

# Zarah & Pharez

## Part Ten

### Questions & Answers

***\* Does sonship teach that Jesus will not literally return to this earth, in a physical form for all to see?***

Since this is one of the more common criticisms directed toward sonship by those who would brand it as "New Age," it requires fair, honest and accurate representation. However, in offering our response to this question, and the way in which it is worded above, we would like to address one thing from the beginning. Oftentimes, whenever individuals speak of a physical return of Jesus, they will generally refer to this as His "literal" return. But, seeing that synonyms for the word literal include actual, factual, real, genuine and truthful, the way in which it is used suggests that only things which occur in the natural are real, or are at least "more real" than those that happen in the realm of the Spirit. As most would agree, this would be an incorrect assumption to make. Therefore, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, and for the sake of fairness to all parties represented here, we will not be employing the word literal in our response.

Now, on with our reply. To be honest about it, there is no consensus on this point among sonship teachers. There are different positions held by different individuals, and, depending on where you go, it would be difficult to find any two in a conference of teachers who are in total agreement on every particular detail of their belief. Without controversy, we believe that all agree on the concept of the internal coming of Christ to His people. This is a very important part of the message of sonship, and one without which we would have no hope of glory (Col. 1:27). However, some believe that when Jesus ascended after His resurrection, He returned entirely to the realm of the Spirit, His physical body having fulfilled its purpose during the Incarnation. Others believe that Jesus still possesses a body, in fact, the very one in which He appeared after He was raised from the dead, and in which He manifested prior to His ascension. This body is not merely a physical body, "an earthy house of this tabernacle," but a glorified one, "a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (I Cor. 5:1-2). According to those who hold this perspective, it is this body that now appears in heaven for us (Heb. 9:24), and that serves as the prototype of the kind of bodies we all hope to receive in the resurrection. This belief is rooted in Paul's words of hope and encouragement: "we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our

*vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself* (Phil. 3:21).

To some, there is a difference between the body of Jesus and the body of Christ. As they see it, both of these bodies belong to our Lord. But the first speaks of His individual body, whereas the last speaks of His corporate one. To others, the only body that now exists in a tangible form is the one that is comprised of many members, exclusively referred to in Scripture as the body of Christ. For them, the only way any one will ever see Jesus is by seeing Him in the church, *which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all* (Eph. 1:23).

(Note: For the sake of those who might be interested, allow me to say that Tykie and I are among those who believe that Jesus still possesses a body; for how shall He change these bodies of our humiliation to be like unto His body of glory, if no such body exists? However, unless someone can show us otherwise, we see no good reason why our belief should disenfranchise us from our brethren who may hold a different view. The reason why we believe this way will be explained more thoroughly toward the end of this response.)

While it is true that there are varying opinions on this subject, there are certain points wherein we do find common ground. For instance, if the question were asked, *Does sonship teach that Jesus will one day appear as so many have come to believe, in a physical form, in physical cumulus clouds in the stratosphere, amidst throngs of singing angels, the audible voice of Gabriel and the sound of a trumpet, to physically rapture the church off of this planet to another physical place called heaven,* we believe that we can speak for the majority by answering NO, we do not. We find this interpretation to be wholly lacking in purpose, not to mention sound biblical grounding. Even those who do believe that Jesus can and will appear in a physical body at some point do not believe that it will be the way people have imagined.

As we'd pointed out in the first part of this series, early sonship teachers such as George Hawtin, George Warnock and Bill Britton began to challenge traditional thinking regarding the manner of Christ's coming, when they realized that a number of problems arise whenever a corporeal fulfillment is demanded of certain scriptures. For instance, when Rev. 1:7 says *Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him,* the idea of this being a natural sensory experience to which every human eye will witness becomes difficult to accept. Their reasoning was something like this.

