

# *First* Steps

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by Richard Cravy



## **Beginning Studies for Those New in the Christian Faith**

*Therefore we have been buried with Him  
through baptism into death. . . so we too might  
walk in newness of life. – Romans 6:4*

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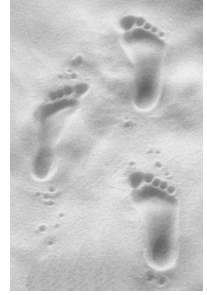
## In Preparation

As you prepare to begin this study here are several suggestions which may help you:

1. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching..." (Acts 2:42). This time of study will require real commitment and devotion on your part. Plan now to be an active part of every class meeting.
2. Both Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20) and the author of Hebrews (Hebrews 5:12-14) tells us that new Christians need instruction and spiritual nourishment. This class is part of that spiritual food.
3. Don't forget to review your lessons both before coming to class and at least once after each class. Review helps your memory retain information.
4. Be sure to take notes, use your Bible, and ask questions! It is very likely some material will be included in your class that is not included in this study guide. Also, some of the material in the study guide may not be covered in class.
5. This study guide does not include everything on every topic you may need or want to know. It is only an introduction, a beginning, to a lifetime of fruitful and beneficial study and application of God's Word to your life.

# Lesson 8

## *Evidences that Jesus Was from God*



### I. Introduction

- A. See the end of this lesson for documentation from history of the existence of Jesus.
- B. The writings we call the New Testament provide our greatest source of information about Jesus. These writings have been strenuously tested and examined over the centuries yet still are known to be completely accurate records of events of their day.

### II. Review: Did Jesus really live?

- A. See previous lesson.
- B. There is more evidence for the existence of Jesus in ancient history than for any other person, including Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, or Socrates.
- C. Thousands of people in his own generation suffered under persecution and even were executed for believing in him. People willingly die only for that which they totally believe in. They were in the very best place and time to know if he really lived; they were there.

### III. What did his contemporaries say about him?

- A. Critics and enemies are unlikely to be complimentary, but. . .
  - 1. Chief priests and Pharisees, John 11:47
  - 2. Police officers, John 7:46
  - 3. Governor Pontius Pilate, Luke 23:4,14
  - 4. Judas, Matthew 27:4
- B. Friends: know a person more intimately
  - 1. Nicodemus, John 3:2
  - 2. Martha, John 11:21, 22, 27
  - 3. Peter, Matthew 16:15-16
  - 4. John the Baptizer (Jesus' cousin), John 1:32-34

### IV. What do his miracles and teachings say about him? *See chart at end of this lesson*

- A. His miracles show he was backed up by God himself, Acts 2:22
  - 1. If someone were from God, what better way to present his credentials than by numerous, widely witnessed, supernatural acts? Who else but God could provide such power? Even his critics recognized this, John 11:47.
  - 2. Look at the nature of his miracles in contrast to modern miracle workers
    - a. He was **not limited** in any way in what he could do. He healed the lame, blind, insane, deaf, paralyzed, leprosy, and dead. He could walk on water, control the weather and read minds.
    - b. His results were always **immediate and complete**. He never turned down a case as too hard; no one left still unhealed; he had total success in every case.
    - c. Almost all miracles were done in **public** and those healed or present could be

- examined and interviewed by anyone.
- d. The miracles were **not staged, planned or advertised**. No gimmicks and very little showmanship; no bags of tricks.
- e. Easily 10,000+ people were healed or otherwise involved in his miracles, yet no one went away saying nothing happened or that he was a fake.
- 3. Jesus explained how he did miracles – John 10:34-38
- B. His teachings are unmatched in human history
  - 1. His teachings on love, responsibility to others, and moral principles are praised even today by those who do not believe in him
  - 2. Why hasn't the human race produced another, equal or greater teacher? Jesus has always been in a class by himself. One explanation: John 8:25-30.
- C. His character, a perfect balance of all the greatest qualities we would want in ourselves and others.
  - 1. He exemplified what he taught; no hypocrisy.
  - 2. He never violated God's laws, or acted inappropriately, John 8:46.

