

SUNDAY MORNING
Announcements Mark Davis Song Leader Jack Calvert Lord's Supper Joseph Barry Rodney Ellis Pete Rowland Prayers Daniel Allgor Bill Brittenham
SUNDAY EVENING
Announcements Scripture Reading Song Leader Lord's Supper Prayers
WEDNESDAY EVENING
Announcements Song Leader Prayers

him only, "but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Psalm 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

ABOUT US
Elders Jack Calvert Rodney Ellis Jon Barry Bill Brittenham Mike Davis Clay Morris Evangelist Bryan Garlock
SERVICE TIMES
Sunday Bible Study9:30 A.M. Worship10:15 A.M. Worship6:00 P.M. Wednesday Bible Study7:00 P.M.
WWW.TXKCHURCH.COM
GOD’S PLAN FOR SALVATION Hear the word of truth Romans 10:13-17 Believe the truth..... Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24 Repent from all sins Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38 Confess the name of Christ ... Matthew10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10 Be Baptized in His name Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Colossians 2:12 Walk in newness of life and be faithful unto death Romans 6:1-4; Revelation 2:10



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Issue 43

Come to Faith or Continue in Faith (John 20:31)?

Shane Scott

Toward the end of the fourth gospel the author states his purpose for writing:

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 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. (John 20:30-31)

That you may believe. The Gospel of John is written to persuade people to come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Or is it?

Many Greek manuscripts of John contain the Greek term that means “come to believe” (*pisteusete*). But many other manuscripts have a different term (*pisteuete*) which means “that you may hold the faith.” It’s only one letter’s difference, but it makes a big difference in this case. Is John writing so that his readers come to have faith, or is he writing so that his readers hold onto the

faith they already have? Most of our English translations choose the former (like the ESV above), but my limited reading on the textual evidence suggests that the slightly better attested reading is reflected in versions like the *New Living Translation*: “that you may continue to believe.”

If this is the case, why would John write such a gospel? Why is he concerned about whether his readers will persist in their faith in Christ? One answer might be a distinctive emphasis of the fourth gospel, the threat of expulsion from the synagogue. John’s gospel is the only one of the four that mentions this threat.

- His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. (9:22)

FAMILY TALK

Continue to remember and check on our shut-ins: **Bonnie Allgor, Maxine Burnham, Ann Thomas and Francine Davis.** Cards, calls and visits are ALWAYS needed and appreciated.

Please remember **Maxine Burnham** and **Jean Cronic** in your prayers.

Donna Mobley is home recuperating from her recent surgery.

Here is the current schedule of services:

Bible Study: 9:30 AM

Services: 10:15 AM

Kids Only: 5:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Sunday and Wednesday Bible Studies are in **Galatians**.

Additionally, we are having studies.

Monday: 7:00 PM

Thursday: 7:00 PM

Ladies Bible Class:
Next Class is Nov. 10th

- Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue. (12:42)
- I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. (16:1-2)

Late in the first century, in response to the spread of Christianity, the rabbis included in the cycle of benedictions at the synagogue a prayer that condemned heretics like the “Nazarenes.” This prayer, the *Birkat ha-Minim* drew a line in the sand for any Jewish believer in Christ – reject the Christian heresy or face the consequences. Since the synagogue was the center of religious and social life for first-century Jews, to be excommunicated from the synagogue was to be disowned by your family and your community.

If the original wording of John’s stated purpose was to encourage his readers to continue to believe, such a backlash against Jewish Christians around the Empire may offer a reason for his concern. And it may also explain the unique structure of the gospel, which focuses on the signs of Jesus’ ministry in chapters 1-11, and the “glory” of Jesus’ death and resurrection in chapters 12-21. John wants his readers to know that the faith they have placed in Jesus is well-founded so that as they face suffering they will maintain their commitment in light of the promise of glory to come.

That makes the fourth gospel incredibly relevant to our own time. The social structures of the contemporary culture here in America are exerting tremendous pressure on Christians to surrender fundamental commitments of faith. It is going to get more difficult to hold on to our confession that Jesus is Lord and King. John has already explained why this is happening:

And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the

darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. (John 3:19-20)

And Jesus told his first disciples that hatred of him would redound to hatred of them:

If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. (John 15:18)

No one wants to be hated. I certainly don’t! But if Jesus is who he says he is, then I would rather be hated by others and loved by him forever. And the signs of the first half of this gospel are designed to assure me that Jesus is indeed who he claimed to be, so that I will have greater confidence in the promises he claims to give.

If you need encouragement to hold on to your faith, I suggest you take a look at the Gospel of John.

[via focusmagazine.org](http://focusmagazine.org)

The Last Fight

Robert Turner

On the ruins of a theater in Ephesus there is a memorial to an athlete of the 2nd century A.D. which reads: "He fought three fights, and twice was crowned." Watch out for that last step! You see, those "athletes" fought to the death. A man's last fight was always fatal. So, the crown meant only that one changed opponents; and sooner or later the last would slay him.

What a difference in this crown, and that of the apostle Paul: "I have fought a

good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day..." (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Paul did more than fight "unto death" — he fought unto life, eternal. If his fight of faith cost him his earthly life, it only meant he was now free to claim the crown that counted most (Revelation 2:10, 2 Cor. 5:6ff.). How different from those who die without hope.

Paul sought an enduring victory — one that could not be taken from him. He exhorted Timothy, "Lay hold on eternal life..." (1 Timothy 6:12). This called for training, perseverance, and above all, self control (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). The athlete trained his body only to prolong the day when it would fail him; but Paul trained his that it might the better serve the Lord, and thus serve his eternal purposes.

We are all engaged in some sort of battle, and in a very real sense it is "unto death." The fatalist, the fool, resigns himself to shortchange. Though he fights 3,000 times, he can expect but 2,999 temporal crowns, not one of which he can take with him beyond that last fight. The futility of it all is enough to make a man throw in the towel.

The Faith gives purpose to life. The Christian fights, hard and often. But he has submitted himself to God's will, "strives lawfully" (2 Timothy 2:5), and his fight is never in vain. Jesus Christ has provided for him a crown, and not for