

**Jesus:
The Manifestation of the Holy Spirit**

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Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D.

Part II

Now let me backtrack just a little. There is a larger theme here that we are just beginning to explore in terms of Jesus and the Holy Spirit—the theme of *form and content*. This is another way of talking about appearance and reality. The true content is God's Love, and the form is the different ways of expressing it. Within the ego thought system, the content is guilt, hatred, and separation, and the form is the different aspects of a separated world and our experiences here of being separate. *Special relationships* is the Course's basic term to encompass all the different forms in which we express our hatred for each other and for God.

When I talk about the illusion and the reality of Jesus, the content—the Love of God—would be the reality, and the different forms in which we experience that love would be the illusion. The Course also makes it clear that forgiveness, which is its central teaching, is an illusion—and that the Course itself, as a set of three books, is an illusion. But unlike all the illusions of the world, these illusions do not foster illusions, nor do they breed further illusions—they lead us beyond all illusions. Jesus falls into this category. He is an illusion because he appears to be a separate person. But by taking his hand and walking with him, we share his thought system, and we share his mind. His thought system is not the reality. It is still a reflection, it is still a concept—because forgiveness is a concept. But it is a concept that leads us beyond this world entirely.

Again, it is extremely important when we work with the Course to understand that crucial difference so that we do not get caught and stuck still further in the illusion. To preview a little of what we will talk about later: Choosing the miracle in this context is to accept and experience Jesus' love. Magic—the Course frequently contrasts magic and the miracle—is getting involved in what Jesus does for us or says to us. Now that does not mean this is not helpful, but if we just stay at that level, we get caught. We really want to join with Jesus, to accept his love and accept his thought system—that is the miracle. And that is the difference between the illusion and the reality. We do not really want the Jesus who does things for us in the world. We want the Jesus who stands within our minds. We want a concept of Jesus that represents the concept of the Atonement, which says that we have never separated from the Love of God and have never attacked it.

In a passage from the *Song of Prayer* that I will read from a little later, Jesus talks about the song of prayer as being the Love the Father and the Son share in Heaven. And he says to us that it is the song we want. We do not want the forms in which the song appears to us. We do not want the echoes, the overtones, the harmonics. In other words, we do not want what is represented on the lower level of the chart. We really want the song (S-1.1.2-3)—the song that we sing to our Self, that our Self sings back to us. In fact, there are no two people singing to each other—we *are* that song of love, we *are* that song

that God and Christ share. Until we know that, we experience a Jesus or a Holy Spirit within our minds, Who sings that song to us, just as we sing the song to Him.

There is a nice passage in Plato at the end of his discussion of the three beds—the ideal bed, the carpenter's bed, and the painter's bed. Plato observes there that the artist deals with appearances rather than reality. Now the original would be the ideal, a symbol for Plato of the world of the spirit, the world of truth, the world that is beyond everything in this world. The copy, of course, would be something that is in the world of appearances. Plato asks rhetorically: Suppose a man could produce both the original and the copy? Do you think he would want to devote himself seriously to the manufacture of copies and make it the highest object in life? Of course not! If he really knew about the things he represented, he would devote himself to them and not to their representations.

This is the exact same sentiment that Jesus is expressing in the *Song of Prayer* when he says it is the song that we want. It is the original that we want, not the copy. Plato is urging his listeners and readers not to pursue the things of this world. What we want is the idea. We want the love behind the appearances. In the Course, Jesus is saying the same thing to us: We do not want the various gifts that we think we receive here in the world. We want his love. Learning to identify with his love is the preparation for God's last step, when we realize that we *are* that love and that in fact we have never left our Source. At that point, the Course explains, the whole world disappears back into the nothingness from which it came (C-4.4:5).

Our goal, however, is not to disappear into the nothingness of God, or into the Heart of God. Our goal is to become the same love of the Atonement that Jesus is. The real world is still within the dream, still within the world of illusion. At that point the mind has no more thoughts of attack and separation within it. Until we reach the real world, Jesus remains within our minds, shining out the love and the light and the truth, and inviting us to come back to him.

Now we will turn to a passage in Chapter 25 in the text which is probably the clearest statement of what I am talking about. And let me first summarize it. I will put a purple line here, as I usually do—everything above the purple line is God. That is the only reality—that is where Christ is also. As the Course teaches, God does not know about this world, because if He knew about it, it would be real. This is extremely important—if God knew about the world, then there would be a world. The whole teaching of the Course is that there is no world. In fact there is a passage in the workbook that literally says, "There is no world! This is the central concept the course attempts to teach" (W-pl.132.6:2-3). So if God knew about the separation and gave an answer to it, then there would indeed have been a separation. Otherwise God would not have given an answer to it. But that makes no sense unless we understand that Jesus is talking to us in symbols. That is why I have the three levels of boxes. At the top is the reality—with the perfect God, Whose perfection is His extension or creation, Christ. And nothing has ever changed that.

