

WHO IS JESUS?

An Investigative Study of Jesus Christ

General Instructions for the Study

1. The Leader's Guide gives you insights into how the more difficult questions are to be answered. Don't copy off the leader's guide for each person in the group. Use it to help you prepare to lead the study. Make copies of the studies for the participants from the originals at the end of this material.
2. Read through all passages out loud. Have each person read a few verses and the person next to him/her read a few and so on around the circle. Try to get everybody a Bible or pass a Bible around the circle. You will need at least one Old Testament for Study #2.
3. The order of the study is:

	Study	Key Topic
Study 1	The Word is Out- John 1	The Uniqueness of Christ
Study 2	But, I'm Very Religious- John 3	Salvation is Not by Works- (Christ the Only Way)
Study 3	A Thirst I Didn't Know I Had- John 4	Our Need of Christ
Study 4	You Can Know Where You Are Going- John 10 "The Bridge from John's Gospel"	Eternal Life in Christ

4. Thought Questions (at the end of studies 1,2 and 3) should be answered in the following study. They should be the first question discussed at the beginning of the next study (e.g. Thought Question for Study #1 should be discussed and answered at the beginning of study #2). This is to give them something to think about between studies and to encourage them to return.
5. If possible make copies of each of these studies for each person. Make a few extra in case extra people show up. Hand out the studies at the beginning of each study and go through them question by question.
6. As a summary for the studies share "The Bridge from John's Gospel". At the end of Study 4 give each person a copy of the sheet labeled "A Summary of the Message of John's Gospel". Share it with the whole study and tell them to fill in the blanks as you go. You might want to bring pencils for this. Explain to each person how they can receive Christ as their personal savior and ask them to pray with you as a group. Go back later and share it again one to one with each individual who was in the study if at all possible.

The Word is Out- John 1

An Investigative Study of Jesus Christ

LEADER'S GUIDE

Read John 1:1-14

1. What is John referring to when he speaks of the Word in verses 1, 2, 3, and 14?
2. Why is Jesus called "the Word"? For what purpose is a word used? What is Jesus communicating to us as "the Word"? (See John 1:18)
Jesus is called the Word because He communicates to us what God is like. He makes God known to us.
3. What qualities are attributed to the Word in 1:1-5,14?
4. Another analogy is used to describe Jesus in 1:4-9. What is it? What is the function of a light? Why is Jesus called the "light of men"?
5. What are the implications of this title? (See John 3:19-21, John 8:12 and John 12:35-36)
The basic implication is that men are either living in darkness or light. Each of us chooses whether we will live in the light or in the darkness.
6. In what sense are all men illuminated by the Light? (1:4,9) *All people are created by and have life from Him. Man has abandoned this source of life and has fallen into darkness. People still maintain a God-consciousness. Everyone has a sense of God in the same way that something can be known about an artist by looking at his or her works. (See Romans 1:18-21) People also have an innate sense of morality. They know how life should work and operate by their concept of fairness. (See Romans 2:14-15) These two elements explain the existence of religions and philosophies; each has a sense of a higher being and also a system of morality. But it is only by returning to the Light that man can be illuminated and reoriented. We can only understand life (our own lives and others' lives) by coming to Him.*
7. According to John 1:11-13, how does a person enter God's family? *It does not happen by heredity, self-effort or the effort of someone else (pastor, priest, etc.)*
8. What do you think it means to "receive Christ"? *In 1:12, "receive" and "believe" are synonymous. In John 3:36, the opposite of belief is rebellion against God. Unbelief is not accepting His authority in our lives. And the conclusion from this? Belief implies submission.*

THOUGHT QUESTION: Read John 14:6. What are the implications of Christ's declaration here?

