FREE
BUT NOT
Finished

UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN MINISTERING TO BELIEVERS
AND THOSE IN NEED OF SALVATION



You are not who you were.

You are who He is making you.

A DIGITAL TEACHING RESOURCE

Free But Not Finished

Understanding the Difference Between Ministering to Believers and Those in Need of Salvation

You are not who you were.

You are who He is making you.

CONTENTS

A Biblical Framework for Deliverance Ministry 04

Deliverance for Believers 07

Deliverance for Non-Believers 13

Why the Distinction Matters 17

PART ONE

A Biblical Framework for Deliverance Ministry

Discerning the difference between ministering to believers and ministering to those still in need of salvation.

A BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK

Scripture teaches that only God truly knows the heart of a person (1 Samuel 16:7). While church attendance, participation, or verbal confession may be visible, they are not in themselves proof of spiritual rebirth. Jesus teaches that genuine faith is ultimately recognized by fruit over time, not proximity to church life or familiarity with Christian language (Matthew 7:16–20; Galatians 5:22–23).

For this reason, Scripture cautions us not to assume that every person who attends church or participates in Christian activities is necessarily a born-again believer indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 3:3; Romans 10:9–10). A person may outwardly confess faith or regularly engage in church life, yet still need the inward work of regeneration that only the Holy Spirit can accomplish.

This distinction is especially important in the ministry of deliverance. At times, what may appear to be a believer experiencing demonic influence is actually a person who has not yet been regenerated, though they are present within the church community. When this discernment is ignored, it can create confusion — leading some to conclude that Christians are demon possessed, when Scripture instead points us to the reality that not everyone in church is yet in Christ.

Deliverance ministry must therefore be approached differently depending on whether a person is indwelt by the Holy Spirit or still in need of salvation. Without this discernment, individuals may receive temporary relief without lasting transformation, or be ministered to as believers when their true need is repentance, surrender, and new life in Christ (Matthew 12:43–45; Acts 26:18).

For this reason, deliverance ministry must remain both discerning and gracious — relying on the Holy Spirit, not assumptions, to reveal whether a person's next step is discipleship as a believer or salvation as the foundation of true and lasting deliverance.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH

Deliverance is a work of the Holy Spirit, not human effort.

"If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

MATTHEW 12:28

INDWELLING

AUTHORITY

COVENANT RELATIONSHIP

PART TWO

Deliverance for Believers

Scripture shows that deliverance looks different for believers and non-believers, based on indwelling, authority, and covenant relationship.

BELIEVERS

Biblical Identity of a Believer

A true believer in Jesus Christ:

- Is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 14:16–17)
- Is sealed and belongs to God (Ephesians 1:13)
- Is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19)
- Has been transferred from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:13)

Because of this, Scripture does not present believers as demon-possessed.

BELIEVERS

Believers' Authority Over Demons

Jesus empowers believers to exercise kingdom authority:

> "As you go, proclaim this message… drive out demons."
>
> MATTHEW 10:7–8

> "These signs will accompany those who believe… In my name they will cast out demons."
>
> MARK 16:17

This authority equips believers to set others free — not because Christians are possessed, but because Christ's victory flows through them (Luke 10:19).

WHAT BELIEVERS MAY EXPERIENCE

Oppression & Footholds

While believers are secure in Christ, Scripture teaches they may still experience spiritual influence and attack when access is permitted.

OPPRESSION / INFLUENCE

> *"Give no foothold to the devil."*
>
> EPHESIANS 4:27

Believers cannot be owned by the enemy, but they can be pressured, harassed, or influenced.

FOOTHOLDS (POINTS OF ACCESS FOR THE ENEMY)

> *"Do not give the devil a foothold."*
>
> EPHESIANS 4:27

A foothold is a place of influence the enemy gains, often through:

- Ongoing sin
- Unresolved anger
- Persistent fear or compromise
- Unforgiveness, bitterness, or trauma left unhealed
- Agreement with lies

Left unaddressed, these can grow into patterns of spiritual struggle.

> *"Be careful… that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble."*
>
> HEBREWS 12:15

Footholds do not cancel salvation but invite unnecessary spiritual conflict.

