

# **The Path to Happiness**

## **Divine Principle Lecture Series**

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### **Lecture 14**

#### **John the Baptist and the Second Coming of Elijah**

##### **SLIDE 1**

Welcome back to our series on the Unification Principle. I'm your host, Dr. Tyler Hendricks. We learned in the last session that Jesus came to make us perfect and bring God's kingdom. But he was rejected, and we still have so much sin and live in a world of suffering. We surely do not want to reject Jesus when he comes back. So we can benefit by what the Bible reveals about the turning point between Jesus being accepted and rejected in this session.

##### **SLIDE 2**

We are going to examine Jesus' relationship with John the Baptist, who was a great religious leader in Israel at the same time as Jesus. He was also Jesus' cousin. To understand John, we have to know something about the Jewish religious expectations.

##### **SLIDE 3**

The Old Testament ends with the Book of Malachi, written around 431 BCE.

→ Malachi, in this book, foretold that Elijah would come again: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes." (Mal 4:5) So the Jewish people believed that Elijah would come before the Messiah. Who was Elijah?

##### **SLIDE 4**

During the period of the divided kingdoms of north and south,

→ Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, with the power of God. (1 Kings 18)

→ Elijah fled from a wicked queen, and ascended to heaven in a whirlwind before he could complete his divine mission, which he passed down to Elisha. (2 Kings 2)

→ But now Malachi said that Elijah would return

→ to open the way for the Messiah. The Jewish people believed in the prophecies of Scripture, and fervently hoped for the advent of the Messiah. Yet we should know that they longed just as eagerly for the return of Elijah.

##### **SLIDE 5**

Nevertheless, before any sign of Elijah coming, Jesus suddenly appeared and claimed to be the Messiah. It is no wonder that Jesus' appearance and proclamation stirred up all of Jerusalem in great confusion. Jesus' disciples were asked questions about Elijah. (Mt. 17:10)

→ The disciples turned to Jesus asking, "Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?"

→ Jesus replied that John the Baptist was the very Elijah for whom the people were awaiting. (Mt 11:14; Mt 17:13)

##### **SLIDE 6**

Contradicting what Jesus said, John the Baptist himself flatly denied that he was Elijah. (John 1:21)

→ The Jewish scribes believed in John the Baptist, not Jesus.

## SLIDE 7

→ Jesus was uneducated, who suddenly appeared and made big claims with no foundation. He called himself the “Lord of the Sabbath” even though he broke the Sabbath laws (Mt. 5:17).

→ Jesus’ disciples were simple fishermen, tax collectors, prostitutes and sinners, with whom he would eat and drink. (Mt. 11:19)

## SLIDE 8

→ Jesus claimed himself to be equal with God (Jn. 14:9), and

→ that no one can enter heaven except through him (Jn. 14:6). Thus, to the Jewish people who lived according to the Jewish law, Jesus’ words and deeds appeared to attack God.

→ Hence, it is not surprising that the Jewish leadership rebuked and mocked him, accusing him of being possessed by the devil (Mt. 12:24).

## SLIDE 9

On the other hand,

→ John the Baptist was born to a prominent family; he was the son of Zechariah, a high priest. (Luke 1:9-66) The miracles and signs surrounding John’s conception and birth surprised all the hill country of Judea.

→ Furthermore, John led an exemplary life of faith and discipline in the wilderness, surviving on locusts and wild honey. (Lk 3:15; Jn 1:20). He was well-educated, famous for his powerful ministry of repentance, and he had thousands of followers.

→ Some Jewish people thought he might even be the messiah.

## SLIDE 10

Considering these circumstances, when the Jewish people of Jesus’ day compared

→ Jesus and

→ John the Baptist, without a doubt,

→ John’s words had more credibility.

→ Since the people believed John, they considered Jesus’ words to be a fabrication concocted to support his dubious claim to be the Messiah.

→ Consequently, Jesus was condemned as an impostor.

→ Since pious Jews would not even consider denying the scriptural words that Elijah must come before the messiah, they were left with no other choice but to disbelieve in Jesus.

## SLIDE 11

Let’s do a little more assessment of John. The angel Gabriel actually spoke to Zechariah about John.

→ The angel told John’s father: “And he will go as forerunner before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him.” It’s in the Bible, Luke 1:17.