By making this statement Jesus made people make a decision about Him. They had to decide if He was the real Messiah, a delusional Liar or just crazy. What Jesus was saying was that He was the only way to God. There are no alternative routes. Just as there is only one right answer to a math problem there is only one right way to God. Many people believe in the doctrine of sincerity which states that it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere. Some how what you believe isn't as important as your sincerity in believing it. This doesn't work well for someone who sincerely believes he can fly when he jumps out of a tall building. The only way to God is God's way not some way we conjure up. The question that each person has to answer is: Is Jesus Christ, God's way to God?

But I'm Very Religious!- John 3

An Investigative Study of Jesus Christ

LEADER'S GUIDE

Objective: The emphasis of this study of John 3 is that salvation is not by works. We don't get to God by being religious or doing good works, we get there through Jesus Christ. Its our simple faith that allows to step out of the darkness of sin and self-righteousness into the light of His salvation.

Possible questions from John 3

1. Verse 3 **What is the kingdom of God?**
The kingdom of God is the realm or sphere of God's authority or blessing which is now invisible (Luke 17:20-21) but will one day be manifested on earth (Matthew 6:10).

2. Verse 5 **What does it mean to be born of water?**
5 possible interpretations
 - a. Water baptism as necessary to salvation
 - b. The natural birth- when a baby is born there are many waterlike fluids in the sac in which the baby has been that are expelled at birth.
 - c. The "water" refers to the Word of God (as in Eph 5:26)
 - d. The "water" is a symbol of the Holy Spirit (as in John 7:37-39)
 - e. The "water" refers to the repentance ministry of John the Baptist and the "Spirit" refers to the Holy Spirit's work of giving the believer new life in Christ.

3. Verse 8 **How does the working of the wind compare to the Holy Spirit?**
the essence of Christ's illustration here is that the work of the Spirit is invisible like the blowing of the wind. You can see His effects but cannot see the Spirit, Himself.

4. Verse 12 **What are the earthly things Jesus spoke of?**
Jesus explained how God would give us new life using earthly illustrations (e.g. birth, wind, etc.) Nicodemus could not understand the truths with earthly illustrations how then could he understand things when there was no earthly illustration? (Like the Trinity)

5. Verse 13 **What is the emphasis of this verse?**
No one has ever gone into heaven and then come back to earth, and is therefore able to give clear teaching about divine matters. Except for of course, Jesus Christ. He is the only one qualified to teach us about the future life.

But I'm Very Religious!- John 3

An Investigative Study of Jesus Christ

LEADER'S GUIDE

1. Read or someone quote John 3:16. This verse is probably the most famous verse in the Bible. We're going to look at the context in which it was given.

Read John 3:1-10

2. What was a Pharisee? What kind of people would be modern day Pharisees? Why do you think Nicodemus came at night?
The Pharisees were a lay fellowship originating in the second century B.C. and dedicated to the strict observance of the Law of Moses. In Christ's day many of the Pharisees had degenerated into self-righteous, hypocritical religionists (see Matthew 23:13-36)
3. What does Jesus say that confuses Nicodemus? (see verses 3,5-8)
4. Nicodemus says that being born again is surely not a physical birth (verse 4). What kind of birth does Jesus say it is? (verses 5-8)
5. Put yourself in Nicodemus' place. He is a very religious man and because of this believes he is 'right' with God. If anybody should be allowed admission into God's kingdom he should. What does Jesus say is the basis for admittance into God's kingdom? Why do you think this surprised Nicodemus? (verse 7)

Read John 3: 11-17 & Numbers 21:4-9

6. Numbers 21:4-9 is the passage referred to in verse 14. In what ways was Jesus lifted up like the snake? What happened when people looked on the snake Moses lifted up? What happens when we believe in Christ? (verse 15)
7. What did it cost God to keep us from perishing? (verse 16) If doing good works or being religious (like Nicodemus) could give us eternal life do you think God would have given Christ to die on a cross? Why or why not?

