Mark points out that neither chains nor people could subdue him. West (1973:101) notes that the verb 'bound' is used in the perfect tense to refer to a well-done, complete piece of work. One of the signs of demon possession is when ordinary individuals display supernatural strength. Douglas (1966:112) remarks that demons have superhuman strength and several people are required to hold down the victim. In this particular case, even the help of the several people was ineffective. He constantly cried and lacerated himself. This was attributed to the severe torment that he experienced as a result of demon possession (Lane 1974:182). Wuest (1973:101), in describing the phrase "cutting himself" says that it connotes "the sense of gashing, hacking, or cutting one's whole body so as to leave it covered with scars". The man's display of abnormal behavior further attested to the presence of demons when Jesus arrived. Michael (1976:43) says that it was the demon-possessed person rather than Jesus who initiated the confrontation. Mark 5:6-7 records that the demons trembled at both the presence and the name of Jesus.

3.3 The Solution

Jesus recognized the man's painful condition and his need for deliverance. It was also the setting to drive home the authority of Jesus' teaching (Montgomery 1976:42). Christ, and the authority He commanded, caused the demons to shudder. The demons pleaded with Jesus to allow them to inhabit the pigs nearby. This further indicates that demons are spirit beings and do not have a body of their own. There were enough demons in this one man to mobilize two thousand pigs (Mk 5:13). Mark 5:15 describes the result of exorcism in this man's life. Without the demons in his life he was described as calm, relaxed, dressed and in his right mind. This incident of the demon-possessed man is unique. Contributing to its uniqueness was the personal, physical presence of Jesus, which resulted in the instantaneous reaction of the demons. Today, a situation such as the one experienced by the man of Gadara will usually involve a psychiatric evaluation and perhaps confinement to a mental institution. If Christian exorcism, however, is to be applied to such a situation then it is

important for us to understand the preparation that is needed to bring holistic healing to the person that is demon-possessed.

4 Sources of Demon Possession

The Christian view of exorcism is the casting out of demons that take control of a person physically. How does a person become possessed by the demon? Elwell (2001:373) suggests three reasons for invasion. First, it is because of a hereditary curse, which according to biblical teaching continues to the third and fourth generations. Prominent among the curse is the birth of illegitimate children. They were refused membership into Israel until the tenth generation. Second, there are the curses that are directed towards enemies. This is done through the use of spells, incantations, practicing of voodoo and other forms of witchcraft. Believers however are protected against such curses from the time when Christ died for humanity. Third the participation in alternate worship, such as astrology, fortune-telling and other similar religions where the demonic world is prominent, thus providing the opportunity for Satan to interfere.

4.1 Some Methods of Exorcism

Jesus enforces the following principles when dealing with a demon-possessed person as summarized by Elwell (2001:373):

- Jesus spoke to demons and commanded them to come out (Mk 1:25; 9:25).
- He cast them out "with a word" (Mt 8:16).
- Jesus was anointed by the Father with the Holy Spirit and with power to heal all who were oppressed by the Devil (Lk 4:18-19).

The Christian method of exorcism will be addressed later in this article.

4.2 The Effects of Demon Possession

Demon possession affects people physically, emotionally and spiritually. Each of these will be discussed in some detail.

4.2.1 Demons effect human physically

It must be stated that not all physical, emotional or spiritual problems are a result of demon possession. The Bible does make reference to sickness as a result of demons. Wright (1968:128) states that Jesus and his disciples made a distinction between natural illnesses, often cured by the laying on of hands or anointing with oil, and cases of possession that were cured by the command of the word even when some diseases masqueraded as signs of ordinary diseases such as dumbness and blindness (Mt 9:32-33 & 12:22). Nevertheless Scripture attests to individuals who were physically ill not because of natural conditions but as a result of demon possession. The demons gained control of their bodies. Luke 9:39 records that one child's epilepsy was a result of demon possession. Luke 11:14 documents a case of a man whom he describes as being possessed by a "demon that was mute". Luke 13:10-13 describes a woman who was physically hunched for eighteen years. Her

physical condition was a result of a 'spirit' or demon. Davis (1973:181) states that the inhabitations by demons in some cases have been responsible for effecting people physically and expressing itself in certain ordinary diseases. Those in the Scriptures who were healed from demon possession always enjoyed the blessing of a normal life. (Lk 8: 35b- 39b).

