

## Discovering the Divine Principle Session 7

Andrew Compton  
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### Session 7

#### The Mission of the Messiah part 2

**1** Welcome, my name is- and it is my great pleasure to be your host for this session of the series, “discovering the Divine Principle, the Mission of the Messiah, part 2”

The content that we will be studying comes from the Divine Principle, the chapter on the Mission of the Messiah. The Divine Principle is a revelation from God that was given to the Rev. Sun Myung Moon.

**2** As we shared in the last session, when Rev Moon was just 15 years old, Jesus appeared to him on Easter Morning, 1935, as he was praying on a mountain near his home. **3** At that time, Jesus revealed to the young man that God had intended for Jesus to be a living Messiah, that he was to restore God’s ideal, the family that Adam and Eve should have established at the beginning of human history. **4** He also revealed that the path of the cross became necessary only because the people rejected him.

The question that often comes when we hear this is – **5** “If God wanted Jesus to be received and accepted, then why didn’t God make that happen?”

We know God prepared the foundation for Jesus’s ministry. However, as we have learned God designed us with a **6** portion of responsibility, especially when it comes to love. God could not force Adam and Eve to love Him, and God could not force the people to believe in, follow, and love Jesus.

**7** The biblical history from Adam to Abraham and then from Abraham to the birth of Jesus is a story of God preparing a people to receive the Messiah.

Think about it. Was God’s primary objective in history to prepare a people to kill his son? No. If the key to salvation was the death of God’s son – that could have happened from the beginning, **8** when Cain murdered Abel.

**9** God knows that it is the nature of evil to destroy the good. That is why it took so long for God to send Jesus. **10** God did not want to send His son until He had prepared a situation in which Jesus could avoid being killed. God’s goal was to prepare a place that would protect Jesus from the evil of this world.

**11** There can be no doubt that God was working to raise up a people of faith, a people able to receive the Messiah. If you asked the people of faith at the time of Jesus, **12** “Does God want you to receive the Messiah or kill the Messiah?”, they would all say that God wants them **13** to receive the Messiah. Only evil people, such as King Herod wanted to kill the Messiah.

**14** The reason Jesus was killed is not because he was the Messiah. He was killed because the people **15** thought that he was *not* the Messiah. They thought he was a false prophet, a blasphemer, a threat to true religion.

**16** How did God expect the people to know that Jesus was the Messiah? That was the mission that God gave John the Baptist. **17** John the Baptist’s mission was to prepare the way for Jesus. John the Baptist is the one who was to announce to the world that Jesus was the Messiah.

Before we look more closely at John the Baptist, let’s take a look at what led up to the birth of John and Jesus.

If we look at the history leading up to Jesus’ birth, we can clearly recognize God’s effort to prepare a people able to receive His son. We call this **18** the foundation for the Messiah.

To use an analogy, the foundation is like a runway for landing an airplane. If the Messiah is an airplane that God wants to land on the earth, God can’t send the Messiah until we create the runway. God needs a representative people to do that.

**19** The preparation really began in Abraham’s family, 2,000 years before the birth of Christ.

20 Abraham and his son Isaac showed great faith in God. And then Isaac's sons, Esau and Jacob were able to overcome their fallen nature and embrace after 21 years of animosity. For this reason God renamed Jacob Israel. And God determined that he would send the Messiah to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob— the Israelites.

But, in a world where there were kingdoms and empires and with great armies, the foundation of one family was not enough. 21 God needed to raise up a people, a kingdom, that would be able to receive His son. And so, after the Israelites had spent 22 400 years in Egypt, God sent 23 Moses to bring them out of Egypt to the land of Canaan to form a nation. In Canaan, centered on Moses and the laws God had given Moses (I am sure you have heard of the Ten Commandments), God was planning to send the Messiah. But it did not go well. The people rebelled against Moses and he eventually died in the wilderness.

24 400 years later God tried again to prepare a foundation for the Messiah through the kings Saul, David, and Solomon. 25 God's hope was that the Kings would unite the people around the Temple. For that purpose God had the kings build the Temple. The Temple was a symbol of the coming Messiah. In it the word of God, the Ten Commandments were kept. This would prepare the people to unite with the Messiah when he came. But the Kings failed to do God's will. 26 The third, King Solomon built the Temple, but corrupted it with evil forms of worship. Later this would lead to such extremes as the sacrifice of children as offerings to false idols.