Read John 3:18-21; 3:36

8. In verse 21 it says that he who lives by the truth comes into the light. Where was this person before he came into the light? *In the darkness. The point of this question is that each of us needs to come out of the darkness into the light. Nobody starts in the light.* If we come into the light what must we admit about the good works (the good things we have done) in our lives? *We must admit that God has done them in us. They are not works of self-righteousness but are the evidence of our new life in Christ.*
9. Nicodemus learned that admittance into God's kingdom was not something that is gained by good works or by being 'religious'. If not by good works then how does a person receive eternal life? (John 3:36) *By believing in Jesus Christ.* What are we doing if we choose not to believe in Christ and Christ only for our salvation? Why is God's wrath on us if we don't believe in Christ? *Because he has given His Son for us and if we do not accept the free gift of salvation through Christ we are still under the just wrath of God against our sins. (see Hebrews 2:3)*

THOUGHT QUESTION: What did Nicodemus have to disbelieve in order to believe in Christ? *Nicodemus has to disbelieve (or discontinue believing) that his own good works could get him into heaven and put his trust in Christ as his only means of getting right with God.*

A Thirst I Didn't Know I Had- John 4

An Investigative Study of Jesus Christ

LEADER'S GUIDE

Objective: The emphasis of this study is that Jesus offers salvation to all men regardless of their religious background or moral condition. It is necessary to point out that although this woman had an immoral life Jesus recognizes that what she was doing was trying to fulfill a legitimate thirst. Her thirst was for acceptance, security and purpose. She sought to have it fulfilled in a sinful manner but Christ's offer was to fulfill this desire as only He can. Each of us has a thirst for living water that we seek to quench with waters that don't satisfy (see Jeremiah 2:13). By coming to Christ we can find the living water that meets our deepest needs.

Possible questions from John 4

1. What is significant about Jesus passing through Samaria?

This was the shortest route from Judea to Galilee but not the only way. The other route was through Perea, east of the Jordan River. In Jesus' day the Jews, because of their hatred for Samaritans, normally took the eastern route in order to avoid Samaria. The Samaritans were descendants of Babylon and other foreign places that an Assyrian king brought to Samaria when he conquered it in 722 B.C. The first settlers there were overrun by lions and appealed for a priest of the Lord to teach the faith of Israel to them. The result was a mixed worship of Jehovah God for which the Jews despised them.

2. For what cultural reasons shouldn't Jesus speak to this woman?

The normal prejudices of the day prohibited public conversations between men and women, between Jews and Samaritans, and especially between strangers. Also this woman was an immoral woman and was ostracized because of it. (Evidenced by the fact she came alone to draw water. This was another reason not to speak to her. Jesus further surprised her by being willing to drink from the same vessel she drank from. Jews did not eat with or use the same dishes that Samaritans had used.

3. Who is the Jacob referred to in verses 6 and 12?

Isaac's son Jacob in the Old Testament. The land that the well was on was given to Joseph by Jacob (Genesis 48:21-22)

4. When the woman begins talking about worshipping on the mountain or in Jerusalem what is she doing?

a. She is trying to change the subject in order to avoid the moral issue Jesus has brought up.

b. She is trying to raise a controversial question as to who was right about the right place to worship God. Was it Jews or Samaritans? Jesus instructs her that where a person worships is not the most important. Who he or she worships is of greatest importance. We must worship in Spirit (an inward reality not a place) and in truth (its not how sincere you are its whether you are worshipping according to what is true).

5. When she says, "He told me all that I ever did", what does she mean?

She means that the Lord's penetrating discernment of her moral condition had impressed her the most. That Jesus knows what is in a person and that He has comprehensive knowledge of one's life is an indication of His deity (Psalm 139) Also many of those she spoke to in that town may have realized that because of her immoral life, if Jesus knew all that she had done, He might just know something about them too.

