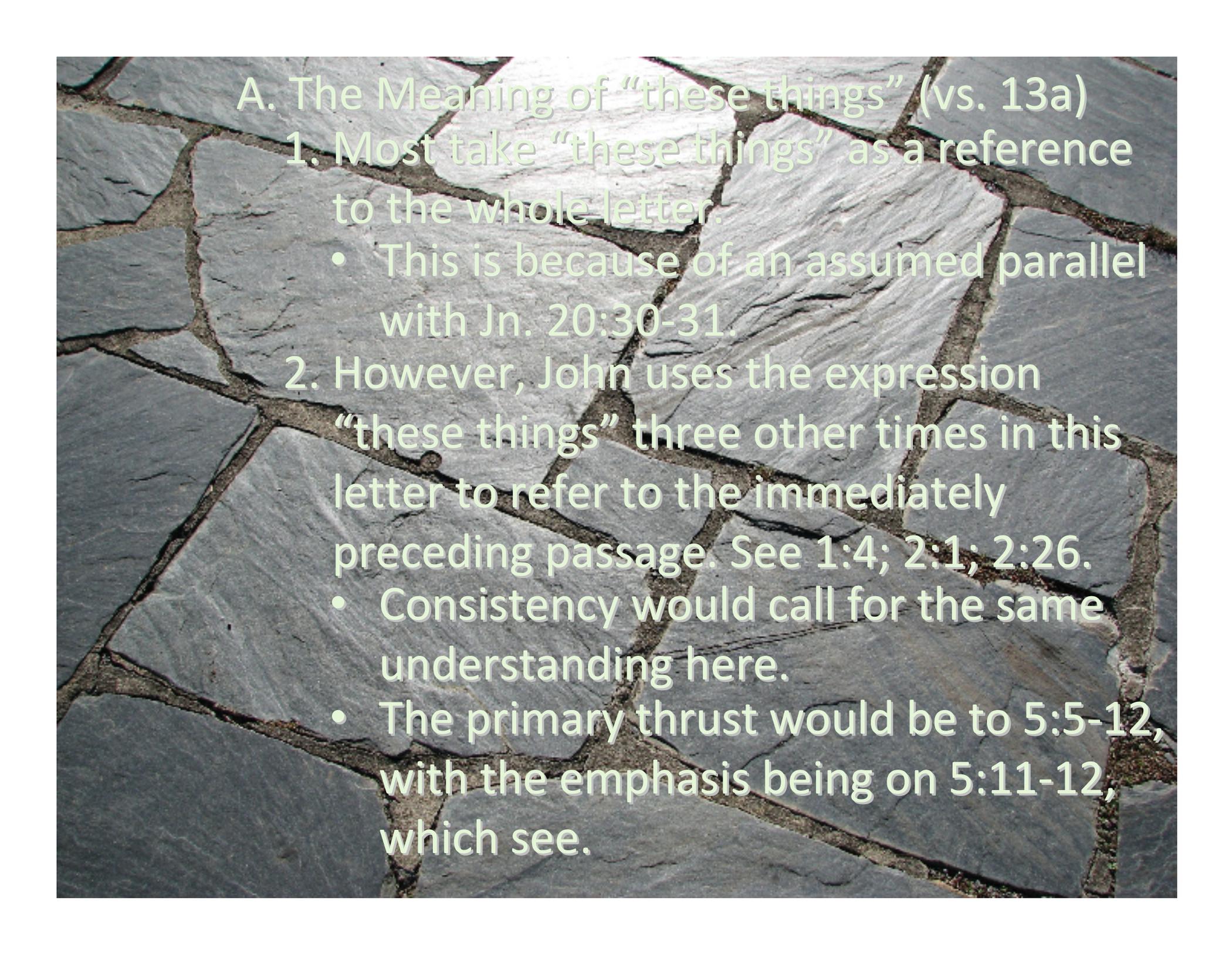




# Certain Knowledge of Eternal Life

## 1 John 5:13

- A. The Meaning of “these things” (vs. 13a)
- B. John’s readers are believers (vs. 13b).
- C. John gave his purpose for writing (vs. 14c).



