

CHRIS SEGLENIEKS

# Johannine Belief and Graeco-Roman Devotion

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen  
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

528

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**Mohr Siebeck**

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Chris Seglenieks

# Johannine Belief and Graeco-Roman Devotion

Reshaping Devotion  
for John's Graeco-Roman Audience

Mohr Siebeck

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For Stephanie



## Preface

This book is a lightly edited version of my doctoral thesis at the Bible College of South Australia, an affiliated college of the Australian College of Theology. Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors, Bill Salier and Mark Kulikovskiy. They have both been generous with their time and their knowledge, they have been accessible when I have had questions, and they have asked questions about my project that needed asking. They encouraged me through the challenging stages as well as spurring me to take chances and get my work out there. My examiners Dorothy Lee, Christopher Skinner, and Warren Carter have strengthened this work through their comments and questions. My thanks also go to Professor Jörg Frey for accepting my work in this series.

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I was warned that a PhD is as much a test of endurance as of intelligence, and that endurance has only been possible through the support of my family. My parents, Arnold and Gill, with their emotional and material support. My children, Joshua and Hannah, who may not have made the writing any easier, but whose smiles and complete disinterest in my thesis have kept me anchored to the outside world. Megan, for looking after the kids so often, and supporting my wife while I was working. Most especially, to my wife Stephanie, for love



and support in too many ways to describe, without which this project would never have been. To God be the glory.

Adelaide, 26 February, 2020

Christopher Seglenieks

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## List of Abbreviations

In addition to the standard journal abbreviations found in *The SBL Handbook of Style* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Atlanta: SBL 2014), the following abbreviations will be used:

- AvP* *Altertümer von Pergamon VIII*. Edited by M. Fränkel and C. Hacht. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1890–1969.
- BIWK* Petzl, G. *Die Beichtinschriften Westkleinasiens*. Bonn: Habelt, 1994.
- CIL VIII* *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum VII: Inscriptiones Africae Latinae*. Collegit G. Wilmanns. Edited by T. Mommsen. Berlin: Berlin-Brandenburg Academy, 1881
- CIL X* *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum X: Inscriptiones Bruttiorum, Lucaniae, Campaniae, Siciliae, Sardiniae Latinae*. Edited by T. Mommsen. Berlin: Berlin-Brandenburg Academy, 1883
- DT* Audollent, A. *Defixionum Tabellae*. Paris: Fontemoing, 1904.
- IDidyma* *Didyma II: Die Inschriften*. Edited by R. Rehm. Berlin: Mann, 1958.
- IEph* *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*. Edited by H. Wankel et al. 8 vols. Bonn: Habelt, 1979–1984.
- IG II<sup>2</sup>* *Inscriptiones Graecae II et III: Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno posteriores*. Edited by J. Kirchner. Berlin: Berlin-Brandenburg Academy, 1913–1940.
- IG IV<sup>2</sup>,1* *Inscriptiones Graecae I: Inscriptiones Argolidis*. Edited by F. H. von Gaertringen. Berlin: Berlin-Brandenburg Academy, 1929.
- IG X,2 1* *Inscriptiones Graecae X: Inscriptiones Epiri, Macedoniae, Thraciae, Scythiae*. Edited by C. Edson. Berlin: Berlin-Brandenburg Academy, 1972.
- IG XII,2* *Inscriptiones Graecae XII: Inscriptiones insularum maris Aegaei praeter Delum, 2. Inscriptiones Lesbi, Nesi, Tenedi*. Edited by W. R. Paton. Berlin: Berlin-Brandenburg Academy, 1899.
- IG XII,5* *Inscriptiones Graecae XII,5: Inscriptiones Cycladum*. Edited by F. H. von Gaertringen. 2 vols. Berlin: Berlin-Brandenburg Academy, 1903–1909.

