

Study Guide and Commentary

Chapter One, Section II Revelation, Time and Miracles

Note: The edition of the Course published by the Foundation for Inner Peace (FIP Edition) has been heavily edited from the original dictation, called the Urtext, and even from the “interim” version known as the Hugh Lynn Cayce (HLC) version. In the first paragraph, for instance, nearly half of the word count was removed, including all explicit references to sex, and the early Course’s map of the mind. Robert Perry summarizes that map of the mind in his commentary, and I have reproduced his summary below.

The paragraphs of the Text quoted below are Robert’s amalgamation of the FIP Version with the Urtext. My comments were originally written based only on the FIP version, so there are no written remarks below on the material added from the Urtext. I will try to cover most of that in the group discussion.

Section II compares and contrasts miracles with revelation, with particular attention to their relationship with time. Such theoretical discussion falls away after the first few chapters, as the “Clarification of Terms” section in the Manual for Teachers explains:

You will notice that the emphasis on structural issues in the course is brief and early. Afterwards and soon, it drops away to make way for the central teaching. (C-in.5:1–2)

You may feel that this terse and somewhat disjointed discussion is academic, a mere defining of terms. But the Course, here at its opening, is answering a crucial question: If revelation is the goal of the Course (and it is), why does the Course pay so much attention to miracles, and so little to revelation?

In studying Section I, we were able to derive a definition for the word “miracle,” as follows:

A miracle is the intervention of a divine power—the Holy Spirit, or Jesus Christ in the context of the Course—to heal human thought patterns in a way that is beyond our human ability. Usually this also involves that divine power extending from one person’s mind to heal that of another.

In this section, we will attempt to derive a definition of “revelation” as the Course sees it. With the nature of both miracles and revelation clear in our minds, the reason for the Course’s focus on miracles will become clearer, and your mind, one can hope, will become more willing to be led into the Course’s program.

As a start toward formulating the Course’s definition of revelation, look up the word in a dictionary to see what it means in normal discourse. One dictionary has the following:

“1. Something revealed. 2. And act of revealing, esp. a dramatic disclosure of something not previously known or realized. 3. *Theol.* A manifestation of divine will or truth.”

Paragraph 1.

1. ¹Revelation induces complete but temporary suspension of doubt and fear. ²It reflects [Ur: They represent] the original form of communication between God and His creations, involving the extremely personal sense of [Ur: closeness to] creation sometimes sought in physical [Ur: sexual] relationships. [Ur: This confusion is responsible for the depression and fear which are often associated with sex. Sex is often associated with lack of love, but Revelation is *purely* a love experience.] ³Physical closeness cannot achieve it. [Ur: As was said before, the subconscious impulses properly induce Miracles, which *are* interpersonal.] ⁴Miracles, however, are genuinely interpersonal, and result in true closeness to others. [Ur: This can be misunderstood by a personally willful consciousness as an impulse toward sexual gratification.] ⁵Revelation unites you directly with God. ⁶Miracles unite you directly with your brother. ⁷Neither emanates from consciousness, but both are experienced there. ⁸Consciousness is the state that induces action, though it does not inspire it. ⁹You are free to believe what you choose, and what you do attests to what you believe. [Ur: The deeper levels of his subconscious always contain the impulse to Miracles, but he is free to fill its superficial levels, which are closer to consciousness, with the impulses of this world and to identify himself with them. This results in denying himself access to the miracle level underneath. In conscious actions, then, his interpersonal relationships also become superficial, and miracle-inspired relating becomes impossible.]

• Study questions •

1. (A) Read over the section at least once, and then try to find phrases that describe what the Course means by “revelation.” Combine their concepts into a definition. Do this before doing part (b) of this question.

(B) Contrast the Course’s meaning for revelation (please see the Answer Key for my answer to part (a) of this question) with the traditional meaning. What aspect of revelation, not part of the usual meaning of the term, is spot-lighted in the Course’s discussion?

