

ALARMED BY THE VOICE OF JACK DEERE

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Dr. Jack Deere, the well-known noncessationist author of the previously published Surprised by the Power of the Spirit, has proposed in his sequel, Surprised by the Voice of God, that humble, obedient Christians who seek to have an intimate walk with God should regularly hear God speak outside of Scripture through various means such as an audible voice, impressions, dreams, and/or visions. The author even suggests that a Christian's experience today could exceed the most spectacular moments in the first-century church at Jerusalem as recorded in Acts. Deere's attitudes toward those who disagree with his theological posture on these issues (cessationists) and his proposals are examined in regard to their logical validity, hermeneutical propriety, anecdotal proportions, exegetical precision, and theological persuasion. This reviewer has concluded that Deere unfortunately attempts to make too much out of too little and thus fails to present a convincing case for his own Third Wave convictions when Scripture, not experience, is the arbiter.

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When living in an age of neognosticism and extreme mysticism¹ such as the present, how can one tell the difference between predictions made by Jean Dixon, hotline psychics, and those who practice the Third Wave theology espoused by Jack Deere? They all share in common the claim to receive messages about the future and general counsel concerning issues of life. Everyone seems to have just enough

¹Arthur L. Johnson, *Faith Misguided: Exposing the Dangers of Mysticism* (Chicago: Moody, 1988); John F. MacArthur, *Reckless Faith* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1994) 19-34; Peter Jones, *The Gnostic Empire Strikes Back: An Old Heresy for a New Age* (Phillipsburg, N. J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1992); *idem*, *Spirit Wars: The Revival of Paganism at the Edge of the Third Millennium* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1996).

success, as recounted anecdotally, to sound plausible. So, who is and who is not believable? And, how does one tell? In our age of rampant spiritual deceit, one cannot be too careful (Acts 17:11).

Jack Deere has followed up his previous work *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (Zondervan, 1993)² with *Surprised by the Voice of God* (Zondervan, 1996) in order to explain why he believes that God is speaking today on a frequent basis to Christians who will listen (307-20). This divine communication reportedly includes the realms of specific information about other people (13-17), events that are both past and future (343-58), and particular direction regarding one's life (286-88). He claims this should represent normal Christianity (60-63) which is a continuation of the same phenomena one reads of in Scripture (53-56) and which did not cease with the close of the apostolic era and the NT canon (276-78).

Deere's carefully crafted case might be convincing to many at first glance because: (1) he claims to champion the real biblical cause (26-27); (2) frequent personal illustrations seem to undergird his teaching; and (3) citation of Scripture appears to validate his case.

However, several unusual features of Deere's teaching and ministry should warn one to examine carefully the contents of his latest book first before embracing the conclusions. First, Deere makes some bizarre statements and affirmations. For example, God allegedly spoke to Deere, while he was exercising, through a country western love ballad (128-29). Further, he recounts that Paul Cain, his mentor, supposedly received a message(s) from God via a huge TV screen in the sky (352-53).

Second, although Deere dedicates the book to Paul Cain as his beloved mentor, speaks highly of him (152, 176-77, 186), and uses Cain as the closing, spectacular anecdote to affirm his teachings (343-58), there is another side to the story. Cain's past associations with William Branham and others, whom Deere seems to embrace (207), causes one to question seriously Deere's wisdom in some of the pastoral and theological company he keeps.³

Third, enough credible and substantial critiques have questioned the

²See the reviewer's critique, "Who Surprised Whom? The Holy Spirit or Jack Deere?" *TMSJ* 5 (Fall 1994):123-40.

³See Hank Hanegraaff, *Counterfeit Revival* (Dallas: Word, 1997) 134-37, 145-50.

biblical basis of Third Wave theology in general and Deere in particular to make the reader wary and to prompt a more careful look at Deere's material before accepting it.⁴

Fourth, every generation has its claimants to hearing God speak, to receiving divine dreams, and to being able to tell the future. Since abundant biblical admonitions call believers to examine these kinds of assertions in light of Scripture, this review is in order. Is Jack Deere a modern day Daniel (Dan 1:17; 2:15) or even Paul (Acts 18:9-10), or is he a sincere, misguided soul like the sons of Sceva to whom a demon once said, "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" (Acts 19:15)?

WHO IS JACK DEERE?

