Study Guide and Commentary
ACIM® Text, Chapter 25
The Holy Spirit’s Justice
Section III

The Two Makers of the World

Explanation of underlining, italics and footnote formats can be found at the end of the commentary.

Overview of Section III

In this section we learn that, although we have made a world of insanity and attack, and have lost ourselves in it, we are not alone. The Holy Spirit has been sent with us, a source of sanity in our minds. His forgiving vision of the world shows us a world of light, not darkness, and his vision is always available to us, in this very instant, now.

Paragraph 1

To the extent to which you value guilt, to that extent will you perceive a world in which attack is justified. ²To the extent to which you recognize that guilt is meaningless, to that extent you will perceive attack cannot be justified. ³This is in strict accord with vision’s fundamental law: You see what you believe is there, and you believe it there because you want it there. ⁴Perception has no other law than this. ⁵The rest but stem from this, to hold it up and offer it support. ⁶This is perception's form, adapted to this world, of God's more basic law: that love creates itself, and nothing but itself.

• Study Question •

1. Why would valuing guilt lead you to see a world in which attack is justified?

Only because you want guilt do you see attack as being justified. This is how perception works. What you want determines what you believe which determines what you see. This reflects God’s law that love creates only itself.

Why would we value guilt? Perceiving guilt in others gives our egos justification for condemning and attacking them, which gives us a sense of superiority and specialness.
(1:1). But if we have a different way of seeing, if we “recognize that guilt is meaningless,” we will understand that there is never any justification for attack (1:2). This section will explain how such a different way of seeing is possible because of God’s gift of the Holy Spirit.

Everything is governed by God’s laws, even the insanity of the world. Even the perception of guilt in others is a diluted and perverse form of God’s law: “You see what you believe is there, and you believe it is there because you want it there” (1:3). Every other aspect of our perception derives from this fundamental law (1:4–5). This is how we have twisted “God’s more basic law: that love creates itself, and nothing but itself” (1:6). Love, of course, believes only in Itself, and wants to create only more of Itself. The ego, however, believes that sin exists in others because it wants it to be there to justify its attack; therefore, that is what it sees.

**Paragraph 2**

2. God’s laws do not obtain directly to a world perception rules, for such a world could not have been created by the Mind to which perception has no meaning. Yet are His laws reflected everywhere. Not that the world where this reflection is, is real at all. Only because His Son believes it is, and from His Son’s belief He could not let Himself be separate entirely. He could not enter His Son’s insanity with him, but He could be sure His sanity went there with him, so he could not be lost forever in the madness of his wish.

**Study Question**

2. (2:1). True or false and why: God did not create the world as we perceive it, but did create the world as it really is.

God's laws are not present directly in this unreal world. But they are reflected everywhere, for this allows God’s sanity to be with His Son in his mad belief, so that he will eventually be saved from this belief.

In speaking about “God’s laws,” the Course is continuing its discussion from the previous paragraph about “God’s more basic law: that love creates itself, and nothing but itself” (1:6). In that paragraph it said that all of our perception is governed by perception’s distorted form of that basic law: “You see what you believe is there, and you believe it there because you want it there” (1:3). It seems here to be attempting to explain how it is that God’s laws have some effect in this world even though “such a world could not have been created” by God (2:1). Clearly, God’s laws cannot “obtain directly” to the “world perception rules.” The word “obtain” is used here in its sense meaning “be customary, prevalent, or established.”

The pure form of God’s laws do not prevail in the world of perception. Nevertheless, they are reflected here and everywhere (2:2). That reflection does not grant any reality to this world (2:3); that would make God as insane as we are. Rather, it is one way in which
God could provide at least an image of sanity in an insane world (2:5) — something we can look at and observe and perhaps realize or remember the reality that is being reflected. God saw we had lost our minds but “could not let Himself be separate entirely” (2:4), so he planted a reflection of truth within our insanity like bread crumbs to lead us out of our madness (2:5). Observing how perception’s fundamental law works helps us to understand how God’s more basic law works: God, being Love, wants only to extend that love, and therefore, love is all there is!