There has never been a need to question whether or not Jesus physically ascended out of the sight of those present. The natural ascension of Jesus could be carried out in a visible way after His resurrection, because it was done on a local level. That is to say, it was performed before a specific group of people at a particular place in time. However, it could never have taken place in a way where every human eye could have seen Him at the same time, simply because of certain physical limitations which exist in the world in which we live. What would those be? Well, for one, we live on a round planet. That fact

alone would have prevented every eye from beholding His departure from this world. The same would also be true concerning any physical reappearance He might make, should He come from a particular point in space. (Some, in an attempt to resolve this problem, have suggested that the parousia will be televised around the world via satellite! Now, that *really* requires reading a lot into the script!) Therefore, if all of the elements regarding Jesus's coming have to be fulfilled to the letter, then this is one point which theologians have yet to explain.

While this may seem slightly off the subject of Christ's physical appearing, another problem the round planet factor creates has to do with the idea of a simultaneous physical catching up of the saints around the world. Since it is associated with His coming, however, let's think about it for a moment. If the catching up referred to in I Thess. 4:16-17 is to the physical translation of physical bodies in a specific geographical direction in the sky, then what is UP to believers on one side of the planet would be DOWN for those on the other side. Would not that be true? Some folks would actually have to be *caught down and around* to meet the Lord in the air, if that was the way in which this encounter was to take place. For those who demand that the Scriptures be interpreted at face value and strictly as they are written, then that would constitute a serious violation in the procedure. (The only other alternatives would be to either believe that the rapture would last for a full twenty four hours while the world revolved, or else that Jesus would have to circle the globe, stopping periodically while everyone got on board. We have yet to hear anyone suggest either of these options, but it would not surprise us if they did). Therefore, it only seems logical that an alternative view be considered regarding the manner of His coming, and the events associated with it, rather than limiting ourselves to the natural one.

The main obstacle many have had with this approach presents itself in the words spoken in Acts 1:11. *Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.* To those who are inclined to reading the scriptures with natural understanding, this disallows for any variance in the way we see Christ's appearing. But when we read that Jesus would return *in like manner* as He was seen going away, we find it necessary to ask the question, what is meant by *in like manner*? Does it mean in the exact manner? Or does it mean in a similar manner? There is a big difference, you know. We would draw your attention to the fact that this phrase *in like manner* comes from the Greek word *tropos*, and is also used by Jesus in Matt. 23:37... *O Jerusalem...how often I would have gathered thy children together, even as (tropos) a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings...* No one in their right mind would assume that Jesus wanted everyone in Jerusalem to actually come under His outstretched arms, in exactly the same way that chicks seek refuge under a mother hen. That would be ridiculous. We understand that He was speaking figuratively here. In similar fashion, we could say that during His incarnation, Jesus came *in like manner* as the spotless lamb that was sacrificed at the Feast of Passover. It was similar to, but not an exact duplication of the prototype. After His crucifixion, we could say that He was in the heart of the earth three days and three nights *in like manner* as Jonah's experience in the belly of the whale (Mt. 12:40). We could also say that He carried out His duties behind the veil *in like*

*manner* as the Great High Priest, not in an earthly tabernacle, as did the priests who came before Him, but into heaven itself, in order to make atonement for our sins (Heb. 9:11-12, 24). Many examples like this could be mentioned, but this should adequately demonstrate the fact that *in like manner* does not necessarily mean in exact manner.