⁴Ibid. Particularly noteworthy is the Foreword written by a former Vineyard pastor (ix-xviii). Also consult *The Briefing* 45/46 (April 24, 1990) which gave considerable attention to Deere and Wimber. Deere responded to *The Briefing* critique with "The Vineyard's Response to *The Briefing*" (Anaheim, Calif.: The Assoc. of Vineyard Churches, 1992). Also see Thomas R. Edgar, *Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996).

Jack Deere holds several degrees: an A.B. from Texas Christian University and a Th.M. and a Th.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary. He taught at Dallas Theological Seminary from 1976-1987 before the institution dismissed him because of his noncessationist views (37-38).⁵

According to the author, he originally held strong cessationist views in line with his training and teaching experience at Dallas Theological Seminary. After a year's study leave in Germany (1984-1985), he returned to DTS for the 1985-1986 school year (15). While inviting Dr. John White, a British psychiatrist, to preach at a church conference, Deere had a life-changing, twenty-minute phone conversation with White in January 1986 (13, 22).

White had been worshipping at the Vineyard Fellowship of Anaheim, California—pastored by John Wimber—since mid-1985 (33). White came to Fort Worth in April 1986, to hold the conference Deere writes about in chap. 2 (25-32). Several weeks later Deere attended a Wimber meeting in Fort Worth (33). As a result, Deere and Wimber became good friends; Deere visited the Anaheim Vineyard Fellowship on several occasions during 1986-1987 (37).

After departing from DTS in the fall of 1987, Deere also became acquainted with the Kansas City Fellowship pastored by Mike Bickle (38). He then made plans to move to Anaheim and become a full-time associate of John Wimber (38).

Deere remained with Wimber until 1992 when he returned to the Dallas-Fort Worth area, where he was briefly associated with James Robison. Deere now pastors the First Presbyterian Church in Whitefish, Montana, plus writes and lectures worldwide on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

DEERE'S MIND-SET

Throughout his second volume, Jack Deere has sketched distorted images of those who believe differently than he now does. Those allegations do not at all characterize the humble, Spirit-led person Deere would portray himself as being since he embraced noncessationist theology. The following samples suffice to document the point of Deere's unnecessary caricatures.

1. Cessationists, characterized as Bible deists by Deere (251-69), are idolaters.⁶
2. Those who presently believe like Jack Deere formerly did when he was a

⁵Page citations in this section are from *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit*.

⁶“The Bible deists of today worship the Bible” (251).

cessationist are Pharisaic in their attitudes (28, 61, 108, 124, 239-44, 247-48).

3. One who now believes like Jack Deere did previously is proud of heart (256).
4. Cessationists are like liberals (126).

I suppose if I believed that other Christians who thought differently than I did were liberal, proud, Pharisaic idolaters, then I would be no more gracious or generous to those in my past than is Jack Deere.

DEERE'S LOGIC

Throughout the book, Deere engages in veiled syllogistic reasoning. In so doing, he draws faulty exegetical/theological conclusions that he lures the reader to believe are true when, in fact, they are not. For example (47), Deere asserts that (1) Christ and the apostles performed miracles, raised the dead, and heard God's voice through the power of the Holy Spirit and (2) 20th-century believers share the same Holy Spirit as Christ and the apostles. Therefore, he concludes, 20th-century believers should do miraculous works today like Christ and the apostles. Where Deere errs is in assuming that to share the same Holy Spirit also means that God's purposes in demonstrating the Spirit's power are the same today as they were in the first century. Deere's logic is faulty and he has failed to make that point valid.

Secondly (26), Deere argues (1) miracles occurred in the past and (2) Scripture nowhere says in so many words they will cease. Therefore, the miracles of the past should be expected today. Deere's thinking goes astray when he asserts that no one Scripture verse says that miracles will cease. He ignores the historical witness of Scripture that miracles were absent during long stretches of biblical history, not to mention that valid conclusions can actually be drawn from Scripture with regard to the authenticating purpose of miracles, which did not extend past the apostolic era.

A final example (281; 362 n. 2) will suffice to make this point. Deere asserts (1) miracles are used in Scripture to provide guidance to believers and (2) God is guiding today. Therefore, God is guiding today, as in the past, with the same kinds of miracles. He errs by assuming that God must continue to guide through a new set of contemporary miracles rather than through the faithfully recorded history of biblical miracles.