**Paragraph 3**

| 3 | Perception rests on choosing; knowledge does not. Knowledge has but one law because it has but one Creator. But this world has two who made it,¹ and they do not see it as the same. To each it has a different purpose, and to each it is a perfect means to serve the goal for which it is perceived. For specialness it is the perfect frame to set it off, the perfect battleground to wage its wars, the perfect shelter for the illusions which it would make real.² Not one but it upholds in its perception; not one but can be fully justified. |

**Study Question**

3. Do you see a connection between perception resting on choosing (3:1) and this world having two who made it (3:3)?

Knowledge rests on its one Creator. But this world rests on two makers, two choices. Each sees the world as the perfect means for reaching—for setting off, winning and making real—its goal (which, in one case, is the goal of specialness).

The big difference between the two laws is that what we perceive is the result of a choice; God’s knowledge involves no choice. It simple IS (3:1–2). The nature of perception therefore results in two very ways of seeing the one world. We made the world of sin and guilt, but the Holy Spirit, using different vision, sees it very differently (3:3).

Specialness and the Holy Spirit are the two makers of the world. Each one has a different purpose and each one therefore sees the world as “a perfect means to serve the goal” given to it (3:4). We can learn from this that when we see the world as a terrifying place, a place full of people guilty of horrible crimes, we are perceiving the world through the eyes of specialness. When we see through the eyes of the Holy Spirit, we will perceive the world as the perfect place for teaching and learning love.

Specialness see the world as “the perfect frame,” “the perfect battleground,” and “the perfect shelter” (3:5). The world is the frame, the ideal stage on which specialness can

¹. As is subsequently made clear, the “two who made it” are specialness and the Holy Spirit.

². Pronoun clarification: “For specialness it [the world] is the perfect frame to set it [specialness] off, the perfect battleground to wage its [specialness’s] wars, the perfect shelter for the illusions which it [specialness] would make real.”
strut its stuff. It is perfectly set up to foster and maintain all the wars specialness so loves. It shelters illusions, making them all seem so real and hiding their emptiness from us. The world specialness sees upholds all the ego’s illusions — our anger, our grievances, our victim acts, our attacks made in self defense — and makes them seem “fully justified.”

**Paragraph 4**

| 4 | There is another Maker of the world, the simultaneous Corrector of the mad belief that anything could be established and maintained without some link that kept it still within the laws of God; not as the law itself upholds the universe as God created it, but in some form adapted to the need the Son of God believes he has. Corrected error is the error’s end. And thus has God protected still His Son, even in error. There is another purpose in the world that error made because it has another Maker Who can reconcile its goal with His Creator’s purpose.³ |

**· Study Question ·**

4. *In the second paragraph the Son’s mad belief was that the world is real (see 2:3-4). The mad belief in 4:1 is slightly different. Can you put these two mad beliefs together into a single mad idea?*

At the exact same time that specialness is creating its perception of the world, Someone Else is also making the world, simultaneously offering correction for every belief that *anything* could be so completely separated from God and His laws (4:1). Every time we encounter an ego thought there is a simultaneous Holy Spirit thought to match and correct it.

It seems to me that all those correcting thoughts begin with the basic realization that we are doing this (whatever “this” is) to ourselves. We are seeing what we are seeing because we believe it is there and want it to be there.

³. *In what sense is the Holy Spirit “another Maker of the world”? Based on this section, it seems as if specialness (i.e., the ego) made the world to be outside of God’s laws, so that we could be forever outside of God. However, even as that happened, the Holy Spirit remade the world to be governed by a reflection of God’s laws, so that we could eventually be brought back to God. The fact that God’s laws (in adapted form) are what holds sway here means that God’s *purpose*—for us to return to Him—is also what holds sway here. His laws, then, work to bring us back to Him. How so? According to this section, the ruling law in this world is that what we want within is what we will see without. This law brings us back to God because as soon as we realize we want guiltlessness, we will see in the world that which affirms our guiltlessness. We will see a world in which forgiveness is justified, because bestowing forgiveness is what proves to us that we are guiltless.*
This is the only thing that you need do for vision, happiness, release from pain, and the complete escape from sin all to be given you. Say only this, but mean it with no reservations, for here the power of salvation lies:

I am responsible for what I see.
I chose the feelings I experience,
And I decided on the goal I would achieve.
And everything that seems to happen to me I asked for and received as I had asked.