- IG XIV* *Inscriptiones Graecae XIV: Inscriptiones Siciliae et Italiae, additis Galliae, Hispaniae, Britanniae, Germaniae inscriptionibus.* Edited by G. Kaibel. Berlin: Berlin-Brandenburg Academy, 1890.
- IGRR* *Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes.* Edited by R. Cagnat. 3 vols. Paris: Leroux, 1906–1927.
- IGUR* *Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae.* Edited L. Moretti. Rome: Italian Institute for Ancient History, 1968–1991.
- IKret* *Inscriptiones Creticae.* Edited by M. Guarducci. 4 vols. Rome: State Library, 1935–1950.
- IOropos* *Ἐπιγραφικά τοῦ Ἰωροποῦ.* Edited by B. G. Petrakos. Athens: Archaeological Society of Athens, 1980.
- Isid.* V. F. Vanderlip, *The Four Greek Hymns of Isidorus and the Cult of Isis.* Toronto: Hakkert, 1972.
- LSAM* Sokolowski, F. *Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure.* Paris: Boccard, 1955.
- LSCG* Sokolowski, F. *Lois sacrées des cités grecques.* Paris: Boccard, 1969.
- LSS* Sokolowski, F. *Lois sacrées des cités grecques. Supplément.* Paris: Boccard, 1962.
- NDL* Herrmann, P. and H. Malay. *New Documents from Lydia.* Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2007.
- P.Oxy. XI* *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri Part XI.* Edited by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt. London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1915.
- SEG* *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum.* Edited by A. Chaniotis, T. Corsten, N. Papazarkadas, E. Stavrianopoulou and R.A. Tybout. Leiden: Brill, 1923–.
- SIG* *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum.* Edited by W. Dittenberger. 4 vols. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915–1924.
- TAM* *Tituli Asiae Minoris V: Tituli Lydiae.* Edited by P. Herrmann and G. Petzl. 3 vols. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 1981–2007.





## Chapter 1

# Introduction

More than merely telling the story of Jesus, the Gospels seek to evoke a response in their audience. Nowhere is this clearer than in the Gospel of John, which explicitly states the purpose of the Gospel “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (20:31). Much ink has been spilt over what it means for Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, with the focus centred upon the identity of the one to whom the audience responds. Yet what has been underplayed is the Gospel’s extensive and sustained presentation of how one is to respond to Jesus. The concern for the shape of the response that the Gospel seeks to encourage in its audience has been overshadowed by issues around Jesus’s identity and mission. What is often overlooked is the fact that John goes to great lengths to both depict and call for the proper form of response to Jesus. Indeed, it can be argued that the Gospel of John gives as much attention to *how* to respond to Jesus as it does to the issue of to *whom* to respond.<sup>1</sup> The first key task of this study is to understand the nature of the ideal response to Jesus, not primarily in terms of theological content, but as a comprehensive description that encompasses the complexity of what the Gospel seeks to evoke and encourage in the audience.

To recognise the extent of the Gospel’s concern for how one is to respond to Jesus raises the further question of the reason for such emphasis. Thus, the second key task of this study is to account for the complexity and pervasiveness of the Gospel’s presentation of the ideal response to Jesus. The recognition that the Gospel has a purpose entails the recognition of an audience which the text is seeking to encourage towards a certain response.<sup>2</sup> The precise original audience remains inaccessible to a modern audience, but it is possible to reconstruct

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<sup>1</sup> For an exploration of one technique by which the author encourages the audience to question the nature of genuine belief, see C. Seglenieks, “Untrustworthy Believers: The Rhetorical Strategy of the Johannine Language of Commitment and Belief,” *NovT* 61, no. 1 (2019), 55–69.

<sup>2</sup> Motyer cautions against separating the purpose of a text from the historical context. S. Motyer, “Method in Fourth Gospel Studies: A Way Out of the Impasse?,” *JSNT* 66, no. 1 (1997), 39. Cf. F.J. Moloney, “Narrative Criticism of the Gospels,” *Pacifica* 4, no. 2 (1991), 182; A.Y. Collins, “Narrative, History, and Gospel,” *Semeia* 43 (1988), 150.

a plausible early audience.<sup>3</sup> Certain features of the Gospel betray a Jewish background, such as the knowledge of the physical setting of Palestine and the understanding of Jewish customs (e.g. purification in John 2:6). Despite this background, the deliberate explanation of those Jewish customs (2:6; 11:55; 18:28; cf. 4:9), along with the translation of Aramaic terms (1:38, 41, 42), indicates that the Gospel is aimed at an audience that is at least in part non-Jewish.<sup>4</sup> When this is combined with the probable location of the Gospel in late first century Ephesus, it is likely that a significant proportion of the early audience was from a Graeco-Roman context.<sup>5</sup> Whether they had begun to follow Jesus already or not, their religious concepts would have been significantly

---

<sup>3</sup> On drawing conclusions about the real audience based upon the implied audience see R.A. Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 211–23; M.C. De Boer, “Narrative Criticism, Historical Criticism, and the Gospel of John,” *JSNT* 47, no. 1 (1992), 35–48.