Deere has reduced his thinking to the point that he borders on being simplistic. He has engaged in bad logic which yields poor theology. Until he has established his assertions to be biblically valid through a clear exegetical/theological process, then his conclusions are personal opinions not biblical verities upon which one builds the Christian life. Theological not syllogistic reasoning yields the only reliable conclusions.

DEERE'S HERMENEUTICS⁷

Deere consistently makes two fundamental errors when interpreting Scripture. The first is that of *generalizing*, i.e., believing the occurrence of a miracle in the past means that nothing prevents it from happening again, and therefore expecting its recurrence. The second is *experientializing*, i.e., accepting someone's claims to have a miraculous experience today of the kind that appeared in biblical history, then letting that experience prove that God is presently working the same kind of miracles. The first involves a biblically unwarranted hermeneutic that reasons, unless Scripture denies the continuance of an experience, that experience has continued and will continue today. The second reads experience into Scripture so that experience validates Scripture rather than the reverse.

Both *generalizing* and *experientializing* can be combined and called *normalizing*, i.e. assuming that if it was normal in Scripture, it then must be normal thereafter. For example:

1. Eutychus being raised from the dead (23-24).
2. Abraham hosting angels (19, 26).⁸
3. The life of Jesus (28, 42-45).
4. The Israelites in the wilderness (29).
5. Paul in Corinth (50).
6. The book of Acts (51-56).⁹

⁷Compare Mayhue, "Who Surprised Whom?" 129-32. For a fuller discussion of these interpretive errors consult Richard Mayhue, *How to Interpret the Bible for Yourself* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 1997) 151-61.

⁸Deere cites Heb 13:2 at least five times (19, 26, 29, 137, 140). "What happened then happens today—just read your Bible," writes Deere (26). The main point of Heb. 13:2 is not angelic visitation, but rather entertaining strangers. Further, even if one did entertain angels, one would be no more aware of it than Abraham, so Deere's point is no point at all.

⁹This strikingly strange statement below illustrates Deere's grandiose expectations. He actually

By following the letter of Deere's logic, one could expect additional virgin births after Christ's. Yet, I think Deere would say, "No!" to that because Christ's virgin birth was a unique event fulfilling God's purpose as foretold in the OT and was the one-time manner in which a sinless child was born to sinful parents. Although, the Scriptures do not ever say that no more virgin births will occur, that does not necessarily mean there will be more. So, if Deere is willing to follow the above line of reason with the virgin birth (and I think he would), then he is also bound to follow it in regard to miracles. If so, then, that would invalidate most of his thinking in *Surprised by the Voice of God*.

If Deere's thesis of normalization is true, then miracles of Scripture should be occurring today. People would be taking trips to the third heaven like Paul (2 Cor 12:1-6); only like Paul they shouldn't tell the details. The clothing and shoes of Christians would not be wearing out, just like the Jews in the wilderness (Deut 29:5). Axe heads would float (2 Kgs 6:1-7), people would take alternative transportation (Acts 8:39-40), grocery shopping would be made obsolete (Exod 16:13-14), and crossing the Sea of Galilee would be like taking a walk in the park (John 6:19). But none of this is true. So the reader can see, Deere's paradigm of normalizing the miraculously unique tragically trivializes the extraordinary and essentially emasculates its powerful impact and purposes.

DEERE'S ANECDOTAL STYLE

suggests that the experience of Acts is abnormal in that it is substandard. "If all things are possible for him who believes, and Acts shows us some of these possibilities, shouldn't we make the Christianity of Acts our goal? Better yet, why should we assume that Acts represents the apex of Christian experience? What if the Lord of history really has saved his best wine for the last days? Wouldn't you like to drink it?" (46).

