

Commentary

ACIM[®] Manual for Teachers

23. Does Jesus Have a Special Place in Healing?

Explanation of underlining, italics and footnote formats can be found at the end of the commentary. See also the note there on the effects of switching from the FIP edition to the Complete and Annotated Edition.

Please note that the FIP and CE versions may differ in where paragraph breaks occur.

Overview

This section examines how praying “in Jesus's name” and praying to Jesus affect healing. It teaches that, for Course students, Jesus plays a significant role in healing. It also presents a rather interesting opinion about what Jesus accomplished that makes him particularly important to us. It contains what I consider the “Christology” of the Course, especially in Paragraph 2.

The Course claims to come from Jesus, in which case he wrote this chapter. Yet it speaks of Jesus in the third person, “he,” not “I.” I think this is to avoid sounding boastful. He avoids saying things like, “I have become the risen Son of God,” “I have already healed the world,” or “There is no limit on my power.” Such statements might be off-putting.

Many of us, students of the Course, come from some variety of Christian background. There are a vast number of such backgrounds, and many of them encourage some “personal relationship with Jesus.” The relationship may include things like praying to him, worshipping him, trusting him to save us from hell, and more. If you come from such a background, you may feel you have left such things behind, and *need* to leave them to be free of a belief system you've rejected. This section, with its emphasis on Jesus, will probably disturb you. The Course *does* strongly suggest having a personal relationship with Jesus, although it makes it optional. As you read, bear in mind these words from elsewhere in the Course:

“Forgive me your illusions and release me from punishment for what I have not done.” **(T-19.IV.B.8:6)**

“Some bitter idols have been made of him who would be only brother to the world. Forgive him your illusions, and behold how dear a brother he would be to you. **(C-4.4:7-8 (CE))**

”It is possible to read his words and benefit from them without accepting him into your life. Yet he would help you yet a little more if you would share your

pains and joys with him, and leave them both to find the peace of God. Yet still it is his lesson most of all that he would have you learn.“ (C-4.5:6–8 (CE))

Paragraph 1

God's gifts can rarely be received directly. ²Even the most advanced of God's teachers will give way to temptation in this world. ³Would it be fair if their pupils were denied healing because of this? ⁴The Bible says "Ask in the name of Jesus Christ."¹ ⁵Is this merely an appeal to magic? ⁶A name does not heal, nor does an invocation call forth any special power. ⁷What does it mean to call on Jesus Christ?² ⁸What power does calling on his name confer? ⁹Why is the appeal to him a part of healing?³

The first sentence sets the stage by implying that most of God's teachers received God's gifts *indirectly* (1:1). That further implies some intermediary, which we may surmise is Jesus. The Course recognizes our fallibility, saying that even the most advanced among us "will give way to temptation in this world" (1:2). When a teacher gives way to temptation, they cannot transmit God's gifts to their pupils. "Would it be fair," Jesus asks rhetorically, to deny healing to their pupils because of the failure of the teacher (1:3)? He implies that it would *not* be fair; the pupils should somehow still have access to healing.

He then tells us that the Bible says, "Ask in the name of Jesus Christ" (1:4). The Bible never actually says that! Jesus does tell his disciples to ask in his name or says they will do so. People seem to think that tagging the words "in Jesus's name" to their prayers is what this means. I don't think so. Some say it means asking in Jesus's *nature*, that is, in union with the Christ within. I don't think that's quite it, either. I think it means asking that the request be granted, not based on the asker's merit, but on Jesus's merit, that is, grant it as if it were Jesus asking.

Let's digress to see what the Bible says. If we read the relevant biblical texts, it could be understood this way:

"And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name." (John 15:16, NRSV).

Jesus appoints us to bear fruit that will last. Because of our fruitful actions, God will give us whatever we ask in Jesus's name.

¹ John 14:13-14 (RSV): "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask anything in my name, I will do it."

² This section speaks about Jesus in the third person, but that does not mean he is not its author. After all, the section itself later says, "This course has come from him" (7:1). The reason this section is written this way may be because Jesus in the Course aims to correct the traditional focus on him as the only begotten Son of God, adopting instead a tone of egolessness regarding himself. However, in this section he needs to say things about his role that, because of the importance of it, could sound boastful. Saying them in the third person helps soften that impression. "Would the greatest teacher be unavailable to those who follow him?" (3:11) conveys more egolessness than "Would I, the greatest teacher, be unavailable to those who follow me?"