4.2.2 Demons effect humans mentally

One of the questionable views of demon possession is that of hallucination. It is considered a mere psychological delusion on the part of the victim (Unger 1952:92). Unger (1952:92) further remarks, "...the victim, who, diseased and distraught, becomes wrought up to such a high pitch of emotional frenzy or mental excitement that he imagines himself possessed and controlled by another and more powerful being". Another view, provided by Hunter *et al* (1990:387) asserts that the dialectical drama of possession and exorcism was considered by social scientists as a means of surfacing and discharging 'psychic tension'. Collins (1976:241) declares that psychology dissociates itself from any alignment with the supernatural when the supernatural world is discussed. Any allusion to the supernatural is perceived in a scientific way. Scientifically, possession is explained as changes in the blood and the alternating action of the two hemispheres of the brain (Nevius 1894:215). How then should Christian psychologists perceive demon possession? Collin (1976:238) states that they must not be influenced exclusively by empiricism and naturalism but be holistic in their approach, taking into account God's divine revelation in the Bible.

4.2.3 Demons effect humans spiritually

Koch (1978:268) makes the following observations about those he deemed as being possessed: they become stiff every time they try to pick up a Bible, read or pray. He goes on to describe one woman who became "as stiff as a board" and had difficulties holding and reading the Bible. The demonically-possessed state of individuals keeps them away from comprehending spiritual truths. The demons keep these individuals captives. Douglas (1966:112) says, "Satan rules over fallen man with his government of pride, ambition, selfishness, force, greed and pleasure" (Jn 14:30, Jn 18:36 and Eph 2:2). He says that the greatest aim of the demon is to gain control of the mind. In achieving this, the demon is able to keep him away from anything that will be of spiritual benefit. Koch (n.d: 77), describes patients who accepted treatment by mental suggestion. He discovered that such patients refused to be encouraged by the Word of God. They were described as being both insensible and opposed to the things of God.

5. The Spiritual Worker and Exorcism

Demons are active until their appointed time, when God will judge them. Their work entails a two-fold attack. They would either oppress or possess an individual. While both of these attacks would require prayer as a means of deliverance, the case of possession would require much more attention. This is largely attributed to the control exercised by demons in the lives of humans. The exorcism of such a demon spirit(s) would require the help of a spiritual worker or workers. The primary focus of

the exorcism is to restore normality to the person affected by the powers of demons. The question therefore arises: Who is a spiritual worker?

5.1 The Qualification of a Spiritual Worker

While Pastors, Elders and leaders of various ministries can be referred to as spiritual workers, the term 'Christian worker' may be a more appropriate reference. Spiritual workers, exorcists or deliverance workers are terms that can be used interchangeably to describe those who are involved in the ministry of exorcism. Anderson (2000: 259) states the primary qualification of a Christian worker as 'the Lord's bondservant' (2 Tm 2:24). The deliverance ministry therefore is not a special gift given to a few but can be freely exercised by believers on the basis of what Christ achieved for them redemptively and what they are in Christ positionally as a result of Calvary. It is the prerogative of all who trust Christ and understand the power they have in him and who have believed in his Name (Unger 1952:188-189). McDowell & Stewart (1992:185) believe that only a mature Christian experienced and seasoned in counselling and spiritual warfare should be active in diagnosing or dealing with alleged cases of demon possession. Sumrall (1995:196) says that the casting out of spirits does not relate only to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. He (1995:196) says "It does not only belong to Bishops or men of ecclesiastical positions but rather to individuals who exercise faith to the point of being able to relieve those tormented by spirits". In the context of demonic possession a "spiritual worker" could either be a Pastor, Missionary, Evangelist, Elder, Deacon or a Lay Person. It could be anybody who has pledged faith in Christ. Christian workers are individuals who have placed their faith in Christ, believe that God through a special calling enables them to use a specific gift for a noble purpose and in this context, that of demonically effected persons.

5.2 The Preparation for Deliverance

The process of deliverance requires spiritual preparations on the part of both the spiritual worker and the possessed person. After the key elements necessary for exorcism are examined, the important aspects for both the worker and possessed person will be highlighted.

5.2.1 The possessed person

The possessed person, as presented in this section, is one who is possessed by a demon or demons. Demons have been noted to manifest themselves, particularly when confronted with the Gospel or being in the presence of God, such as in corporate worship or fellowship meetings where faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is being proclaimed. Preparation of a person deemed to be possessed is of utmost importance for their liberation from demons. In the light of this, counselling of the possessed person is of paramount importance. Anderson (2000:261-262) records some of the important areas that need to be explored with possessed persons.

1. What is the history of the person?
2. What are the religious experiences of the parents and grandparents?
3. Was there any participation in occultic activities?
4. Was there disharmony in the home?