## A. The Meaning of “these things” (vs. 13a)

1. Most take “these things” as a reference to the whole letter.

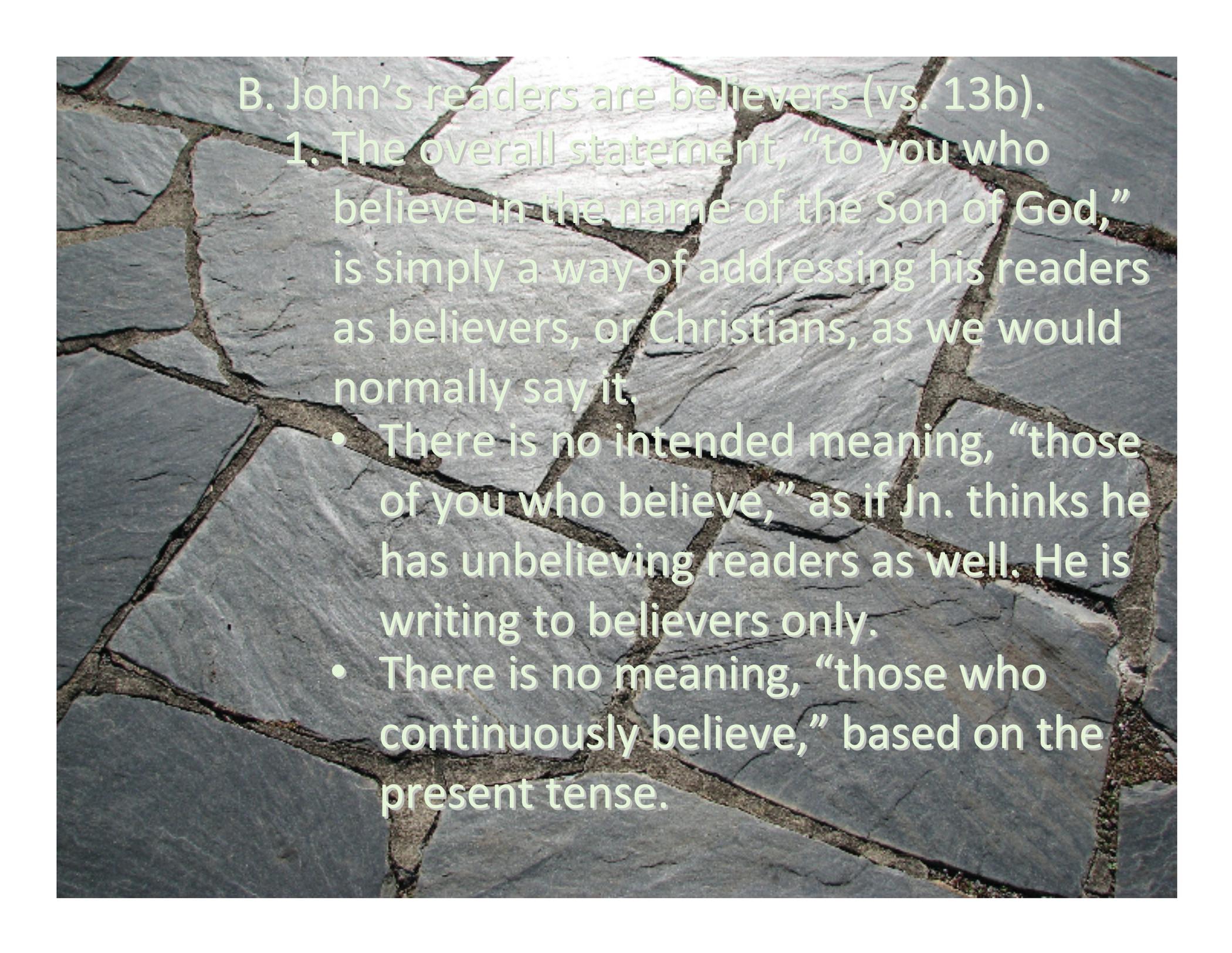
- This is because of an assumed parallel with Jn. 20:30-31.

2. However, John uses the expression “these things” three other times in this letter to refer to the immediately preceding passage. See 1:4; 2:1; 2:26.

- Consistency would call for the same understanding here.
- The primary thrust would be to 5:5-12, with the emphasis being on 5:11-12, which see.