There are numerous other reasons that could be cited why sonship teachers have opted for the symbolic method of interpretation regarding this subject, but we really don't have the room to go into them here. (For instance, we could point out that in every instance where the coming of the Lord is mentioned in Scripture, it is not possible that they could all refer to the same event. The fact of the matter is, there are many different comings of the Lord, and six different Greek words which are used in the New Testament to describe those comings or appearances. A careful study of the original text will prove that this is so. Among these references to His return, some of them are applicable to a future event or events. Some of them have present-day applications, describing ways in which the Lord routinely comes to, with, and in His people. And some even refer to comings which have already occurred, such as His coming on the Day of Pentecost, and His coming in judgment to Jerusalem in 70 A.D. These references *demand* that we understand them symbolically, if we are to understand them at all. They could not be understood otherwise. Furthermore, the whole concept of the physical removal of the saints from this world could be brought into question, by simply considering one of the rapturist's favorite passages, Matt. 24:37-42. When Jesus told His disciples that *as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be,* He was certainly not suggesting that the believers would be rescued from this present evil world by means of a rapture, while the unbelievers remained in the earth. Instead, He was informing them that it would be THE WICKED who would be taken, and THE RIGHTEOUS who would be left. If you've never noticed this before, we encourage you to read it carefully for yourself. *For as in the days that were before the flood they [the wicked] were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.* Anyway, as we said, we don't have the space in this article to go into all of our reasons, even though it is extremely tempting to do so.) Suffice it to say that sonship teachings embody the belief that words and phrases such as "caught up," clouds, air, trumpet, etc. are all subject to spiritual interpretation, and are meant to be interpreted in accordance with the way in which they were consistently used in Scripture. By comparing spiritual things with spiritual (I Cor. 2:13), a glorious picture emerges from the pages of God's Word which provides understanding as to how that coming will effect, not only us, but all of creation. It also enables us to develop a vision which is consistent with the overall plan of God. This offers us a certain sense of assurance, knowing that the Lord is working toward a predetermined goal, and is faithfully following a pattern to achieve that goal which He has laid out in Scripture. At the same time, however, looking at His coming from the symbolic perspective also allows for many possibilities in the way His coming might actually play out in the finite details. And that is precisely the thing that makes some people nervous. The uncertainty of those details forces us all to exercise discernment regarding how He might appear, and many people simply have no confidence in their ability to discern such things.

In spite of the cocksure and confident tone in which certain fundamentalist preachers speak, the truth of the matter is that none of us really know for sure how our Lord might manifest Himself in our midst. The Pharisees thought they had the Messiah's first appearing all figured out, and so they were looking intently for the signs which they had associated with it. However, when He did come, because it was not in the way they had expected, they completely missed His appearing, and crucified the Lord of glory. As John the Baptist had told them, *“but there standeth One among you, whom ye know not...”* (Jn. 1:26), their actions proved that he was right. They were focused on the wrong thing. What a sad indictment this was, especially against those who should have been the first to recognize Him! In light of this, we should all leave a little “wiggle room” in our eschatological understanding, not being so concerned about nailing down the precise “HOW” of His coming, but rather the WHO.

But does rejecting the traditional teaching regarding the coming of the Lord and the rapture equate us to, or make us more susceptible to New Age deceptions? Why don't we consider what it is that is actually believed by New Agers, and then we will be better equipped to make a more informed judgment call.

Within the New Age movement, there are different positions taken regarding the parousia. There are those who have totally impersonalized the idea of Christ, and, in doing so, have turned His coming into a totally impersonalized event. For example, the founder of Unity School of Christianity taught that “the first coming of Christ is the receiving of truth in the conscious mind, and the second coming is the awakening and regeneration of the subconsciousness through the superconsciousness of Christ-Mind.” (*The Twelve Powers of Man*, Charles Fillmore, pg. 1). As far as he was concerned, it was not important whether or not the historical man Jesus ever even existed. The first advent of Christ was purely an internal one, and the gospel “story” was just a vehicle which was invented to convey that understanding. To him, and others of his ilk, the second coming is when “It” is awakened within the individual (or when the individual is awakened to “It”), and results in the raising of the individual to a new state of mind. Then, there are others, such as Fr. Matthew Fox, who believe that while the personal and historical Jesus did exist, there must nevertheless be a paradigm shift from our pursuit of, and expectation for the appearance of the historical Jesus to one for the Cosmic Christ, the universal Spirit which (he and others believe) indwells all living things. “A commitment to the full spirit of Jesus today requires that we let go of the quest for the historical Jesus and embark on a quest for the Cosmic Christ.” (*The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, Matthew Fox, pg. 161). For them, it is not an individual for which we should be looking, but the spirit which is in everything around us. At the same time, there are also those among their ranks who believe very strongly that Christ already has been, or either will be incarnated once again in a single individual, who will become manifest in a physical form at a certain point in time. One of those who believed this way was Alice Bailey. In 1948, she wrote, “The coming of the Avatar, the advent of a Coming One, and, in terms of today, the reappearance of the Christ are the keynotes of the prevalent expectancy. When the times are ripe, the invocation of the masses is strident enough and the faith of those who know is keen enough, then always He has come and today will be no exception to this ancient rule or to this universal law. For decades, the