5. Were there divorces or affairs in the family history?

These are only some of the questions that are important in dealing with the possessed, especially in the Indian context. The possessed person must be made to understand the need to address these matters in his/her life. It is much easier to deal with a person who is willing to be counselled and delivered than to pray for a person against their wishes. Steyne (1992:97) says that an individual who is not properly counselled is vulnerable to re-possession. This is because of the lack of spiritual preparation, which is necessary to prevent demons from returning. Therefore counselling before exorcism is the first step taken by the spiritual worker. What other areas, apart from general information, should a counsellor address in the life of the possessed person?

4.2.1.1 Faith in Christ

Koch (1978:287) states that those who are possessed will have “no help” from psychiatrists, psychologists or an adherent of modern theology. When Koch states “no help” he probably refers to the aspect of being completely healed or set free. True freedom from spiritual bondage by demons is only found in the name of Jesus Christ (Ac 4:12). Koch (1978:287) remarks, “He who tries to shake himself free of his burdens without Christ will be bitterly disappointed”. Spiritual workers believe that a person’s welfare depends on their relationship with Christ (Crabb 1977:131). It is foolish for spiritual workers to believe that they can be successful while the possessed person maintains non-responsiveness to the call to faith in Christ as Lord and Savior. Faith in Christ is the foundation for holistic healing. Demons tremble at the person of Christ (Mk 3:11).

4.2.1.2 Forgiveness

Apart from the possessed person receiving forgiveness from God for sin, forgiving others is also beneficial for deliverance from demonic powers. The one who is possessed is encouraged to seek forgiveness in at least three areas, participation in cultic or religious vows, participation in the occult practices and attitude and relationship towards enemies.

5.2.2 Preparation of the spiritual worker

While possessed persons need to be counselled before the deliverance process, spiritual workers also need preparation for exorcism. This preparation is different from that of the possessed person because spiritual workers focus primarily on exorcising demons from the person who is possessed. The success of the spiritual worker apart from faith in God requires three aspects of spiritual preparation, meditating in the Scriptures, fasting and prayer.

5.2.2.1 Scriptures

Satan is fully aware of the effectiveness of God’s Word in contrast to the champions of today’s spiritual warfare movement (MacArthur 1992:153). Jesus, when dealing with the devil in Matthew 4: 4-11 placed his emphasis on the Word of God. On three occasions when tempted he declared, ‘It is written’. The spiritual worker in their

personal, spiritual preparation shows faith in God by holding onto the promise of God. Some of the passages relevant for such spiritual preparation include Matthew 28:18-20, James 4:7, John 16:14 and Matthew 7:13ff. These passages provide comfort to the worker. The promise is the continued presence of God with those who participate in his kingdom and seek its advancement. They are assured of receiving whatever is asked for in the context of God's will.

The Scriptures also inform us about God's plan concerning the spirits and the destiny of Satan (Pentecost 1969:183). The spiritual worker should meditate on portions of Scripture that reveal the judgment already executed by God concerning demons in his predetermined plan through Jesus Christ (1969:183). By reading the Scriptures the spiritual worker brings their faith in alignment with the will of God. This means that it also helps them to evaluate their spiritual life in the light of who God is. James 1:22 summons believers to remedy areas that foster weakness in faith. La Haye (1976:17) states that the Word of God has a cleansing effect upon the believer. He quotes Jesus who prayed, "Sanctify them through the truth. Thy Word is truth" (Jn 17:17). Maintaining a righteous life gives spiritual workers confidence and power when they are called upon to deal with victims. Wright (1971:106) says that deliberate sins leave workers vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy. The result is that workers could be driven towards evil behaviour or alternatively, a spiritual breakdown. Therefore, the time spent in the Scriptures gives the worker assurance of the victory that is attained through the power of Christ and a consistent life on the part of the spiritual worker.

5.2.2.2 Fasting and Prayer

In exorcism, fasting and prayer are not dealt with separately because the one cannot be practiced without the other. The intensity of the opposition from the evil spirit world to the believer and the nature of the spirit's power also require the need for fasting and prayer.

6. The Key Elements in Deliverance

The actual process of deliverance has some key elements. This section elaborates on some aspects pertaining to the orthodox nature of deliverance as practiced by most pastors within the Indian Evangelical Church.

