

Is deliverance ministry Biblical? 1.

By this is meant the Charismatic ministry of delivering Christians from besetting evil spirits, or exorcism. *The Dict. Of Pentecostal & Charismatic Mvts.* informs us that the practice of exorcism is central in their expansion. If this is wrong then a foundational plank of these churches is wrong.

Charismatic exorcism is ostensibly by 'abjuration in the name of Jesus Christ and done through his power' (*Dict.* p290; 1989 ed.). If so, then there should be commands and instructions from Christ's apostles on this matter. There are none at all. There is no example of a Christian being delivered of evil spirits; no exhortation to seek this deliverance and no instruction for leaders on how to perform it. Charismatics tacitly admit this by the broad diversity of beliefs about it and variations of ministry in doing it. The Dictionary states that, 'no clarified doctrinal statement on demonology and exorcism exists among major Pentecostal bodies. ... [exorcism is] not formally theologised'. Be clear on this; despite no theological base, no Biblical doctrine, they practice it anyway! This leaves the field open to any self-sponsoring individual to do what he likes and it explains the resultant psychological damage amongst thousands of victims who have received this sort of ministry. Even secular bodies, like TV documentary productions, have exposed the terrible abuse of poor folk in the way that some ministries perform exorcism. Apart from mental, emotional, spiritual and physical abuse; there are many documented cases of sexual abuse in removing supposed 'spirits of fornication' from the genitalia of submissive believers.

The ministry of Jesus in expelling demons from subjects is not a paradigm for ministering to Christians. There may be a case, in extreme situations, for praying for the release of sinners from a demonic hold, especially when there has been a long experience of deep sin, such as witchcraft, addiction or fornication. However, there is no ground for applying this to those who have been freed from the dominion of sin by dying with Christ and being born again by the Spirit of Christ. The way for believers to deal with sin is by putting off the old man and putting on the new nature, which is created in the likeness of Christ. Exorcism, at best, is only an attempt to improve the old nature, which cannot be improved and grows in corruption until we die (Eph 4:22-24). Thus exorcism of believers is working against God's truth and denying the new creation in believers (2 Cor 5:17). Satan works in the sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2), and cannot control or demonise that which has been liberated by God. Christ has triumphed over Satan and those who are in Christ share in this victory (Col 1:13, 2:15). If we are delivered out of the devil's kingdom, how can we be dominated by his servants?

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Understanding Ministries

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