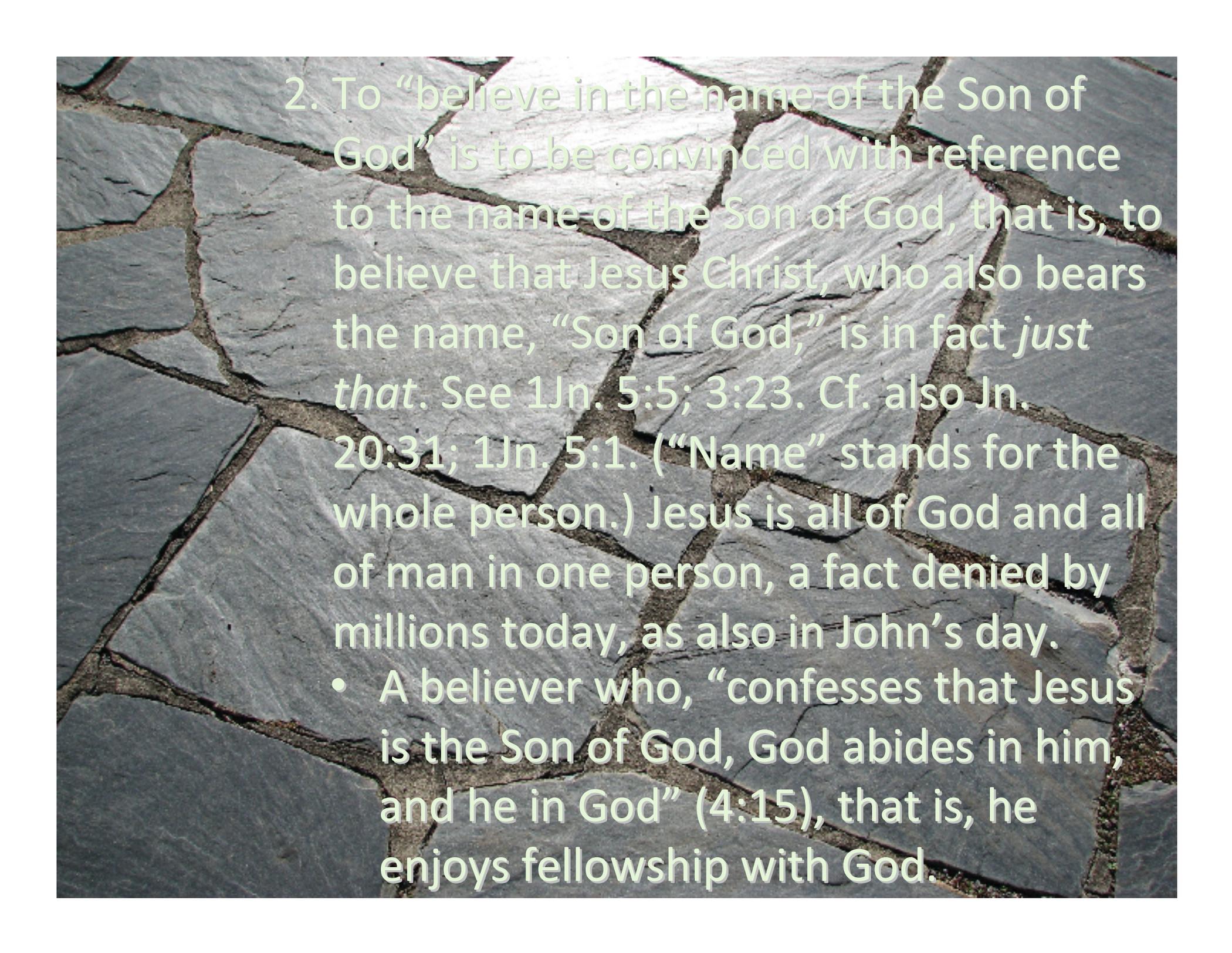
3. The rest of the expression, “I have written,” refers to the apostle John as the author. “Have written” is literally, “I wrote,” and it refers to the readers’ point of view, once his letter is in their hands (epistolary aorist in Gk.).