reappearance of the Christ, the Avatar, has been anticipated by the faithful in both hemispheres not only by the Christian faithful, but by those who look for Maitreya and for the Bodhisattva as well as those who expect the Imam Mahdi... This doctrine of Mediators, of Messiahs, of Christs and of Avatars can be found running like a golden thread through all the world faiths and Scriptures and, relating these world Scriptures to some central source of emanation, they are found in rich abundance everywhere. ( *The Reappearance of the Christ*, Alice Bailey, pgs. 5-6). Another who believes along these lines is Benjamin Creme. For quite a number of years now, Mr. Creme, along with his New Age networking organization, the Tara Center, have been promoting and preparing the way for an individual whom they call Lord Maitreya. The introductory web page of *Share International* states, "Many now expect the return of their awaited Teacher, whether they call him the Christ, Messiah, the fifth Buddha, Krishna, or the Imam Mahdi. Few know that the Teacher who fulfills all these expectations already lives among us now."

"Maitreya, the World Teacher, has not come alone, but with a group of wise Teachers who have long guided humanity from behind the scenes. They are returning to the everyday world to help us solve our most critical global problems. Maitreya is not a religious leader, but an educator in the broadest sense. He is here to inspire us to create a new era based on sharing and justice, so that all may have the basic necessities of life: food, shelter, health care, and education. His open mission in the world is about to begin. As Maitreya himself has said: 'Soon, now very soon, you will see my face and hear my words.'" ---end quote.

So far, all we have established is the fact that New Age leaders embody as many different positions regarding this issue of Christ's coming as do those of us in sonship. There are many differing viewpoints held among their ranks, just as is the case with us. But does this lack of consensus somehow constitute *an association* between them and us, as has been suggested by certain critics of sonship? This is a ridiculous line of reasoning, and a desperate attempt to justify these false accusations. If anything, it simply shows that there can be differences of opinions *within* groups on certain issues, without threatening the overall ideology of the whole. But it does not establish a connection with those outside of their group. You see, the things that separate sonship from New Age are the differences which exist between their overall ideologies. It is to these differences that we should now look.

### **1) The One Who is to come will be the same Jesus that is revealed in the Gospels, and not another.**

The gap widens considerably between sonship and New Age teachings when we begin to focus on the One who is to come. Speaking for those who believe that Jesus can and will appear in a physical form of manifestation, we can affirm to you that it will be THE SAME JESUS who walked the shores of Galilee some two thousand years ago, and not another incarnation. *And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? THIS SAME JESUS, which is taken up from you*

*into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.* § Acts 1:10-11). True, He appeared in various forms after His resurrection. He appeared as the gardener to Mary, when she had returned to the tomb after the Sabbath Day had ended. He veiled His identity from the disciples when they returned from their uneventful fishing trip in John 21:1-14. And Mark 16:12 says that Jesus appeared in another form to the two who walked along the road to Emmaus. It was not until He had broken bread with them that their eyes were opened to recognize Him (Lk. 24:30-31). These examples all attest to the wonderful versatility of a glorified existence, a body which has experienced a radical metamorphosis in its anatomical structure, and one which has been freed from the laws of nature. But, in every single case, it was the very same Jesus whom they had known before.

Why is this important to note? Because many New Agers claim that while the coming Christ may be of the same spirit as Jesus, it will nevertheless be a different individual than Him (the latest incarnation of God, the most advanced among the Ascended Masters, or the Masters of Wisdom). Then, there are others who believe that the One who is to come will be a reincarnation of the Christ, that is, the same entity, but one who inhabits a different, or more recent body. Among this group, there is the belief that the same entity that appeared in Jesus of Nazareth also appeared at other times in history as Buddha, Mohammed, Krishna, etc. According to them, the Christ has merely transmigrated from one incarnation to another, and from one generation to another, being born into the various cultures of the world, in order to relate to all people. While we could take up precious space challenging such unscriptural claims, we will simply move on to the next point in our list of distinctions.

