

# Critical Issues Commentary

A BIBLICALLY BASED COMMENTARY ON ISSUES THAT IMPACT YOU

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## CHASING SUBJECTIVE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES

A Critique of *The God Chasers* by Tommy Tenney

BY BOB DEWAAY

“More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” (Philippians 3:8-11)

A current best selling Christian book, *The God Chasers* by Tommy Tenney, addresses a theme that is similar to Paul’s concern in Philippians 3 to die to everything else, and through faith be found in Christ. It is Tenney’s similarities to Paul’s view that make the book seductive to so many Christians. The differences, however, are vast, fundamental and significant. Tenney is not promoting present righteousness which has been received by faith and the future hope of glorification through the resurrection of the dead. He is confused, apparently, about the imputed righteousness of Christ and ignores the final glorification of the saints. Tenney, a United Pentecostal Church minister,<sup>1</sup> is promoting a superlative experience of the manifest presence of God now, that supposedly can be attained by people who know the secret. This experience is held out to be the key to saving whole cities and changing everything we have ever known about the church.

In the course of preparing articles for CIC I have read many books with which I disagree. This particular book was the most personally disturbing of them all. It so disturbed me that I had to force myself to finish reading it in order to write this critique of it. Let me

explain why.

This book was disturbing for personal reasons. It brought back memories of the early years of my Christian life when I read and believed other similar books. They were written by men who claimed supernatural revelations, outbreaks of God’s manifest presence and power, even trips to heaven to personally talk to Jesus. I spent several miserable years seeking similar experiences, going from revival meeting to revival meeting, hoping to meet God in such a powerful way all the ordinary problems of life would vanish. I sincerely wanted to be closer to God, but faulty premises about what that meant were leading me further from Him. I was seeking subjective religious experience, assuming that was the same as seeking God. *The God Chasers* is just the most popular current expression of this misguided approach. It will doubtless cause many sorrows to people who believe it.

More importantly, I am disturbed by the lack of solid Biblical exegesis. This book is characterized by subjectivism, allegorized Scripture, grandiose claims and psychological intimidation. This we shall see by examining citations from the book. On the surface Tenney’s thesis sounds pious and God honoring: we are

to seek God Himself. This much is good. The book contains many calls for the reader to die to self, repent, and turn to God. Who could argue with this? Yet the lack of solid Biblical exposition leaves the reader with no clear understanding of how one truly turns from self to God.

I am afraid that like my past experience with this approach, sorrows will come because people will never be able to escape the guilt engendered as they futilely seek a Sinai type theophany and assume that when they don’t find it God is displeased with them. Tenney’s book often asserts that everything churches typically do is hopelessly displeasing to God. This includes Bible studies, song services, ordinary evangelistic outreaches, and any kind of orderly, planned service. Even the Pentecostal type revival service of Tenney’s heritage is called seriously lacking and deemed to evoke the displeasure of God.

In this article I will provide numerous examples of how *The God Chasers* discredits the simple faith of Bible believing Christians. I will show that chasing God as defined in this book is actually chasing an elusive, subjectively defined religious experience. Tenney says, “I’m shopping for places where God is ‘breaking out.’”<sup>2</sup>

### Subjectively Defined Experience

Mr. Tenney begins his book with the story of what he considered a dramatic example of God “breaking out.” He claims that at this service he almost caught God.<sup>3</sup> He reports that so much of God was packed into the room that it was hard to breathe because of the rarified air.<sup>4</sup> The pastor of the church said, “we are not to seek His hands any longer, but seek His face,”<sup>5</sup> when the following happened:

In that instant, I heard what sounded like a thunderclap echo through the building, and the pastor was literally picked up and thrown

backward about ten feet, effectively separating him from the pulpit. When he went backward, the pulpit fell forward. The beautiful flower arrangement positioned in front of it fell to the ground, but by the time the pulpit hit the ground, it was already in two pieces. It had split into two pieces almost as if lightning had hit it! At that instant the tangible terror of the presence of God filled the room.<sup>6</sup>