B. John's readers are believers (vs. 13b).

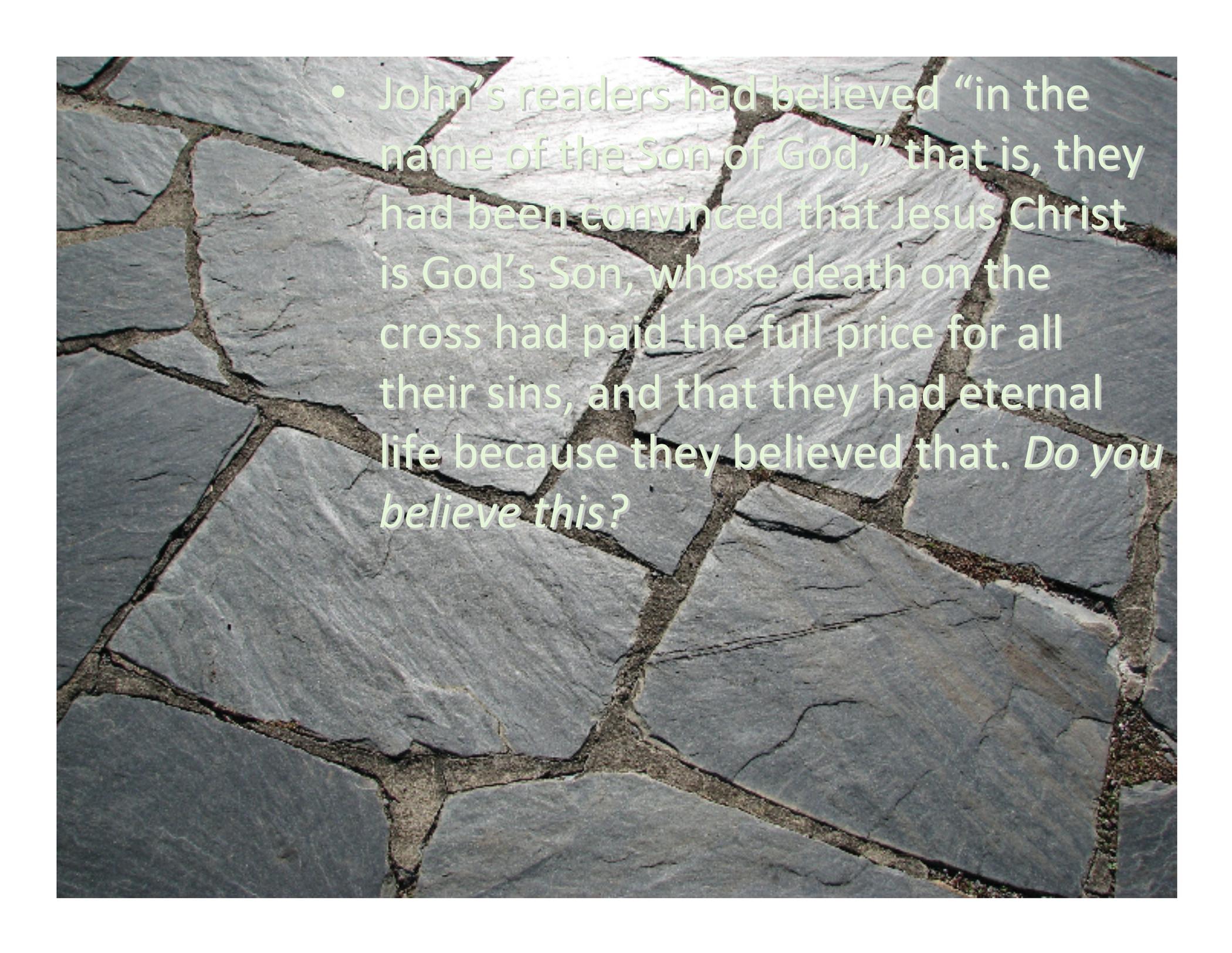
1. The overall statement, "to you who believe in the name of the Son of God," is simply a way of addressing his readers as believers, or Christians, as we would normally say it.

