

# John, the Gospel of Belief

## John 20:30-31

The Gospel of John has as its central purpose the intention of creating belief. An interesting aspect of this is that John's Gospel does not use a noun forms such as "faith" of the Greek root, but a verb forms such as "believe," stressing the active nature of true faith (such forms are used 98 times).

There is some debate raised by the fact that in John 20:31 textual evidence equally divides between the verb form being a present subjunctive or an aorist subjunctive. The debate is muted, however, when the fact that John uses both forms to mean either arriving at faith or continuing in faith. Thus context rather than form becomes the determinate of meaning. The context of the verb in question would decidedly support that John 20:31 answers an implied question, "Who is Jesus?" Since Christians would not ask this question, the traditional understanding of the Gospel as a vehicle to create belief comfortably stands. From the very beginning of John's Gospel one is called to believe (1:7) while at the end John states his purpose for writing is that his readers would believe (20:31). Let us have a look at the two most prominent ways John seeks to instill belief.

### "I Am" Statements

- "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35)
- "I am the light of the world" ( John 8:12; 9:5)
- "I am the gate for the sheep" (John 10:7, 9)
- "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:14)
- "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25)
- "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6)
- "I am the true vine" (15:1, 5)
- "...I am *He*" (Jn. 4:26; 8:24, 28, 13:19)
- "... before Abraham was born, I am" (Jn. 8:58, cf. Ex. 3:14)

### Signs

- Turned water into wine (2:1-11)
- Heals an official's son (4:46-54)
- Healed a lame man (5:1-18)
- Fed 5,000 (6:1-14)
- Jesus walks on water (6:16-21)
- Gave sight to a blind man (9:1-41)
- Raised Lazarus from the dead (11:1-57)

John certainly gives a searcher ample evidence that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. With the kind of belief John's testimony allows, living the Christian life becomes a life of certainty (cf. I John).