2. The word, “consciousness,” is seldom used in the Course. See if you can get a sense of what it means here, and refer to C-1.7:3–6 as well. Write your definition, and try to list what consciousness can and cannot do.

"Consciousness is the receptive mechanism, receiving messages from above or below; from the Holy Spirit or the ego. Consciousness has levels and awareness can shift quite dramatically, but it cannot transcend the perceptual realm. At its highest it becomes aware of the real world, and can be trained to do so increasingly. Yet the very fact that it has levels and can be trained demonstrates that it cannot reach knowledge" (C-1.Int.7:3-6).

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Note: Here is Robert Perry’s summary of the Course’s map of the mind:

In this view, consciousness is a middle level, sandwiched in between the upper level and two lower levels. The upper level is the superconscious, the realm of heavenly knowledge. The lower levels are the unconscious or subconscious. The unconscious contains an upper level, which is the reservoir of all the ego’s contents that are too threatening to be allowed into consciousness. It also contains a lower level, which is filled with pure miracle working ability. It is the source of miracles.

In this picture, impulses from all three non-conscious levels are constantly trying to stream into consciousness, but these impulses are generally stopped at the gate by the “censor.” The censor either blocks them entirely or distorts them, in order to maintain what it sees as our equilibrium. Revelations, which are experiences of direct union with God, are trying to stream in from the superconscious. These, of course, get through only very rarely.

Miracles are trying to stream in from the lower unconscious. They, however, are usually either blocked by all the garbage in the upper unconscious, or they are distorted into sexual impulses. True miracle impulses are impulses to join minds, which is why this paragraph says they “result in true closeness with others.” These impulses get distorted, however, into the impulse to join bodies—sexual impulses—which cannot provide the true love that we seek. Since bodies are superficial, the impulse to join bodies makes our relationships superficial, and, as the Urtext says, “miracle-inspired relating becomes impossible.” Our interactions with others could be continually inspired by the miracle-level, but instead we get distracted by superficialities. We could experience a deep joining of minds, but instead we just discuss the weather.

In the moment when God speaks directly to you, your doubts and fears are gone. Normally, our great fear of God actually prevents such direct communication; we are happier keeping God at a distance. Somehow, in the experience of revelation, that fear is removed, but only temporarily. If you have ever had an experience remotely like this, you know the truth of the first sentence: such experiences are temporary. While it is happening, you cannot doubt. But doubts and fears resume the second the experience ends. It is as if the fear were only set aside for an instant, by God’s grace, but the fear is not permanently removed.

“Freedom from fear cannot be thrust upon you” (T-1.II.2:6), the Course contends. Why doesn’t God just take away our fear? The Course will explain this later, in T-2.IV and T-2.VI, in some detail. The word “thrust,” however, suggests a forcing or overpowering; it makes sense that we might find such thrusting fearful in itself. If God simply burst in on us with revelation, our fear would be augmented instead of being alleviated.

“Revelation,” we are told, “*reflects* the original form of communication...” (1:1–2). That “original form” is our goal, what our spiritual seeking attempts to recover; revelation is only a temporary glimpse of the state toward which we are journeying (see T-4.VII.3). Oddly enough (and contrary to the whole tradition of mystical spirituality), these glimpses are not what carries us most quickly to our goal. We may have profound and moving experiences of direct contact

with God, which are very useful along the way. Indeed, one of the goals of the Workbook is to train us to enter into these brief glimpses more and more, “until all goals but this become of little worth” (W-pI.157.7:1). Yet, amazingly, miracles move us toward that goal even faster. They are not direct viewings of the state of Heaven, but they *are* the fastest vehicles for transporting us there. Why? The answer comes in later paragraphs and is only hinted at here in the mention of one major difference between revelation and miracles: personal versus interpersonal.