## SLIDE 12

Before this all came to a head, John shouted out,

→ “I am the voice of one shouting in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.” (John 1:23) According to these Bible verses, John the Baptist indeed came as Elijah, to prepare the way for the messiah.

→ Now, if John the Baptist had carried out this mission to become one with Jesus, throwing all his support behind Jesus, would Jesus have died on the cross? No! Jesus could have established God’s will

without suffering on the cross.

### **SLIDE 13**

→ He would have been the wonderful counselor, the Prince of Peace, upon whose throne justice and mercy would have poured down like water.

→ All the prophecies of the Lord of Glory would have been fulfilled.

→ If John the Baptist had testified to Jesus AND listened to Jesus, became his first disciple, brought all his followers, worked with the Jerusalem Temple and leadership of Israel, God's providence would have been realized during that time.

### **SLIDE 14**

God did reveal who Jesus was to John, but John neglected it, and turned away from Jesus. He began a ministry of preaching against the king. John the Baptist strongly criticized Herod Antipas' illegal marriage.

→ As a result, he was confined in prison and eventually executed.

### **SLIDE 15**

In prison, John tried to resolve his doubts by sending his disciples to Jesus, asking,

→ "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Matt. 11:3)

→ Jesus answered him indirectly that he is indeed the Messiah. "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense in me." (Matt. 11:4-5)

→ Jesus went on to testify that John was Elijah, and concluded, "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (Matt. 11:11)

### **SLIDE 16**

John the Baptist was the prepared central figure who was supposed to make the way for Jesus. He was the most blessed religious leader.

→ But John couldn't unite with Jesus, and because he couldn't believe and attend Jesus as the Messiah,

→ Jesus had to walk the lonely path,

→ completely exposed to the opposition of the institutional religion, and eventually die on the cross.

### **SLIDE 17**

Accordingly, John the Baptist's disbelief, his failure to lead his disciples by offering everything and attending Jesus, became the greatest cause of Jesus' death on the cross. We have learned that John the Baptist's ignorance and disbelief in Jesus brought about so much suffering for Jesus and all humanity ever since.

→ Our takeaway is that we can't blame John or the people of his times; it is not easy to recognize the Messiah.

→ Instead, we have to study about the reality of Jesus, what made him the messiah, and how I can become like him, and how I can recognize his return.

### **SLIDE 18**

In a subsequent presentation, we will discuss the meaning of salvation through the cross, but first

→ we will talk about what happened right after the cross, that is resurrection. I think you'll find it interesting, because we make it very realistic. Thanks for listening, and God bless you.