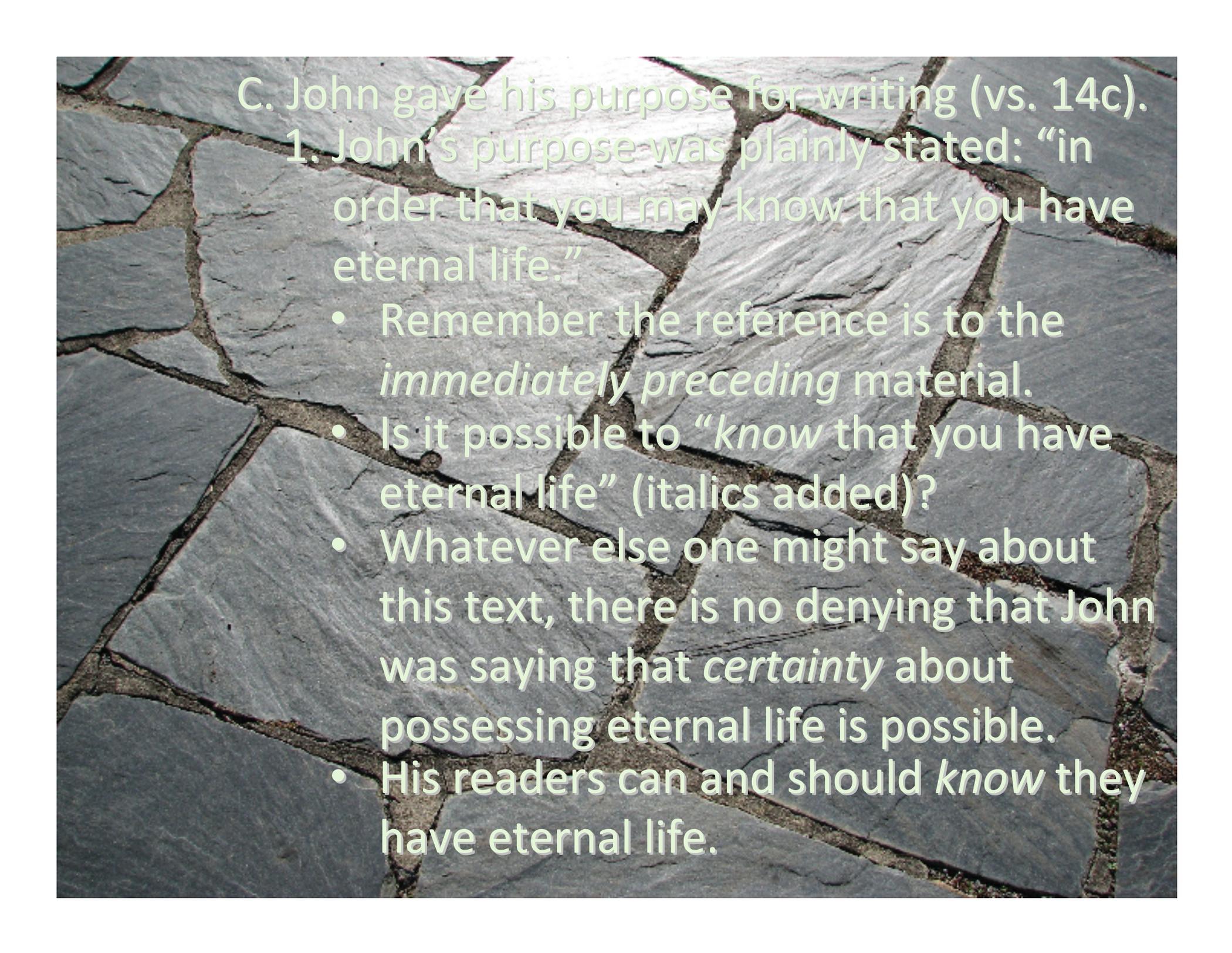
- There is no intended meaning, "those of you who believe," as if Jn. thinks he has unbelieving readers as well. He is writing to believers only.
- There is no meaning, "those who continuously believe," based on the present tense.



2. To “believe in the name of the Son of God” is to be convinced with reference to the name of the Son of God, that is, to believe that Jesus Christ, who also bears the name, “Son of God,” is in fact *just that*. See 1Jn. 5:5; 3:23. Cf. also Jn. 20:31; 1Jn. 5:1. (“Name” stands for the whole person.) Jesus is all of God and all of man in one person, a fact denied by millions today, as also in John’s day.

- A believer who, “confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God” (4:15), that is, he enjoys fellowship with God.