27 To remedy this, God sent prophets. One famous one that you may have heard of was Elijah. God wanted the prophets to turn the people back to God's word and the Temple. But Israel rejected the prophets and eventually was invaded by outside forces. 28 The Temple was destroyed, and the people were taken into captivity in Babylon.

In Babylon the Israelites repented for their sins, and eventually they were able to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their city and the second Temple. Nehemiah and Malachi revived God's words. Through Malachi, the last book of the Hebrew Scriptures, God proclaimed that the Messiah would come, but before he came, God would send the prophet Elijah once again in order to prepare the people by turning the hearts of the fathers to their children and hearts of the children to their fathers.

And God gave a warning – if this does not happen, a curse will come on the land.

400 years later, 29 Jesus was born. But what about the return of Elijah and the preparation of the people's hearts?

30 Now, let's talk about John the Baptist. His story is in the Gospel of Luke. 400 years after Malachi, an angel appeared in the Temple and spoke to the chief priest on duty that year, Zechariah. 31 The angel told him that his wife, Elizabeth, who had been unable to have children, would give birth to a son he should name John and that this child would go forth with the spirit and power of Elijah. This means that John was actually the "Elijah" that God had promised He would send before the coming of the Messiah.

And it says in Luke 1:65 that these amazing events, the coming of the angel, John's miraculous birth, were all well-known throughout the land of Judea. And so the people were watching what would become of John with great expectation.

32 Well, John grew up and eventually went into the wilderness to fast and pray. There, God told him that He, God, would show him the Messiah. With that news, John came out of the wilderness to the river Jordan and there, with great excitement, began to proclaim the news that "the Kingdom of God is at hand", that the Messiah is going to appear. And the multitudes come to John to repent of their sins and to be baptized.

This is the foundation that God needed. Here was a people, united in faith by the ministry of John the Baptist, ready to receive the Messiah.

Once John the Baptist had established himself as a spiritual leader, 33 Jesus, at the age of 30, came to be baptized. And when Jesus emerged from the water, John saw God's spirit come upon Jesus and he heard the voice of God say, "This is my son in whom I am well pleased." And John testified that Jesus was the Messiah.

At this point, what was God expecting to happen? God intended for John to humble himself and 34 believe in, follow, and love Jesus. He was to have been Jesus' first disciple. And then John's associates, people of faith, people who had been longing and waiting for the Messiah, would have all become disciples of Jesus.

But that never happened. In fact, one of the reasons Jesus was 35 rejected was that he testified to himself. (John 8:13) According to Jewish law, there had to be at least two witnesses to prove something. John and his disciples should have been those witnesses.

36 We know that when Jesus went to the synagogue in Nazareth and testified to himself, the people wanted to stone him. If I were to boast to you that I am the world's greatest teacher, you would be critical even before I said one word. But if someone you respected deeply told you that I am a great teacher, then you would at least want to listen and hear me out.

37 John, not Jesus, should have gone to the synagogue to proclaim that Jesus was the Messiah. They all knew John was a prophet of God. They know about his birth, that it was announced by an angel of God. If John had told the people that Jesus was the Messiah, Israel could have received Jesus. And not only Israel. 38 Through Israel, Jesus could have reached out to 39 the East, where the wise men who had brought gifts at his birth had come from. God had prepared to those lands as well. And eventually, 40 even Rome could have been transformed through this new teaching. Judaism was widespread and very influential throughout the empire. This is how Jesus could have become the victorious living Messiah. 41 As the Messiah, he would have taken a bride and established God's family rooted in God's love. In this way, Jesus and his bride, standing as the True Parents of humanity, would have begun God's kingdom here on earth.

42 But what happened? John did not follow Jesus. After he testified to Jesus, he went his own way. 43 He kept his own disciples. In Matthew 9:14, we read how John's disciples were critical of Jesus and his disciples because they were not fasting.

And John's teachings differed from the Gospel. John was teaching the laws of Moses according to the old way. Jesus was teaching a new way. When the woman was caught in the act of adultery, according to the law, 44 she had to be stoned to death. But Jesus said, 45 "Let he who has no sin cast the first stone." If you check the New Testament accounts you will find that at the time John was casting stones at the king's house, accusing the king of adultery. And so the king threw him into prison.

And when John was in prison, he revealed that he had lost faith in Jesus. He sent his disciples to Jesus to ask if he were the Messiah or not. This was the same John who was told directly by God who Jesus was, who had earlier testified that Jesus was the Messiah.