Deceive yourself no longer that you are helpless in the face of what is done to you. Acknowledge but that you have been mistaken, and all effects of your mistakes will disappear.

3 It is impossible the Son of God be merely driven by events outside him. It is impossible that the happenings that come to him were not his choice. His power of decision is the determiner of every situation in which he seems to find himself by chance or accident. No accident or chance is possible within the universe as God created it, outside of which is nothing. Suffer, and you decided sin was your goal. Be happy, and you gave the power of decision to Him Who must decide for God for you. This is the little gift you offer to the Holy Spirit, and even this He gave to you to give yourself. For by this gift is given you the power to release your savior, that he may give salvation unto you. (T-21.II.2:1-3:8 (CE), T-21.II.2:1-3:8 (FIP))

In accepting our responsibility for perception, we are recognizing what perception’s law is, and opening our minds to recognize in it the reflection of God’s higher law. We see it is a form of God’s law that has been “adapted to the need the Son of God believes he has” (4:1).

Once we have let the correction to error in, our error is gone (4:2). Even in the experience of error we have discovered God’s salvation (4:3)! We are ready now to accept a different purpose for the world, even though that world was made by our error, because the Holy Spirit is able to “reconcile its goal with His Creator’s purpose” 4:4). The Holy Spirit can take literally everything we ever made in error and transmute it to a tool for waking up:

The Holy Spirit, as always, takes what you have made and translates it into a learning device for you (T-6.VII.2:4 (CE), T-6.V.2:4 (FIP).
Paragraph 5

In His perception of the world, nothing is seen but justifies forgiveness and the sight of perfect sinlessness. Nothing arises but is met with instant and complete forgiveness. Nothing remains an instant to obscure the sinlessness that shines unchanged beyond the pitiful attempts of specialness to put it out of mind, where it must be, and light the body up instead of it. The lamps of Heaven are not for it to choose to see them where it will. If it elects to see them elsewhere from their home, as if they lit a place where they could never be, and you agree, then must the Maker of the world correct your error, lest you still remain in darkness, where the lamps are not.

• Study Question •

5. Note the three “nothings” here. 1) Nothing is seen that does not justify forgiveness and sight of sinlessness. 2) Nothing arises but is met with forgiveness. 3) Nothing remains to obscure sinlessness. This seems impossible. How can this be true? How can it be that the events and situations of this world could only justify forgiveness? To answer this question, please refer to 1:3 and 3:4-5.

Rather than justifying all the errors of the ego and its specialness, the Holy Spirit sees everything as justifying “forgiveness and the sight of perfect sinlessness” (5:1).

If anger comes from an interpretation and not a fact, it is never justified. Once this is even dimly grasped, the way is open. Now it is possible to take the next step. The interpretation can be changed at last. Magic thoughts need not lead to condemnation, for they do not really have the power to give rise to guilt. And so they can be overlooked, and thus forgotten in the truest sense (M-17.8:6-11 (FIP)).

The real world is achieved when you perceive the basis of forgiveness is quite real and fully justified. (T-30.VII.3:3 (CE), T-30.VI.3:3 (FIP)).

Therefore, there is absolutely nothing that cannot be met with forgiveness (5:2). The flimsy, pitiful veils and shields we have erected to obscure the sinlessness that “shines unchanged” in everyone, spot-lighting the body rather than the holy mind, are gone, recognized as fabrications of our distorted perceptions (5:3). Specialness cannot control what we light up, where we focus our vision.

I find the reference to “the lamps of Heaven” to be a bit confusing. As best I understand it, the phrase refers to the holy lights of God that are the true creations of Spirit. Consider this passage from Chapter 10:

4. Pronoun clarification: “to put it [sinlessness] out of mind, where it [sinlessness] must be, and light the body up instead of it [the mind]. The lamps of Heaven are not for it [the mind] to choose to see them where it [the mind] will.”
Because the miracle worker has heard Him, he strengthens His voice in a sick brother by weakening his belief in sickness, which he does not share. The power of one mind can shine into another, because all the lamps of God were lit with the same spark. It is everywhere and it is eternal.