After this “pure pandemonium” broke out as people ended up “stacked on top of one another” repenting.<sup>7</sup> The pastor was unconscious for hours and had to be carried to his office. Since hundreds of people wanted to be baptized, people were sent to the pastor’s office to see if it was alright, but they all ended sprawled on the floor.<sup>8</sup>

This experience and the desire for more like it underlie the premise of the book: that we need an experience of the manifest presence of God, and God chasers are those fervently seeking God as experienced in His manifested presence. Tenney claims Biblical support for this in the various manifestations of God in the Bible: at Sinai, in the holiest of holies of the temple, the mount of transfiguration, et. al. We call these “theophanies,” times where the invisible, omnipresent God reveals Himself to the physical senses of people at certain times and places. The Jews in the wilderness experienced this as the cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. Tenney claims that God wants to do this in our cities, but that the church is so corrupt we have chased God away. For example: “The Church has lived in self-righteous smugness for so long that we stink in God’s nostrils. He can’t even look at us in our present state.”<sup>9</sup>

The experiences Tenney describes and promotes are subjectively defined. For example, never does Tenney explain how he knew that it was the God of the Bible who split the pulpit and knocked the pastor unconscious for hours. The substitutionary atonement seems confused in his theology. The resurrection of Christ is mentioned in a footnote once. His beliefs about what is necessary for salvation are never explained, one can only assume he follows the traditional

oneness Pentecostal tenets with unorthodox requirements for salvation.<sup>10</sup> So we are to chase God, but Tenney leaves us to guess whether the God we are chasing eternally exists as three persons or is the modalist God of his own oneness Pentecostal denomination.

The revival he describes in the first chapter contained no preaching of the gospel as far as can be discerned by his description of it. He describes people driving into the parking lot, staggering into the church, falling at the altar and repenting.<sup>11</sup> He writes, “No matter what they did or how far they made it, it wasn’t long before they began to weep and repent. As I said, there wasn’t any preaching.”<sup>12</sup> Now, since the gospel was not preached, what were they repenting of and to whom were they turning? Paul said, “How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14) According to Tenney if the manifest presence of God shows up people will be saved right out in parking lots with no preaching. He seems to think that people can come to a faith with no content, just an experience. For example, he claims that if the Church ever became what it should be (of course defined in his terms), people would just come in and “. . . fall on their faces before our holy God without a single word being spoken. Even the heathen would instinctively know that God Himself had entered the house.”<sup>13</sup>

By implication, total pagans can come to know God without the gospel or knowing anything at all about who He is. Why, for example, would you expect a pantheistic Hindu to have a religious experience such as Tenney describes, and immediately know that the experience was not caused by a pantheistic deity, but the God of the Bible? If the only deity one had ever heard of was pantheistic, and such a person had a remarkable religious experience, obviously he would interpret it in terms of his own beliefs. Eastern religions describe their experiences very much as Tenney describes his, yet these powerful experiences are used to promote their own religious ideas. It is difficult to see how a subjective experience is going to make it clear what

the sin issue is all about, that Christ was God incarnate, lived a sinless life, died to pay the penalty for our sins, and was raised again on the third day, and that we must have faith in Him to be saved. How could a untaught heathen get all that by walking into a church and hearing no preaching and no gospel? When Paul had his Damascus road experience he had already heard the gospel preached by Stephen, and even at that had to ask the meaning of the experience (see Acts 9:5 where Paul was told specifically which Jesus he encountered).

Tenney’s ill-defined, subjective approach is undergirded by comments throughout the book that denigrate scholarly Bible study. For example, Tenney writes: “But a man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with only an argument.”<sup>14</sup> He then concludes, “If we can lead people into the manifest presence of God, all false theological houses of cards will tumble down”<sup>15</sup> This begs the question. With no theological teaching or study, how do we know the difference between a false theology and a true one? In fact Tenney never tells us enough of his own theology for us to find out whether it is orthodox. His web site contains no statement of faith, his book is almost devoid of any clear theological teaching, and my request for a theological statement sent via his web site remains unanswered. So we get delivered from false theology by a subjective religious experience but are offered no true theology to replace it, only an experience. This strains the limits of anyone’s credulity.