#### V. **What about his resurrection from the dead?**

- A. Early Christians believed his resurrection was the ultimate proof, Romans 1:3-4.
- B. Jesus promised beforehand that he would rise from the dead, John 2:18-22 and Matthew 20:17-19. Even his disciples did not believe him, Mark 9:9,10.
- C. Well over 500 people who had known him saw him alive again after his crucifixion and burial.
  - 1. Less than 2 months after his resurrection, in the very city where it happened, 12 of his disciples told a large crowd that they were eyewitnesses to him being alive.
  - 2. 3,000 people on that day, plus tens of thousands more over the next few years, became followers of Jesus because of the resurrection.
    - a. in Jerusalem (Acts 2 - 7)
    - b. Samaria (Acts 8) including Ethiopian official
    - c. Damascus (Acts 9) and the highly educated Saul of Tarsus
    - d. Caesarea, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch, Ephesus, Greece, Rome, etc.
  - 3. The local authorities were at a loss to stop this growing "cult" since all evidence pointed to the reality of his bodily resurrection.
  - 4. All these people were in the very city, at the very time, among the very witnesses of these events. They had ample opportunity to examine all the evidence and draw their own conclusions. They concluded that he was alive again!

#### VI. **Conclusion**

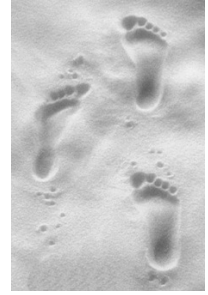
- A. The evidence is overwhelming that Jesus was a very unique person.
- B. His own explanation was that he was the very Son of God.
- C. Millions from then until now agree.

# Miracles of Jesus

	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
<b>Healing</b>				
Man with leprosy	8:2-4	1:40-42	5:12-13	
Roman centurion's servant	8:5-13		7:1-10	
Peter's mother-in-law	8:14-15	1:30-31	4:38-39	
Two men from Gadara	8:28-34	5:1-15	8:27-35	
Paralyzed man	9:2-7	2:3-12	5:18-25	
Woman with bleeding	9:20-22	5:25-29	8:43-48	
Two blind men	9:27-31			
Man mute and possessed	9:32-33			
Man with a shriveled hand	12:10-13	3:1-5	6:6-10	
Man blind, mute and possessed	12:22		11:14	
Canaanite woman's daughter	15:21-28	7:24-30		
Boy with a demon	17:14-18	9:17-29	9:38-43	
Two blind men (one named)	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
Deaf mute		7:31-37		
Man possessed, synagogue		1:23-26	4:33-35	
Blind man at Bethsaida		8:22-26		
Crippled woman			13:11-13	
Man with dropsy			14:1-4	
Ten men with leprosy			17:11-19	
The high priest's servant			22:50-51	
Official's son at Capernaum				4:46-54
Sick man, pool of Bethesda				5:1-9
Man born blind				9:1-7
<b>Command over the forces of nature</b>				
Calming the storm	8:23-27	4:37-41	8:22-25	
Walking on the water	14:25	6:48-51		6:19-21
5,000 people fed	14:15-21	6:35-44	9:12-17	6:5-13
4,000 people fed	15:32-38	8:1-9		
Coin in the fish's mouth	17:24-27			
Fig tree withered	21:18-22	11:12-14, 20-25		
Catch of fish			5:4-11	
Water turned into wine				2:1-11
Another catch of fish				21:1-11
<b>Bringing the dead back to life</b>				
Jairus's daughter	9:18-19, 23-25	5:22-24, 38-42	8:41-42, 49-56	
Widow's son at Nain			7:11-15	
Lazarus				11:1-44

# Lesson 11

## *What Must I Do to Be Saved?*



### I. Introduction

- A. Last week we explored the Bible's concept of God's law, human sin, punishment, and redemption.
- B. To be "saved" means to be released from guilt and punishment for sins committed, and be in a right relationship again with God.
- C. To raise the question, "What must I do to be saved?" presupposes both that one is in need of forgiveness, and that such forgiveness is possible.

### II. Jesus is our Savior, therefore he can and has answered our question

- A. Who can save us? Give your own response after reading each passage:
  - 1. Matthew 1:18-21
  - 2. John 1:29
  - 3. Mark 2:1-12
  - 4. Luke 19:10
- B. How are we saved? Write down the key concept(s) in each passage from John:
  - 1. John 1:10-13
  - 2. John 3:1-5
  - 3. John 3:13-18
  - 4. John 8:12
  - 5. John 8:31-32
  - 6. John 20:30-31
  - 7. Summary: Jesus is at the center of salvation. Accepting and believing in him is central. Being "born again" "of water and the spirit" is also a part of being saved.