Deere begins where he left off in *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit*, primarily using anecdotes to make his case. By his own admission, he puts experience on the same level as Scripture.¹⁰

I have confined my discussion to that part of the language of the Holy Spirit that seems most common in the Scriptures, or to those aspects that either I have personally experienced or that someone I know to be a credible witness has experienced.¹¹

Elsewhere, Deere takes to task those whose theology would be based on Scripture alone for not correcting their beliefs with experience (253). But, no matter how frequently or loudly Deere argues that his convictions come from Scripture, not experience, his books say otherwise. What one reviewer lamented about *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* is equally true of this volume. “. . . [H]e unfortunately leaves the reader with the impression that it is the religious experience itself that validates what he argues.”¹²

One other point needs to be made, this time from Deere's first volume. In *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (55), Deere argued, “No cessationist writer that I am aware of tries to make his case on Scripture alone. All of these writers appeal both to Scripture and to either present or past history to support their case.” Later he wrote (268 n. 9), “Even the greatest of the cessationist scholars, Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield, could not make his case on Scripture alone. He appealed both to the Scriptures and to ‘the testimony of later ages.’” What Deere has argued is essentially that cessationists should restrict their discussion to Scripture alone. The use of historical or contemporary illustrations weakens their case.

This, however, is significantly inconsistent with what he knows to be true. It is a little like a boxing match in which one fighter has his hands free to smash his opponent, while the other has his hands tied behind his back and cannot even defend

¹⁰Compare Mayhue, “Who Surprised Whom?” 129-32.

¹¹Deere, *Surprised by the Voice* 156. When Craig Blomberg reviewed *Surprised by the Power of the Holy Spirit* in *Themelios* 21 (April 1996):26-27, he noted, “Deere engages in narrative theology at its finest. He simply recounts the events he experienced, particularly in the realm of supernatural physical healings and startlingly accurate prophecies, which led him to abandon his prior beliefs that the signs and wonders of the contemporary charismatic movement were at best all of human manufacture.”

¹²Edith L. Blumhofer, “Dispensing with Scofield,” *CT* 38 (January 10, 1994):57.

himself. In light of the above quotes from Deere, this reviewer was astounded to read this, also from the pen of Deere, when he defended himself against the critique of others. What was denied to cessationists is allowed for noncessationists.

. . . [A]lthough Scripture establishes doctrine, personal experience and anecdotes are vital for the effective communication of that doctrine. The role of personal experience is to illustrate, clarify, support or confirm the teaching of Scripture; that is why the Scripture is filled with biography and historical writings.¹³

Let the reviewer suggest that the rules of engagement must be consistent for both sides. From the cessationist's side, illustrations that illustrate are permissible. From Deere's perspective, illustrations are also permissible, which is known from: (1) his own admission as quoted above; (2) the thirty pages of attempted historical validation in *Surprised by the Voice of God* (64-93); and (3) anecdotes galore that proportionately seem to overshadow the biblical discussion. But let both sides be reminded—Scripture is always primary in determining truth, while experience is only secondary at best.

DEERE'S EXEGESIS¹⁴

Deuteronomy 18:20-22 (68-69). Deere lightly dismisses the seriousness of this text as it applies to a false prophet of God.¹⁵ To speak on behalf of God without a clear message from God was enough to make one a false prophet deserving of death. This standard would apply in spirit at all times, not just in ancient Israel.

Job 33:14-15 (219, 232, 235). The words of Elihu to Job are uncritically assumed to be true by Deere with regard to the normalization of dreams in the experience of all believers. Given the obscure nature of the saying and the fact that Elihu rendered it in anger (cf. *Job 32:2-3*), these observations should quickly alert the interpreter of Scripture not to build a theology of dreams upon this foundation of sand. Yet, Deere unwisely does just that.

Isaiah 42:3 (113). Deere allegorizes this wonderful text describing the graciousness of Messiah. With this interpretive methodology, Deere can make the

¹³Deere, "The Vineyard's Response," in the section "Major Issues," 3.

¹⁴Compare Mayhue, "Who Surprised Whom?" 132-34.

¹⁵Consider the prophetic example of Samuel whose words did not fail (1 Sam 3:19-20) and, in contrast, the false words of Hananiah (Jer 28:15-17), for which God took his life.

Scripture mean anything he desires.