The claim that an experience trumps arguments is sadly often true; but it does not prove any given experience valid. Religious experiences keep many people in bondage. I was visiting a man in the hospital for example, when a nun who was over 80 years old came into the room. She displayed a silver cross around her neck, and said that inside the silver there was an actual piece of the silver that Jesus died on. She also said that this cross would heal people and she had seen it work many times. Her experience proved to her that she really had a literal piece of Jesus’ cross and had been healing people with it most of her life. There was no argument in the world that would convince her otherwise. But

she was deceived. Likewise many people have seen visions of Mary, apparitions, appearances, etc. They are convinced by their experience, and are trusting that Mary hears their prayers and will put in a good word for them. They are deceived by their experience. If they were willing to search the Scriptures and believe them, these people would be corrected; but they aren't willing.

Tommy Tenney evidently assumes that his religious experience is the right one. But how are we to know when he provides us with no content by which to judge it? Why is his experience valid but the Catholic Mary experience invalid? Either the experiences are self-validating or they must be judged by an outside authority (i.e. the Bible). If they are self-validating, then everyone's experience is valid, the Mormon's, Hindu's, Catholic's, everyone's. No Evangelical Christian would want to grant this because to do so would be to lay aside the exclusive claims of the gospel. Therefore religious experiences must be judged by Biblical criteria. This means that the Bible is a greater authority than modern religious experiences and that Tenney's thesis is false.

The Bible contains propositional truth, the stuff of arguments. Tenney belittles such things continually. He promotes instead new revelation and even directly quotes the Holy Spirit numerous times as if he is giving us extra-biblical revelation.<sup>16</sup> But the Bible must stand as the final judge of such experiences and claims.

To justify his approach, he writes, "The difference between the truth of God and revelation is very simple. Truth is where God's been. Revelation is where God is. Truth is God's tracks."<sup>17</sup> He probably does not realize that his position is simply neoorthodox.<sup>18</sup> Rather than believing that the Bible is God's revelation of propositional truth, neoorthodoxy claims that it is merely a record of past experiences of revelation. Those who hold to this approach claim that the Bible only becomes the Word of God through personal religious experience gained through a blind leap of faith. Since the current trend in modern evangelicalism is to jettison Biblical content in favor of personal experience, it is no wonder Tenney's book is a best seller.

How incredibly odd it is that modern evangelicals are flocking to the neoorthodox approach that was the main opposition to evangelicalism in the first half of the twentieth century.

Tenney's promotion of subjectively defined experience leads him to make outlandish claims that any reader of the Bible should easily see through. For example, he writes: "In all my reading and study of the Bible, I have never found any person mentioned in the Scriptures who really had a 'God encounter' and then 'backslid' and rebelled against God. . . . It's [experiencing God] not just an argument or a doctrine it's an experience."<sup>19</sup> Really? How about all the Jews who died in the wilderness. They saw God in His manifest presence as a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. They saw the mighty power of God split the sea. They saw the manifest presence of God upon mount Sinai. They experienced the reality of God's manifest presence continually and experienced the miracle of manna. Yet the Book of Hebrews says that they died in the wilderness in unbelief (Hebrews 3:17,18).

#### Psychological Manipulation

The God Chasers, if it does nothing else, will surely leave most of its readers with a strong sense of God's continual displeasure with them. The brow beatings are supplied in every chapter, convincing the readers that however they have worshiped and served God in the past is horribly inadequate. Any questioning of Tenney's type of experience is the same as quenching the Spirit.<sup>20</sup> After describing the wild meeting that epitomizes Tenney's approach, with no preaching, pandemonium, and the pastor unconscious, he then asks his readers: "What are you feeling right now as you read about how God Himself invaded these churches? Are you squelching it? What is gripping your heart? Don't you feel the awakening of what you thought was a long-dead hunger?"<sup>21</sup> This is nothing but intimidation. We are required to believe *prima facie* that these questionable proceedings are from God without any objective content to go by. If we question it and search the Scriptures like the Bereans we are "squelching" what God wants to do. Then he tells us we "stink in God's nostrils."<sup>22</sup> However the

Bible tells us, "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place" (2Corinthians 2:14). Then Tenney asserts that God cannot stand to look at us and He is embarrassed with us.<sup>23</sup> This is in strong contrast to what the Scriptures offer: "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Romans 15:4). It is hard to see how Tenney's approach would ever result in encouragement or hope.