## **2) The One Who is to come will endorse the same message which He delivered before, and not another.**

In order to consider this, let's examine a few quotes from Ms. Bailey regarding the message which they expect Christ to bring at His appearing. ○ The development of spiritual recognition is the great need today in preparation for His reappearance; no one knows in what nation He will come; He may appear as an Englishman, a Russian, a Negro, a Latin, a Turk, a Hindu, or any other nationality. Who can say which? He may be a Christian or a Hindu by faith, a Buddhist or of no particular faith at all; He will not come as the restorer of any of the ancient religions, including Christianity... ○ (Ibid, pg. 19). "The work and teaching of the Christ will be hard for the Christian to accept, though easier of assimilation in the East. Nevertheless, some hard blow or some difficult presentation of the truth is badly needed if the Christian world is to be awakened, and if Christian people are to recognize their place within a worldwide divine revelation and see Christ as representing all the faiths and taking His rightful place as World Teacher. He is the World Teacher and not a Christian teacher. He Himself told us that He had other folds and to them He has meant as much as He has meant to the orthodox Christian. They may not call Him Christ, but they have their own name for Him and follow Him as truly and faithfully as their Western brethren." (Ibid, pgs 62-63) "He comes to correct the mistakes and the misrepresentations of those who have dared to interpret His simple words in

terms of their own ignorance, and to recognize those whose faithful service has made His return possible." (Ibid, pg. 55).

We would agree that the physical appearance of Christ is not the issue. Since none of us have any idea how He might have appeared in the days of His flesh, anyway, our recognition of Him could not possibly be based on such things. (Even if we did know, we were admonished by Paul to know Christ no longer after the flesh, but after the Spirit; ref. II Cor. 5:16). However, there is one thing of which we can rest assured, and that is that the One who is to come will NOT be a Hindu or Buddhist by faith, for that would suggest that His teachings were compatible with those found in Hinduism or Buddhism. No, He will endorse the same message which He previously bore in the days of His flesh, but with one main difference. The emphasis will not be on the issue of sin this time, but on the bringing in of full salvation to those who look for Him. As Heb. 9:28 says, *...So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear a second time without sin unto salvation.* *...The Amplified Bible brings it out beautifully... Even so it is that Christ, having been offered to take upon Himself and bear as a burden the sins of many once and once for all, will appear a second time, not to carry any burden of sin nor to deal with sin, but to bring to full salvation those who are [eagerly, constantly, and patiently] waiting for and expecting Him.* *...While there may be a greater clarity brought to the message, and new light shed on obscure portions of Scripture, the message itself will not conflict with that which He delivered two thousand years ago. Instead, it will build upon it.*

Sonship teachers stand united in the fact that the reception of any other Jesus, any other Spirit which claims to be of Him, or any other gospel than that which was clearly declared by the apostles, constitutes a mental constriction of the old serpent himself, and a vile corruption of the truth (Ref. II Cor. 11:3-4). As Paul said, *"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed"* (Gal. 1:8).

### **3) The One Who is to come will perpetuate the same purpose that He has since the beginning, and will not take away from it.**

From the beginning, God has purposed to establish a relationship with man, one which would not only fulfill His own desires for companionship, but also our needs for restoration back into His Image. Throughout the Old Testament, He spoke of this relationship, graphically describing it in its most intimate details. And even though the Israelites knew God to a limited degree through the revelation of the Law, this was not the relationship God had in mind. To them, He was a God afar off, One to whom they had difficulty relating.