6.1 Faith in Christ

It is important that both the possessed person and spiritual worker express and maintain faith in Christ. The nature of faith required by the possessed person has been described. What now follows is an exploration of how the spiritual worker can build his faith. Koch (1978:317-318) states that the Lord Jesus is able to make people free with or without the counsellor. Providing a basis for his statement is a quotation from Psalm 127:1-3, "Except the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain that build it". A paraphrase would be, "Unless the Lord does the counselling those who counsel, counsel in vain" (Koch 1978:318). Koch obviously highlights the importance of placing faith in Christ.

The spiritual worker places his faith and authority in Jesus Christ. When confronted by a demon the Christian worker uses the name of Jesus to rebuke the demons

possessing a human. Demons trembled at the person of Christ (Mk 3:11). Unger (1952:102) further states that the phrase, “in the name of Jesus” or the “Lord rebukes you” does not imply any magical power that pre-empted a cure. The “name” or the rebuke was tantamount in its description of the infinite person who was behind the name therefore the expression “in the name of Jesus” or the “Lord rebukes you” is equated with the power and all that Christ is and does (1952:103). Believers, and in this context spiritual workers, have the right to use the name of Christ and the authority that comes with it. The delegated authority apportioned to those who are sent by Christ (Mt 10:1) affords them the power to rebuke spirits (Steyne 1992:110). The reason for the assertive nature of the spiritual worker is attributed to the position he inherited in Christ. 2 Peter 1:4 states that prior to salvation, human beings inherited God’s wrath but after salvation he was granted God’s favour. Peter says, “but you have become a partaker of the divine nature....” John 1:12 qualifies it by stating that believers received sonship (Anderson 2000:48).

The name of Jesus is only effective to those who believe and place their faith in Christ. The name used in any other way could be devastating to that person who engages in exorcism. A case in point is mentioned in Acts 19:13-18. A group of Jews identified as the “seven sons of Sceva” (Ac 19:14) were attempting to exorcise demons in the name of Jesus. These men obviously thought that “the name of Jesus” could be used as a magical formula to exorcise the demon. Their lack of faith and belief in Jesus Christ became evident. The evil spirits, responding that they knew about Jesus and Paul but not who *they* were demonstrated this. Thus, the wrongful use of the name of Jesus Christ brought physical judgement on them. The demon-possessed man jumped on them, overpowered them, beat them, stripped them of their clothes and left them bleeding (Ac 19:16). Luke, apart from demonstrating the disastrous consequences, chose to display the power to save and heal that there is in the name of Jesus (Stott 1990:307). Koch (1978:307) says that the name of Jesus must never be used as a magical formula. Ferguson (1980: 131) states “in the second century when the pagan philosopher Celsus accused Christians of using magic in exorcism, Origen responded by saying, It is not by incantations that the Christians seem to prevail, but by the name of Jesus...”. The “name of Jesus” was held in high esteem and honor (Ac 19:17). Steyne (1992:111) declares, “‘the name of Jesus Christ’ is the highest and most glorious name in all the realms of time and eternity”.

6.2 Prayer

There are two opinions presented when praying for those who are demon-possessed. Some feel it should be a private matter while others feel that it should be done publicly. The argument for exorcism being done privately is because of the manifestations by the possessed person. These may include strange unnatural body movements, becoming dumb, speaking in voices not their own, swearing, insulting and other physical and verbal torments. Those who are set free often tend to become embarrassed by the comments of those who watched them publicly.

The number of persons required to pray with the spiritual worker supports the case for public exorcism. The opinion of the researchers is that the exorcism of the demonically-possessed ought to be a private matter and should be conducted by at least two or more persons. These individuals should, given the factors mentioned previously, spend time in prayer before participating with the others. The reasons for prayer are the following:

6.2.1 Divine Revelation

The spiritual workers seek the Lord's assistance in identifying the area or areas of the body that the demon possesses. The reason for identifying a particular part of the body is for the purpose of calling out the demon in the name and authority of Jesus. In doing so, ownership by the demon is denied and the ownership of Christ is confessed (Ps 1972:120).

6.2.2 Divine Power

John 3:8 declares that the Son of God was manifested for the purpose of destroying the devil's work. Steyne (1992:114) states that prayer brings the presence and power of Jesus Christ into manifestation and Satan must therefore retreat (Ac 4:31). Demons are tortured every time they hear the name of Christ or rebuked by the name of the Lord. The people of other ancient religions (e.g. Hinduism) behave contrary to much of this when it comes to the exorcism of spirits. Unger (1952:101) explains that they depend on the use of magical formulas, commonly compounded the names of deities and repeated these formulations with exorcistic rituals over the demon-possessed person. The power to cast out demons was regarded as existing in the words themselves and great importance was attached to the correct recital of the right formulas and the proper performance of the prescribed rituals. Koch (n/d:15) aptly puts it, 'No matter what the custom is, each and every one of them is just a pitiable effort to compensate for a lack of faith in God'.