“Miracles, however, are genuinely interpersonal, and result in true closeness to others” (1:4). The word “however” clues us in that the author is contrasting what he is about to say to what came before, which implies that revelation is *not* interpersonal and does not result in true closeness to others. Revelation is a good thing, but miracles are better in terms of achieving true joining together. Physical closeness doesn’t do it; revelation is only a reflection of the original union; but miracles actually bring about “true closeness to others.” This seems to have something to do with why miracles are better in advancing us towards the goal, but the connection isn’t clear yet.

Our conscious mind is the receptive mechanism. It is free to choose between messages from the ego or messages from the Holy Spirit. Our actions are based on what message consciousness receives and believes. This is the tool the Course works with to effect spiritual change.

Paragraph 2.

2. ¹Revelation is intensely personal and cannot be meaningfully translated [Ur: and is actually not translatable into conscious content at all]. ²That is why any attempt to describe it in words is impossible [Ur: is usually incomprehensible, even to the writer himself at another time]. ³Revelation induces only experience. ⁴Miracles, on the other hand, induce action. ⁵They are more useful now because of their interpersonal [Ur: impersonal] nature. ⁶In this phase of learning, working miracles is important [Ur: more valuable] because freedom from fear [which is what revelation is] cannot be thrust upon you. ⁷Revelation is literally unspeakable because it is an experience of unspeakable love.

• Study question •

3. “Freedom from fear cannot be thrust upon you” (2:6). To open to revelation, we have to be willing for our fear to end; we have to choose it. It cannot be forced on us. Therefore, revelation cannot be forced on us either. For revelation to happen, we have to choose to let go of our fear.

“Miracles are a way of earning release from fear” (T-1.I.28:1). Miracles are the means by which we can be induced to relinquish our fears. Pause to reflect of ways in which you are afraid of getting too close to God.

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We must choose freedom from fear voluntarily; it cannot be thrust upon us. Therefore, what is needed are experiences that reduce our fears, opening us to make the right choice. Miracles are those experiences that reduce our fear.

I can't speak for you, but I know that for most of my life, God has seemed a bit scary. The idea of standing in God's eternal light, blinding in purity, used to bring forth fears of all the ugliness and imperfection that light would reveal in me. Revelations unite us directly with God; yet our greatest fear is of God. Therefore, we resist revelations. Furthermore, they are intensely *personal*, which to me implies private; they cannot be communicated to others, so that the healing can spread. (This surely shows that revelations are more than mere information, which *can* be communicated.)

Miracles unite us with our brothers. They are by nature *interpersonal*, so the healing spreads automatically. They side-step our fears. They bring an experience of joining together that is highly pleasurable to us; in fact, it is better than sex (which I infer from Paragraph 1's remark about "physical closeness"). Thus, at this stage of our learning, miracles are more desirable and more effective than revelation. This paragraph still does not entirely explain why miracles are more desirable, but it offers more clues:

- They result in closeness with others; revelation doesn't.
- They induce action; revelation induces only experience.
- They can be communicated; revelation cannot.
- They release our fear and so ready us for the totally fear-less state of revelation.

Miracles are the means, and revelation is the end toward which they serve to bring us (see T-1.I.28). This is one of the remarkable things about the Course: Like many spiritual paths, the Course endorses the goal of mystical union with God, but union with God is not its direct goal. It aims for union with God, but it says we get there through union with our brothers. Miracles, which unite us with our brothers, represent an indirect approach to God that engenders less fear than the direct approach. Miracles are more desirable now because, through miracles in our relationships with one another, we feel safe to approach God. Fear would keep us from God. Miracles allow us to experience oneness on a concrete level that we can relate to and accept without quite so much fear, thus preparing us for ultimate union with God.

Putting it into very simple terms, as the Course does as it goes on, we are too afraid to approach God directly. We need to approach God through each other. We need to experience forgiveness and love in our relationships, and this will "induce" us to let go of fear enough that God, Himself, can begin to reach us.