<sup>4</sup> A mixed audience including both Greeks and Jews is commonly identified. E.W. Klink, *The Sheep of the Fold: The Audience and Origin of the Gospel of John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 176–7; C.R. Koester, “The Spectrum of Johannine Readers,” in *What is John? Readers and Readings of the Fourth Gospel* (ed. F.F. Segovia; Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1996), 5–19. Hengel argues for a predominantly Gentile audience. M. Hengel, *The Johannine Question* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1989), 119. A mixed audience is compatible with theories of either a specific community as the audience (e.g. Brown) or a wider audience (e.g. Bauckham). R.E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (London: Cassell, 1979), 55; R.J. Bauckham ed. *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> The Gospel of John is being read increasingly within a Graeco-Roman context. Recent examples include R.A. Culpepper, “Temple Violation: Reading John 2:13–22 at the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus,” in *The Opening of John’s Narrative (John 1:19–2:22)* (eds. R.A. Culpepper et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017); C.R. Koester, “The Wedding at Cana (John 2:1–11): Reading the Text in the Cultural Context of Ephesus,” in *The Opening of John’s Narrative (John 1:19–2:22)* (eds. R.A. Culpepper et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017); M.R. Whinton, “The Dissembler of John 3: A Cognitive and Rhetorical Approach to the Characterization of Nicodemus,” *JBL* 135, no. 1 (2016); K.B. Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger: Recognition Scenes in the Gospel of John* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); J.C. Stube, *A Graeco-Roman Rhetorical Reading of the Farewell Discourse* (London: T&T Clark, 2006); G.L. Parsenios, *Departure and Consolation: The Johannine Farewell Discourses in Light of Graeco-Roman Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); J.-A.A. Brant, *Dialogue and Drama: Elements of Greek Tragedy in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004); S. van Tilborg, *Reading John in Ephesus* (Leiden: Brill, 1996). This is not exclusively a recent phenomenon, as Dodd argued for reading John in the context of Hellenistic Ephesus. C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 9. As Buch-Hansen observes, earlier work primarily considered the connection between the Gospel and philosophical traditions. For the history of such approaches, see G. Buch-Hansen, “The Johannine Literature in a Greek Context,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Johannine Studies* (eds. J.M. Lieu et al.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

shaped by the Graeco-Roman religious world.<sup>6</sup> An investigation of this religious context, and therefore the religious thought world of the early audience, has the potential to both sharpen our understanding of the Johannine response to Jesus, as well as to point to reasons for the nature of the Johannine presentation. Any resonance or dissonance between the response to Jesus for which John calls, and the response to the gods practised by the Graeco-Roman audience, will illuminate the ways that John seeks to present a distinctive pattern of religious devotion.

The central argument of this study is that the purpose of John's Gospel is not only to present the object of belief, but also how to believe in order to have life. This is especially understood when the Gospel is read in its Graeco-Roman context, where the author reshapes devotion to the gods – cognitive, relational, ethical, ongoing, and public aspects – into a pattern of believing that aligns with the identity of Jesus, the Christ and Son of God. Reshaping the devotion of the audience requires a multi-faceted and pervasive presentation of belief, which informs the way the ideal audience is to respond to Jesus. Understanding the function of the Gospel within its context highlights the purpose of the Gospel, to teach the audience the nature of the ideal response to Jesus.

In order to understand both (a) the nature of the ideal response to Jesus which the Gospel of John presents, as well as (b) the reasons for the complexity and pervasiveness of the Johannine presentation of this ideal response, the study will proceed in four main sections. The first will establish the contribution of previous research on the Johannine response to Jesus, before outlining the method which will be followed (§1.1–1.2). The second section will investigate of the text of the Gospel of John to identify the aspects which comprise the ideal response to Jesus (§2–6). The third section will explore the Graeco-Roman religious world to outline the patterns of devotion that an early audience of the Gospel may have brought to the text as part of their cultural experience (§7–8). The fourth and final section will bring the biblical text and the context together, identifying any significant points of overlap or divergence between the patterns of devotion directed towards Jesus as opposed to the Graeco-Roman gods. This will enable an exploration of the reasons behind any divergence, along with indicating how our understanding of the Gospel of John might be advanced through reading the Gospel in its Graeco-Roman religious context (§9–10).