John the Baptist and the  
Second Coming of Elijah





## The Relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist





400 years



**Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. (Mal 4:5)**



## **Elijah's Mission**

To eradicate Baal worship

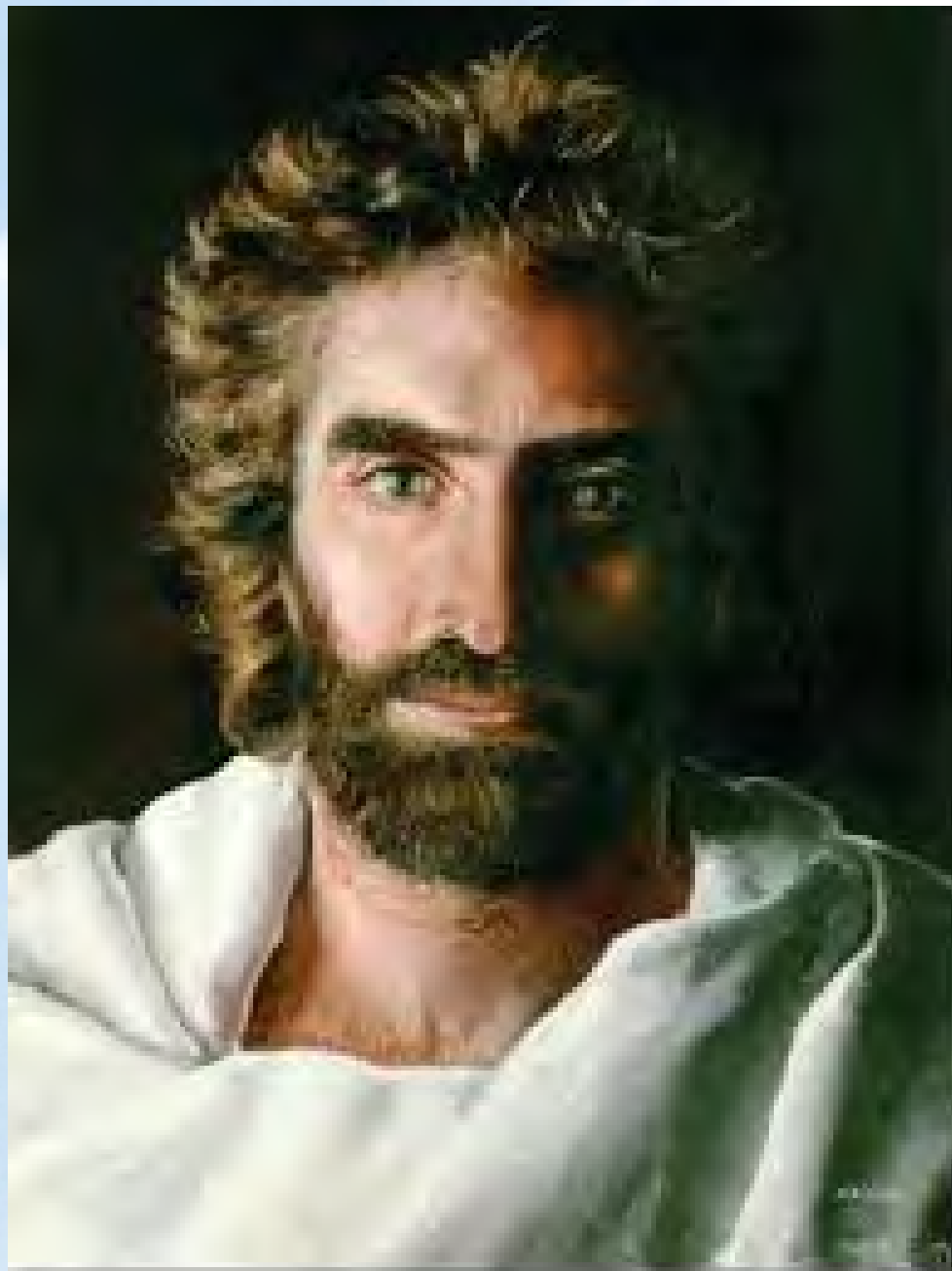


Elijah ascended to Heaven  
before completing his divine  
mission (2 Kings 2:11)

## **Elijah's New Mission**

To open the way for the  
Messiah





Before any signs of  
Elijah's coming,  
Jesus appeared and  
claimed to be the  
Messiah

### Questions to the disciples

“Where is Elijah who is  
to come before the  
Messiah?”

Matthew 17:10

### Jesus' answer

John the Baptist is the  
Elijah you have been  
waiting for.