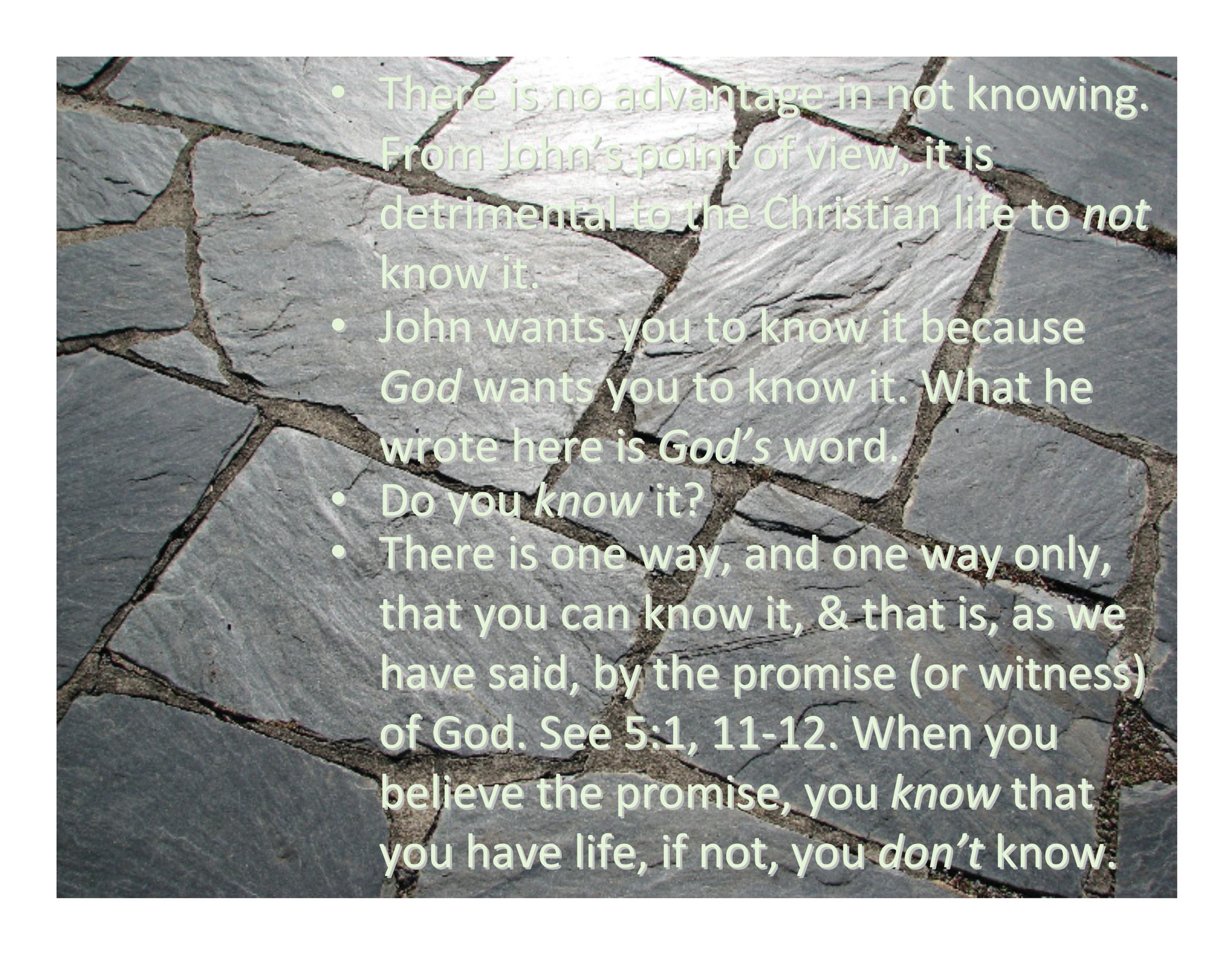
- 
- John's readers had believed "in the name of the Son of God," that is, they had been convinced that Jesus Christ is God's Son, whose death on the cross had paid the full price for all their sins, and that they had eternal life because they believed that. *Do you believe this?*