8 In many, only the spark remains, for the great rays are obscured. But God has kept the spark alive, so the rays can never be completely forgotten. If you but see the little spark, you will learn of the greater light, for the rays are there unseen. Perceiving the spark will heal, but knowing the light will create. Yet in the returning, the little light must be acknowledged first, for the separation was a descent from magnitude to littleness. But the spark is still as pure as the great light, because it is the remaining call of creation. Put all your faith in it, and God Himself will answer you. (T-10.IV.7:4-8: (CE)), T-10.IV.7:4-8: (FIP))

The lamp, then, is the original light. It may have been obscured by the illusions of specialness, but the light is still there. All we need to do is “see the little spark,” and we will learn that “the rays are there unseen.” We must acknowledge the little light first in the process of returning, and as we do, “God Himself will answer you” with a miracle.

If we fail to do this — if we agree with the person’s own thinking that their identity is in his or her body or specialness — we will be unable to correct their error. Instead, the Holy Spirit will have to correct ours.

Paragraph 6

| 6 | Everyone here has entered darkness, yet no one has entered it alone.  
|   | Nor need he stay more than an instant.  
|   | For he has come with Heaven’s help within him, ready to lead him out of darkness into light at any time.  
|   | The time he chooses can be any time, for help is there, awaiting but his choice.  
|   | And when he chooses to avail himself of what is given him, then will he see each situation that he thought before was means to justify his anger turned to an event which justifies his love. |

• Study Question •

6. How does Heaven’s Help (the Holy Spirit) lead you out of darkness (the darkness of the body, where the lamps of Heaven are not), in light of what was said in the previous two paragraphs?

We’ve all come to the darkness of this world and the darkness of our ego minds (6:1). That’s how we got here. But Someone has come with us; we aren’t alone. No matter who it is, he or she “need [not]…stay more than an instant” (6:2) (which probably refers to the holy instant). That’s true because we have all the help we need within us, “ready to lead [us] out of darkness into light at any time” (6:3). We don’t have to put up with the darkness. Heaven’s help, in the form of the indwelling Holy Spirit, is right there with us in every situation, just waiting for us to choose it (6:4).
The next line (6:5) has always been, for me, a clear expression of what a miracle is. Imagine having some situation that has evoked considerable anger in you, anger that seems totally justified. It might be something minor such as someone stepping in front of you in the checkout line. It might be your supposed best friend having sex with your spouse. Justified anger to be sure! Well, imagine your perception of that event somehow being so totally transformed that, instead of justifying your anger, you see that situation as one that justifies your love! That, my friends, is a miracle. That is what happens when you choose to avail yourself of the gift of the Holy Spirit’s vision.

**Paragraph 7**

| 7 | He will hear plainly that the calls to war he heard before are really calls to peace. He will perceive that where he gave attack is but another altar where he can, with equal ease and far more happiness, bestow forgiveness. And he will reinterpret all temptation as just another chance to bring him joy. How can a misperception be a sin? Let all your brother’s errors be to you nothing except a chance for you to see the workings of the Helper given you to see the world He made instead of yours. |

**· Study Question ·**

7. These sentences say that your brother’s misperceptions, his errors, are not sins but chances for you to see the Holy Spirit at work, showing you His world. How different do you think your life would be if you saw everyone’s mistakes as an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to show you His world?

The description of the miraculous results of your choice to share the perception of the Holy Spirit continues in panegyric after panegyric, such high praise that one might suspect hyperbole. “Calls to war” “are really calls to peace” (7:1). Is that even possible? The occasion for attack that becomes an altar where we can bestow forgiveness (7:2)? Really? “All temptation” seen as “just another chance to bring [me] joy” (7:3)? These are things that seem almost impossible. How could my mind be so radically changed that I view every temptation (presumably to anger) as an opportunity for joy? And to do this “with equal ease” as I once gave in to attack (7:2)?

Truly, a miracle. Yes. But that’s what this is: A Course in Miracles. There is Something (Someone) within each of us that makes this not only possible but easy. You will wonder how you ever could think that someone’s misperception was a “sin” (7:4). You will just be thrilled to treat every one of your brother’s errors as “nothing except a chance for you to see” the Holy Spirit at work in your mind, shifting your perception so that you “see the world He made instead of yours” (7:5).