The guilt manipulation of The God Chasers takes several forms. One is the claim that people going to bars, psychics, and using crystals are hungry for God, but those of us in Bible preaching churches who fail to jump on Tenney's bandwagon are not. The reason God is not manifesting Himself in Old Testament type theophanies, according to Tenney, is that we are not hungry for Him.<sup>24</sup> It stands to reason, since Old Testament type theophanies are by nature unique and extraordinary, and since it is entirely unclear that any have happened since John's experience on Patmos, then no one since the Apostle John has been hungry for God. That leaves the whole Christian church since the time of the apostles in the condition of not being hungry for God. Tenney says, "Our problem is that we have never really been hungry."<sup>25</sup> The next truly visible manifestation of God on earth shall be at the return of Christ, until then we are instructed not to listen to people who say, "Behold here is the Christ" (Matthew 24:23,24).

In contrast to the supposed lack of hunger for God that you and I have as born again Christians, the pagans are filled with hunger for God and it is totally our fault that they are expressing it in sinful ways. As outrageous as this is, it is Tenney's claim. He says, "It should convict and shame the Church to see so many hurting and searching people turn to psychics, astrology, and spiritists for guidance and hope in their lives. People are so hungry . . . Oh, the depth of spiritual hunger in the world! There is only one reason so many people are so willing to attempt to get in touch with

something . . . they don't know where to find the real thing."<sup>26</sup> The church is supposedly lacking God's presence, but the bars are not.<sup>27</sup> The sinners and pagan idolaters, according to Tenney, are noble minded people who are just looking for God. How can they be blamed because God cannot be found in churches (as evidenced by the lack of raucous meetings that Tenney and others of his ilk promote).

The Old Testament prophets rebuked those who practiced idolatry and praised people who put their trust in God and served Him alone. Tenney rebukes sincere born-again Christians who trust God and praises the idolaters for supposedly being hungry for God. What a cruel way to accuse the brethren. Tenney writes "[W]hen people pay the exorbitant price to psychics, they are really trying to touch God and find relief from the pain in their lives."<sup>28</sup> In contrast he writes about us: "Through our ignorance of spiritual matters and our lack of hunger, we have figuratively 'stood at the door' by the way we have done things, and have barred the lost and hungry from entering in."<sup>29</sup>

Tenney's claim that the wicked are actually seeking God is blatantly unbiblical. Paul wrote, "As it is written, 'There is none righteous, not even one; There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one' (Romans 3:10-12). This is the condition of all who are outside of Christ, universally. It seems rather crass of a man to chide nearly every Christian for not being hungry for God simply because they do things like study the Bible, hold orderly worship services, and preach the gospel; while praising idolaters. What is even harder to understand is that a book that is so blatantly unbiblical is in its nineteenth printing, being marketed to Christians. There is a problem for sure. The problem is a lack of hunger for the truth, not a lack of hunger for subjective religious experience.

#### CONCLUSION

There are many other problems with *The God Chasers*. When the Bible is referenced at all, it is mostly allegorized. For example the story of Esther sup-

posedly teaches that we stink to God until we get enough anointing on us.<sup>30</sup> Tenney even allegorizes weather patterns to predict spiritual happenings. Waves of storms caused by El Nino supposedly predicted waves of glory from the Christ child because there are supposed "parallel events in the natural and spiritual realms."<sup>31</sup> Another problem is over-realized eschatology. For example, he writes, "We must become clean, because God can't reveal His face to a partially pure Church."<sup>32</sup> This is true. That is why we will not see Him as He is until He returns and we receive resurrection bodies (1John 3:2). Like the Latter Rain movement and the Manifested Son's of God (two heretical predecessors to the current revival movement<sup>33</sup>) before him, Tenney thinks we can attain this now through new revelations.