INVOLVEMENT IN WITCHCRAFT & FORBIDDEN PRACTICES

Scripture clearly warns against occult involvement (Deuteronomy 18:10–12; Galatians 5:19–21).

- Participation — whether through curiosity, generational exposure, or active practice — can open direct spiritual access points.
- Practices such as witchcraft, divination, spells, or unauthorized "energy" practices invite deceptive spiritual influence.

The remedy is not fear, but repentance and renewal in Christ, who has already secured victory:

> *"Having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."*
>
> COLOSSIANS 2:15

STRONGHOLDS IN THINKING

> *"We demolish arguments… and take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."*
>
> 2 CORINTHIANS 10:3–5

Strongholds are deeply rooted patterns of thinking that resist God's truth and must be renewed.

UNFILLED SPACES AFTER DELIVERANCE

> *"When an unclean spirit leaves a person… it finds the house empty."*
>
> MATTHEW 12:43–45; LUKE 11:24–26

Jesus warns that deliverance without filling leaves a person vulnerable.

- A cleared life must be filled with the Holy Spirit
- Truth must replace lies
- Obedience must follow repentance

Cleared is not the same as filled. Deliverance must be followed by formation.

WHAT DELIVERANCE LOOKS LIKE · BELIEVERS

Deliverance for believers is not expelling an indwelling demon, but restoring alignment with Christ through:

Repentance · James 4:7

Renouncing lies & unhealthy agreements · 2 Corinthians 10:5; John 8:44

Forgiveness · Ephesians 4:31–32; Matthew 6:14–15

Healing of wounds · Psalm 147:3; Isaiah 61:1

Renewing the mind · Romans 12:2

We address influence, not identity.

PART THREE

Deliverance for Non-Believers

True and lasting deliverance for the unregenerate must always lead to new life in Christ, not merely temporary relief.

NON-BELIEVERS

Biblical Condition of the Unregenerate

Scripture teaches that those not in Christ:

- Are not indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 14:17)
- Remain under spiritual bondage (Acts 26:18)
- May be subject to demonic possession as demonstrated in the Gospels (e.g., Mark 5:1–20; Luke 8:26–39)

The Gospels frequently show Jesus casting demons out of those not yet restored to God (Mark 1:23–27; Mark 5:1–13).

WHAT NON-BELIEVERS MAY EXPERIENCE

Scripture presents several ways spiritual bondage may manifest among the unregenerate

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS AND DECEPTION

> *"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers."*
>
> 2 CORINTHIANS 4:4

Non-believers may be unable to perceive truth clearly, living under deception and false belief systems.

BONDAGE TO SIN

> *"Everyone who sins is a slave to sin."*
>
> JOHN 8:34

Sin exercises authority over the unregenerate, producing patterns of captivity that cannot be broken apart from Christ.

DEMONIC INFLUENCE AND OPPRESSION

Non-believers may experience harassment, torment, or influence from demonic powers due to the absence of spiritual covering and indwelling protection.

DEMONIC POSSESSION

The Gospels record instances where unclean spirits inhabited individuals who had not yet been restored to God, and Jesus cast them out by divine authority (Mark 1:23–27; Mark 5:1–13).

WHAT DELIVERANCE LOOKS LIKE FOR NON-BELIEVERS

For non-believers, deliverance may include:

- Calling the person to repentance and surrender to Christ, which breaks spiritual bondage from sin and the kingdom of darkness (Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13)
- Casting out demons as an act of God's authority and compassion, pointing to the lordship of Christ (Mark 16:17; Luke 11:20)

“

When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person… the last state of that person is worse than the first.

MATTHEW 12:43–45

True and lasting deliverance for the unregenerate must always lead to new life in Christ, not merely temporary relief.

PART FOUR

Why the Distinction Matters

True deliverance is not merely the absence of bondage, but the presence of Christ formed within.

WHY THE DISTINCTION MATTERS

Failing to distinguish between believers and non-believers can lead to:

- Confusion
- Fear-based ministry
- Mislabeling believers
- Spiritual harm

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved... rightly handling the word of truth."

2 TIMOTHY 2:15

True deliverance is not merely the absence of bondage, but the presence of Christ formed within.

You are not who you were.

You are who He is making you.