Paragraphs 3 and 4

3. ¹Awe should be reserved for revelation, to which it is perfectly and correctly applicable. ²It is not appropriate for miracles because a state of awe is worshipful, implying that one of a lesser order stands before his Creator [Ur: **the Greater One. This is the case only when a Soul stands before his Creator.**]. ³You are a perfect creation, and should experience [Ur: **be struck with**] awe only in the presence of the Creator of perfection. ⁴The miracle is therefore [Ur: **The miracle, on the other hand, is**] a sign of love among equals. ⁵Equals should not be in awe of one another because awe implies inequality. ⁶It is therefore an inappropriate reaction to me. [Ur: **Awe is not properly experienced even to me.**]

That is why in that short introductory vision, I knelt beside you, *facing the light.* ⁷An elder brother is entitled to respect for his greater experience, and obedience for his greater wisdom. ⁸He is also entitled to love because he is a brother, and to devotion if he is devoted. ⁹It is only my devotion that entitles me to yours. [Ur: But you will notice that I have knelt at your altar as readily as I would ever have you kneel at mine.] ¹⁰There is nothing about me that you cannot attain. ¹¹I have nothing that does not come from God. ¹²The [Ur: main] difference between us now is that I have nothing else. ¹³This leaves me in a state [Ur: of true holiness] which is only potential in you.

4. ¹"No man cometh unto the Father but by me" [Ur: is among the most misunderstood statements in the Bible. It] does not mean that I am in any way separate or different from you except in time, and time does not really exist. ²The statement is more meaningful in terms of a vertical rather than a horizontal axis. ³[Ur: Regarded along the vertical,] You stand below me and I stand below God. ⁴In the process of "rising up," I am higher because without me the distance between God and man would be too great for you to encompass. ⁵I bridge the distance as an elder brother to you on the one hand, and as a Son of God on the other. ⁶My devotion to my brothers has placed me in charge of the Sonship, which I render complete because [Ur: only to the extent I can] I share it. ⁷This may appear to contradict the statement "I and my Father are one," [Ur: It doesn't.] but there are two parts to the statement ["I" and "my Father"] in recognition that the Father is greater. [Ur: Actually, the original statement was "are of one kind."] [Later in the Urtext: The real meaning "are of one kind" is "of one mind or will."]

• Study questions •

4. Revelation may bring a sense of awe, but awe is not appropriate to miracles. Why not, and what does this imply about the nature of miracles?

5. Jesus, as the author of the Course, speaks here about our relationship with him. What is your relationship to him as a student of this Course? How willing are you to grant him the respect, obedience, love and devotion to which he says he is entitled? As you consider this, you may find it helpful also to turn to the back of the Manual for Teachers and read the Clarification of Terms, fifth section, fifth and sixth paragraphs; it points out that while accepting Jesus into your life as your teacher is advantageous, it is not necessary.

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The third and fourth paragraphs use our relationship to the author, Jesus, as an example of why miracles are more effective than revelation at our stage of learning. They draw a parallel between how we react to him, and how we react to God. In effect, by healing our relationship to him we can draw nearer to God, which is exactly how miracles work in all our relationships.

Revelation, appropriately enough, inspires awe. Awe is fear's holy counterpart, a response to greatness, a response that involves reverence, respect and wonder, with no trace of fear's cringing contraction. Awe is appropriate for revelation, and it is also appropriate for approaching God, or being "in the Presence of the Creator of perfection," which is what revelation *is*. Unfortu-

nately, awe is too easily confused with fear, as the Text points out quite clearly later on, in T-1.VII.5:8. A direct approach to God is too shocking for our egocentric selves, and our natural reaction of awe gets distorted into fear.

We also tend to react to Jesus inappropriately—with awe, instead of simply loving him as our equal, our elder brother. Miracles are the sign of love among equals. In relationship to Jesus, we need a miracle to transform our inappropriate awe into love. That is a kind of stepped-down version of what the Course says miracles can do for us in relationship to God. It is easier for us to accept that kind of healing between brothers than it is, at first, to accept it in relationship to God.

This section is united by the thought that miracles are more useful now than revelation. Miracles overcome fear, and fear is what prevents us from receiving revelation. They do so by bringing about a recognition of equality, which reduces the sense of distance and difference on which fear is based.