A Thirst I Didn't Know I Had- John 4

An Investigative Study of Jesus Christ

LEADER'S GUIDE

Read John 4:1-30

1. Describe the appearance of the woman at the well. What do you think she looked like? *For questions 1 and 2 if you have a group of four or more divide into groups, discuss these questions and report back to the group.*
2. Describe the emotional condition of the woman (rejected by five men, living with a sixth).
3. Why is she so surprised that Jesus speaks to her and asks her for a drink?
4. From verses 13 and 14, what kind of thirst does living water (the water that Jesus gives) satisfy? *Inner thirst, spiritual thirst. A thirst for acceptance, significance and purpose.*

- Do you think that this woman thirsts in this way? Why or why not?

- Does the woman seem to understand what Jesus is getting at yet? *No she continues to talk about water that would meet her physical needs rather than water that will meet her spiritual needs.*

5. What does Jesus say in order to reveal the woman's thirst? *Jesus calls her to go call her husband knowing that this will reveal her moral condition. He wants her to become aware of her own thirst for acceptance, significance and purpose.*

What are some other ways that people show that they thirst for meaning in life?

Read John 4:39-42

6. How does this woman's life have an impact on her hometown?
7. Upon closer examination of Jesus what did the people of Sychar come to believe about Him?

THOUGHT QUESTION: Many Samaritans in Sychar came to believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. Why does the world (including you and me) need a Savior? *The world needs a Savior because all of us in the world have sinned and we need to be saved from the penalty of sin; eternal death.*

You Can Know Where You Are Going-John 10

An Investigative Study of Jesus Christ

The Sheperd Knows the Sheep

Read John 10:1-6

1. Verses 1-6 describe a morning sheperding scene. A sheperd enters through a gate into a walled enclosure which has several sheep in one pen. What two kinds of persons are being compared here? *A faithful sheperd and those who would steal his flock away.*
2. What is characteristic of the sheperd? (verses 2-4) *He speaks to the sheep and the sheep listen to His voice. He calls them by name and the sheep know His voice and follow Him.*
3. How do the sheep know their sheperd? *They know the sound of his voice, they have become familiar enough with him to know his voice.*
4. Did they understand what Jesus was trying to say here? *NO.* What do you think Jesus is saying? *Just let people answer this question don't rally answer it till later. Jesus himself answers it when he says that He is the Good Sheperd. Jesus is pointing out to the people His personal care for them.*

The Sheperd Protects the Sheep

Read John 10:7-10

5. After a sheperd enters the enclosure he separates his sheep from the other sheep and takes his sheep to pasture. Near the pasture is an enclosure for the sheep. The sheep can go into the enclosure or eat in the pasture in the sight of the sheperd. The sheperd guards the gateway in front of the enclosure. What does Jesus mean then when he says "I am the gate for the sheep" (verse 7)? *The spiritual meaning is that Jesus is the only gate by which people can enter into God's provision for them.*
6. Who are the thieves and robbers that Jesus refers to? *He is referring to those leaders of the nation who cared not for the spiritual good of the people but only for themselves. The ultimate thief of course being Satan himself. (verses 8,10) What is their purpose? To steal, kill and destroy. His concern is not the security of the sheep but his own selfish interest.*
7. What does Jesus want for His sheep? (verses 9,10) *Abundant life. The thief takes life, Christ gives it to to the full. You could ask here, "Just what do you think it means to have life to the full?"*

The Sheperd Lays Down His Life for the Sheep

Read John 10:11-18

8. What does Jeus call himself in this passage? (verses 11,14) Why does Jesus qualify to call Himself this? (verses 11,14,15) *He lays down his life for the sheep.*
9. What are the characteristics of the hired hand? (verses 12,13) Whom does he represent? *In contast with the Good Sheperd who owns, cares for, feeds, protects and dies for His sheep, the hired hand does not have the same commitment. His care is not the sheep but his own wages. Israel had many false prophets, selfish kings, and imitation messiahs. The flock of God suffered constantly from their abuse (e.g. Jeremiah 23)*