Everything changed when Jesus was born into the world. His coming made it possible for God to draw nigh, and to dwell among His people. *"Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us"* (Isa. 7:14; Mt. 1:22-23). Without the

Incarnation, men would have never been able to observe what God was like. However, with the appearance of Emmanuel, God with us, the opportunity presented itself in wondrous fashion. John spoke of it this way. "*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life; for the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us...*" (I Jn. 1:1-3). The beauty of this relationship was the fact that it was based, not on the revelation of His Law, but on the revelation of His Life. Truly, God was with us, manifesting Himself in human form!

For approximately thirty-three and one half years, the people of that generation were privileged to have God with them in the person of Jesus. When they'd seen Him, they'd seen the Father. And yet, toward the end of that period, He told His disciples that His physical departure was necessary, in order that He might take their relationship to a higher level. "*Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.*" (Jn. 16:7). With this announcement, sorrow filled their hearts. Naturally, they didn't want to see Him go. But He assured them that this "Comforter" who was to come would be no stranger to them. In fact, they were already acquainted with Him, whether they were aware of it or not. "***But ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you***" (Jn. 14:17). And, lest for some strange reason any of them should misunderstand what He was telling them, He expressed Himself in the plainest of words by saying, "***I will not leave you comfortless: I will come unto you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day, ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you***" (Jn. 14:18-20). He wanted them to understand that, by His departure in the natural, and by His return in the Spirit, they would discover a closeness with Him which otherwise they would not have known. This was because, while He was manifested as the Son of Man, there were certain limitations regarding that which He was able to accomplish. He could demonstrate eternal life, making it observable for all. And yet, He was unable to impart it (ref. Jn. 7:37-39). But once He was glorified, and returned as the indwelling Spirit of Truth, He could make it experiential to them. He could lead and guide them into all truth. He could take of the things of sonship, and show these unto them. He could bring to their remembrance all that He had spoken unto them, and show them things to come. Even more importantly, He could write His laws on the tables of their hearts, and upon the tables of their minds He could inscribe them. He could rewrite their genetic codes, and make them partakers of His divine nature, thus enabling them to "come unto a perfect Man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). They could become so completely joined to the Lord, they would become One Spirit (I Cor. 6:17)!

You see, His purpose all along was to make His abode in the heart of man, to take up His residence within us. By the establishing of this internal relationship, He is able to provide us with all the things that pertain unto life and godliness (enabling us to live the overcoming life), and we are able to fellowship with Him on a level that satisfies the

deepest desires of His heart. This is why it stands as the primary emphasis of the New Testament. No other relationship can offer as much.

His purpose was not derailed, nor does it need to be gotten back on track. He has consistently been working throughout history, ever since He returned on the Day of Pentecost, to teach men how to be led of His Spirit, to trust in, and to rely entirely upon this line of communication (Rom. 8:14). Furthermore, He will not do anything that would in any way detract from that purpose, either now, or at any time in the future. For this reason, we do not believe that He intends to return in order to take up residence, or to live among us as a fellow citizen of planet earth. (In case anyone might be wondering, this also means that we reject the idea that He plans to dwell in a temple made of hands, or to be seated upon a throne in natural Jerusalem.) Neither do we believe that He will be touring the country, giving lectures and/or seminars, teaching the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. As is reflected in the following quote from Ms. Bailey, the idea held by many within the New Age movement is that Christ's mission will be to educate and to inform, to discuss and to debate, to resolve mankind's problems through logical, rational and intellectual answers. "All of this will not come as the result of some proclamation or some stupendous planetary event which will force human beings everywhere to say: 'Lo, He is there! Lo: here are the signs of His divinity!' for that would evoke only antagonism and laughter, resistance or fanatical credulity. It will come as a recognition of potency of leadership, through dynamic but logical changes in world affairs, and through action taken by the masses of the people from the depths of their own consciousness." (Ibid, pg. 47) What she is saying here is that the way in which we will recognize the Christ will be by His great skills as a leader, by His ability to address the problems in society in a logical fashion, and His ability to persuade people that they have the power within them to initiate change. But we believe that when He appears, the time for verbal public teaching will just about be over (ref. Heb. 8:11). He will simply be doing all that He has said that He would do, regarding this salvation ready to be revealed in the last times.