³ Acts 3:6 (KJV): "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk."

“On that day you will ask nothing of me. Very truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.” **(John 16:23, NRSV).**

“Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.” **(John 14:12–14, NRSV).**

In that last quotation, Jesus says if we ask *him* anything in his name, *he* will do it. The marginal note in the NRSV points out that some manuscripts of John's Gospel omit the word “me.” That word provides a basis for prayers addressed to Jesus or (see John 15:16 above) to God.

To sum up: Based on these biblical passages, it seems to me that to pray in the name of Jesus can include *both* prayer based on his merits and prayers originating from *our* union with him. The “greater works” appear to be both the *reason* for God's response to our prayers and the *result* of those prayers. The outcome is that the Father is glorified in the Son, that is, in the Sonship we share with Jesus. That's the picture from the Bible. Let's continue to see how the Course's answer lines up with this.

We left off at 1:4, which spoke about praying in the name of Jesus Christ. In the following sentence, Jesus asks a rhetorical question: “Is this merely an appeal to magic?” **(1:5)**. He disposes of the idea that merely throwing in the phrase, “in Jesus's name,” at the end of a prayer does anything, and invoking the name of Jesus, in itself, does not “call forth any special power” **(1:6)**. So what does calling on his name mean, and what power does it confer on the caller **(1:7–8)**? Why is it even a part of healing **(1:9)**?

The next paragraph begins his answers to these questions.

Paragraph 2

2 We have repeatedly stated that one who has perfectly accepted the Atonement for himself can heal the world.⁴ ²Indeed, he has already done so. ³Temptation may recur to others, but never to this one. ⁴He has become the risen Son of God. ⁵He has overcome death because he has accepted life. ⁶He has recognized himself as God created him, and in so doing he has recognized all living things as part of him. ⁷There is now no limit on his power, because it is the power of God. ⁸So has his name become the Name of God, for he no longer sees himself as separate from Him.

There have been several earlier references to the idea stated here: “that one who has perfectly accepted the Atonement for himself can heal the world” **(2:1)**. Chapter 12 of this Manual posed the question, “How many teachers of God are needed to save the world?” He immediately gave

⁴ M-12.1:1-2: “The answer to this question [‘How many teachers of God are needed to save the world?’] is ‘one.’ One wholly perfect teacher, whose learning is complete, suffices.” M-14.3:3-4: “But time stands still and waits on the goals of God’s teachers. Not one sin will remain [in the world] the instant any one of them accepts the Atonement for himself.”

his answer in a single word: “The answer to this question is - one. One wholly perfect teacher, whose learning is complete, suffices.” In my commentary on those lines, I wrote this:

“There are two possible interpretations that I can see:

- 1. The first person to wake up to our true Identity as the Son of God opens the path back for all of us and “activates” the One Son, guaranteeing the full awakening of the entire Sonship. That may have been the role Jesus played.*
- 2. Each of our seemingly individual awakenings are all a part of the One Son waking up.”*

I added that M-12.1:2's mention of “one wholly perfect teacher” sounds like a reference to Jesus but indicated that possibly there were others who preceded him. I think what we will read in this paragraph in Chapter 23 eliminates the possibility that anyone before Jesus was wholly perfect or that our individual awakenings are what is meant by the awakening of the Son. My #1 above is the best understanding I can come up with.

It says here that Jesus has *already* healed the world (2:2). He is beyond the temptations that may recur to anyone else, such as us (2:3). Jesus has recognized his true identity and has fully identified and become one with “the risen Son of God,” the Christ (2:4). He has accepted life fully and so has overcome death (2:5).

The Course appeals to us over and over to recognize that we remain as God created us; Jesus has already done that (2:6), and “in so doing he has recognized all living things as part of him.” He has identified with Oneness. He has realized that there is only one life and that life he shares with God and with all of God's creation.

He has unlimited power because he has the power of God, being one with Him (2:7).

The name of Jesus has become synonymous with the name of God because Jesus “no longer sees himself as separate from Him” (2:9).

In the Gospel of John, Jesus is accorded equality with God (see, for instance, John 8:28, where Jesus claims the name of God, “I am,” or John 1:1, where “the Word was with God, and was God.” In John 1:14, the Word has become flesh, and his disciples saw him; the Word is Jesus.)