God is totally uninvolved with anything that is outside His Mind, because if it is outside His Mind, it does not exist. So, too, the concept of the Holy Spirit as a separate Voice that speaks in our minds is also part of the illusion, because there is no separation in reality, in Heaven. At the bottom level, we find symbols that give form to the separation—we think of the Holy Spirit as a person, we think of Jesus as a person, we think of each other as persons. So in the box at the second level, we have the word *concept*, and in the third box we have the word *form*.

There is no way that any of us here within the dream—identifying ourselves as separated bodies, separated personalities—can have any idea or any experience of what reality is. The reality is that we are perfectly at one with God. A wonderful line in the workbook states that "nowhere does the Father end, the Son begin as something something separate from Him" (W-pl.132.12:4). There is no separated or differentiated consciousness that can step back and observe itself in relationship to the other. God cannot observe, perceive or experience Christ. Christ cannot observe, perceive, or experience God. There is no separated mind, no separated consciousness, no separated self that can see itself or experience itself in relation to the other. That kind of experience of another only occurs within the dream (below the purple line on the chart).

There is no way here—as we will see in the passage we are about to read—that we can understand how we are totally one with our Source and Creator. It is not uncommon for students to ask what else God created besides Christ, because we are not spirit as we identify ourselves and therefore have no way of understanding what a world of spirit is really like; and so Christ is as much of an unreality as God is. Thus it would make no sense for *A Course in Miracles* to reflect only on our reality as one with our Source and Creator. In a passage in the workbook Jesus says, "We say God is, and then we cease to speak" (W-pl.169.5:4). That is not very helpful. What would have happened if Helen had taken down these wonderful words, and all that this book contained was, "God is"? People would say, "God is what?" or "Christ is what?" It would make no sense to us. And it would certainly not be helpful. And the Course's purpose, as it observes many times, is to be practical.

So that is the context for this passage. It is the clearest statement in the entire Course of the difference between what it says on the level of form or words and the reality which the words reflect. It is extremely helpful as we read and study the Course to understand the difference between form and content, between symbol or appearance and reality. Otherwise we will get trapped in the very thought system from which we want to escape. Many passages in the Course have to be read as a poem would be read—without analyzing, but rather letting the words flow through and allowing that to turn into an experience. This passage from the first section in **Chapter 25** makes that very clear (**T-25.I.5**):

(Paragraph 5 - Sentence 1) Since you believe that you are separate, Heaven presents itself to you as separate, too.

Since we believe we are separate here in the world of form—each with a separate identity—then Jesus and the Holy Spirit are each presented to us as a separate identity. In fact, the Course refers to the Holy Spirit, not as an "it," but as a Him, as a Person. He is a Teacher, a Guide, a Comforter, a Friend, a Mediator—always in terms that have to do with a body. So He is presented to us in the Course as separate from us—that is what this first sentence means.

(Paragraph 5 - Sentence 2) Not that it is in truth, but that the link that has been given you to join the truth may reach to you through what you understand.

Heaven is not truly separate in truth. In truth, in reality (above the purple line on the chart), Heaven is totally unified. God and Christ are totally one, and the Love of God for which the Holy Spirit is the Voice, is the essence of God and Christ. And we are all totally one. There is no differentiation.

The link that has been given to us is the Holy Spirit, and He has been given to us in a way that we can understand—He comes to us as Someone Who is separate, because we believe we are separate. One of

the major premises of the Course—key to understanding both the ego's and the Holy Spirit's thought systems—is that what we have made real inside us is exactly what we will experience outside us. Probably the clearest analogy to this is if we think of ourselves in a theater looking at a movie on the screen in front of us. What we see on the screen is identical to what is on the film running through the projector that is in back of us. It is impossible that there be something on that film that we do not see on the screen. It is impossible that we see something on the screen that is not in the film. If the film is running through and there is a black dot on the film, we will see it on the screen.

Since we believe that we are separate, we must experience the Love of God as separate, because what is within us is exactly what we will experience outside us. If we experience ourselves as a body, if we think of ourselves as a separate organism that is different and separate from other organisms, and if we believe this is what we believe we are—which is inherent in believing that we are a body—then it is impossible for us to conceive of God as anything other than a body. In the text Jesus says, "You cannot even think of God without a body" (T-18.VIII.1:7). This must be because we cannot think of ourselves without a body. Jesus also includes in the Course the biblical statement that God created man in his own image and likeness (T-3.V.7:1), meaning God is pure spirit and so we are pure spirit. The Bible, however, meant that in some kind of strange way, we are flesh—a body—and that this somehow is a mirror of God. So in the Course, Jesus reinterprets that quote to mean that God is pure spirit and therefore we are pure spirit.