Truly, this is a course in miracles.
Paragraph 8

What, then, is justified? What do you want? For these two questions are the same, and when you see them as the same, your choice is made. For it is seeing them as one that brings release from the belief there are two ways to see. This world has much to offer to your peace, and many chances to extend to you your own forgiveness. Such its purpose is to those who want to see peace and forgiveness descend on them and offer them the light. The Maker of the world of gentleness has perfect power to offset the world of violence and hate that seems to stand between you and His gentleness. It is not there in His forgiving eyes, and therefore it need not be there in yours.

• Study Question •

8. Sentences 1–3 are key in this section. First notice the other uses of “justify” in the section (1:1, 2, 3:6, 5:2, 6:5). Why is what is justified the same as what you want to see?

That first question isn’t entirely rhetorical; it is asking us to choose whether attack or forgiveness is justified, and to make that choice every time someone else acts out of their misperception and ego error. And the answer to what is justified is the same as, “What do you want?” (8:1–2). “When you see them as the same, your choice is made” (8:3). How can you see what that person did as justifying your forgiveness? When you want it, you will see it, because that’s the law (1:3). How you see it is how you choose to see it.

There aren’t really two ways to see any situation. There is only one, and that is what you realize when you see the two questions as identical (8:4). Forgiveness is always justified.

Don’t feel as though you are being asked for some great sacrifice or some heroic effort. What each situation offers you is a chance to extend your own forgiveness to yourself and to find peace (8:5). You are doing this for yourself, not just for your brother. When you want forgiveness for yourself, truly want it, you will recognize that the purpose of the whole world is to provide opportunities “to see peace and forgiveness descend on you and offer you the light” (8:6), through offering forgiveness to others.

The Holy Spirit, “Maker of the world of gentleness,” has the power to transform the world you see from one of violence and hate to one of gentleness (8:7). He does this, not by changing anything outside of you, but by changing your mind. In His eyes there is no world of violence and hate, and that is the perception He longs to share with you (8:8).

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5. “To extend to you your own forgiveness” seems to mean to extend forgiveness to yourself by extending it to others.
Paragraph 9

9  Sin is the fixed belief perception cannot change. ²What has been damned is damned, and damned forever, being forever unforgivable. ³If, then, it is forgiven, sin’s perception must have been wrong. ⁴And thus is change made possible. ⁵The Holy Spirit too sees what He sees as far beyond the chance of change. ⁶But on His vision sin cannot encroach, for sin has been corrected by His sight. ⁷And thus it must have been an error, not a sin, for what it claimed could never be has been. ⁸Sin is attacked by punishment and so preserved. ⁹But to forgive it is to change its state from error into truth.

• Study Question •

9. What common belief do you think sentences 1–3 are trying to counter?

When we identify something as a sin, we are expressing a belief that “perception cannot change” (9:1). We’re saying, “It is what it is: sin.” Once we’ve identified anything as sin we have damned it, damned it forever, and proclaimed that it is “forever unforgivable” (9:2). If, by some miracle (which really does exist), our perception of the event or person changes so that we forgive it, our original perception of “sin” “must have been wrong” (9:3). We’ve realized that perception can change (9:4).

The Holy Spirit also believes His perception cannot change — and He is right! His perception of any situation has wiped out the perception of sin; it can’t go back. Spirit’s perception cannot be invaded by the notion of sin because the perception of sin has been erased (9:5–6). What we thought was a sin was never a sin, but merely an error, a mistake. Sin says it was unforgivable, but it has been forgiven, so the perception of sin was also an error (9:7).

We try to deal with things we see as sin by punishing them, which simply is an attack that preserves the perception rather than altering it. (If it deserved to be attacked, it must have been bad!) Forgiveness, on the other hand, actually changes “its state from error into truth” (9:9).

This concept has potentially far-reaching implications for our penal system. What if it were not a way of punishing criminals but instead forgiving them, and rehabilitating them, aiding them to find the light within themselves?
Paragraph 10

The Son of God could never sin, but he can wish for what would hurt him. And he has the power to think he can be hurt. What could this be except a misperception of himself? Is this a sin or a mistake; forgivable or not? Does he need help or condemnation? Is it your purpose that he be saved or damned, forgetting not that what he is to you will make this choice your future? For you make it now, the instant when all time becomes a means to reach a goal. Make, then, your choice, but recognize that in this choice the purpose of the world you see is chosen too, and will be justified.

