

John 20:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Analysis

John states his Gospel's purpose: 'But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God' (tauta de gegraptai hina pisteusete hoti Iesous estin ho Christos ho huios tou theou). The purpose clause hina pisteusete indicates John wrote to produce faith - that readers would believe (pisteuo) that Jesus is both the Messiah (ho Christos) and God's Son (ho huios tou theou). The dual identification is crucial: Jesus fulfills Jewish Messianic expectation and possesses divine sonship. The purpose continues: 'and that believing ye might have life through his name' (kai hina pisteuontes zoen echete en to onomati autou). Believing results in having (echete) life (zoen) in His name. This summarizes John's Gospel - presenting Jesus' identity and work to produce saving faith that grants eternal life. The verse provides hermeneutical key to reading John's carefully selected signs and discourses.

Historical Context

John's Gospel, written circa 90-100 AD, addresses both Jewish and Gentile readers. Against Jewish objections, John proves Jesus is Messiah through fulfilled prophecy and signs. Against Gnostic denials of Christ's humanity, John emphasizes incarnation (1:14, 19:34). Against imperial cult proclaiming Caesar as 'son of god,' John declares Jesus alone is God's Son. The purpose statement reveals John's evangelistic intent - the Gospel is missionary literature designed to convert readers. Church tradition holds that John wrote last of the four Gospels,

supplementing synoptics with theological reflection. Early church used John's Gospel extensively in catechesis, teaching new converts Christ's identity. The verse became foundational to gospel literature more broadly - all Scripture is written to produce saving faith in Christ. Modern evangelical preaching often cites this verse explaining salvation's simplicity - believe in Jesus' identity and receive life.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does John's stated purpose of producing faith shape how we should read and interpret his Gospel?
2. Why does John emphasize believing Jesus is both the Christ (Messiah) and the Son of God - why both identities?

Interlinear Text

ταῦτα	δὲ	γέγραπται	ἵνα	πιστεύοντες	ὅτι	ὁ	Ἰησοῦς
these	But	are written	that	believing	that	G3588	Jesus
G5023	G1161	G1125	G2443	G4100	G3754		G2424
ἐστίν	ὁ	Χριστὸς	ὁ	υἱὸς	τοῦ	θεοῦ	καὶ ἵνα
is	G3588	the Christ	G3588	the Son	G3588	of God	and that
G2076		G5547		G5207		G2316	G2532 G2443
πιστεύοντες	ζωὴν	ἔχητε	ἐν	τῷ	ὀνόματι	αὐτοῦ	
believing	life	ye might have	through	G3588	name	his	
G4100	G2222	G2192	G1722		G3686	G846	

Additional Cross-References

Acts 10:43 (Faith): To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

1 John 5:1 (Faith): Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

1 John 4:15 (References Jesus): Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

1 John 5:20 (References Jesus): And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

John 3:36 (Faith): He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

John 3:18 (Faith): He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 6:40 (Faith): And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

2 John 1:9 (References Christ): Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

John 19:35 (Faith): And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

John 20:28 (References God): And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.