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<sup>6</sup> It is debated whether the purpose of the Gospel is evangelistic or encouraging existing believers (see §5.3 for a discussion of John 20:31). However, the ideal response to Jesus is ongoing (see §6.4), thus it is better to understand the Gospel functioning to both evoke belief and encourage continuing belief. J.C. Tam, *Apprehension of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 202–4.

## 1.1 Literature Review

When considering previous scholarship, it is surprising to note the rarity of works that focus on the overall picture of the ideal response to Jesus in the Gospel of John.<sup>7</sup> Various aspects of the response to Jesus have been studied, primarily in terms of πιστεύω, but attempts to combine the disparate facets into a coherent description are rare. In addition, there is no clear narrative of how scholarly views have developed with regard to the response to Jesus in the Gospel of John.<sup>8</sup> Instead, each aspect is dealt with largely in isolation, and attempts to combine multiple elements remain limited in scope (see §1.1.9). Therefore, the notable contributions to understanding the ideal response to Jesus will be grouped according to their primary focus. Those studies primarily focusing on belief will be considered first (§1.1.1–3), followed by those which consider belief alongside one or more other elements of response (§1.1.4). Next will be those studies which have investigated the response to Jesus aside from the topic of belief, including those which focus on loving, following, or abiding (§1.1.5–8). The overview of previous studies will show that there remains a need for a comprehensive account of the ideal response to Jesus according to John’s Gospel (§1.1.9). This will be followed by a similar consideration of works that have sought to read John in a Graeco-Roman context (§1.1.10), which will demonstrate that there have been few attempts to understand John against a Graeco-Roman religious context, particularly in terms of a personal response of devotion.

### 1.1.1 Response to Jesus as Belief

Investigations into the ideal response for which the Gospel calls have centred on belief, based on the identification of the purpose in 20:31 and the frequency of the term πιστεύω.<sup>9</sup> These approaches predominantly consider belief in

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<sup>7</sup> The ideal response to Jesus is the response that the text of the Gospel presents as necessary in order to receive eternal life, as summarised by 20:31.

<sup>8</sup> The only notable development is the rediscovery of the ethical dimension of John (see below §1.1.6). Even sharp critiques of methods have resulted in little progress. For example, despite Barr’s critique of focussing on a single lexeme in place of a concept, shortcomings remain in seminal works such as Brown’s commentary, as highlighted by Botha. J. Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 206–62; R.E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (2 vols.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966–70), 1:512–5; J.E. Botha, “The Meanings of Pisteúō in the Greek New Testament: A Semantic-Lexicographical Study,” *Neot* 21, no. 2 (1987), 227–9.

<sup>9</sup> N. Ueberschaer, “Das Johannesevangelium als Medium der Glaubensvermittlung,” in *Glaube* (eds. J. Frey et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 451; S. Brown, “Believing in the Gospel of John: The Ethical Imperative to Becoming Children of God,” in *Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John* (eds. S. Brown et al.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 3.

propositional terms, focused on accepting certain truths about Jesus and his identity.<sup>10</sup> While these studies highlight the central place that the identity of Jesus has within the Gospel, and the concern that the audience accept that identity, they are limited by their focus on the lexeme πιστεύω, occasionally considering the language of ‘knowing’ as essentially synonymous. The narrow focus on a single lexeme can lead to an over-reliance on analysis of grammatical forms which confuses rather than clarifies the nature of belief.<sup>11</sup> Alongside this are approaches which see confession of faith as the primary expression of the response for which the Gospel seeks. This can lead to either a focus on the content of such confessions to identify what they convey of the identity of Jesus, or attempts at assessing the faith of characters on the basis of their confessions.<sup>12</sup> A second approach to πιστεύω understands belief in terms of trust or allegiance, a more relational than propositional concept.<sup>13</sup> However, the two