James 5:13-20 (25, 163). As in *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit*,¹⁶ Deere shallowly touches on this text and concludes about James, “He promised his readers God would use them to heal sick people . . .” (25). He never considers or even allows for the fact that the context of James 5:16 points primarily to spiritual healing through the confession of sin, not to physical healing. It certainly does not promise that Christians will go about healing people physically.¹⁷

The above is a representative sampling of texts that Deere has handled casually to support his thesis. Perhaps more telling than his less-than-careful exegesis is his practice of eisegesis, i.e., imposing a meaning foreign to the biblical text on the text and then speaking as though the conclusions came from Scripture. For example, Deere’s section “Learning the Language of the Holy Spirit” (159-232) in large part comes directly from his own thinking and experience. One ought to ask of this material, “Where is this taught in Scripture?” The answer would be, “In the white spaces.” It is the personal opinion of Jack Deere—nothing more!¹⁸

DEERE’S THEOLOGY

A representative set of rather startling statements which help to define Deere’s thinking can also illustrate the author’s noncessationist theology. They prove to be extremely insightful in trying to comprehend the core message of the book.

“I can no longer conceive of trying to live the Christian life without it” (17). One might think Deere is referring here to guidance from the Scripture or prayer, but in context he is referring to the voice of God beyond the biblical text. Not only does this kind of statement suggest spiritual elitism—i.e., without the voice

¹⁶Mayhue, “Who Surprised Whom?” 132-33.

¹⁷For an expanded treatment of James 5:13-20 see Richard Mayhue, *The Healing Promise* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 1997) 127-39.

¹⁸For other examples of Deere’s eisegesis see his (1) discussion of personal expectations with regard to the voice of God (17); (2) guidelines for prophetic ministry (190-203); and (3) rules with regard to “prophetic pitfalls” (204-16).

of God the Christian life is inferior—but also some sort of Christian gnosticism—i.e., possessing special knowledge to which only a few have access. It does not appear that Deere is talking about “How to know the will of God” in life’s daily affairs as understood by most Christians through the ages.¹⁹ But rather, he seems to be referring to frequent updates directly from God.

“But after God wrote the Bible, he apparently went mute, or so it seemed to me, for the only way I could hear him speak was through his book” (19). This true confession from Jack Deere is quite revealing. In spite of the claims and promises of such Scripture as Psalms 19, 119; 2 Tim 3:14-17; and 2 Pet 1:3 that Scripture alone is sufficient in spiritual matters, Deere wants more. This craving usually marks one who does not appreciate what he has, rather than one who is seeking what has been promised but not yet delivered. He has certainly joined the ranks of the “Bible plus something else” crowd, which is characteristic of both aberrant Christianity and cults.

“. . . [E]ven knowledge of the Bible is an insufficient guide to Jesus” (38).

Deere seems to be suggesting that without extrabiblical revelation from God, no one will know Christ in a sufficient manner. He is definitely going beyond the illuminating ministry of God’s Spirit, which both cessationists and noncessationists embrace. Deere is talking about “*direct, supernatural revelation*” (38; his emphasis). Yet, he later writes, “The most common way the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus and speaks to us today is through the Bible” (100). That statement alone is at odds with Deere’s statement on page 38 and with the thesis of his volume.

“With the coming of the Spirit there is a sense in which every Christian is to be prophetic. . . . Everyone in the New Testament may at one time or another prophecy, dream, or have a vision” (179). How does Deere know this? It certainly is not from anything the New Testament clearly teaches or from any NT historical examples. He appeals to Peter’s quote of Joel 2:28-29 in Acts 2:17-18 at Pentecost and draws the above unsubstantiated conclusion. He fails to alert his readers to the following facts: (1) The phenomena in Acts 2:19-20 (cf. Joel 2:30-31) did not occur then; (2) all of Acts 2:17-20, quoting Joel 2:28-31, seems most certainly to be experienced concurrently in the future; (3) it appears that only the Twelve were speaking in tongues, not the entire assembly; and (4) nowhere else in the NT epistles is the scope of Joel’s prophecy seen to be fulfilled. So, Deere’s conclusion is a result of the worst kind of proof-texting.

“But probably more often than not, a naive commitment to tradition often

¹⁹See Richard Mayhue, *Spiritual Intimacy* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1990) 113-34, for a biblical discussion of this theme. Also see John Murray, “The Guidance of the Holy Spirit” in *Collected Writings of John Murray* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976) 1:186-89.

drowns his [God's] voice in a sea of confidence in human methods and rules" (249).

Deere is saying that the so-called extrabiblical voice of God is more reliable than the biblical voice of God, i.e., biblical instruction that is gleaned from a careful study of Scripture. He would accuse those who believe differently of having embraced a deficient tradition, but commend those of his persuasion who have supposedly interpreted the truth correctly. Or put another way, without "the voice" one cannot be sure of what Scripture teaches.