And, in addition to not following Jesus, John outright denied being Elijah. This is recorded in John 1:21. 46 This was a serious problem for Jesus, because later, when Jesus was asked, "If you are the Messiah, then where is Elijah who, according to scripture, must come first?" Jesus answered in Matthew 11:14 and 17:12 that John the Baptist was Elijah.

According to Luke 3:4-6, John was the voice in the wilderness preparing the way for the Lord, to make the way straight and smooth, to make that runway upon which Jesus could land. But instead, 47 John the Baptist blocked the way to Jesus. When John, the highly respected and educated son of a priest, denied that he was Elijah, he made Jesus, who was the uneducated son of a carpenter, 48 appear to be a false Messiah. John's words and actions made it impossible for those who believed in scripture to believe in Jesus.

49 In Matthew 11:11, Jesus taught that John would be lower than the least in heaven. What does that mean? In Matt 5:19, Jesus explained that to be the least in heaven is to be someone who guides others away from God's will. This was how Jesus characterized John.

After John was killed in prison, what could Jesus do? 50 He had to find someone else to testify to him. But because of John's failure, none of the religious leaders God had loved and prepared were willing to stand up for Jesus. And so Jesus gathered disciples from the common people, people who may have been uneducated, but who had sincere hearts. At one point he took the three disciples who were closest to him, 51 Peter, James and John, up on a mountain, called the Mount of Transfiguration. On this mountain they saw Moses and Elijah from the spirit world and heard God's voice saying, 52 "This is my son, in whom I am well pleased." These were the same words God had spoken to John the Baptist.

If these disciples could have been faithful to Jesus, believed in and followed him, there would have been a way for Jesus to continue on the path as the living Messiah. But, tragically, even they were not able to sustain their faith.

Just before he was arrested, Jesus took these same disciples late at night to the Garden of Gethsemane. There, he gave them an opportunity to their faith love for him. He asked them to stay awake and watch while he prayed.

**53** He walked deeper into the Garden and prayed to God, with tears mingled with sweat and blood. He pleaded with God to open another way to go, besides that of the cross.

Many have thought that in that moment Jesus experienced weakness. But nothing could be further from the truth. If Jesus thought that dying on the cross could end the evil in this world, if he thought it would end God's suffering and fulfill God's kingdom of Heaven on Earth, he would have been willing to be crucified a 100 times.

**54** The reason he prayed as he did is because he knew that if he went the path of cross, evil would continue to dominate this world. Evil would attack his followers in the future with persecution and death. He also foresaw that the chosen people of Israel would suffer greatly. He knew that all humanity would have to go through a tragic course and God's heart would be broken again.

But God did not answer his prayer. Why? **55** It's because the disciples slept. They were not able to demonstrate their love for Jesus. Jesus awoke them and chastised them, and asked them to stay awake just this hour. He prayed again the same prayer – but again the disciples slept. He tried a third time, but the disciples slept again. It was clear no one on this earth truly loved Jesus more than their own life. Furthermore, Jesus's main disciple, Peter, would later deny that he knew Jesus three times.

This is why Jesus had to go the way of the cross. **56** The faithlessness at Moses' time was repeated in Jesus time. And so, as Moses lifted up the serpent, Jesus had to be lifted up on the cross. And on the cross Jesus won a victory of love. He loved humankind, those who deserved to perish. He loved us and asked God to forgive us. This is what enabled God to resurrect Jesus.

And what next? **57** For 40 days, the resurrected Jesus gathered his disciples. And he tested them. He challenged them to love him and to care for those who believed in him. Finally, they united in their love for Jesus and determined to follow him.

**58** And on that foundation, Pentecost came. The spirit of God came like a wind and lit a fire of faith in the Upper room where the disciples were gathered. A new faith began, centered on the resurrected Jesus. Through this new faith, which the world knows as Christianity, God began to prepare a foundation upon which He could send the Messiah once again.

**59** Over the past 2,000 years, the Christian faith has spread to the world, proclaiming that the Messiah will return. In the next session we will look at the path of history since the cross, through which God has worked to prepare the world for the second coming of the Messiah.

And we will have to challenge ourselves with one huge question. The Messiah Jesus came and the people did not know who he was. **60** What will make it different when Jesus comes again? **61** How will you or I recognize and receive him? **62** What can we do to prepare for that day?

**63** Thank you once again for your kind attention. Please reflect on what you've heard and make sure you're clear about it, before moving forward. What you are about to hear in our next session of "Discovering the Divine Principle", is really amazing.