In John 14:9–11, Jesus's claim is clear:

*Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.
(New Living Translation)*

Marcus Borg, the author of several books about Jesus (and other great books as well), said of Jesus that he was “God's revelation in a human life.” He wrote, “Jesus reveals, discloses, what can be seen of God in a human life and what a life filled with God looks like.” Anyone who saw him had seen what God is like. He was living proof that God exists, and is loving and compassionate.

Theologians debated for centuries about the nature of Jesus. Was he human? Was he God? Was he both equally somehow? The churches split time and time again over exactly how to define him. In this paragraph, the Course has a different take on who and what Jesus was, although it retains some characteristics of the notion of the “Trinity.”

1. Jesus is God, yes. The Holy Spirit is God, too. Jesus is also the Son of God.
2. Whereas the classical doctrine of the Trinity, as I understand it, teaches “God in *three* Persons, blessed Trinity,” the Course emphasizes the Oneness of God.
3. In addition, Jesus is not the *only* Son of God; we are all “sons” of God, really all of us the same as Jesus: one with God.

As we will see in the following paragraph, it is this identity of every living thing with the Son of God that makes what Jesus did so effectual.

Paragraph 3

3 What does this mean for you? ²It means that in remembering Jesus, you are remembering God. ³The whole relationship of the Son to the Father lies in him. ⁴His part in the Sonship is also yours, and his completed learning guarantees your own success. ⁵Is he still available for help? ⁶What did he say about this? ⁷Remember his promises,⁵ and ask yourself honestly whether it is likely that he will fail to keep them. ⁸Can God fail His Son? ⁹And can one who is one with God be unlike Him?⁶ ¹⁰Who transcends the body has transcended limitation. ¹¹Would the greatest teacher be unavailable to those who follow him?⁷

After giving us all kinds of information about the accomplishments of Jesus, you — and most readers — probably have the very question in mind that opens this paragraph: “What does this mean to you?” (3:1) Why is he telling us all this about Jesus? Most people have little to no interest in reading about all the controversy in the early church about the exact nature of Jesus. I’m different. I find it all fascinating, in large measure, because it shows just how far off-kilter the church had become. They were majoring in minors, splitting and dividing from one another, and in some cases, killing one another, all over things that seem to have almost nothing to do with how to live a more decent, loving, compassionate, and God-like life. But maybe for you the preceding paragraph raises the question: “What has all this got to do with me?”

So Jesus goes on to provide an answer. He makes several points:

⁵. Matthew 28:20 (KJV): “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 18:20 (RSV): “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

⁶. The logic here is that since God cannot fail to keep His promises and since Jesus is one with God, *Jesus* cannot fail to keep his promises.

⁷. The logic here seems to be that since the act of teaching involves being available to one’s students, then the greatest teacher must surely be available to *his* students. This is especially so given that, having transcended the body, he is no longer limited to one place and time.

1. To remember Jesus is to remember God **(3:2)**. Jesus realized that he was not separate from God. Therefore, whatever we learn or remember about him shows us something about God. We can learn about relating to God through relating to Jesus.
2. He demonstrates to us the relationship of the Son to the Father **(3:3)**. As he once said, anyone who has seen Jesus has seen God the Father. In the Course, we have an extensive expression of the thoughts of Jesus; they are equally the thoughts of God. He communed with God in prayer, in dialogs with Him. He told us, “What I speak ... I speak just as the Father has told me.” **(John 12:50, NRSV)**,” and we must do the same: First listen to God's voice, and only then speak. Jesus shows us how a Son of God operates in the world, and in that, he is our example.
3. “His part in the Sonship is also yours, and his completed learning guarantees your own success” **(3:4)**. Several places in the Text explain this in more detail:

“I am in charge of the whole Atonement. This is only because I completed my part in it as a man and can now complete it through others. My chosen receiving and sending channels cannot fail, because I will lend them my strength as long as theirs is wanting” **(T-4.VIII.15:1-3 (CE), (T-4.VI.6:1, 5-7 (FIP))**.