That discussion is what leads to Jesus' talking about our relationship to him. Most of us, if we think of Jesus at all, tend to see him as a highly advanced being, superior to us in many ways. Traditional Christian teaching makes him the *only* true son of God, born without sin, while we are burdened with a corrupt, sinful nature. The Course's Jesus is not like that. We certainly should not be afraid of him; he is our loving elder brother. Even awe is not an appropriate reaction to him, "because awe implies inequality." So he is emphasizing the fact that you and I, and he, are all equal. Miracles *involve* that sense of equality. They *evoke* that sense of equality. So when you experience yourself or another as God's holy child, just like Jesus, *that* is what the Course means by a miracle.

That brings up another point: Obviously, there are some ways in which Jesus seems to be unequal to us—more advanced, more knowledgeable, wiser, and purer. After all, he is the one writing this Course; not us. So, in the light of what he is trying to teach us about perfect equality, how do we explain the apparent *inequality*?

Jesus explains by portraying himself as our "elder brother." He is our equal in nature, but has greater experience and greater wisdom. He is our brother, and he is devoted to us. For all these reasons, then, although we are his equals, he deserves our respect, our obedience, our love, and our devotion. That is a pretty strong set of words. Especially "obedience." We tend to dislike that word. It certainly seems out of place in regard to an equal. Why should we obey someone who is our equal?

This is where *time* comes in. Jesus says that everything he has, and everything he is, is something that we all can attain. Everything he has comes from God, and the same is true of all of us; in that sense, we are his equals. But *there is a difference between us now*. It's crucial that we see this and recognize the effect it has. We are equal in nature, equal in *potential*—but now, in time, there is a difference. What is that difference? He says:

I have nothing that does not come from God. The difference between us now is that I have nothing else. This leaves me in a state which is only potential in you. (T-1.II.3:11–13)

Jesus has nothing that does not come from God. You and I, however, *do* have things that do not come from God. You and I have guilt, and fear, and anger, and doubt; Jesus does not. You and I have separate identities in our egos, imbued with a firm conviction that we are distinct from one another and distinct from God; Jesus has no such illusions. In a nutshell, you and I are blinded by illusions; Jesus knows only the truth, and has set all illusions aside. That is the difference between us. It is a difference that exists only in time. It will eventually be erased. But now, in time, there is a difference.

That is why he deserves our respect and obedience. Here and now, in time, Jesus is different from the rest of us. He is clear; we are muddled. Of course we should listen to his advice and do what he says! He does not deserve our awe, because we are—potentially—his equals. Nor does he merit our fear, because he loves us. But there is a difference, and he does deserve to be recognized as our older, wiser, more experienced elder brother.

Paragraph 5

5. ¹Revelations are indirectly inspired by me because I am close to the Holy Spirit, and alert to the revelation-readiness of my brothers. ²I can thus bring down to them more than they can draw down to themselves. [Ur: Jean Dixon's description ("feet on the ground and fingertips in the heavens") is perhaps a better statement of my position. Because my feet are on the ground and my hands are in Heaven, I can bring down the glories of Heaven to my brothers on earth.] ³The Holy Spirit mediates higher to lower communication, keeping the direct channel from God to you open for revelation. ⁴Revelation is not reciprocal. ⁵It proceeds from God to you, but not from you to God. [Ur: This is because God and man are *not* equal. The miracle is reciprocal because it *always* involves equality.]

Revelation is a one-way street; it comes from God to us, not the other way. This paragraph implies that we can somehow "draw down" revelation from God, but only to a small extent. Both Jesus (the "I" who is speaking in the Text) and the Holy Spirit are involved in facilitating our reception of revelation.

Jesus can bring us *more* revelation than we can draw down for ourselves because he is "close to the Holy Spirit" and aware of our readiness, perhaps more than we are ourselves. I get the image of a parent, or elder brother as Jesus calls himself, who is guiding the learning and growth process of a young child. This image may not work for everyone, but I find it to be quite comforting and encouraging. Someone with a little more wisdom than I have is overseeing my learning process; thank God!