Interestingly, we have done the very same thing—we have made God in our own image. In a statement that has become famous, Voltaire proclaimed that God created man in his own image, and then man returned the compliment. The God that we have made up is the projection of what we believe we are. We believe that we are separate, sinful, guilty, and angry, and that we are killers. Therefore the God we have made up must be a God Who is separate, wrathful, angry, and Who is a killer. It is impossible that what we think of ourselves will not determine what we think of God. Since we believe we are separate—that is a given because we are all here in this world or so we think, for our experience is that we are here in this world—we must think of God as separate too. And because we do, we will experience the Love of God as separate—but not because this Love is separate in truth. In truth (above the purple line on the chart), God's Love is perfectly unified. Remember, "nowhere does the Father end, the Son begin." Love is not divided or broken. But because we believe we are in a world of form, we can only experience God's Love in a world of form. Since we believe we are a body, we can only experience God's Love through a body. So we think of the Holy Spirit as a person—people used to think of Him as a bird, but a bird has a body, too. Or we think of Jesus as a body, a person.

(Paragraph 5 - Sentence 3) Father and Son and Holy Spirit are as One, as all your brothers join as one in truth.

This is the same idea—there is perfect unity in Heaven. And our brothers are all part of the same Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity—we are all part of the Sonship.

(Paragraph 5 - Sentence 4) Christ and His Father never have been separate, and Christ abides within your understanding, in the part of you that shares His Father's Will.

The beginning of the sentence is a statement of the Atonement principle. And the part of us that shares His Father's Will is the part of our minds that has never left God. That is the part of our minds to which the Holy Spirit is the connecting link, as we see in the next sentence.

(Paragraph 5 - Sentence 5) The Holy Spirit links the other part—the tiny mad desire to be separate, different and special—to the Christ, to make the oneness clear to what is really one.

Our minds are really one—totally joined with God. But we believe we are separate and so we need an experience within the dream of that Love and oneness of Christ and God that then leads us back. That is why in the Course the Holy Spirit is often referred to as the Link or the Bridge. The Course repeatedly describes Him as the Communication Link between God and His separated Sons (T-6.I.19:1; T-8.VII.2:2; C-6.3:1). That link is still an illusion, because we never separated. But as long as we believe we have separated, we need an illusion or a symbol that represents for us the truth of the perfect unity and unbroken Love of God and Christ.

(Paragraph 5 - Sentence 6) In this world, this is not understood, but can be taught.

We are taught, not by being taught about God—we cannot be taught about God. At the beginning of the Course, in the Introduction to the text, Jesus says this is not a course about love because love cannot be taught. It is rather a course that aims at removing the interferences to the awareness of love's presence (T-in.1:6-7). So we are not taught about the nature of Heaven or reality or creation or Christ or God. We are taught how to join with the concept or symbol of God's Love that we know as Jesus. That we can be taught. And, as we know from our study of the Course, we learn to join with Jesus by joining with each other—we will look at this more later. And what helps us to join with each other is to join with him.

We are speaking here totally within a world of symbols—but they are symbols that represent and reflect the truth of Heaven. They are not the truth of Heaven, but they reflect that truth. And it is not the reflection that we want—we want the truth. It is not the overtones or the harmonics we want—we want the song. In Plato's terms, we do not want the painting of the bed, we do not want the bed itself, we want the *idea* of the perfect bed. We want the truth. Learning how to join with each other through forgiveness and how to let go of our grievances is the exact same dynamic as learning how to join with Jesus. I cannot join with you in forgiveness without joining with him. I cannot join with him without joining with you. If I separate myself from you, I separate myself from Jesus, and vice-versa.

That is why this is a course in forgiveness and undoing guilt through the miracle. Learning how to join with Jesus and how to join with each other is how we learn to remember God. So here in this paragraph—and we will see it again as we continue—is a very clear statement about the difference between appearance and reality, between illusion and the truth. This is not a course about truth. If it were about truth, it would not be a course. Truth is never taught—truth can not be learned. The illusion is what we taught ourselves, and therefore the illusion is what we need to unlearn. When the illusion is unlearned, the truth that was always there is left.

There is another nice parallel between the Course and Plato. Plato's theory of education stated that you do not *give* a student knowledge—you *awaken* the knowledge in him. The truth is already present in us—we only need to remember it. A major theme of the Course in terms of its process is that we see the face of Christ in each other—which means that we forgive—and then the memory of God dawns on our mind (e.g., C-3.4:1; C-5.2:1). The memory of God is already in our minds, but we have forgotten it.