

The three major themes of John's Gospel come together in his statement of purpose expressed in 20:30-31. signs, believing, and life. But the major focus of the book is Jesus Christ. John has recorded signs pointing to Jesus as the Christ, calling for people to believe in Jesus as the Christ, and promising eternal life in Christ for all who truly believe. This message attempts to follow the thread of each theme through the entire book to gain this important focus on Jesus Christ.

I. *Signs pointing to the Christ*

A miracle is a supernatural act of power. A wonder is something which causes astonishment. A sign could be a miracle or some action that points to or indicates something. John in his Gospel never uses the word miracle, only once uses the word "wonder", but uses "sign" 17 times. His emphasis in the miraculous acts of Jesus is that they point to the identity and authority of Jesus Christ like large arrows with the words, "this is the Christ, the promised Messiah, the Son of God."

1. *Changing water into wine (2:1-11)*: This sign revealed to a limited audience the creative power of Jesus, beginning to reveal His glory.
2. *The cleansing of the temple (2:14-22)*: Although not a miracle on the level of the others, it pointed to the identity of Jesus reminding the disciples of a Messianic passage in the OT.
3. *Unnamed signs in Judea (2:23; 3:2)*: These moved people to believe in Jesus and brought Nicodemus to the conclusion that God must be with Jesus.
4. *Divine knowledge concerning the Samaritan woman (4:1-42)*: His divine knowledge of her background brought the Samaritan woman to conclude that Jesus must be a prophet and finally that He is the Christ.
5. *Healing the son of a royal official (4:43-54)*: This second sign in Galilee and first reported healing was also done from a distance. It showed His power over sickness and brought the man and all his household to believe in Jesus.
6. *Healing the invalid man (5:1-9)*: On a Sabbath Jesus healed a man who had been an invalid for 38 years, demonstrating not only His power but also His divine authority even over Sabbath regulations.
7. *Feeding the five thousand (6:1-14)*: With this Jesus demonstrated His creative power at a greater level than turning water to wine. Some concluded that surely Jesus was the Prophet promised by Moses but were essentially more excited with getting fed than understanding the sign.
8. *Walking on water (6:16-21)*: This mastery over the physical world terrified the disciples.
9. *Healing the man born blind (9:1-12)*: This unprecedented healing of a man born blind eventually brought the blind man to faith in Christ. Many others believed as well, but the Jewish leadership rejected that to which the sign was pointing.
10. *Raising Lazarus from the dead (11:1-46)*: The claims of Jesus to be the resurrection and the life are fully established in this act of divine power, the greatest of the public signs which John reports.
11. *The Resurrection (20)*: The placement of John's conclusion after 20:29 points to the resurrection as another of the signs to which John refers. It is the supreme "arrow" pointing to Jesus, validating His claims, proclaiming Him to be the Christ, the Son of God.

II. *Believing in the Christ*

1. *"Believing" as presented in John's Gospel*

John reports reasons why people believe or do not believe, both from a human perspective and from a divine perspective. We also can observe a spectrum of believing: rejection, superficial belief, misplaced belief, incomplete or weak belief, and mature belief.

2. *Analogies to understand believing*: Analogies to better understand and communicate what it means to believe are found throughout John's Gospel: receiving Christ (1:12; 3:11-12; 5:43-44), obeying (3:36; 8:51), knowing (4:42; 6:69), the word dwelling within a person (5:38), coming to Jesus (5:40; 6:35, 37, 44, 45), eating and drinking (6:53; 7:38), looking to Jesus (6:40; 12:45), hearing or listening to Jesus (8:47; cf. 5:24), walking in the light (12:35-36).

Believing is not passive, nor mere intellectual assent, but is active, vital and goes deeper than any superficiality. It has Jesus Christ as the object and demands a response to Jesus and what He has said.

III. *Life issuing from the Christ*

1. The true believer possesses life which is eternal (3:15, 16, 36; 5:24; 6:29, 40, 47, 50, 51, 57; 8:51; 10:26; 11:25, 26; 20:31), meaning not simply eternal existence, but a divine quality of life which begins the moment of true belief.
2. The true believer will never perish (3:16; 10:26), nor be judged (3:18; 5:24), nor lost (6:39), nor thirst or hunger spiritually (6:50-51), nor die spiritually (6:50, 51) and does not dwell in darkness (12:46).
3. The true believer receives as part of eternal life many positive benefits and blessings (cf. 6:39, 40, 50, 51; 10:26; 7:39; 12:36; 14:1, 12; 16:27; 17:20, 20:29).
4. But the true believer should experience a change in their hearts now such as hearing and obeying Christ (3:36; 10:26) and being inspired to worship (4:21-24; 9:38; 20:28-29). The believer has abundant life now.

Although the gospel, i.e., "Good News," has at its core the death and resurrection of Jesus, it fills four books with the title "Gospel." It addresses more than what we need to get saved. The gospel addresses God's provision for our living – receiving life in Christ and living in Christ. We need the focus of the gospel every day. We need Jesus, His death and His life, saving us from the penalty of sin and from the power of sin. It requires believing "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and then by believing one has life in His name.