“Give me but a little trust in the name of the complete trust I have in you, and we will easily accomplish the goal of perfection together” **(T-12.II.8:5)**

He says we can “trust his gratitude and thankful Heart to beat for yours when yours appears to fail” **(Gifts of God, p. 127)**.⁸

“Truth is still untouched by your deceptions. Yet you cannot go past that first dream without a Savior's hand in yours. Each gift of fear would hold you back unless you let me lift it from your mind by showing you that it is but a dream within a larger dream of hopelessness in which there is no hope. ... Help me give you salvation. Let us share the strength of Christ and look upon the dream in which illusions started, and which serve to keep their birthplace secret and apart from the illumination of the truth. Come unto me.” **(Gifts, pp. 120-121)**

“I take the journey with you. For I share your doubts and fears a little while, that you may come to me who recognize the road by which all fears and doubts are overcome. We walk together. I must understand uncertainty and pain, although I know they have no meaning. Yet a savior must remain with those he teaches, seeing what they see, but still retaining in his mind the way that led him out, and now will lead you out with him. God's Son is crucified until you walk along the road with me.” **(W-rV.In.6)**.

⁸. *The Gifts of God* is a book consisting mostly of a collection of poetry by Helen Schucman, but it also contains a long message from Jesus to Helen, received as was the Course. This quote and the following one are from that section.

“My mind will always be like yours, because we were created as equals. It was only my decision that gave me all power in Heaven and earth. My only gift to you is to help you make the same decision.” **(T-5.II.9:1-3)**

He goes so far as to say, “Believe with me, and we will become equal as teachers” **(T-6.I.6:11 (FIP), T-6.I.12:6 (CE))**. Equal teacher with Jesus! Imagine that! Seem impossible? But that is exactly what “His part in the Sonship” guarantees for us. By coming to him and sharing our doubts and fears, we enable him to share “the way that led him out” with us, leading us “out with him.” He can lend us his strength when ours would fail. Praying to Jesus, and asking for his help in our journey, is entirely appropriate and does not have to conflict with nor contradict our shared Oneness with him and God. If speaking to Jesus or God bothers you, consider this: Don’t you sometimes talk *to yourself*? Don’t you sometimes speak of yourself in the third person, as if you were separate? (“Hello; it’s me.”) In prayer, we are communicating with one who has *completed the journey* and knows how to share with us how to do it ourselves. His only gift is to help us make the same decision he made: to recognize and accept our Oneness with him and with God. He himself is the living guarantee that we can make that decision.

4. We may wonder, is Jesus still available to help us **(3:5)**? Calling on his name isn't just a magical invocation. The Course asks us to recall his promises **(3:6)**. That must refer to sayings in the Bible such as *Matthew 28:20*, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” He points out that Jesus promised to be with us until the end of the world and that it is implausible he would fail to keep his promises **(3:6-7)**. We can always trust God to meet the needs of His Son **(3:8)**. If Jesus is one with God, he has to be *like* God **(3:9)**. He will keep his promises.
5. He has left the limitation of a body behind him, and so he is no longer confined to any place or time **(3:10)**. He can be anywhere at any time and even in multiple places simultaneously. He can listen to millions of people’s prayers and answer them all. He is not subject to any limitations. (All this smacks of quantum physics to me!)
6. Finally, he was the greatest teacher of all time. Surely, he could not be unavailable to his followers **(3:11)**. This is the only place I can think of in the FIP version of the Course where Jesus claims to be “the greatest teacher.” There is another example in the material newly restored to Chapter 1 in the Complete & Annotated Edition: “I am the only completely true witness for God” **(T-1.26.5:3)**. That may cause discomfort because of your awareness of other spiritual masters you have come to revere. It's there, nonetheless. The chapter will address the question of other teachers a bit later. In any case, Jesus was at least one great teacher, and as such, he would surely be available to his students.

All of these are examples of what it means to us that Jesus has completed his journey; “he has recognized himself as God created him, and ... recognized all living things as part of him” **(3:6)**. They give us powerful motivation to call on Jesus to help us .

To me, calling on the name of Jesus or praying to him in this way is not the same thing as the way traditional Christians call on Jesus (or the Virgin Mary or a saint) to intervene in their

worldly affairs. Many such prayers are patently absurd, such as praying for the victory of one football team over another or asking to win the lottery. I do not think God or Jesus intervenes in the external world. It seems clear to me that the prayers spoken of here are primarily for *internal* help. We ask for inner strength, clear vision, guidance on how to act as a son or daughter of God in a situation, or, as we've read in Chapter 21 above, what to say to someone asking for help or healing.