The role of the Holy Spirit in revelation is quite direct, while that of Jesus is somewhat indirect. He says that, "Revelations are indirectly inspired by me," yet, "The Holy Spirit mediates higher to lower communication." That seems to be the primary role assigned to the Holy Spirit in the Course's theology—mediator, or intermediary between the absolute reality, perfection, oneness and holiness of God and Heaven, and the relatively illusory, imperfect, separated and corrupt nature of this world and those who seem to live here. The Holy Spirit keeps the communication channel open. By the way, it isn't God's ability to communicate that is impaired; it is ours.

In the Course, the Holy Spirit symbolizes God's deliberate activity to stay in touch with us. Without Him, we would have lost touch with God entirely.

This paragraph arouses in me a sense of gratitude for the two helpers that have been given to me: Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Thank You, Father!

You may find the idea of a close relationship with Jesus to be distasteful or silly. Often, a negative reaction to the idea of relating to Jesus comes from past, fearful pictures of him. One purpose of these paragraphs is to counteract such false ideas about Jesus. Such negative pictures may include:

- seeing Jesus as the one who accuses us of sin, and judges us for misbehavior
- believing Jesus is demanding our worship and adoration
- seeing Jesus as a being of a completely different kind than ourselves, and therefore one who is fearful and terrifying
- resenting Jesus because he had it easy, being born without sin, being God incarnate, while we have to struggle along as mere, fallible human beings
- resenting Jesus for making such a horrible sacrifice for us as "dying for us," thus obligating us to him forever
- feeling disillusioned by his apparent failure to make us happy in past religious involvements
- associating Jesus with the repugnant features of religions that have developed in his name.

• Study questions •

6. Do one of the following:

a. If you feel comfortable quietly talking to Jesus, spend a little time thanking him for his part in drawing revelations to you. If you do not feel you have ever had a revelation (mystical experience), simply thank him that he is assisting you towards that kind of direct communication with God.

b. If you do *not* feel comfortable talking to Jesus, examine why you are experiencing discomfort around the idea. Consider the image of Jesus that is painted in this section. If he is as he pictures himself here, why the discomfort? What false ideas about him, perhaps from your past, are coloring your reaction to him?

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Paragraph 6

6. ¹The miracle minimizes [Ur: lessens] the need for time. ²In the longitudinal or horizontal plane the recognition of the equality of the members of the Sonship appears to involve almost endless time. [Ur: But we know that time is only an artifact introduced as a learning aid.] ³However, the miracle entails a sudden shift from horizontal to vertical perception. ⁴This introduces an interval from which the giver [Ur: doer] and receiver both emerge farther along in time than they would otherwise have been. ⁵The miracle thus has the unique property of abolishing time to the extent that it renders the interval of time it spans unnecessary. ⁶There is no relationship between the time a miracle takes and the time it covers. ⁷The miracle substitutes for learning that might have taken thousands of years. ⁸It does so by the underlying recognition of perfect equality [Ur: and holiness] of giver [Ur: doer] and receiver on which the miracle rests. ⁹The miracle shortens time by collapsing it, thus eliminating certain intervals within it. ¹⁰It does this, however, within the larger temporal sequence.

• Study questions •

7. Have you ever felt that growing up spiritually “appears to involve almost endless time”? Try writing a few sentences that explain why you should devote yourself to the study of “A Course in Miracles,” given the way miracles relate to time.

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Miracles bring about a recognition of equality between giver and receiver, which has the effect of causing both parties to leap ahead in their passage through time to eternity. In recognizing one another as equals, they are simultaneously recognizing the Christ in one another, because it is the Christ in them that is equal. Certainly their egos are not equal!