* Study Question *

10. 10_3–5: These three sentences begin a process of choice which closes the section. Specifically, they present to us the choice discussed throughout the section, the choice between the two worlds. Please think of a recent instance in which someone angered you, and then really ask yourself these four questions. Once you are done, ask yourself the question in sentence 6.

“The Son of God” — that’s me, that’s you, that’s every person who comes into this world — “could never sin” (10:1). In other words, sin is impossible. Ernest Holmes, author of Science of Mind, once wrote, “There is no sin but a mistake, and no punishment but an inevitable consequence.” And the Course elsewhere declares:

* There is no sin. (T-26.VII.10:5 (CE), T-26.VII.10:5 (FIP))

God’s will for me is perfect happiness.

* There is no sin; it has no consequence. (W-101.7:4–5 (CE), W-pI.101.6:6-7 (FIP))

But the sentence continues: “…but he can wish for what would hurt him” (10:1). That’s all that is going on when someone seems to “sin.” He has entertained a wish for something that would hurt him, and that is married with the fact that “he has the power to think he can be hurt” (10:2).

If you or anyone actually perceived the truth about who and what they are they would realize they are invulnerable, and cannot be hurt. So, if a person wishes for something that (so they think) would hurt them, they must be misperceiving themselves (10:3). And that isn’t a “sin” but a lamentable mistake, and therefore quite forgivable (10:4). Anyone making a mistake like that does not need condemnation; they need help (10:5).

Now consider: Whatever you choose for this person will be what you get. So, do you want him, or her, to be saved or to be damned? What do you want for yourself? It’s the same for both (10:6).

This instant, now, is when you are making this choice. It always is this instant, “the instant when all time becomes a means to reach a goal” (10:7). All time! Perhaps we are prone to think that our spiritual development is something that takes place at special times, like Sunday morning, or in classes, or daily meditation. But no; it’s right now, this instant and every instant. All of it can be a means to reach our goal.

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So, next time you are tempted to judge someone, make your choice: condemn or help? Judge or forgive? And recognize when you choose that you are choosing the purpose of the entire world that you see, a purpose that will be fully justified in your mind, either in reality or in illusion (10:8).

**Legend:**

*Light underscoring* indicates emphasis that appears in the Urtext or shorthand notes.

The Text is taken from the Circle of Atonement's Complete and Annotated Edition (which I refer to as the "CE" for "Complete Edition" or "Circle Edition"). Please be aware that, even when the wording is identical to the FIP version, the division into paragraphs is often entirely different in the CE, which restores the paragraph breaks found in the original notes. This results in different reference numbering as well. I will indicate for each paragraph the corresponding sentences in the FIP edition. You should be able to locate specific sentences in that edition if you need to, with a minimum of visual clutter in the commentary. Passages that lie outside the current section will continue to have footnoted references. References to quotations are from the CE unless another version is being quoted, in which case that version is indicated.

Footnotes by the commentary author are shown in this font and size. Other footnotes come from the Complete Edition itself.
Answer Key

1. Because attacking is how one attains the “prize” of guilt. Attacking is a means to the goal of guilt.

2. False. This statement amounts to the idea that God did not create the world as we perceive it, but did create the world in which we are perceiving. This is impossible since perception has no meaning to Him.

3. The two who made this world represent the two alternatives there are to choose. In other words, the world you perceive will rest on which maker (ego or Holy Spirit) you choose.

4. The mad belief that we could establish a real domain apart from God, a place in which God’s laws were completely shut out. This is what the world seems to be.

5. You will see whatever serves your chosen goal. You will look on everything you see as a perfect means to that goal. If your chosen goal is forgiveness, sinlessness, you will see everything in the world as a perfect means to that goal.

6. The Holy Spirit leads you out of darkness by showing you that you can see everything in this world as a means to your chosen goal, what you really want.

7. No written response is necessary.

8. Because that is the fundamental law of perception: You will see as justified what you want to see.

9. The belief that I will never see past this world to the Holy Spirit’s world.

10. No written response is necessary.