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<sup>10</sup> Ueberschaer, “Johannesevangelium”; T.L. Stegall, “That You May Believe: The Evangelistic Purpose and Message of John’s Gospel in Relation to Free Grace Theology” (ThD thesis, Grace Biblical Seminary, 2017); Tam, *Apprehension*, 1; J. Zumstein, *L’apprentissage de la foi* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2015), 59–61; D.A. Croteau, “An Analysis of the Concept of Believing in the Narrative Contexts of John’s Gospel,” (MTh thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002); A. Barus, “The Faith Motif in John’s Gospel: A Narrative Approach,” (PhD thesis, University of Aberdeen, 2000); A.D. Hopkins, “A Narratological Approach to the Development of Faith in the Gospel of John” (PhD thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1992); Culpepper, *Anatomy*; F.J. Moloney, “From Cana to Cana (Jn 2.1–4.54) and the Fourth Evangelist’s Concept of Correct (and Incorrect) Faith,” in *Studia Biblica 1978 International Congress on Biblical Studies* (ed. E.A. Livingstone; Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 1978); J.T. Forestell, *The Word of the Cross* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1974), 103–13; J. Gaffney, “Believing and Knowing in the Fourth Gospel,” *TS* 26 (1965); G.F. Hawthorne, “The Concept of Faith in the Fourth Gospel,” *BSac* 116, no. 462 (1959).

<sup>11</sup> Most notable in Hawthorne, “Concept”. See also C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; London: SPCK, 1978), 164; Dodd, *Interpretation*, 183; J.H. Moulton, *Prolegomena* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1908), 67–8.

<sup>12</sup> C.W. Skinner, “Misunderstanding, Christology, and Johannine Characterization: Reading John’s Characters through the Lens of the Prologue,” in *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John* (ed. C.W. Skinner; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013); J.C.S. Redman, “Eyewitness Testimony and the Characters in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John* (ed. C.W. Skinner; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013); S.E. Hulen, *Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009); W. Bonney, *Caused to Believe: The Doubting Thomas Story at the Climax of John’s Christological Narrative* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); K. Quast, *Peter and the Beloved Disciple: Figures for a Community in Crisis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989); E. Liebert, “That You May Believe: The Fourth Gospel and Structural Developmental Theory,” *BTB* 14, no. 2 (1984).

<sup>13</sup> J.-W. Yoo, “The Rhetoric of Truth in the Gospel of John: ‘Truth’ as Counter-Imperial Reality in the Face of Conflict and Stress” (PhD thesis, Lutheran School of Theology, 2013), 185; C.R. Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids:

are not exclusive, and C.H. Dodd combines both the relational and propositional ideas in his discussion of πιστεύω.<sup>14</sup> While Dodd's analysis of the background to πιστεύω may be problematic, his recognition of multiple dimensions to the concept of belief is valuable and has been followed by several significant voices.<sup>15</sup> The differing understandings of πιστεύω highlight the need for clarity on its meaning (see §1.2.1.2). Even those who take a broader understanding of πιστεύω still centre the discussion on a single lexeme. However, a focus on a single lexeme does not do justice to the more extensive picture of the response for which the Gospel calls. Therefore, the focus must extend beyond πιστεύω, even if it remains a central term.

### 1.1.2 Belief as a Binary Option

Another approach to belief in John has been to categorise the variety of responses that characters have towards Jesus. While John can depict belief as binary, with the only possibilities either belief or unbelief (3:18), most scholars accept that there is a range of responses seen in John.<sup>16</sup> However, there are several scholars who reject this idea, and insist that there is simply belief or

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Eerdmans, 2008); A.S. Jensen, *John's Gospel as Witness: The Development of the Early Christian Language of Faith* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 115; M.M. Thompson, "Signs and Faith in the Fourth Gospel," *BBR* 1 (1991); E.A. Abbott, *Johannine Vocabulary: A Comparison of the Words of the Fourth Gospel with Those of the Three* (London: Black, 1905), 32. O'Brien's emphasis on commitment as essential to belief is similar to allegiance. K.S. O'Brien, "Written that You May Believe: John 20 and Narrative Rhetoric," *CBQ* 67, no. 2 (2005), 291.

<sup>14</sup> Dodd, *Interpretation*, 179–85.