Ironically Tenney might be right about one thing, that the church in America is not in very good shape. The evidence I see of this is that a book as unbiblical as *The God Chasers* has been a best seller for so many months. If people knew the Bible and loved the truth they would not be deceived by such blatant error. We need to return to the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3), rather than chasing modern religious experiences.

#### End Notes

1. As reported by Pastor Bill Randles, "Chasing What God — Examining *The God Chasers* by Tommy Tenney," in *Midwest Christian Outreach Journal*, Vol. 6 #3; Summer 2000. Tenney never mentions his denomination in his book.
2. Tommy Tenney *The God Chasers* (Destiny Image: Shippensburg, PA) 102.
3. *Ibid.* 4.
4. *Ibid.* 6.
5. *Ibid.* 7.
6. *Ibid.* 7; emphasis in original.
7. *Ibid.* 8.
8. *Ibid.* 9; Tenney as a United Pentecostal minister would be required to believe that one must be baptized in the name of Jesus to be saved. People who have been baptized by the Trinitarian formula of Matthew 28 are considered lost as are those who have believed in Christ but never been baptized. He does not openly tell us of his position in his book, but it likely explains why the people felt such

an urgent need to be baptized right then. United Pentecostals also claim that one must speak in tongues to be saved and they deny the doctrine of the trinity. They are not to be confused with other Pentecostals such as those in the Assemblies of God who are Trinitarian and hold to justification by faith alone.

9. *Ibid.* 13. This claim is repeated throughout the book. Every form of Christianity is included in the indictment.

10. That one must be rebaptized in Jesus name if previously baptized under a Trinitarian formula and speak in tongues to be saved.

11. *Ibid.* 9,10.

12. *Ibid.* 10.

13. *Ibid.* 24.

14. *Ibid.* 20.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.* 74; for example.

17. *Ibid.* from the unnumbered introduction.

18. This movement was popularized in the twentieth century by such theologians as Barth, Tillich, and Bultmann.

19. *Ibid.* 35.

20. *Ibid.* 6.

21. *Ibid.* 13.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.* 12.

25. *Ibid.* 15.

26. *Ibid.* 23.

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.* 24

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Ibid.* 41,42.

31. *Ibid.* 110.

32. *Ibid.* 80.

33. see *The Plumline* published by Orrel Steinkamp (74425 Co. Rd. 21; Renville, MN 56284) for articles documenting the errors of this movement and its roots in the Latter Rain movement of the 1940's. I highly recommend this publication.

## Signs, Wonders, and Spiritual Deception

### A Call for Discernment in These Last Days

By Ryan Habbena

The “Last Days” are upon us! Of course, they have been upon us for the last 2,000 years. The “Last Days” began on the Day of Pentecost and will come to their culmination at the “End of the Age.”<sup>1</sup> As we draw nearer to this consummation, there appears to be a fascination with supernatural phenomena, both in and outside of the church. Stories of angelic encounters, supernatural manifestations at revival meetings, trips to heaven and hell, and the like abound. What is especially troubling in the current evangelical climate is that any supernatural phenomenon under the guise of “religion” is often deemed acceptable by those professing to be Christians. As we approach the last days of the “Last Days,” it is imperative for all those who confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior to gird themselves with discernment, for a deception looms on the horizon of history which promises to engulf all those who do not abide in the One who is the Truth.

#### END TIMES DECEPTION

The Scriptures are consistently clear. There will be a great deception at the End of the Age, with false supernatural “signs and wonders” playing an integral part in the misleading. The eschatological texts of the New Testament are peppered with such examples.

Note the following:

Then if anyone says to you, “Behold, here is the Christ,” or “There He is,” do not believe him. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance. (Matthew 24:23-25)

Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved (2 Thess. 2:8-10).

He performs great signs [the False Prophet], so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. (Revelation 13:13,14)

These false “signs and wonders” are intended to mislead and, more specifically, draw people’s hearts and minds toward the Antichrist. All those who “do not love the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:10) will fall prey to this deception. In light of this, a call for discernment to the professing church resonates throughout the Scriptures. However, this call for discernment is not just relegated to the “End of the Age.” It is pertinent for the present day.

