

Objects of Faith in John: A Matter of Person AND Content

Dr. John Niemelä

INTRODUCTION

THREE WAYS JOHN STATES OBJECTS

1. *eis* + a word as an object (in + __) He who **believes** in Him is not condemned (3:18a)
2. *hoti* + a phrase as an object (that...) **believe** that You are the Christ (11:27)
3. Dative (accusative) + __ But if you do not **believe** his writings, how will you **believe** My words?
(5:47ab)

JOHN USES TWO KINDS OF OBJECTS

- A. Testimony (what is testified, e.g., content, i.e., words)
- B. Witness (who testifies, e.g., a person)

TEST EXAMPLES

1. John 1:6–7 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might **believe** _____.
Whom? Or what?
2. Jesus said to her, “Woman, **believe** Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. (4:21)
Whom? And what?
3. **Believe** Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me (14:11a)
Whom? And what?

TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS THAT BELIEVING IS A MATTER OF *WHOM?* AND *WHAT?*

4. Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, “I saw you under the fig tree,” do you **believe**? You will see greater things than these. (1:50)
5. This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples **believed** in Him. (2:11)
6. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they **believed** the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said. (2:22)
7. Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many **believed** in His name when they saw the signs which He did. (2:23)

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who **believe** in His name: (1:12)

He who **believes** in Him is not condemned; but he who does not **believe** is condemned already, because he has not **believed** in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (3:18abc)
8. If I have told you earthly things and you (plural) do not **believe**, how will you (plural) **believe** if I tell you heavenly things? (3:12ab)

9. that whoever **believes in Him** should not perish but have eternal life. For God loved the world thus that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes in Him** should not perish but have everlasting life (3:15–16)

10. He who **believes in the Son** has everlasting life; and he who does not **believe the Son** shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. (3:36ab)

11. And many of the Samaritans of that city **believed in Him** because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I ever did.” (4:39)

And many more **believed** because of His own word. (4:41)

Then they said to the woman, “Now we **believe**, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.” (4:42)

12. Then Jesus said to him, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means **believe**.” (4:48)

Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your son lives.” So the man **believed the word that Jesus spoke to him**, and he went his way. (4:50)

So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives.” And he himself **believed**, and his whole household. (4:53)

13. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and **believes in Him who sent Me** has everlasting life, & shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. (5:24)

But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not **believe**. (5:38)

Then Jesus cried out and said, “He who **believes in Me, believes not in Me** but **in Him who sent Me**.” (12:44ab)

14. How can you **believe**, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?” (5:44)

“For if you **believed Moses**, you would **believe Me**; for he wrote about Me.” (5:46ab)

“But if you do not **believe his writings**, how will you **believe My words**?” (5:47ab)

15. Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you **believe in Him** whom He sent.” (6:29)

Therefore they said to Him, “What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and **believe You**? What work will You do?” (6:30)

16. And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who **believes in Me** shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not **believe**.” (6:35–36)

17. “And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and **believes in Him** may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” (6:40)

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who **believes in Me** has everlasting life.” (6:47)

18. “But there are some of you who do not **believe**.” (6:64a)

For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not **believe**, and who would betray Him. (6:64b)

“Also we have come to **believe** and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (6:69)

19. For even His brothers did not **believe in Him**. (7:5)

And many of the people **believed in Him**, and said, “When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?” (7:31)

20. “He who **believes in Me**, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those **believing in Him** would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (7:38–39)

“Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees **believed in Him**?” (7:48)

21. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not **believe that I am He**, you will die in your sins. (8:24)

As He spoke these words, many **believed in Him**. (8:30)

Then Jesus said to those Judeans who **believed Him**, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.” (8:31)

22. But because I tell the truth, you do not **believe Me**. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not **believe Me**? (8:45–46)

23. But the Judeans did not **believe** concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. (9:18)

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; & when He had found him, He said to him, “Do you **believe in the Son of God**?” He answered and said, “Who is He, Lord, that I may **believe in Him**?” (9:35–36)

Then he said, “Lord, I **believe**!” And he worshiped Him. (9:38)

24. Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not **believe**. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. But you do not **believe**, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.” (10:25–26)

If I do not do the works of My Father, do not **believe Me**; but if I do, though you do not **believe Me, believe the works**, that you may know & **believe that the Father is in Me**, & I in Him. (10:37–38c)

And many **believed in Him** there. (10:42)

25. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may **believe**. Nevertheless let us go to him. (11:15)

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who **believes in Me**, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and **believes in Me** shall never die. Do you **believe** [all of] this?” (11:26ab)

She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I **believe** that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.” (11:27)

26. Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would **believe** you would see the glory of God?” (11:40)

“And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may **believe** that You sent Me.” (11:42)

Then many of the Judeans who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, **believed** in Him. (11:45)

27. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will **believe** in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation. (11:48)

28. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Judeans went away and **believed** in Jesus. (12:10–11)

29. “While you have the light, **believe** in the light, that you may become sons of light.” These things Jesus spoke, & departed, and was hidden from them. But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not **believe** in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: “Lord, who has **believed** our report? & to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?” Therefore they could not **believe**, because Isaiah said again: (12:36–39)

30. Nevertheless even among the rulers many **believed** in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; (12:42)

31. Then Jesus cried out and said, “He who **believes** in Me, **believes** not in Me but in Him who sent Me.” (12:44ab)

I have come as a light into the world, that whoever **believes** in Me should not abide in darkness. And if anyone hears My words and does not **believe**, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. (12:46–47)

32. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may **believe**. (19:35)

33. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and **believed**. (20:8)

34. The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not **believe**.” (20:25)

Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have **believed**. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have **believed**.” (20:29ab)

35. but these are written that you may **believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that **believing** you may have life in His name. (20:31ab)

36. But Jesus did not **commit** Himself to them, because He knew all *men* (2:24, one unique usage within John)

CONCLUSION AND APPLICATION

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Precis: The age-old debate about the difference between believing (in) a person versus believing content rests upon a misguided approach to the subject. Sometimes John speaks about believing a witness (a person). Believing a witness implies that one believes what the witness testifies (the content). Similarly, to believe testimony (content) implies believing the witness (person) who testified that content. A few passages in John make have double objects [speaking about believing the witness (person) and the witness' testimony (content)]. This paper will illustrate the thesis over and over that John's normal usage is that believing a witness implies believing the witness' testimony; that believing a witness' testimony implies believing the witness. Only one passage in John (2:24) does not fit this pattern.