Matthew 11:14, 17:13



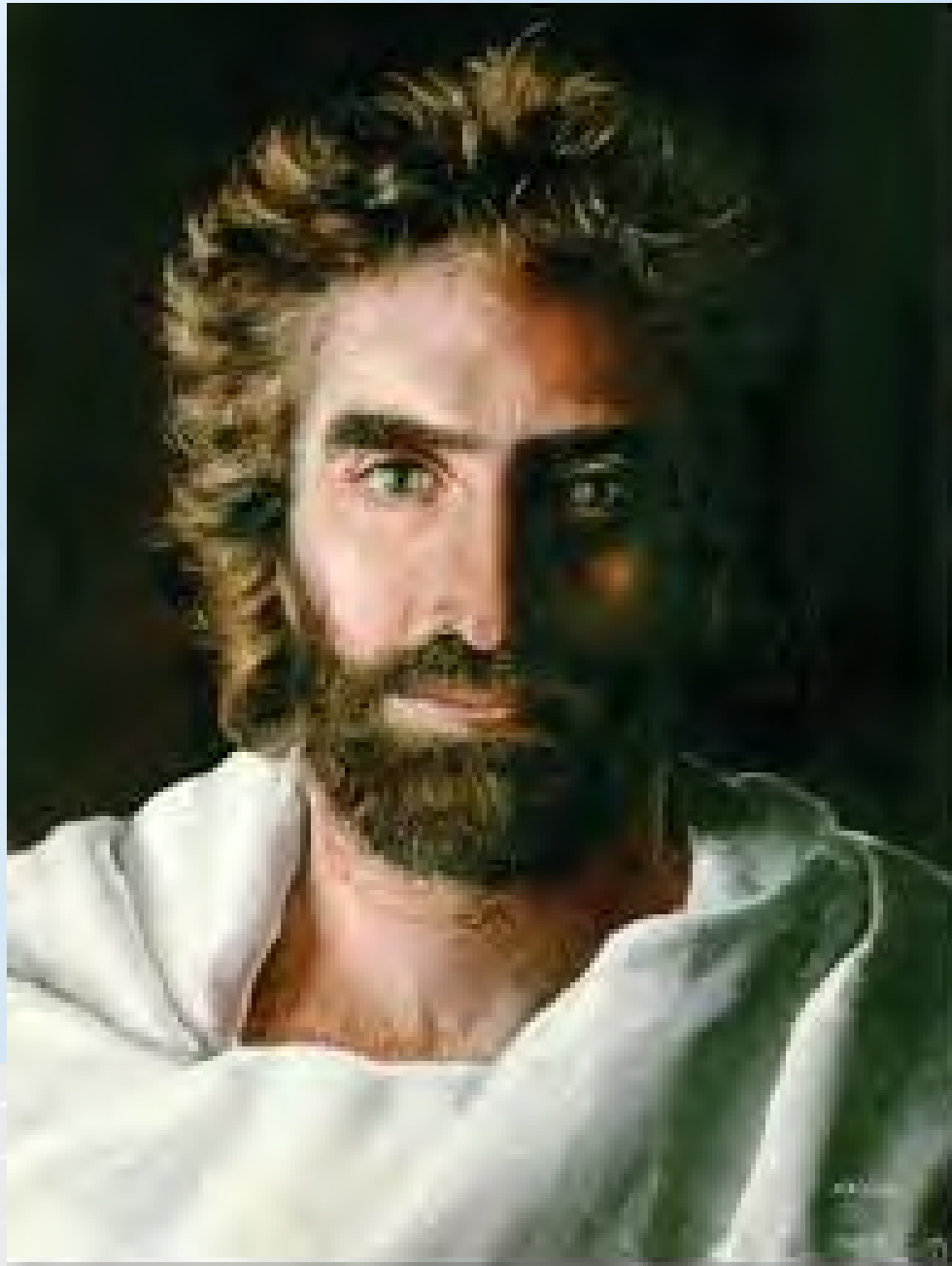


John the Baptist **flatly**  
**denied that he was Elijah**  
John 1:21

The scribes believed John  
the Baptist more than they  
did Jesus.



