



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:

Mark 13:24-37 (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:

Advent is the time when we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. There are two major orientations in this liturgical season: our preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus and our preparation for the celebration of his First Coming. In this first week, the Gospel invites us to prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus at the End-time. During the other three Sundays of Advent, we are introduced to different people who helped prepare the way. The Prophet Isaiah, John the Baptist and Mary who says yes to God's call to become the mother of the Savior. In keeping with the spirit of Advent, today's Gospel is an invitation to be vigilant. It is taken from Jesus' speech about the end of time (Mk 13) where he urges his disciples six times to be vigilant and to 'stay awake.' The return of Jesus is likened to that of a master of a house. Before setting out on the journey, the master gives to each person a specific task. The door keeper also has his work and has to keep awake to open to the master at any moment, even if he comes during the night. The Gospel writers want to make us realize that to be a Christian is to belong to a family of which there is a head. The head of the family is not always physically present. It is as though he has gone somewhere but has not abandoned his children. The Master has told them what to do in his absence as they await his return. Some early Christians thought that Jesus would return during their lifetime and decided to stop working. Paul has to scold them and order them to resume (2Th.3:10-13). Mark found it necessary also to remind his readers not to be idle just because Jesus is not physically present nor to despair in the midst of their troubles because he will come back in victory. In our congregations, we share our different ministries so that all member of the "household" are meaningfully occupied as they await Christ' return. We must be faithful and watchful because we will have to give an account to the Master when he comes.



Mark 13:24-37 ²⁴But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ²⁸From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³²But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake — for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

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.....

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

Answer.....

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. Quietening 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 post on social media