Paragraph 4

4 The name of Jesus Christ as such is but a symbol. ²But it stands for love that is not of this world. ³It is a symbol that is safely used as a replacement for the many names of all the gods you pray to.⁹ ⁴It becomes the shining symbol for the Word of God, so close to what it stands for that the little space between the two is lost the moment that the name is called to mind. ⁵Remembering his name is to give thanks for all the gifts that God has given you. ⁶And gratitude to God becomes the way in which He is remembered, for love cannot be far behind a grateful heart and thankful mind. ⁷God enters easily, for these are the true conditions for your coming home.

Yes, the name of Jesus Christ is just a symbol, like every other word (4:1). It's what the word symbolizes that makes it different. "It stands for love that is not of this world" (4:2). Earlier, we read that symbols can stand for two things: either things of the world that bring experiences of the world or for the Word of God that brings the experience of God. The name of Jesus falls into the second class. His name calls to mind God's Word, which leads to the experience of God. When we consider Jesus, we learn about God because he has become the perfect reflection of God in a human being.

In Sentence 4:3, we might think he is asserting that the name of Jesus should replace any other name of God. However, I don't think that is what it means. If you recall, Chapter 21 said that we often direct the prayer of our hearts at things of this world (M-21.3:1–2). We turn to material things to rescue us from our misery instead of turning to God. Instead, we can turn to Jesus. The name of Jesus symbolizes the Word of God. His name is so close to God's Word that "the little space between the two is lost" the instant we call on it (4:4).

In (4:5–6), we learn that gratitude to God for all His gifts is the way we can remember Jesus's name. In remembering His gifts to us, we remember Jesus, because the Son of God, which is Jesus's Identity, is also God's gift to us. A grateful heart and a thankful mind "are the true conditions for [our] coming home" (4:7). To remember our Identity and to remember Jesus are virtually the same thing. The Gospel of John reflects this mingling of our Identity with Jesus:

"...that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (John 17:21 ESV)

⁹ The "gods" here, based on other Course references, are probably the external things and activities that we look to for salvation. The implication is that we should instead ask for salvation from Jesus.

One of the” fundamentalist “teachers I listened to for several years used to refer to the” mingling “of God and humankind. He said it was like tea in water; once joined, you cannot separate them. What is true of one is true of the other. That may not be quite the full extent of unity presented in the Course or John 17 — God in Jesus, Jesus in God, and all of us in both of them, all together as one. But it was close. You can see how God was leading me gradually past traditional Christianity to the Course and Unity.

Paragraph 5

5 Jesus has led the way. ²Why would you not be grateful to him? ³He has asked for love, but only that he might give it to you. ⁴You do not love yourself. ⁵But in his eyes your loveliness is so complete and flawless that he sees in it an image of his Father.¹⁰ ⁶You become the symbol of his Father here on earth. ⁷To you he looks for hope, because in you he sees no limit and no stain to mar your beautiful perfection. ⁸In his eyes Christ’s vision shines in perfect constancy. ⁹He has remained with you. ¹⁰Would you not learn the lesson of salvation through his learning? ¹¹Why would you choose to start again when he has made the journey for you?

”Jesus has led the way,“ which is sufficient reason for us to be grateful to him **(5:1)**. That gratitude is enough for us to meet the condition for bringing us home **(4:7)**. Jesus refers to leading the way several times in the Course:

”Then follow Him in joy, with faith that He will lead you safely through all the dangers to your peace of mind that this world sets before you.“ CE T-13.VIII.5:4

”You know not where you go, but One Who knows goes with you. Let Him lead you with the rest.“ CE W-155.10:4-5

”‘No man cometh unto the Father, but by me’ 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. Now, we know that time does not exist. Actually, the statement is much more meaningful if it is considered on a vertical rather than a horizontal axis. Regarded along the vertical, humanity stands below me and I stand below God. In the process of “rising up,” I am higher. This is because without me the distance between God and humanity is too great for you to encompass. I bridge the distance as an elder brother on the one hand and a Son of God on the other. My devotion to my brothers has placed me in charge of the Sonship, which I can render complete only to the extent I can share it.“” CE T-1.46.17

What follows expands on the answer to what it can mean to us that Jesus has become the risen Son of God, having recognized himself as God created him.