# Jesus as viewed by the religious people

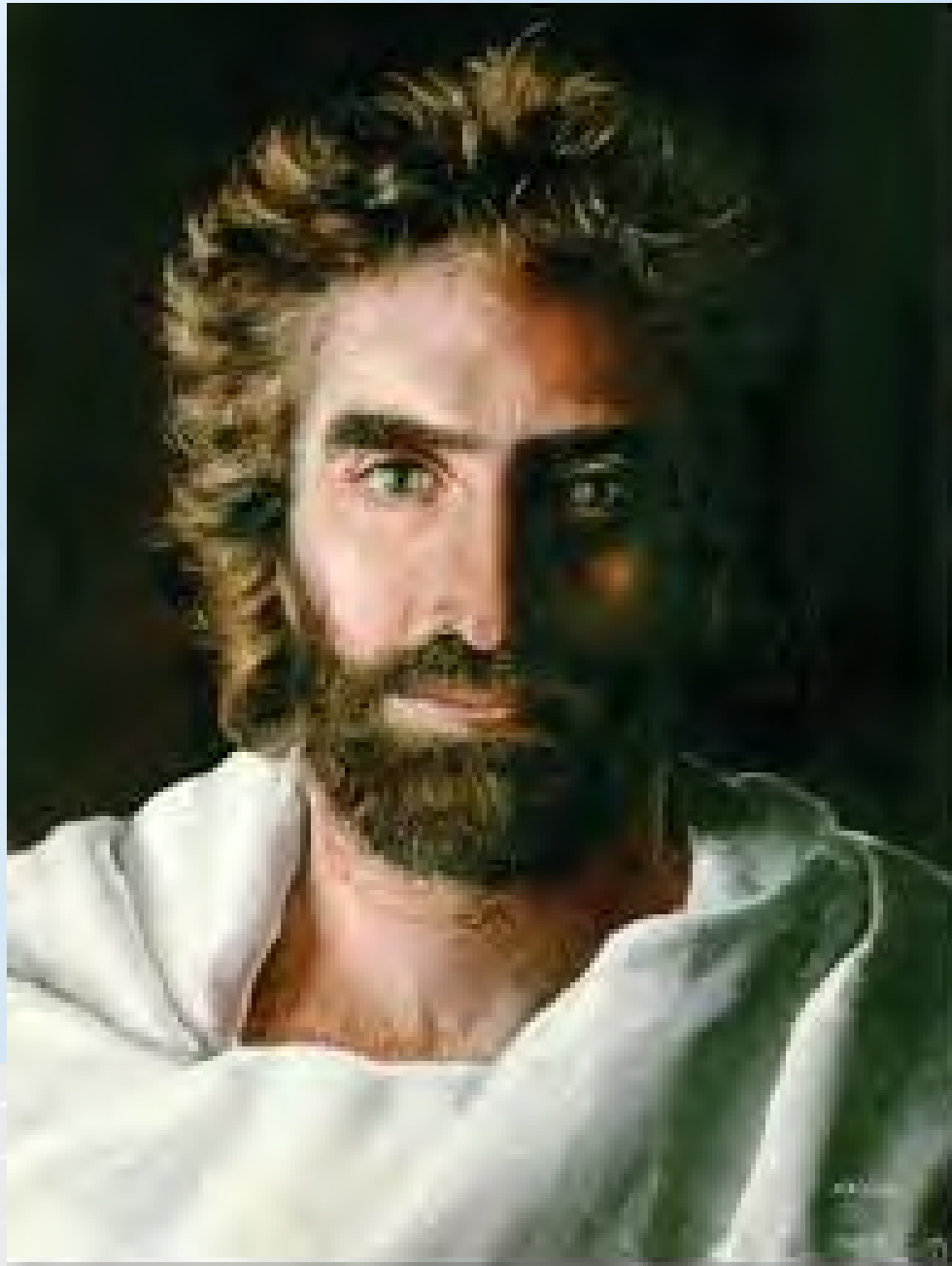


Poor and low-class.  
Called himself Lord of the  
Sabbath, while breaking the  
Sabbath laws.  
Matthew 12:1, 5:17

A friend of fishermen,  
prostitutes, sinners  
Matthew 11:19



## Jesus as viewed by the religious people



Jesus claimed himself to be  
equal with God  
- John 14:9 -

He claimed that no one can  
enter heaven except through  
him - John 14:6 -



No surprise he was rebuked, mocked,  
considered possessed by the devil



## John as viewed by the religious people



From a prominent family, son of Zechariah, a high priest  
Luke 1:13

Ate locusts and wild honey,  
an exemplary ascetic life  
Luke 3:15, John 1:20



Greatly respected, even might be the Messiah.



**John is Elijah**  
Matthew 11:14



**Dubious claim**

**I am not Elijah**  
John 1:21



**Believable**

People



Jesus' claim was seen as a fabrication concocted to support his dubious claim to be the Messiah.





And he will go as forerunner  
before the Lord in the spirit and  
power of Elijah, to turn the  
hearts of the fathers back to  
their children and the  
disobedient to the wisdom of  
the just, to make ready for the  
Lord a people prepared for him.

