



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:**

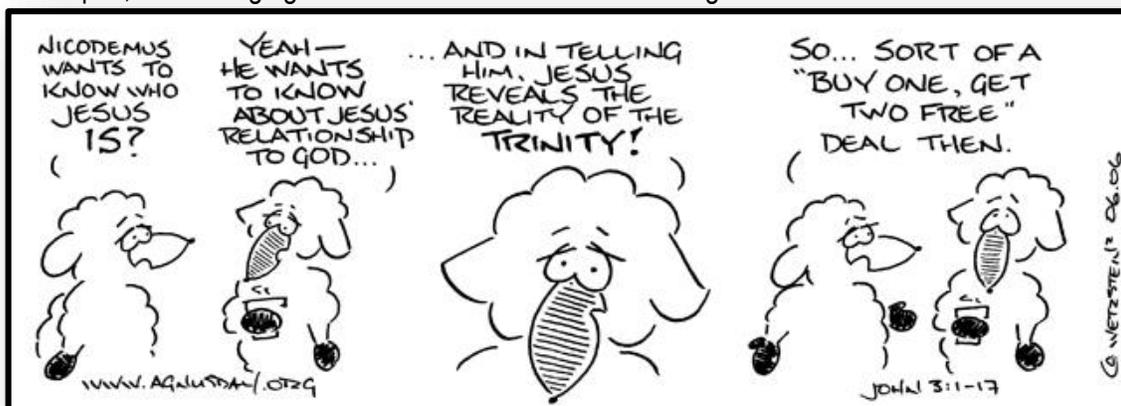
*"Father, let your law and Gospel voice renew our love, faith, and hope."*

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

**John 3:1-17** (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:**

Jesus says to Nicodemus, "Unless one is born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God." (v. 3) Nicodemus responds --"How can a man be born when he is old?" Jesus answered, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (vv. 5-6) In these words, Jesus made the conditions for entering the kingdom clear. The kingdom of God is not entered by anything we do, but through a transformation brought about by God. We do not enter the Spirit's realm through our own efforts. We enter the realm of God's Spirit through the water of Baptism and the Holy Spirit's efforts. Baptism is the washing of regeneration -- rebirth. Through it, the Spirit adopts us as his own, bringing us under his dominion. Jesus offered Nicodemus and us the key to understanding. What is "heavenly" has come to earth: "the Son of man" (v.13). In the Son, God has come to earth and opened his heart and will to us. Perishing in spiritual confusion and death, we have only to look to Jesus to find life, as the smitten children of Israel looked to the bronze serpent erected by Moses as a sign of God's grace. Then the text leads naturally to the best loved passage of Scripture, John 3:16-17, the heart of the gospel. The Spirit of God is seeking you out to make you his own. The Greek word "*anōthen*" (v.3) has a double meaning -- "anew" or "from above." Tragically, the "born again" movement of the 1960's interpreted "*anōthen*" as "born again." The word "again" is used to describe how one can be accepted into the Kingdom without being baptized. However, according to the New Testament and this passage in particular, Jesus describes salvation as a gift of God's Spirit given through the "water and Spirit" of baptism alone and does not imply any "decision," or "will" on our part. This text is for Trinity Sunday because it declares God to "be one". As our Father, He is behind all the good that occurs. As the Son, He is the revelation of love. As the Spirit, He is bringing us a new and eternal life in His Kingdom.



**John 3:1-17** Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. 2He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." 3Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." 4Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" 5Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. 6What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' 8The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." 9Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" 10Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? 11Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. 12If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. 14And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 16For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. 17Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

**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.....  
 .....  
 .....

Please send your "answers" to Pastor Bob: [Schmalzle@yahoo.com](mailto: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 re-post on social media*