10. Colossians 1:15 (RSV): “He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God.” Since Jesus has traditionally been seen as the image of God, the above passage says that he sees *us* as we have traditionally seen *him*.

The only reason Jesus asks for our love is to give it back to us because we don't love ourselves (5:3–4). He loves you *for* you since you have a problem doing it yourself. He loves you because, in his eyes, he sees your flawless loveliness showing him the image of God (5:5)! You become the symbol of God for him (5:6).

Once in a while, one of us has the mind-blowing experience of seeing God in another person. Jesus has that experience whenever he looks at any of us, including you and me. That demonstrates that nothing has to change in anyone else to allow us to have that experience. What makes the difference for Jesus is his enlightened mind, not anything about the person he is beholding. It's *our* minds that have to change for us to see God in those around us. This is just another way that Jesus leads the way and shows us an example of how we must evolve.

We may think of looking to Jesus or God for hope, but he looks *to you* for hope (4:7)! In this, too, he is the Great Example (not the great exception). His vision shows us how we should see one another: with “no limit and no stain to mar [our] beautiful perfection.” He has learned to see with Christ's vision “in perfect constancy” (5:8), and he has remained with us, making himself available so that we can “learn the lesson of salvation through his learning” (5:9–10). He has already completed the journey *for us*. Why on earth would we try to start figuring things out again all by ourselves (5:11)?

Paragraph 6

6 No one on earth can grasp what Heaven is or what its one Creator really means. ²Yet we have witnesses. ³It is to them that wisdom would appeal.¹¹ ⁴There have been those whose learning far exceeds what we can learn. ⁵Nor would we teach the limitations we have laid on us. ⁶No one who has become a true and dedicated teacher of God forgets his brothers, yet what he can offer them is limited by what he learns himself. ⁷Then turn to one who laid all limits by, and went beyond the farthest reach of learning. ⁸He will take you with him, for he did not go alone. ⁹And you were with him then, as you are now.

There are many advanced spiritual teachers in the world today, and many who have come before us. For example, I think of Meister Eckhart (which reminds me also of Eckhart Tolle), Aurobindo, Ramana Maharshi, Plotinus, Hildegard of Bingen, the Dalai Lama, my own mentor, Norman Grubb, Ken Wilber, Richard Rohr, and there are so many more. None who remain on earth, says Jesus here, “can grasp what Heaven is or what its one Creator really means” (6:1). While on earth our perception is limited.

“Yet we have witnesses” (6:2). What strikes me immediately is the use of the plural: *witnesses*. That's how I think of those gone by or still living: witnesses. They can share with us from what they have learned, whether in person, through their words, their writings, or their example. Their learning may far exceed what we can learn (6:4). If we are wise we will listen to

¹¹ The “witnesses” to whom we would be wise to appeal are by implication those who have transcended the earth and all limitations. They “can grasp what Heaven is” and “what its one Creator really means” because they are *in* Heaven, *at one* with their Creator. These witnesses, then, would be the same as the teachers of teachers described in Section 26. The witness focused on here is Jesus.

such witnesses (6:3). And none of us want to pass on our own limitations to those who follow us (6:5)! What we can offer others is nevertheless limited by what we can learn ourselves. Yet we can point people in the direction of those with learning much greater than our own.

But there is a *perfect* witness, “one who laid all limits by, and went beyond the farthest reach of learning” (6:7) — Jesus. We can turn to him, and point others to him as well. If we do, he will take us with him, because *he did not go alone* — we were *with* him, both then and now (6:7–9)! He *will* take us with him because he *took us with him then*, when he transcended learning.

Paragraph 7

7 This course has come from him because his words have reached you in a language you can love and understand.¹² ²Are other teachers possible, to lead the way for those who speak in different tongues and appeal to different symbols? ³Certainly there are. ⁴Would God leave anyone without a very present help in time of trouble; a savior who can symbolize himself?¹³ ⁵Yet do we need a many-faceted curriculum,¹⁴ not because of content differences, but because symbols must shift and change to suit the need. ⁶Jesus has come to answer yours. ⁷In him you find God’s Answer. ⁸Do you, then, teach with him, for he is with you; he is always here.