Luke 1:17



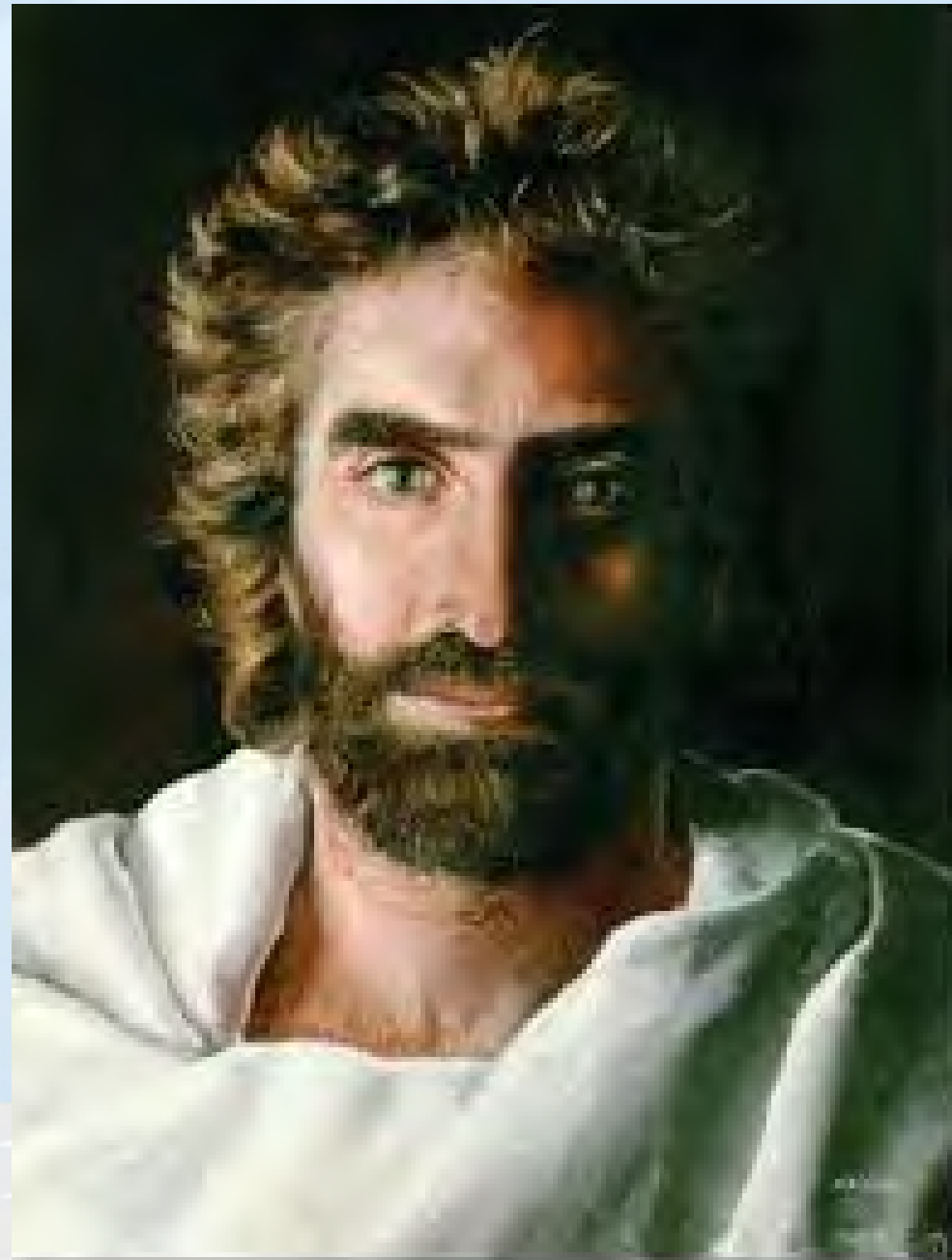


“I am the voice of one shouting in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.’”

John 1:23

If John the Baptist had **become one with Jesus**, Jesus could have established God's Will without suffering on the cross.





Jesus would have reigned as wonderful counselor, Prince of Peace

The prophecies of the Lord of Glory would have been fulfilled



God's providence would have been realized at that time.





John preached  
against Herod  
Antipas's marriage



John was confined  
in prison and  
executed for this.





Are you he who  
is to come, or  
shall we look for  
another?

Matthew 11:3

Go and tell John what you hear and see:  
the blind receive their sight and the lame  
walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf  
hear, and the dead are raised up, and the  
poor have good news preached to them.  
And blessed is he who takes no offense  
in me.

Matthew 11:4-5

Truly, I say to you, among those born  
of women there has risen no one  
greater than John the Baptist; yet he  
who is least in the kingdom of heaven  
is greater than he.

Matthew 11:11





John was the most blessed religious leader

John couldn't believe in and attend Jesus as the Messiah



He exposed Jesus to opposition from the institutional religion, leading to his crucifixion





The crucifixion of the Lord caused terrible suffering for the world

We cannot blame John, but we can learn the path of the Messiah, and how hard it is to recognize him.



We can study about the reality of Jesus, how to become like him, and how to recognize him at his return.





What is the  
meaning of  
salvation through  
the cross?

First we will talk  
about the  
resurrection.