#### THE DECEPTION HAS ALREADY BEGUN

The Apostle John warned His readers, “Children, it is the last hour; and just as you have heard that antichrist is coming; even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour” (1 John 2:18). And

further, "Any spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world" (1 John 4:3).

While the Antichrist will indeed arise just prior to the End of the Age, those who embody his purpose have already arrived, deceiving those who do not love the truth. Therefore, all those professing to be believers in Jesus Christ must be on guard against the subtle "End Times" deception that is already at work in this world. While the deception may not be as powerful and universal, its reality is indeed already present.

#### TO WHAT (AND WHOM) DO TRUE SIGNS AND WONDERS POINT

When "sign and wonders" do arise, in whatever age, we must keep in mind what true "signs and wonders" signify. The "signs and wonders" noted in the ministry of Christ and the Apostles were intended to attest to the message of the Messiah and His Gospel. In Acts 2:22, Peter proclaims, "Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through Him." D.A. Carson notes: "When 'signs and wonders' refers to God's major redemptive-historical appointments, what function do such references have in the text where they are found? One of their major purposes is to call the people of God back to those foundation events, to encourage them to remember God's saving acts in history, to discern their significance, and to pass on the information to the next generation."<sup>2</sup>

The major, redemptive-historical appointment was the appearance of God in human flesh, to die for the sins of the world, and be resurrected in triumph over death. It is the central message of the cross to which true "signs and wonders" attest in this present age. It is because of the simplicity of this message that most people miss it. Proclaiming the Gospel does not simply mean testifying to a generic "Jesus." As Carson again rightly notes, in commenting on the modern "signs and wonders" movement: "There are, after all, many Jesuses around: the Mormon Jesus, the Jehovah's Witness Jesus, the Muslim Jesus, the

classic liberal Jesus, and so forth. The question, rather, is whether the movement draws men and women to renewed love for the Jesus of God's great, redemptive-historical act, the Jesus of the cross and resurrection."<sup>3</sup> True "signs and wonders," in this age, must point to the definitive Jesus of the Scriptures: true God, true Man, was crucified, died, and rose again.

#### THE CALL FOR DISCERNMENT

"Do not be deceived." (1 Corinthians 6:9, 15:33, Galatians 6:7, James 1:16)

"Let no one in any way deceive you." (2 Thessalonians 2:3)

"See to it that no one misleads you." (Matthew 24:4, Mark 13:5)

We are called to discernment. Discernment is required at all times, yet it is especially needed at the End of the Age. We do not know which generation will be called to be the final generation. All who would "overcome" must be firmly rooted in Christ and His word. In order to stay on the "narrow road," by God's grace, we must abide in Christ and His teaching, loving both Him and His word. In Christ we have been granted "everything pertaining to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3).

Any "signs and wonders" that do not appear to testify to Christ and His redeeming work are to be avoided. Whether they accompany an apparently godly man or seemingly harmless sect or, yes, even wonderful, "religious" experience is not a valid test, for the road is wide and the appearance is subtle that leads to deception, which, in turn, leads to destruction. Remember: Christ has not commanded us to follow anything except Him and His word. In fact, those who were chasing after "signs and wonders" while He walked the earth were firmly rebuked. Matthew records the following: "Some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, 'Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.' But He answered to them, 'An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign' (Matthew 12:38-39).

Indeed, the ultimate day of deception will eventually arise and, with it,

great false "signs and wonders." Our generation, or one that follows us, will encounter this deception that will engulf the entire world. When that day does arise, those who profess to know Christ and His teaching are without excuse. His instructions serve as an implicit challenge to all that profess to know Him: "See to it that no one misleads you . . . Behold, I have told you everything in advance" (Mark 13:5,23).

#### END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Peter confirms this in Acts 2:16-21 by citing Joel's prophecy. Also, compare this with Matthew's account of the Olivet Discourse regarding the "End of the Age."

<sup>2</sup> D.A. Carson "The Purpose of Signs and Wonders in the New Testament" in *Power Religion: The Selling Out of the Evangelical Church?* Ed. Michael Horton, (Chicago: Moody, 1192) 92.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 96-97.