

# Learning How to Read

Contra Costa Gospel Church  
Adult Sunday School

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Themes 2

Last time we were introduced the idea that when we are studying Scripture we would do well to pay attention to “themes” in the text put there by the author which communicate his main point.

## The Gospel of John as an Example

The thesis/purpose statement of the Gospel of John is found in John 20:30-31:

“Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

The question that we have to ask ourselves is, what does John mean when he says, “These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ...”? For whom is the Gospel of John written? In order to answer these questions, we need to track the theme of “believe” and “faith” throughout the book.

## Forms of the Word

It is important to know that the Greek word for “believe” and “faith” come from the same word root.

Believe – *pisteuo* (I believe); verb

Faith – *pistis*; noun

These are related words in Greek despite the fact that the English words are nothing alike. One is simply the noun form of the verb (or vice versa).

## Occurrences of the Word

The word group “*pist-*” occurs in the New Testament almost 600 times, but occurs more than 100 times in the Gospel of John alone. Statistically the Gospel of John is about 11% of the entire New Testament (by word count), but contains almost 17% of the occurrences of the word group “*pist-*”. Compare that with the other gospels:

Book	Percentage of NT	“Pist-” Occurrences
Gospel of Matthew	13%	26 (4%)
Gospel of Mark	8%	26 (4%)
Gospel of Luke	14%	30 (5%)

From this it is clear that John’s emphasis on faith in Jesus is more pronounced than in the other three Gospels. In fact, John uses the word group more often than the other gospel writers combined!

In the following table you will find a verse reference in the left column that has an occurrence of the word “believe,” “faith,” or some variation. As we read through each reference, what can we say about the usage of the word in that verse?

“Believe” in John	Comments about “believe” in this passage
1:12	
1:50	
2:11	
2:22-24	
3:36	
4:42	
4:50	
5:24	
6:66-69	
8:30-31	
10:26	
13:19	
14:29	
16:29-31	
20:8	
20:25-29	

*In the final analysis, what can we can about our original question regarding the thesis statement found in 20:30-31? Who is the book written to, and what is its purpose?*