Experiencing a miracle is like fast forwarding a video-taped movie; you jump over huge intervals of time. When we read that a miracle “substitutes for learning that might have taken thousands of years” (6:7), we realize that the Course is looking at things on a scale a lot larger than we normally use. It certainly seems to imply multiple lifetimes in the sense of reincarnation, or at the very least life beyond the short span of bodily existence.

If you think of a spiral ramp that ascends towards perfection, then while the normal path might take us around and around the spiral several times in “horizontal” movement, a miracle takes a “vertical” leap and jumps us up a level or two or three on the spiral. To me it is interesting to realize that, from the viewpoint the Course is taking, we are all going to get to the same place eventually. Some of us will trudge around the spiral ramp, learning our lessons very slowly, while others will leap ahead with miracles, but in the end, with inevitable certainty, we will all arrive at the same destination. Both sides of the picture are reassuring. Miracles can accelerate the process, and that’s good news. But if we are slow learners, we will still get there! And that’s good news, too.

Notice that what gives the miracle its effectiveness is “the underlying recognition of perfect equality of giver and receiver” (6:8). It’s very clear that the miracle involves at least two people, and it involves dissolving the sense of separation between those two people. Why is this recognition of oneness such an important factor in the miracle’s ability to transcend time? Because our

goal, which seems so far off in time, is “the recognition of the equality of the members of the Sonship” (6:2). Our journey is a return from separateness to unity; our goal is the complete removal of all sense of separation and difference. Therefore, when a miracle comes along and removes the sense of separation and difference between two individuals, it is a great leap forward towards that goal.

The “interpersonal nature” of miracles is precisely what makes miracles “more useful now” (2:5). “Revelation is not reciprocal” (5:4). Miracles are. They involve union on a level that we can relate to, a union that we can accept without fear. This prepares us for the ultimate union. And for that reason, miracles, not revelation, are what propel us towards the goal more rapidly.

Answer Key

Chapter One, Section II

1. **(A)** Revelation reflects a personal communication between God and His creations (1:2). It unites us directly with God (1:5). It is unspeakable because it is an experience of unspeakable love (2:7). Revelation proceeds from God to us, not us to God (5:4–5).

When the Course speaks of “revelation” it seems to be referring to what we might call a mystical experience, in which our mind suddenly is opened up to see the spiritual realm, or to *know* God directly. In a way, this is probably what most of us who are following spiritual pursuits long for. We want to know God directly; we want God to reveal Himself to us. With that in mind, the message of this section, right at the start of the Course, is very significant. As you read, be sure to apply what you are reading to your desire for such “revelations” from God. While direct communion with God is the ultimate goal, the transitory experiences of revelation are *not* the immediate goal of the Course.

A definition of revelation as the Course understands it might be this: an experience of direct union with God, in which God communicates Himself directly and intimately to us, beyond words; a mystical experience of oneness with God.

(B) To most people, revelation means God revealing His truth to us through words and ideas. Here it means God revealing His Self to us through direct union. It is a far more intimate revealing, and far more total. It is an experience in which God reveals His oneness with us. This gives it a highly personal feeling, almost like a lover revealing herself to her lover. The images of love and personal intimacy are exactly what this paragraph talks about.

2. *Consciousness* is the receptive mechanism of our minds; “awareness” is a close synonym. Consciousness in the Course means *the conscious mind*, not consciousness as a kind of substance that exists on all levels of mind. Consciousness makes conscious choices between messages from the ego or messages from the Holy Spirit. Our actions are based on what message consciousness receives and believes. Consciousness is not the *source* of action, and not the source of revelation or of miracles.

4. Awe is not appropriate to miracles because awe involves a sense of worship, a lesser being relating to a greater being. Miracles are not like that; they are a sign of love among equals.

7. I want to devote myself to a study about miracles because miracles dramatically shorten the time it takes for me to reach my spiritual goal. Each miracle lets me emerge further along in time than I would have been otherwise. Miracles reduce the time it takes for me to learn my lessons and to recognize the equality of all members of the Sonship. A miracle saves me thousands of years.