"In Bible times, people knew God spoke frequently through dreams, so they took them seriously" (217). "Dreams have always been an important means of communication. . . . And one of his favorite ways of speaking is through dreams" (219). Contrary to Deere's pronouncements, dreams and visions were actually uncommon, even scarce. Consider that in the entire OT (a period of over 4,000 years) fewer than 20 specific dreams to less than 15 people are recorded.²⁰ Historical instances of dreams in the NT are not found beyond the 6 recorded in Matthew.²¹ All these dreams occurred to or for the benefit of incredibly important people as they related to the crucial times in God's unfolding plan of redemptive history. Yet dreams, even then, were extremely few and far between.²² The biblical data does not support Deere's thesis that dreams were frequent in Scripture and thus should be today. Actually, the Bible and Jack Deere are in direct conflict.

If one also includes "visions" with the above survey of "dreams," as done in Scripture (Dan 1:7), less than 25 specific visions to fewer than 15 people are recorded in the OT.²³ Even fewer are found in the NT.²⁴ Dreams and visions were never given for mundane reasons or to the masses as they related to God's plan of redemption.

²⁰Abimelech (Gen 20:3, 6); Jacob (Gen 28:12; 31:10, 11); Laban (Gen 31:24); Joseph (Gen 37:5; cf. 42:9); Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker (Gen 40:5); Pharaoh (Gen 41:5, 8); Moses (Num 12:6); a soldier (Judg 7:13-14); Saul [implied] (1 Sam 28:15); Solomon (1 Kgs 3:5, 15); Job (Job 4:13; 7:14); Daniel (Dan 1:17; 2:1-2; 4:4-5; 5:12; 7:1); and Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:1-2; 4:4-5). Deere's frequent mention of Job 33:14-15 is discussed above.

²¹Five relate to Christ's birth and very early childhood. They were to Joseph (Matt 1:20; 2:13; 2:19; 2:22) and the magi (2:12). The last, related to Christ's trials, was experienced by Pilate's wife (Matt 27:19).

²²The only other two mentions of dreams in the NT are Acts 2:17, which is commented on above, and Jude 8 which actually warns the church to beware of dreamers.

²³Abraham (Gen 15:1); Jacob (Gen 46:2); Balaam (Num 24:4, 16); Samuel (1 Sam 3; Ps 89:19); Nathan (2 Sam 7:4, 17; 1 Chr 17:15); Iddo (2 Chr 9:29); Zechariah (2 Chr 26:5); Ezekiel (Ezek 1:1; 8:3; 11:24; 40:2; 43:3); Daniel (Dan 1:17; 2:19; 7:1-2; 8:1; 10:1); Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 4:5, 9-10, 13); prophets (Hosea 12:10); Joel (Joel 2:28); Amos (Amos 1:1); Obadiah (Obad 1:1); Nahum (Nah 1:1); and Habakkuk (Hab 2:2).

²⁴The four disciples (Matt 17:9); Zacharias (Luke 1:22); the women at the tomb (Luke 24:23); Ananias (Acts 9:10); Paul (Acts 9:12; 16:9-10; 18:9; 26:19; 2 Cor 12:1); Peter (Acts 10:3, 17, 19); and John (Rev 9:17).

Those revealing quotes from Deere illustrate the biblically unwarranted extremes and Scripturally unsubstantiated conclusions espoused by the author. These alone seriously jeopardize the biblical credibility of his teachings.

CUTTING TO THE CHASE

At this point it could be asked, “Why would anyone be against the kind of experiences Deere tries to persuade the reader should be part of the normal, healthy, vibrant Christian life as abundantly portrayed in Scripture?” The answer is quite simple, “Because Jack Deere’s conclusions are unbiblical!”

Deere’s efforts to normalize the extraordinary are quite unconvincing in light of too many bizarre statements, too many anecdotes, and too many caricatures of those who sincerely disagree. On the other hand, the almost total absence of sound hermeneutics, skilled exegesis, and biblically-based theology deeply erode any confidence in the accuracy of Deere’s conclusions. In short, this reviewer submits that Deere’s work is scripturally deficient and neither adequately nor accurately addresses the most important question, “How and in what ways does God’s Holy Spirit, who resides in every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, guide and direct Christians today?”