10. who are the other sheep Jesus speaks of in verse 16? *The other sheep not of this flock refer to Gentiles (anyone not a Jew) who would believe.*
11. What does Christ say he will do after he lays down his life? *He will take it up again. Jesus is saying that He will rise from the dead. (verses 17,18) How can he do this? Because He has the authority to do it. God has given Him the authority. (Authority indicates power especially when God gives it.)*
12. What conclusions do the Jews come after hearing Jesus on this matter? (verses 19-21) What caused each group to believe what they did? *It depended upon whether they judged Him by His words or the authority He had to speak those words.*

The Sheperd's Promise

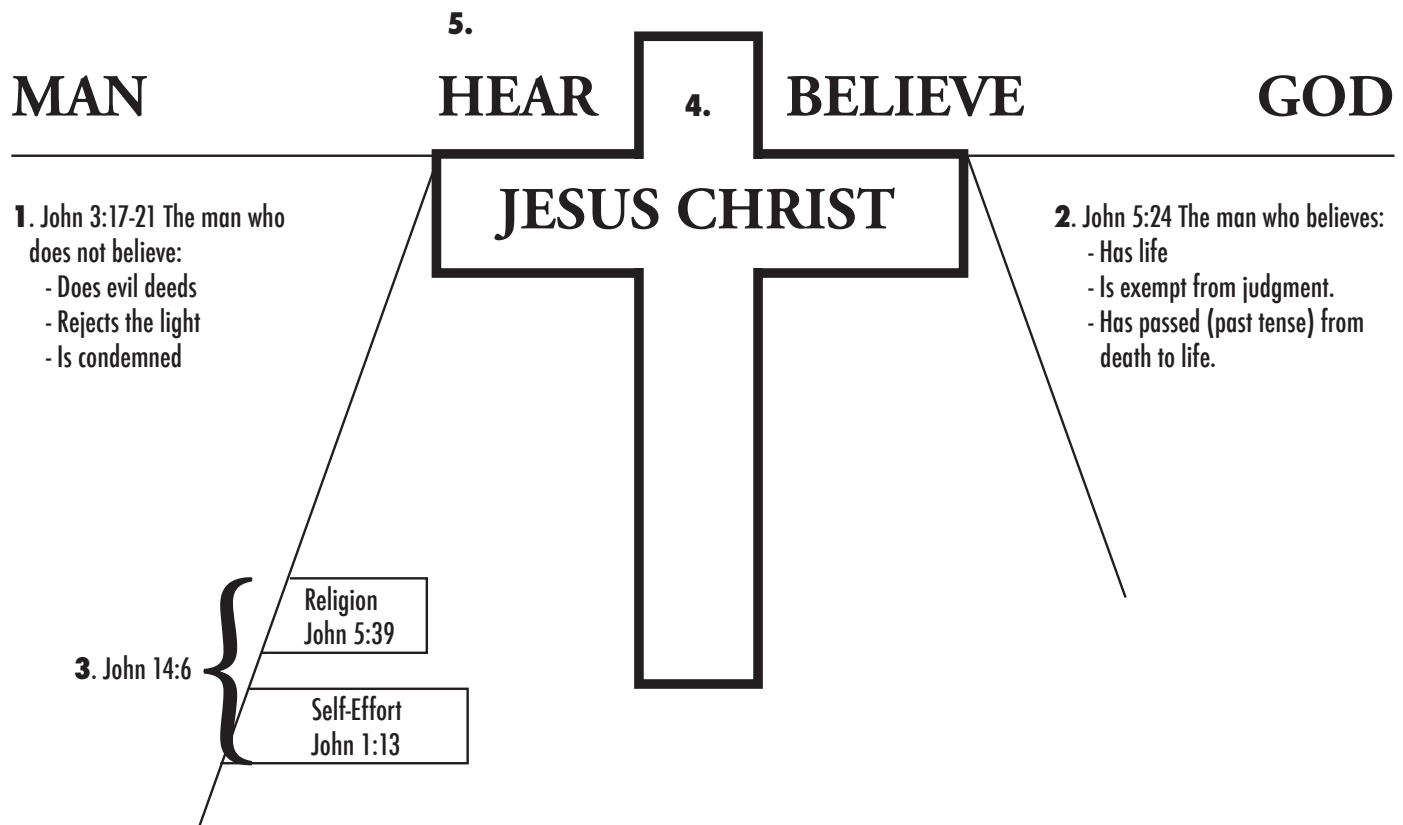
Read John 10:27-30

13. How has Jesus consistently described those who follow Him? *Sheep who know and listen to His voice. (verses 3-5,16,27) What does it mean to know and listen to His voice? People come to God when He calls them. Their proper response to His call is to follow Him.*
14. What is Christ's promise to His sheep? *This statement clearly states that one who believes in Jesus for salvation will never be lost. He gives them eternal life and they shall never perish. Eternal life is a gift, if you receive the gift it is yours eternally. And no one can snatch us out of our Father's hand. Not even ourselves by our own sinful actions. (verses 28,29) Upon what basis can He make this promise? (verses 29,30) Because the Father has given Him the authority and power to make this promise.*
15. If someone followed Jesus as one of His sheep but did not receive eternal life what would it mean about Jesus and His promise? *It would mean that Jesus was not faithful to His promise or that He didn't have the power to carry it out. Or it could mean that His promise just was not true making Him to be a liar. His promises are backed by the strength of His character.*

SUMMARY: The following sheet is an illustration of what we have learned about Jesus from this 4 part study of John.

The Bridge Illustration Based on John's Gospel

