

# The Bible's Great Purpose

The Bible is the all-time bestselling book in the world—over 5 billion copies have been sold and/or distributed! And yet the Bible is one of the bestselling, least understood books in the world. Even those who say they believe the Bible (the majority of Americans, for example) often do not understand the content and purpose of the Bible. In our text today, as we come to the conclusion of the main section of John's gospel, John gives us the purpose of his gospel and of the entire Bible.

## John 20:30-31

**30** Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; **31** but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Here John gives us three very important principles.

### I. **The Bible is written to persuade us (v. 31a)**

Contrary to what some people say, the Christian faith is not a blind leap, but rather a trust in Jesus Christ based on very solid evidence. We see in Acts 17, for example, that when the apostle Paul went about preaching the Gospel both to Jews and Gentiles, he reasoned and persuaded his hearers. The Bible is seeking to persuade us of something very important. We can see this in two ways: 1) John carefully selects his material. He gave us seven signs before teaching us of the eighth great sign of Jesus' death and resurrection, but he says there were many other signs performed. The ones he gave us were for a particular purpose. 2) These signs occurred in the presence of many credible witnesses, namely the other disciples. John shows us again that the disciples were eyewitnesses (see 1 John 1:1-4, 2 Peter 1:16). The Bible is the honest testimony of honest men.

### II. **The Bible is written to persuade us to believe in Jesus (v. 31b)**

John addresses us personally here, his readers, to say that he has written to us to persuade us that the Messiah, the Son of God, is Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is the one foretold in the Old Testament who is the seed of the woman, the scepter of the tribe of Judah, the prophet greater than Moses, the king greater than David, the Son of Man in Daniel's vision, and the suffering servant of Isaiah. In John the verb form "to believe" is used around 90 times (only 35 times in the other three gospels). This is obviously a key concept in his gospel. The essence of faith is 1) to know the facts of the Gospel, 2) to believe those facts are true, and 3) to trust in the Christ of the Gospel. John seeks to persuade us to put our trust in Jesus Christ.

### III. **The Bible was written to persuade us to trust in Jesus in order to have life (v. 31c)**

The object of our faith is Jesus Christ, and the purpose of our faith is in order to have life in Him. In John's gospel he speaks of life in two aspects: 1) eschatological life, that is, eternal life in the future (we see this in John 3:16) and 2) experiential life, that is, life right now. We see that described in John 10:10. What is this life? Perhaps the "hierarchy of needs" described by Dr. Abraham Maslow 70 years ago is helpful. In his "a theory of human motivation," he describes the priority of human motivations: first of all we seek our physical needs to be met, then our security needs, then our social needs, then our desires for self-esteem, and then the need for self-actualization. As we consider how the Gospel affects our lives, we can see that each of these needs are profoundly met — and more!

## Discussion Questions

1. Why is the Bible sufficient evidence upon which to place our faith?
2. Why do we study the Bible?

3. How can we discern the driving purpose in each book of the Bible?
4. Why is John so concerned that his readers believe in Jesus Christ? How can you tell that John is urgent and passionate about his purpose?
5. What does John mean by “believe”?
6. What does John mean by “life”?

### **Going Deeper**

1. In what ways does your life need to be more focused on the Bible?
2. Are you confident that you believe in Jesus Christ with the kind of faith described in John's gospel? Why or why not?
3. Are you experiencing the abundant life described in John's gospel? Why or why not?