In 7:1 we find a direct claim that *A Course in Miracles* comes from Jesus. As with taking the hand of Jesus as your friend and elder brother, whether or not you believe that Jesus or his spirit was the actual author of the book is optional. Some people have theorized that the inner voice Helen heard in her mind was her higher Self, not Jesus. However, Helen's higher Self and Jesus are the same thing to me! We all share the same Self — Christ. Jesus wholly identified with his true Identity, and our true Identity is the same as his (WI-6.1:1-2). So, there is no difference between saying the Course came from Jesus or that it came from Helen's higher self.

Some people seem to have difficulty interacting with Jesus because it could tend to perpetuate the illusion of separation, of separate identities. That is indeed a possible negative side effect. Personally, I find enormous value and comfort in the idea that I have an elder brother who has already completed the spiritual journey and who can, therefore, offer me assistance and guidance as I follow the same path. I remind myself that the inner voice I am hearing, which sometimes seems separate from me, is my true voice, which helps offset the apparent separation.

If you bear in mind that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are one in the sense that if you “hear” the voice of Jesus, it is the same as hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit, then the following quotes may help understand how I can view talking with Jesus the same as talking to my higher self.

12. The teaching in this paragraph seems to be that Jesus and his words are part of the symbol system that we have inherited by growing up in a Western culture. This is why a course written to Westerners has come from him. Those who grow up in cultures with different symbol systems will be sent teachers who employ the symbols *they* are familiar with.

13. Psalm 46:1 (KJV): “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” The above reference implies that God acts as “a very present help” by giving us “a savior who can symbolize Himself.”

14. A “many-faceted curriculum” means a curriculum (the universal curriculum) that takes different forms for people in different cultures.

“Do you not understand that to oppose the Holy Spirit is to fight yourself? 2 He tells you but your will; He speaks for you. 3 In His divinity is but your own. 4 And all He knows is but your knowledge, saved for you that you may do your will through Him.”
(T-30.II.1:1-4 (CE))

“The Holy Spirit abides in the part of your mind that is part of the Christ Mind. He represents your Self and your Creator, Who are one. He speaks for God and also for you, being joined with both. And therefore it is He Who proves them one. He seems to be a Voice, for in that form He speaks God’s Word to you. He seems to be a Guide through a far country, for you need that form of help. He seems to be whatever meets the needs you think you have. But He is not deceived when you perceive yourself entrapped in needs you do not have. It is from these He would deliver you. It is from these that He would make you safe.” **(T-31.IX.4:1-10 (CE))**

Why has the Course come from Jesus? That’s the point in **(7:1)**. It’s because it can so easily dovetail with what we know of Jesus from the Bible, even as it corrects things we may have mislearned or misunderstood. He is a familiar teacher to whom we are accustomed to listening.

Of course, there are other teachers, many who are better suited to “those who speak in different tongues and appeal to different symbols” **(7:2-3)**. In the USA and much of the Western world, we are a predominantly Christian culture, whether or not we have ever identified ourselves as Christian. Bible stories and Christian concepts have influenced all of us. We’ve had blockbuster movies, many based on the Bible and the life of Jesus. So the best “voice” to address our culture is that of Jesus.

Yet God would not leave the rest of the world without teachers more appropriate for them than Jesus would be. I don’t think the Course is meant for every culture, although wherever Christianity has influenced the culture, there is a place for it. But there are many other forms of “the universal course” **(M-1:3-4)**, each one geared to the unique symbols and needs of a particular culture. And in each, there needs to be a living symbol of God, someone in whom that culture can see God in human form **(7:4)**. There has to be “a many-faceted curriculum” to suit the need of every culture **(7:5)**.

Jesus “has come” in the Course to answer *our* needs **(7:6)**. We can find God’s Answer to our need in Jesus **(7:7)**. For us, he is the ideal access point, God in human form. He can help us, as teachers of God, to communicate God’s Answer to others.

The final sentence is not a question; it is an injunction for us to do our teaching *with Jesus* and not on our own. It sums up the core message of the section. What is the place of Jesus in our communication of God’s healing message to the world? As he told us in the Text: “I am in charge of the the process of Atonement” **(T-1.24.2:1 (CE), T-1.III.1:1 (FIP))**. We are to allow him to teach through us. We are to teach in cooperation with him. He is teaching with us. He is always here **(7:8)**.

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 Foundation for Inner Peace (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. 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.