An Investigative Study of Jesus Christ



- 1.** Man is separated from God and is under judgment because of sin (John 3:17-21, 36) (See also Romans 3:23; 6:23; and Heb 9:27)
- 2.** There is a solution to man's separation from God because of Christ. Christ pays the penalty for our sin by dying on the cross. We are no longer under God's judgment. Jesus gives us eternal life, He gives us an never ending relationship with God Himself.
- 3.** Man attempts to build his own bridges to God (John 1:13), but Jesus declares Himself to be the only way to God (John 14:6) (See also Ephesians 2:8,9)
- 4.** Jesus is the Way because of who He is: God (John 1:14); the Lamb (John 1:35) and because of what He did. He died (John 6:51 and see also Romans 5:8); and He rose from the dead (John 11:25).
- 5.** Jesus calls on us to act on this message to hear and believe (John 5:24) Some other descriptions of believing: receiving (John 1:12); being reborn (John 3:3), and drinking (John 4:13).

The Word is Out- John 1

An Investigative Study of Jesus Christ

Read John 1:1-14

1. What is John referring to when he speaks of the Word in verses 1, 2, 3, and 14?
2. Why is Jesus called “the Word”? For what purpose is a word used? What is Jesus communicating to us as “the Word”? (See John 1:18)
3. What qualities are attributed to the Word in 1:1-5,14?
4. Another analogy is used to describe Jesus in 1:4-9. What is it? What is the function of a light? Why is Jesus called the “light of men”?
5. What are the implications of this title? (See John 3:19-21, John 8:12 and John 12:35-36)
6. In what sense are all men illuminated by the Light? (1:4,9)
7. According to John 1:11-13, how does a person enter God’s family?
8. What do you think it means to “receive Christ”?

THOUGHT QUESTION: Read John 14:6. What are the implications of Christ’s declaration here?

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But I'm Very Religious!- John 3

An Investigative Study of Jesus Christ

1. Read or someone quote John 3:16. This verse is probably the most famous verse in the Bible. We're going to look at the context in which it was given.