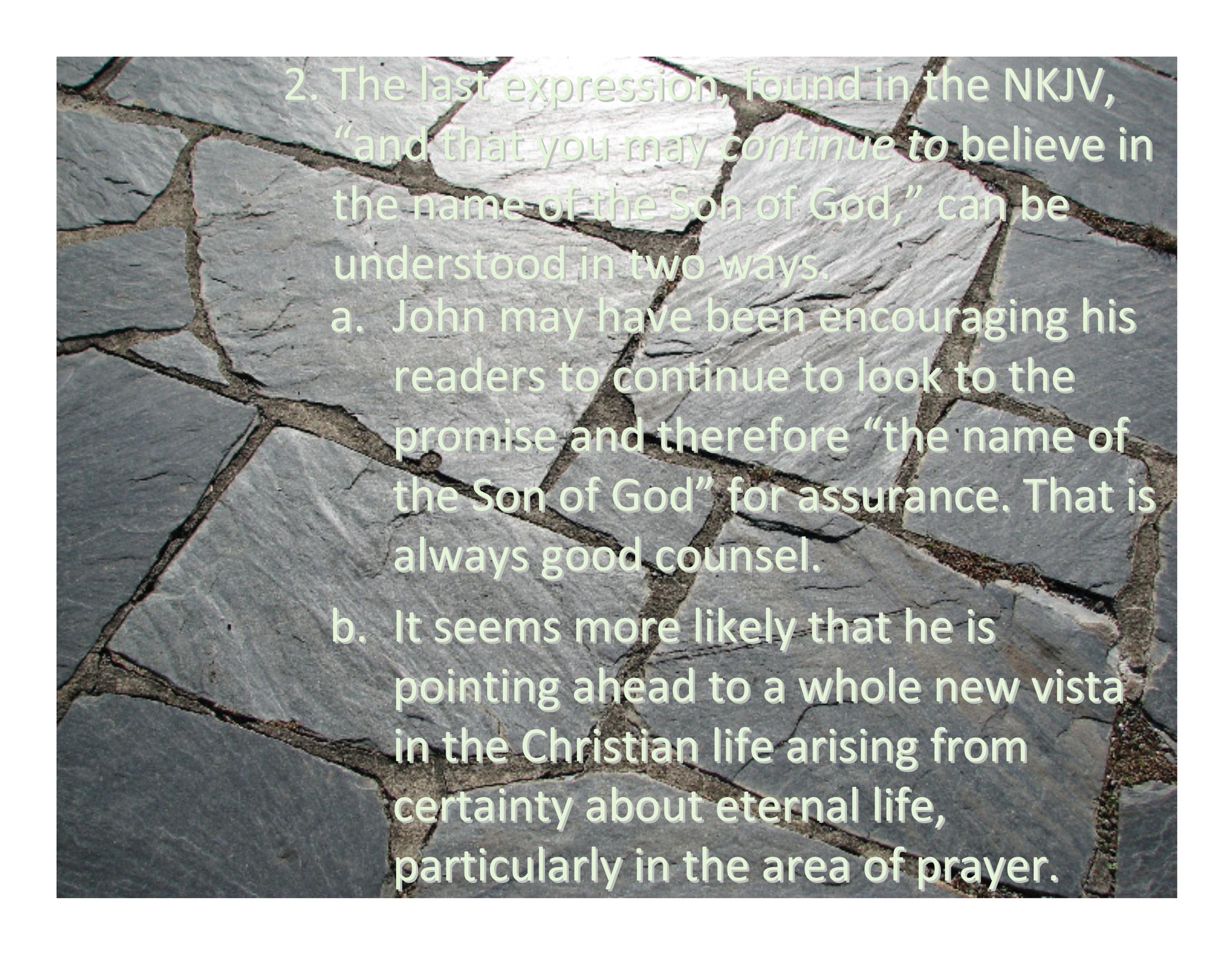


C. John gave his purpose for writing (vs. 14c).

1. John's purpose was plainly stated: "in order that you may know that you have eternal life."

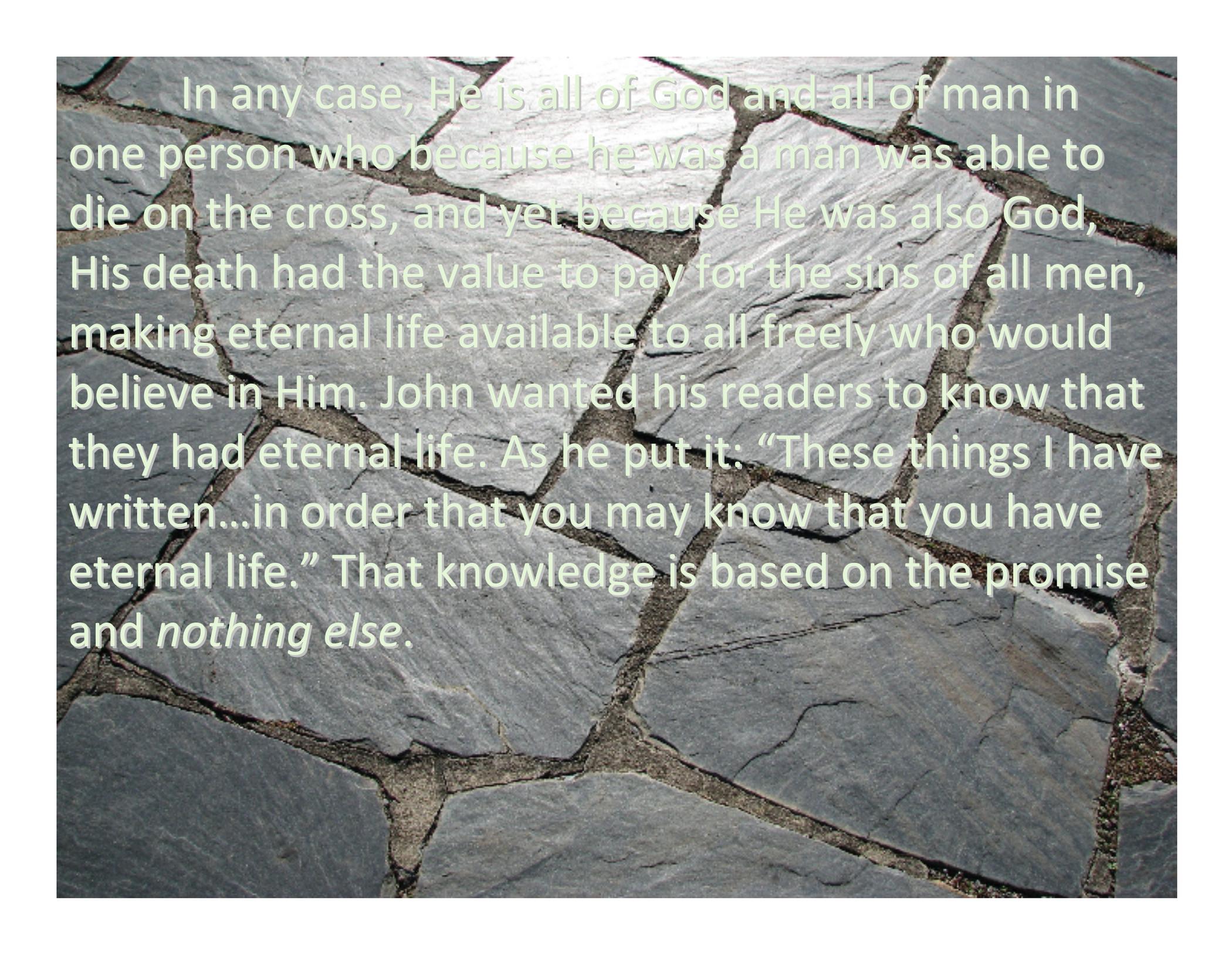
- Remember the reference is to the *immediately preceding* material.
- Is it possible to "*know* that you have eternal life" (italics added)?
- Whatever else one might say about this text, there is no denying that John was saying that *certainty* about possessing eternal life is possible.
- His readers can and should *know* they have eternal life.

- 
- There is no advantage in not knowing. From John's point of view, it is detrimental to the Christian life to *not* know it.
  - John wants you to know it because *God* wants you to know it. What he wrote here is *God's* word.
  - Do you *know* it?
  - There is one way, and one way only, that you can know it, & that is, as we have said, by the promise (or witness) of God. See 5:1, 11-12. When you believe the promise, you *know* that you have life, if not, you *don't* know.

- 
2. The last expression, found in the NKJV, “and that you may *continue* to believe in the name of the Son of God,” can be understood in two ways.
- a. John may have been encouraging his readers to continue to look to the promise and therefore “the name of the Son of God” for assurance. That is always good counsel.
  - b. It seems more likely that he is pointing ahead to a whole new vista in the Christian life arising from certainty about eternal life, particularly in the area of prayer.

## Conclusion:

Remember that the expression “these things” refers to the immediately preceding section, namely, the testimony of God: “And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life” (1Jn. 5:11-12). John’s readers are those, “who believe in the name of the Son of God,” that is, they are believers, or Christians, as we normally put it. “Name” stands for the whole person who is here, “the Son of God,” who elsewhere is recognized as Jesus Christ (3:23), or simply the Christ (5:1).



In any case, He is all of God and all of man in one person who because he was a man was able to die on the cross, and yet because He was also God, His death had the value to pay for the sins of all men, making eternal life available to all freely who would believe in Him. John wanted his readers to know that they had eternal life. As he put it: "These things I have written...in order that you may know that you have eternal life." That knowledge is based on the promise and *nothing else*.