<sup>15</sup> The shortcomings of Dodd's analysis of the Graeco-Roman use of πιστεύω are evident in light of the work of T. Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith: Pistis and Fides in the Early Roman Empire and Early Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). Thiselton argues that as neither Greek nor Hebrew distinguishes lexically between trust and belief, it is inappropriate for interpreters to do so. A. Thiselton, *Doubt, Faith and Certainty* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 61–2. Those identifying both relational and propositional aspects to belief in John include D. Tovey, *Jesus: Story of God: John's Story of Jesus* (Adelaide: ATF, 2007), 107; L.L. Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); S.M. Schneiders, "Reflections on Commitment in the Gospel According to John," *BTB* 8, no. 1 (1978); R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John* (3 vols.; New York: Herder & Herder, 1968–1982); A. Decourtray, "La conception johannique de la foi," *NRTh* 81, no. 6 (1959). Bennema similarly states that saving faith involves adequate propositional belief and allegiance. C. Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009). While Ueberschaer primarily refers to propositional belief, she also includes personal attachment (*personale Bindung*). Ueberschaer, "Johannesevangelium," 467.

<sup>16</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 146–8; Moloney, "From Cana," 193–5; Brown, *John*, 1:512–5.

unbelief.<sup>17</sup> In their view, if any character is said to believe, that must be an acceptable response to Jesus. The effect of such a limitation is to overlook the complexity of the presentation of belief. However, this does raise the question as to how faith responses might be best categorised, if indeed there is more than merely belief and unbelief. Raymond Brown, R. Alan Culpepper, and Francis Moloney each give different categorisations, and as the nature of the ideal response is investigated, consideration will also need to be given as to how to understand responses that are less than ideal.

### 1.1.3 Belief and Sense Perception

The question of how one comes to believe has featured prominently in previous scholarship. Craig Koester approaches the issue broadly, looking at the role of seeing and/or hearing in coming to believe.<sup>18</sup> Some unhelpfully equate seeing with believing.<sup>19</sup> However, while seeing can lead to believing (2:11) it is not necessary for belief (20:29) and at times seeing does not lead to belief (6:36), for believing requires a volitional response.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, hearing can lead to belief (4:41), but it does not always do so (8:45).<sup>21</sup> Several recent works have addressed the role of perception in John, including connections to coming to believe.<sup>22</sup> A narrower debate revolves specifically around the place of seeing

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<sup>17</sup> D.R. Anderson, "The Nature of Faith," *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal* 5, no. 4 (1999); B.W. Henault, "John 4:43–54 and the Ambivalent Narrator. A response to Culpepper's Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 19, no. 3 (1990); Z.C. Hodges, "Problem Passages in the Gospel of John Part 2: Untrustworthy Believers – John 2:23–25," *BSac* 135, no. 538 (1978).

<sup>18</sup> C.R. Koester, "Hearing, Seeing, and Believing in the Gospel of John," *Bib* 70, no. 3 (1989). Cf. H. Schlier, "Glauben, Erkennen, Lieben nach dem Johannesevangelium," in *Besinnung auf das neue Testament* (Freiberg: Herder, 1964), 280–1.

<sup>19</sup> M. Müller, "'Have You Faith in the Son of Man?' (John 9.35)," *NTS* 37 (1991), 293. Although not equating the two, Phillips argues seeing and believing form a continuum, with different Greek words for seeing as steps towards belief. G.L. Phillips, "Faith and Vision in the Fourth Gospel," in *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (ed. F.L. Cross; London: Mowbray, 1957), 84–5. However, the words for seeing are used effectively synonymously in John. J. Painter, "Eschatological Faith in the Gospel of John," in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology* (ed. R. Banks; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 41; O. Cullmann, "Eiden kai episteusen: La vie de Jésus, objet de la 'vue' et de la 'foi' d'après le quatrième évangile," in *Aux sources de la tradition chrétienne: Mélanges offerts à M. Maurice Goguel* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1950), 55.

<sup>20</sup> C.H. Williams, "Faith, Eternal Life, and the Spirit in the Gospel of John," in *The Oxford Handbook of Johannine Studies* (eds. J.M. Lieu et al.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 351–2; Cullmann, "Eiden kai episteusen," 56.

<sup>21</sup> Hearing can lead to inadequate responses, just as seeing can. Hopkins, "Narratological", 99.

<sup>22</sup> S.K.-H. Wang, *Sense Perception and Testimony in the Gospel According to John* (Tübingen; Mohr Siebeck, 2017); Tam, *Apprehension*.



signs in coming to faith, with a common view understanding signs-based faith as necessarily inadequate.<sup>23</sup> While some faith based upon the miraculous is flawed (6:26), John does not present a consistent picture of signs-based faith being inadequate, and belief in the signs is encouraged (10:38; 14:11). The issue is not the sign itself, but what is perceived, and how one goes on to respond to Jesus.<sup>24</sup> Seeing and hearing can each be means to believing, yet neither comprise a response.<sup>25</sup> Thus, sense perception is not part of the ideal response to Jesus and therefore will not be discussed in this study.