### III. Looking at the "Great Commission"

- A. What Jesus told his apostles and disciples to do:
  - 1. Matthew 28:18-20.
  - 2. Mark 16:15-16.
  - 3. Luke 24:46-47.
- B. What did his apostles and disciples do? (*Fill out the CHART below as you read the passages listed.*)
  - 1. Acts 2:36-41.

2. Acts 8:12-13.
3. Acts 8:26-40.
4. Acts 9:18; 22:16.
5. Acts 10:34-48; 11:14-17.
6. Acts 16:25-34.

Source of Authority	Hear	Believe	Repent	Baptism	Salvation
<b>WHAT JESUS COMMANDED IN THE GREAT COMMISSION</b>					
Matthew 28:18-20 Mark 16:15-16 Luke 24:46-47	X	X	X	X	X
<b>WHAT THE EARLY CHRISTIANS DID</b>					
Acts 2:22-41					
Acts 8:12-13					
Acts 8:26-40					
Acts 9:1-19; 22:16					
Acts 10:34-48; 11:14-17					
Acts 16:30-33					
<b>MODERN POPULAR TEACHINGS</b>					
“Four Spiritual Laws”					
Other:					

IV. **Other Passages in the New Testament on this subject**

A. Check out these passages and note the **key words** about salvation:

1. Romans 1:16-17. Key words:
2. Romans 6:3-4. Key words:
3. Romans 6:17-18. Key words:
4. Romans 10:9-13. Key words:
5. Galatians 3:26-27. Key words:
6. Ephesians 2:8-10. Key words:

B. Observations

1. No one passage has **ALL** the things listed which are a part of salvation
2. But the same elements are named over and over
3. It would be a mistake to conclude that something was not a part of being saved simply because it is absent in a given passage. Example: Paul wrote to the Romans that justification, salvation, and new life came through faith (1:17), baptism (6:3-4), obeying (6:17-18), and confessing Jesus (10:9-10). yet these were not four different ways to be saved. They were what the Roman Christians had done to be saved!

V. **Comparing modern teachings on salvation**

- A. A very common teaching today about salvation is summarized in the "Four Spiritual Laws" found in numerous books, pamphlets, and websites. We quote in part from one such source.

*Law 1: "God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life."*

*Law 2: "All of us sin and our sin has separated us from God."*

*Law 3: "Jesus Christ is God's only provision for our sin. Through him we can know and experience God's love and plan for our life."*

*Law 4: "We must individually accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord."*

Up to this point we may very well express total agreement. But now we hear "how" a person individually accepts Jesus as Savior and Lord.

*"You can receive Christ right now by faith through prayer: (Prayer is talking to God). God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:*

*'Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.'*

*Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If it does, I invite you to pray this prayer right now and Christ will come into your life, as He promised."*

Taken from [www.crusade.org](http://www.crusade.org) (Campus Crusade for Christ) and [www.everystudent.com](http://www.everystudent.com).

- B. Compare this teaching with the various passages in the New Testament we read.
1. What things are alike?
  2. What is in this teaching but not in the Bible?
  3. What things were in the Bible but not in this teaching?
  4. Go back to our chart on what Jesus and the apostles teach about how to be saved. Use the last row in the chart to fill in what the "Four Spiritual Laws" teach.
  5. Would you say the "Four Spiritual Laws" **do** or **do not** teach exactly what Jesus and the apostles taught?
- C. What would you say a person should do to be saved?
- D. What did (or will) you do to be saved?



# Lesson 13

## *Our Spiritual Worship*



### I. Introduction

- A. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Acts 2:42
- B. Spiritual growth and maturity should be the goal of every new Christian. It is God's plan for us. Ephesians 2:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Hebrews 5:11-14
- C. Some areas in which we need to be devoted and diligent are covered in this lesson.
- D. Often people think that "worship" is the Sunday service at the church building. However, Romans 12:1-2 tells us that offering our total selves as living sacrifices to God's service is our real "spiritual worship." (Read several different translations of this passage.)