Read John 3:1-10

2. What was a Pharisee? What kind of people would be modern day Pharisees? Why do you think Nicodemus came at night?
3. What does Jesus say that confuses Nicodemus? (see verses 3,5-8)
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Read John 3: 11-17 & Numbers 21:4-9

6. Numbers 21:4-9 is the passage referred to in verse 14. In what ways was Jesus lifted up like the snake? What happened when people looked on the snake Moses lifted up? What happens when we believe in Christ? (verse 15)
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THOUGHT QUESTION: What did Nicodemus have to disbelieve in order to believe in Christ?

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An Investigative Study of Jesus Christ

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 - Do you think that this woman thirsts in this way? Why or why not?
 - Does the woman seem to understand what Jesus is getting at yet?
5. What does Jesus say in order to reveal the woman's thirst?

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3. How do the sheep know their sheperd?
4. Did they understand what Jesus was trying to say here? What do you think Jesus is saying?

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The Sheperd's Promise

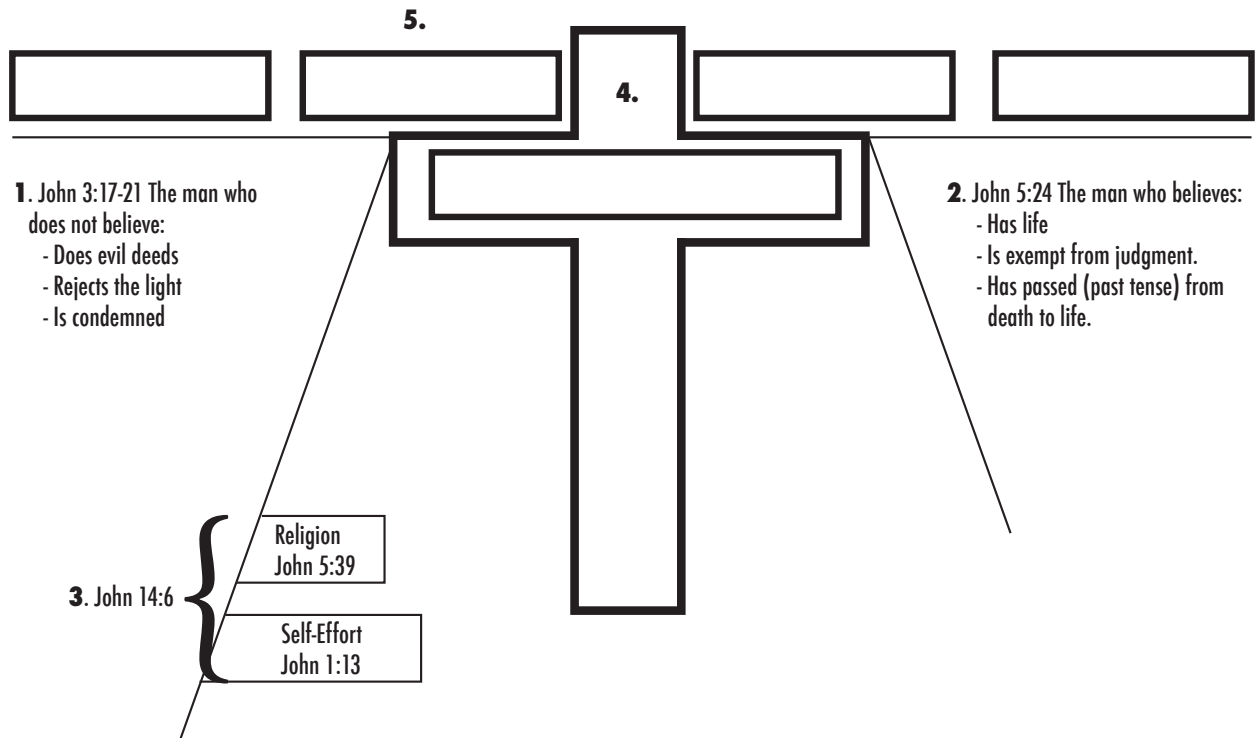
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