



The law & Gospel method of Bible study is the Church's traditional way to study the Bible, which was popularized by Martin Luther. Law & Gospel Bible study makes a distinction between God's two main Biblical themes: law & Gospel. God's law theme identifies our sin, by revealing what God wants us to do that we don't do. God's Gospel theme identifies our need for Jesus the Savior, and reveals how God's love offers us salvation through Christ.

STEP ONE PRAY FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO REVEAL GOD'S VOICE THROUGH THE TEXT:

"Father, let your law and Gospel voice renew our love, faith, and hope."

STEP TWO READ THE TEXT REPEATEDLY UNTIL YOU CAN TELL IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

Luke 3:7-18 (See the reverse side of the worksheet for the printed Gospel text)

STEP THREE REVIEW A STUDY BIBLE TO DETERMINE THE TEXT'S THEOLOGICAL MEANING:

In today's Gospel Luke continues to speak about the activity of John the Baptist as he prepares the people to receive the Messiah. He asks them to straighten up their lives through repentance and baptism for the forgiveness of sins. John the Baptist invites the people to be baptized in water as an expression of their conversion. However, people expected that the Anointed One (the Christ of Messiah) would appear soon and began to mistake John for the Messiah. For all the Gospel writers, however, John is not the Messiah. He is his forerunner and will give way to him when he comes. Before the Messiah, John does not even consider himself worthy to undo the straps of his sandals, a job reserved for the slave of the house. The baptism of John is with water while that of Jesus will be in the Spirit. John's baptism is the expression of a radical conversion, a turning back to God, symbolized by an external ritual of washing in water and renouncing the evil past. As serious as such a step was, it was not yet a complete inner transformation. This would be possible only through the action of the Messiah himself, through a baptism in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God himself. The Spirit will descend upon Jesus at his baptism and will lead him all along. This same Spirit will be given to the Apostles during their Pentecost experience, enabling them to be witnesses of Jesus to all the nations. It is that same Spirit that every Christian receives in baptism. In Jesus and through the subsequent Christian baptism in Jesus' name, the inner transformation is so deep and the whole person completely won over to God that the person is really born to a new life in God's family. Our priority then is to live our baptism as sons and daughters of God and as brothers and sisters of the same family.



Luke 3: 7-18 ⁷John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." ¹⁰And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" ¹¹In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." ¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." ¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages." ¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." ¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

STEP FOUR COMPLETE A LAW & GOSPEL BIBLE STUDY TO *Restore Hope in the Savior*

Law Question: *How does this text reveal our sin (self-centeredness) and how we do not live as God desires?*

Answer.....

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Gospel Question: *How does this text reveal God's gift of Jesus as the Savior who freely offers us salvation?*

Answer.....

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Please send your "answers" to Pastor Bob: Schmalzle@yahoo.com which he likes to incorporate into the sermon.

STEP FIVE PRAYERFULLY MEDITATE UPON GOD'S GOSPEL VOICE: *Restoring Our Hope*

A. Quieting Our Inner Sanctuary: *We quiet our hearts (souls) by focusing on our breathing. Breathe in slowly to the count of five (J-E-S-U-S)...hold your breath to a count of six (C-H-R-I-S-T)...exhale to a count of seven (T-H-E-L-O-R-D). Repeat this pattern of breathing until you are relaxed.*

B. Dwelling within Our Inner Sanctuary: *We meet the Lord Jesus in the sanctuary of our hearts (souls), which is a place created within our mind's eye for us to be with the Lord. Using our favorite sights, sounds, smells and feelings, we visualize our inner sanctuary as a place of peace where the Lord Jesus meets us.*

C. Listening to God's Voice in Scripture Speak to Us through Jesus: *As Jesus meets us in our inner sanctuary, he lovingly shares God's Gospel message of hope from the Scripture text we have just studied. Listening to God's Gospel voice restores our trust and hope that Jesus' death and resurrection freely offers us eternal Salvation. When Jesus speaks to us, our souls are nourished and refreshed.*

STEP SIX SHARE THIS LAW & GOSPEL BIBLE STUDY WITH A FRIEND:

Forward this via email, give a printed copy, or like then re-post on social media