### II. Overcoming Sin

- A. We need to be totally committed to dealing with all sin and rebellion to God's will for our lives.
  - 1. Hate what is evil, Romans 12:9
  - 2. Be separate, touch nothing unclean, 2 Corinthians 6:17-18
  - 3. Not even a hint, Ephesians 5:3-7
- B. Starts with a commitment to a new mind set and attitude, Ephesians 4:21-24
- C. Then immediate repentance when we sin, 2 Corinthians 7:8-11
- D. Do whatever is necessary to get away from the sin. Example: Matthew 18:7-9
- E. Confess sin to God, 1 John 1:5-2:2; Acts 8:22-23
- F. Confess sin to other Christians who can help, James 5:16
- G. Resist temptation and look for the way out, 1 Corinthians 10:12-13
- H. Leave no room for evil by filling up our life and thoughts with good and right things, Luke 11:24-26; Galatians 5:16-25

### III. Pray Consistently

- A. Encouragements to always be praying, Ephesians 6:18f; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:17
- B. Prayer is a child talking to his/her Father, and a humble worshiper talking to God!
- C. Effects of prayer, James 5:16; 1 John 5:14-15
- D. Kinds of prayer:
  - 1. Adoration and praise, Psalms 145-148
  - 2. Confession, Psalm 51:1-17; 1 John 1:5
  - 3. Thanksgiving, James 1:16-17; Ephesians 5:20
  - 4. Supplications and requests, Philippians 4:4-7; Matthew 6:9-13
- E. Many believers have found it useful to keep a "prayer list" of both things and people to pray about. A prayer journal for writing out prayers and letters to God, and recording how God answers, is also very faith-building.

### IV. Daily Bible Reading and Study

- A. We are taught every week in class and in sermons. Take notes and diligently read the scriptures cited to learn what God's Word says.
  - B. Be hungry for God's words for our life, 2 Peter 2:2-3
  - C. Be trained, equipped, disciplined and encouraged, 2 Timothy 3:16-17
  - D. Psalm 1
  - E. Do what it says, James 1:19-25
  - F. Get advice from others on good study guides and materials to help with study. Learn different methods of study: by subject, book, characters.
- V. **Associate with Other Christians as Much as Possible**
- A. The Bible word for this is "fellowship". We are all members of one family and, figuratively, one body. So we live, work, play and grow together.
  - B. What is supposed to happen when we are with each other?
    - 1. Meet needs
    - 2. Bear each other's burdens, Galatians 6:1-2
    - 3. Pray for each other
    - 4. Encourage one another
    - 5. Teach each other
    - 6. Join together to worship, pray, sing, eat the Lord's Supper
- VI. **Share Our Faith with Others**
- A. The "mission"
    - 1. Of God: to save all men, 1 Timothy 2:5
    - 2. Of Jesus: to seek out and save the lost, Luke 19:10
    - 3. Of Paul: to win as many as possible, 1 Corinthians 9:19
    - 4. Of all Christians: to hold out the words of life, Philippians 2:14-16; to go into all the world and proclaim the good news about Jesus, Mark 16:15-16
  - B. The "method"
    - 1. Tell others what God has done for you, Mark 5:19
    - 2. Bring a friend to meet Jesus, John 1:41,45
    - 3. Share the gospel and our life with others, 1 Thessalonians 2:8
    - 4. Be Christ's ambassadors, urging people to respond, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21
    - 5. Pray for others who are preaching the gospel, Colossians 4:2-4
- VII. **Become Good Managers of Our Time and Money**
- A. Christians manage their time well
    - 1. Ephesians 5:15
    - 2. Since our focus is on serving God and others, scheduling, planning and diligence is needed. Be people of our word; be on time and be consistent.
  - B. We can either serve money or use it to serve God, Matthew 6:19-24
    - 1. We give our money to help support the good the church is doing, 2 Corinthians 9:6-14; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2
    - 2. We also use what we have to help others, 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Ephesians 4:28
    - 3. Our responsibilities to our families require us to be good managers of our resources as well, 1 Timothy 5:8; 2 Corinthians 12:14
  - C. Use a calendar and a budget to better plan and track how we are doing in these two areas.

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