#### 1.1.4 Response to Jesus as Belief Plus Other Elements

There have been attempts to broaden the discussion around belief by including another aspect of responding to Jesus alongside belief. One option is to place ‘love’ alongside ‘belief’, although this results in a similar picture to those who take πιστεύω alone as conveying a relational and a propositional element.<sup>26</sup> A second option emphasises the need for endurance, observing the Gospel’s language of abiding notably in 15:1–10.<sup>27</sup> A third approach is that the need for

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<sup>23</sup> This attitude derives in large part from R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 131, 209. Similar views can be found in W.R.G. Loader, *Jesus in John’s Gospel: Structure and Issues in Johannine Christology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 291–3; C.S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2 vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:531; Painter, “Eschatological,” 48; J. Becker, “Wunder und Christologie: Zum literarkritischen und christologischen Problem der Wunder im Johannesevangelium,” *NTS* 16 (1969-70); L. Schottroff, *Der Glaubende und die feindliche Welt: Beobachtungen zum gnostischen Dualismus und seiner Bedeutung für Paulus und das Johannesevangelium* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neuchirchner, 1970), 251–8. Other scholars see a more positive role for signs in generating faith or strengthening existing faith, including Thompson, “Signs”: 107; Koester, “Hearing”: 347–8; E. Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17* (London: SCM, 1968), 21.

<sup>24</sup> W.H. Salier, *The Rhetorical Impact of the Semeia in the Gospel of John* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 59. In 2:23–25, the inadequate faith is not directly linked to the signs, and to do so obscures the function of the passage. Seglenieks, “Untrustworthy”: 58–9.

<sup>25</sup> Similarly, the role of divine election in coming to believe will not be considered. Cf. R. Kysar, “The Dismantling of Decisional Faith: A Reading of John 6:25–71,” in *Critical Readings of John 6* (ed. R.A. Culpepper; Leiden: Brill, 1997).

<sup>26</sup> P. A. Rainbow, *Johannine Theology: The Gospel, the Epistles and the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP; Nottingham: Apollos, 2014); Schlier, “Glauben.” Unfortunately Rainbow’s discussion unhelpfully places belief under the idea of union with Christ, which is presented in a far more Pauline than Johannine fashion (on the Johannine idea of being in Jesus, see §4.3). While Walter places belief alongside love, it is loving fellow believers rather than loving Jesus. L. Walter, *L’incroyance des croyants selon saint Jean* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976), 18.

<sup>27</sup> F.D. Bruner, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 1195; D. Rensberger, “Spirituality and Christology in Johannine Sectarianism,” in *Word, Theology, and Community in John* (eds. J. Painter et al.; St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2002); S. Motyer,

public confession of faith accompanies belief in the necessary response.<sup>28</sup> A few authors combine three aspects together, such as D. Moody Smith who places love and obedience alongside belief as necessary responses.<sup>29</sup> These approaches are an improvement over a singular focus on *πιστεύω* but they still do not address the full range of responses to Jesus presented by John. The fact that various scholars can put different facets alongside belief shows that the desired response to Jesus in John's Gospel is more complex than many have supposed, so a comprehensive analysis of the elements that comprise the ideal response is warranted.

### 1.1.5 Response to Jesus as Relational

Aside from belief, the next most significant focus for investigating the ideal response to Jesus has been the relational dimension. In this area, studies have focussed upon the language of love and friendship in the Gospel, with some extending their study to the language of oneness and abiding, arguing that loving is an essential component of the ideal response to Jesus.<sup>30</sup> There can be a

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*Your Father the Devil? A New Approach to John and 'the Jews'* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997), 60–1.

<sup>28</sup> J. Beutler, "Faith and Confession: The Purpose of John," in *Word, Theology, and Community in John* (eds. J. Painter et al.; St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2002); D.R. Beck, *The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the Fourth Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 139.

<sup>29</sup> D.M. Smith, "Ethics and the Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel," in *Word, Theology and Community in John* (eds. J. Painter et al.; St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2002), 113. There are similarities to the recent work of Bates on *πίστις* in Paul, where he argues for a response that comprises an intellectual dimension along with personal fealty and obedience. M.W. Bates, *Salvation by Allegiance Alone: Rethinking Faith, Works, and the Gospel of Jesus the King* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 92.