We cannot rule out whether or not Christ might make certain brief personal appearances in the midst of various gatherings of believers, confirming the words which have been proclaimed beforehand. To our minds, this remains a very real possibility. Since His ascension, various individuals have testified that Jesus has manifested Himself to them in a tangible manner, and, considering the effects of those visitations, we have no reason to question their accounts. But it seems to us that the idea that He will come for an extended period of time to teach us His ways, to once again dwell among us as the Son of man, and to lead us in an external manner like an earthly King or Potentate, would cause men to revert back to an inferior relationship, and to rely on something that He once took away. "*He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second*" (Heb. 10:9).

**4) The One Who is to come is not returning for an opportunity for spiritual advancement, or to participate in some kind of an initiation rite into a higher order, but He has already been perfected forever after the order of Melchisedek.**

New Agers who look for His appearing believe that the Christ will personally benefit from His reentry, in that He will have the chance to advance to an even higher dimension

of spiritual enlightenment and power than that to which He has already attained. "He too is facing a major test, preparatory to a great initiation and when He has passed the test and fulfilled His task, He will pass to a still more exalted position in the Father's House or to some distant place of service where only the most exalted can follow Him; His present position will then be taken by the One Whom He has prepared and trained. But before all this can happen, He must again enter the public arena, play His part in world affairs, and prove the scope of His mission." (Ibid, pgs. 55-56).

On the other hand, those who share in the beliefs of sonship agree that when Jesus returned to the glory which He had with the Father before the world began, He ascended "far above all heavens", that is to say, above every individual plane and level that exists in the spiritual realm. Therefore, He is not awaiting an opportunity to improve His position, or hoping to accomplish a task which He'd left unfinished, but, having finished the work which He came to do, He now possesses a name above every name, and occupies the highest position that could possibly be held. "*Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered And **being made perfect**, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all who obey Him.*" (Heb. 5:9).

#### **5) The One Who is to come will come in supernatural power and in glory.**

While there might not be unanimity among sonship teachers concerning the way in which Jesus will appear (whether physically or spiritually), that He *will* appear in absolute power and in majesty has never been in question. Regardless of how He chooses to manifest Himself, and regardless of when, all of us agree that **there will be no mistaking His Presence, and that His coming will not be done in a corner.** (In other words, the evening news anchors will not be able to explain it away as some strange natural occurrence!) Furthermore, the effects of His Presence will likewise be inimitable, unparalleled and undeniable. It will have a universal impact, in every part of the world, and will ultimately result in the restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began (ref. Acts 3:20-21). Needless to say, this is no small feat!

Speaking for New Agers, Ms. Bailey says that "He does not come as the omnipotent God of man's ignorant creation, but as the Christ, the Founder of the Kingdom of God on earth, to complete the work that He started, and again to demonstrate divinity in far more difficult circumstances." (Ibid, pg. 55) But speaking for those of us in sonship, Paul says that we are "*looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ*" (Titus 2:13). Therefore, our expectations could not be more different. We believe that He will appear as both our great God and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His appearing will be glorious, beyond anything that we could ever imagine!

If, as Ms. Bailey contended, the idea of Christ appearing in His Omnipotence is the ignorant invention of man, then John the revelator must have been among the most ignorant of inventors. Consider this highly figurative picture he provides for us in Rev. 19:11-16: "*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon*

*Him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and His name is called THE WORD OF GOD...and out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS"* (Rev. 19:11-16). We don't know about you, but we find nothing here that suggests anything less than the absolute authority, power and might of the coming One! He bursts upon the scene in majesty and strength, conquering all His foes!

Perhaps, by beholding Him in His glistening garments of beauty and glory, it will trigger the Spirit of resurrection within us, which will, in turn, produce a quickening in our mortal bodies (ref. Rom. 8:11). At that instant, corruptible shall put on incorruption, mortal shall put on immortality (see I Cor. 15:51-57). The cells of our bodies will be transfigured, and we will experience for ourselves "*the adoption, yea, to wit, the redemption of our bodies*" (Rom. 8:23). Exactly how all this will play out in the finite details remains to be seen. But this much we know. "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: **but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is***" (I Jn. 3:2). Who knows...following the transfiguration of a firstfruits company, He may continue to appear to other groups of individuals, as they are prepared to meet Him at His coming. He may come and go at random, appearing and disappearing at will, much like He did after His resurrection. Who can say? At any rate, however it may be, and whenever it may be, we certainly want to be among the first in line to see Him as He is!