6.2.3 It weakens the power of the demon(s)

Consistent prayer, during exorcism, helps weaken the power of the demon(s). In the beginning the demons are normally full of physical strength; however as prayer is being offered they recede to a position of acquiescence to the spiritual worker. The spiritual worker's ability to maintain strength and authority in dealing with demons is found only in their union with the Lord Jesus Christ (Steyne 1992:123). The use of the hands to beat the demon(s) by hitting the demon-possessed person, or any kind of physical force is strongly renounced. Reliance upon God through the medium of prayer is adequate to have persons released from demonic possession. Wink (1992:312) declares, "Prayer is the ultimate act of partnership with God".

5.3 The Blood of Jesus

The "blood" of Jesus Christ unsettles demons. The death of Christ was the means and the cross of Christ was the place Satan was judged by God (Pentecost 1969:184). By shedding his blood on the cross, Christ dealt a fatal and incurable blow to Satan's kingdom. This defeat was pronounced in a prophetic statement mentioned in Genesis 3:15b. Newport (1976:343) states that the cross provided a

decisive victory over Satan and his hosts. The victory further ensured that countless people are given the opportunity to be delivered from the kingdom of darkness. Like the phrases “the Lord rebuke you” and “in the name of Jesus” demon(s) hate to hear, “the blood of Jesus Christ” for it removes from them any authority or right they may claim to distress believers (Stejne 1992:112). Lindsey (1972:203) affirms that through the death of Christ, the rulers and Satan’s authority have been disarmed and therefore they have no authority to put their hands on a child of God. The “blood” of Jesus also provides protection for spiritual workers. Dealing with demons can become physically dangerous therefore it is necessary for workers to place themselves daily under the protection of the “blood” of Jesus so that the demon(s) will not overpower them (Koch 1978:305). One of the ways in which spiritual workers can come under satanic attack is through oppression. MacArthur (1992:173) states that believers must be alert in spiritual warfare otherwise they become easy targets for Satan’s temptation. 1 Peter 5:8 declares, “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour”.

6.4 Perseverance

Of all the virtues that a spiritual worker may possess during exorcism, patience is perhaps the most important. The reason for this is attributed to the deceptive, subtle, meandering nature of demons. During the exorcism process they generally “say” that they are leaving but they have been found to lie on numerous occasions. Khan, Govender and Gopaul have reported that sometimes they had to revisit demonic cases because of this deception. Deception is one of the key strategies used by Satan’s demons (Stejne 1992:117). In some cases deliverance may take place immediately but in others it may continue for days. On occasions demons have been known to re-possess people. Their condition is declared to be worse than it was at the beginning. To counteract this, the need for counselling after deliverance becomes important. Believers must be encouraged in their struggle against demons. Unger (1952:224) states, “The dark cloud of evil which hangs today like a pall over the moral universe is not without a silver lining; for Christ has conquered the unseen realms of evil, and Christians conquer in Him”. It must be noted that re-possession, does not bring into question the integrity and ability of Jesus to deliver. Neither is it a question of who is greater, Jesus or Satan. The underlying reason is primarily the possessed person’s faith in Christ. Any spiritual neglect on the person’s part will leave them vulnerable for reinvasion by demons.

The spiritual worker and the possessed person who needs exorcism require great preparation. The success of the worker is determined by their relationship with God and their patience in bringing understanding to the possessed person, particularly in terms of his spiritual status and what Christ can do for them. To be successful in exorcism, spending time with God, by both the worker and the possessed person, is of paramount importance. Deliverance only comes through belief and faith in the name of Jesus Christ.

7. Conclusion

A few concluding remarks for evangelical workers, who seek perspective on the issue of demon possession: Evangelical spiritual workers need a greater measure of maturity and understanding about those possessed or oppressed by demons and how to minister to them more effectively. In early Christianity as reflected in the Gospels there is no Christology without demonology. Satan's fall from heaven is the sign that God retains the upper hand, however powerful and crafty demons might be. (Grudem 1994: 433). If we really believe the testimony to the existence and activity of demons and if we really believe that 'the Lord rebukes and destroyed the work of the devil through his appearing', then it would seem appropriate to expect that there will be a genuine and often recognizable triumph over the power of demons" and we will rejoice in Christ's victory.

8. Notes

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³ These may also include Indian Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches who operate on the same principles with minor deviations.

9. Personal Interviews

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