<sup>30</sup> Focussing on love and friendship are F.J. Moloney, *Love in the Gospel of John: An Exegetical, Theological, and Literary Study* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013); D.A. Lee, "Friendship, Love and Abiding in the Gospel of John," in *Transcending Boundaries: Contemporary Readings of the New Testament: Essays in Honor of Francis J. Moloney* (eds. R. M. Chennattu et al.; Rome: LAS, 2005); G.R. O'Day, "Jesus as Friend in the Gospel of John," in *Transcending Boundaries: Contemporary Readings of the New Testament: Essays in Honor of Francis J. Moloney* (eds. M.L. Coloe et al.; Rome: LAS, 2005). Considering oneness and/or abiding include J.W. Pryor, "Covenant and Community in John's Gospel," *RTR* 47, no. 2 (1988); E. Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978); M.L. Appold, *The Oneness Motif in the Fourth Gospel: Motif Analysis and Exegetical Probe into the Theology of John* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1976). Jerumanis investigates believing and abiding, alongside other terms, but primarily as the means to a relationship of communion with God. P.-M. Jerumanis, *Réaliser la communion avec Dieu: Croire, vivre, et demeurer dans l'évangile selon S. Jean* (Paris: Gabalda, 1996).

recognition that, following the example of Jesus, the call to love and friendship is not merely relational but has ethical implications as well.<sup>31</sup>

### 1.1.6 Response to Jesus as Ethical

While historically underplayed, there has been a recent shift to recognise that ethics is a key concern of the Gospel.<sup>32</sup> Aside from the explicit command to mutual love, a range of implicit ethics has been uncovered, which comprise an important part of the response that the Gospel seeks to evoke.<sup>33</sup> As with the previous aspects that have been considered, the aspect of ethical response has predominantly been considered in isolation from other dimensions. The recent work by Sherri Brown and Christopher Skinner offers hope for a more integrated approach, as it begins its investigation of Johannine ethics with a chapter on belief.<sup>34</sup> However, the different facets are not brought together, and not all contributors even accept that John demands an ethical response.<sup>35</sup> Thus the possibility of a more integrated account of the response to Jesus does not eventuate.

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<sup>31</sup> C.W. Skinner, "Love One Another: The Johannine Love Command in the Farewell Discourse," in *Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John* (eds. S. Brown et al.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 25–42.

<sup>32</sup> S. Shin, *Ethics in the Gospel of John: Discipleship as Moral Progress* (Leiden: Brill, 2018); L.M. Trozzo, *Exploring Johannine Ethics* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017); S. Brown and C.W. Skinner eds, *Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017); R. Zimmerman, "Abundant and Abandoning Life: Towards an 'Ethic of Life' in the Gospel of John," *ABR* 64 (2016); J.G. van der Watt and R. Zimmermann eds, *Rethinking the Ethics of John* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); J. G. van der Watt, "Ethics through the Power of Language: Some Explorations in the Gospel according to John," in *Moral Language in the New Testament: The Interrelatedness of Language and Ethics in Early Christian Writings* (eds. R. Zimmermann et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); R. Burrige, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 285–346; J.J. Kanagaraj, "The Implied Ethics of the Fourth Gospel: A Reinterpretation of the Decalogue," *TynBul* 52, no. 1 (2001). Earlier works that rejected the ethical value of John include D. Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Chicago: IVP, 1981), 907; J.T. Sanders, *Ethics in the New Testament: Change and Development* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 100. One of the few to continue to reject the ethical value of John is A. Reinhartz, "A Rebellious Son? Jesus and His Mother in John 2:4," in *The Opening of John's Narrative (John 1:19–2:22)* (eds. R.A. Culpepper et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017).

<sup>33</sup> As a basic definition, ethics is concerned with right behaviour. Thus, the Gospel and Graeco-Roman religious expressions reflect an ethical aspect in so far as they seek to establish how adherents *should* behave. Trozzo, *Johannine Ethics*, 2.

<sup>34</sup> Brown argues that belief is both christological and ethical. Brown, "Believing," 4.

<sup>35</sup> A. Reinhartz, "The Lyin' King? Deception and Christology in the Gospel of John," in *Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John* (eds. S. Brown et al.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017).



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