Now, going back to what we§d said before, Tykie and I have not allowed this issue to separate us from other sonship teachers who might differ with our position. We have friends on both sides of the table. We have to ask ourselves, ***what does it matter?*** Is it really *that* important? Is He any less real in spiritual form as He was / is in the flesh? And is He any less capable of fulfilling all that He promised He would do, if He should only appear to us in the essence of His Spirit? We know that this might not exactly gel with some folks, but this is the way we see it. For three and a half years, Jesus manifested Himself in physical form, ministering daily among the masses, and personally disciplining twelve men whom He had handpicked to become His diplomatic representatives on the earth. These twelve men ate with Him, slept with Him, walked with Him, and talked with Him. They hung onto His every word, and sought desperately to gain an understanding of them. They witnessed His miracles, up close and personally, and they even participated in the performance of many of those miracles themselves. They marveled at His ways, and examined the moral and ethical example He set before them. If He would have succumbed to temptation at any point, or at any time during this earthly sojourn, surely they would have known! And yet, not one of their testimonies contradicted the distinct and explicit words of Paul: ○(He) was in all points tempted like as we are, ***yet without sin***○ (Heb. 4:15).

In spite of the example that He set before them, in spite of the teachings which He provided so plainly, and in spite of the miracles which He so powerfully performed in their midst, at the conclusion of His earthly endeavor, when He was about to depart from them, His disciples remained unconverted! His words to Peter make this painstakingly clear: *○And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren○* (Lk. 22:32).

It is a generally accepted fact that when Jesus returned in the power of His Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, He accomplished more *in one split second* than had been accomplished in all those years of public and private ministry. (Let no one misconstrue this to mean that what was accomplished in the natural, i.e. the crucifixion, death, and resurrection, was unnecessary, or was of secondary importance. Perish the thought!) But He wrought a heart change so great, so profound, so absolutely radical, that ordinary men and women received the strength and courage to come out into the open with their beliefs, and to demonstrate before the whole world the indwelling power of His resurrection. They were transformed from the inside out, and in no small way!

What was done on the Day of Pentecost was done without requiring a physical, bodily manifestation of Jesus. Why then are we required to believe that anything else He has purposed to do has to be any different?

Regardless of where we stand on the matter, we should all ask ourselves: if He should choose to appear in a physical way, would that disappoint us, or somehow disturb our doctrinal position regarding His coming? Or if He should perform His work apart from any physical manifestation whatsoever, would that frustrate us in any way? Would we feel that He had somehow cheated us out of a part of "the blessed hope," and deprived us of the full experience of the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ? If our answer to either of these questions (as they apply to us) is No, then we should then ask ourselves why we have allowed this issue to become such a divisive one.

One of the primary rules of logic is referred to as the Undistributed Middle. It is explained this way. Just because two things have something in common does not necessarily mean that they are one and the same. For example, we cannot make a logical assumption that just because a man has a brain and a monkey has a brain, that a man is the same as a monkey. (Some women may disagree here.) There are common features shared between these species, yes, but there are radical differences, as well. It is by the comparison of both the similarities and the differences that ultimately determines the status of a thing's being.

To summarize, then, does the fact that some in sonship do not believe that Jesus will appear in a physical form equate it with New Age? Certainly not. As we have sought to point out in this response, many in New Age DO believe in a physical appearance, and hold such an appearance as their hope. Therefore, the question might just as well be turned around—does the fact that many in mainstream Christianity believe in a physical appearing and many in New Age believe the same mean that mainstream Christianity is somehow supportive of, or in league with New Age? This line of reasoning reveals its own flaws, without any help from us.

To be continued...

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