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The elementary history of salvation



From back to front, the Bible is characterized by the story of salvation as well as historical events. In our new semester we have the theme "D'Jungschi voll im Element" - The Jungschar totally in the element, and we are dealing with the elements: earth, fire, water, air (wind) and gold. The spiritual concept is based on an event from the history of salvation.

So we start at the beginning of the Bible and finish at the end of the Bible - and all that in just five afternoons - not bad, eh? Of course, we cannot deal with the whole story, but only with some very central events - so-called key passages, otherwise we would never be able to do this!

Earth - God's good intentions in his creation

God has absolutely good intentions, as the story of creation shows us. Six times God looks at what he had created and judges it to be "good". In the end, he looks at the whole and judges everything together as "very good". Man also occupies a central position. It gives the impression that God has created everything for him. He is supposed to manage the earth, he is allowed to give the animals their names. Man was created with these abilities, in the image of God. God means absolutely well with us and entrusts us with many things, and most importantly, he lives with man from the very beginning.

Bible passages:

- 1. Genesis 1-2
- Psalm 139

Questions:

- What can be indications of man's likeness to God?
- How do you recognize that you are uniquely created?
- What fascinates you about God's creation?
- What is the appropriate response when we realize that we were created by God with good intentions? (Cf. Psalm 139)

Possible introduction:

Theater with professor and pupils (cf. YouTube film), must be adapted to the children's level or is particularly suitable for older children. Then either read out the creation account and illustrate it with pictures, or a film can be shown (if possible, see 2nd YouTube film). Give the children the task of counting how often the word "good" and "evil" occurs.

Fire - The separation of God and man

Fire is often used in the Bible in connection with God's judgment, but also with separation from God. And it is precisely this drastic separation from God and man that we are dealing with when we look at fire. Many people are aware that fire has a separating effect. For example, fire separates people in a burning house from the outside world where they would be safe. In larger fires, people are cut off from each other.

Bible passages:

- 1. Genesis 3
- Jer 23:29

The story of the fall of man speaks of angels (cherubim) who guarded the garden with fiery swords so that people would never again taste of the tree of life and thereby receive eternal life (Genesis 3:24). God says to Jeremiah: "Is not my word like a fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer that shatters rocks?

Questions:

- Why do sins separate us from God?
- What comes to your mind about God's glory?
- Why is the separation from God so serious?
- How do you see the restriction (not to eat from this one tree) that God places on man in relation to the freedoms that man had?

Possible entry point:

Light a sword, a burning sword can have an impressive effect (must be tested beforehand of course and observe safety guidelines). Explain that today it would also be about such a burning sword. This can be referred to later in the story.

Water - Jesus the source of life

Separation from God causes people to long for redemption. But people can look for it in the wrong places. Jesus makes this clear using the example of water when he spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1-42). Every day she fetched her water from this well, but she did not know that there was someone else who could give her the water of life. Step by step, she realized that there was someone standing before her who was more than an ordinary person and ultimately a whole village in Samaria came to believe in Jesus.

Bible passages:

- John 4:1-42
- Revelation 22:17

Questions:

- How much does a person need to drink to live 'healthily'?
- Wouldn't it be great to drink water that doesn't make you thirsty?
- Who is Jesus for you?
- Why can Jesus call himself the water of life?

Possible introduction:

Two bottles are shown to the children. They look exactly the same on the outside. One bottle is filled with clean drinking water, the other is filled with salt water. One child should drink from both bottles and then decide which bottle contains edible water and which bottle contains inedible water.

Air (wind) - The Holy Spirit is our great help

How do you get from air (wind) to the Holy Spirit? Well, it's actually quite simple, at least if you know a little Greek or Hebrew. But since you can't assume that everyone knows it, here is a brief explanation: The Hebrew word '*ruach*' actually means wind, breath or breath. However, it is also used to refer to the Holy Spirit'*Ruach HaQodesh*'. In the New Testament, the word '*pneuma*' is used. Here we can think of the tire of our car or bicycle, which is hopefully filled with air, otherwise we have to walk or ride on the rims.

The Holy Spirit is our great help on our journey with Jesus Christ. Pastor Andreas Symank once compared the letter to the Romans (at least the first eight chapters) to a school class:

- The pupil is confronted with a difficult calculation, starts to solve it, but the result he had calculated cannot possibly be right, he thinks to himself. In fact, the teacher marks everything in red. The first three chapters of Romans: everyone is guilty before God.
- But then the unbelievable happens. The teacher could have simply written down the worst grade. But he doesn't. He says: "Here's a new sheet, you can try again. I won't count the grade you received against you. This is also what happens in Romans (chapters 4 - 6): we have been declared righteous through faith in Jesus Christ.
- So the student goes to his seat with the new white sheet and begins to count. But this time, he says to himself, I must do the math correctly, I owe it to the teacher who has been so lenient with me. In Romans 6:1, Paul writes: What conclusion do we draw from this? Should we continue to sin so that grace can be fully effective? And his answer to this is clear: Never!
- But again the disciple is in line. He simply doesn't get anywhere. The result is certainly not right again. He goes to the teacher's desk and indeed, everything is red again. This is what happens to Paul in Romans chapter 7 when he says about his struggle: "I am a wretched man! My whole existence is doomed to death. Will no one deliver me from this miserable state? (Romans 7:24)
- The teacher could now say: That's enough, now you'll get your bad mark. He could also go to the blackboard and write down the result. But what is the point of that in the end? How do I arrive at this solution? The teacher now does the following: he leaves the seat at the front of the teacher's desk and sits down next to the pupil and says to him. Let's look at this calculation together, I'll show you how to do it step by step. That's exactly how it is in the letter to the Romans. The answer to Paul's question is chapter 8 - or rather: the answer to the question is the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit lives in us, he shows us step by step how to do it. He helps us to persevere in faith.

Gold - Every plan has a goal and the goal is worth its weight in gold

What would a plan be without a goal? Nothing. This is precisely why God's plan of salvation also has a goal. Of course, how could it be otherwise - salvation. Or perhaps we should say: our final salvation.

When we ask people today how they imagine heaven, we hear statements like: "Great, brilliant, grandiose." Or even: "Um, I don't know." But perhaps also: "Boring, always sitting on a little cloud and playing the harp." Others are afraid of the idea of spending an eternity in heaven. Some don't even think about it.

However, when we look at the Bible, we realize that there are not enough words to describe heaven. John, for example, is overwhelmed by the splendor he sees in his visions. The first time John sees heaven (Revelation chapter 5), he is immediately surprised. There is talk of this: Who would be

allowed to open the book with the seven seals. But no one was deemed worthy to open this book and reveal its contents. No one in heaven, on earth or under the earth. John even wept at this. But then came the surprise. Someone has won the victory, namely the Lion of the tribe of Judah. And now we stand there, expecting a lion to appear. But things turn out quite differently. John says it like this:

"Now I saw a lamb standing in the middle, where the throne was, surrounded by the four living creatures and the elders. It looked like a sacrificial animal that had been slaughtered, and it had seven horns and seven eyes. (The seven eyes are the seven spirits of God sent out into the whole world.") (Revelation 5:6)

Jesus has won the victory, but his victory is not based on power but on powerlessness. Where it was thought that the enemy had now triumphed over righteousness, the power and also the wisdom of God is expressed. So the plan is fulfilled in Jesus, through his sacrifice we also have the victory.

Now, of course, we know nothing more about heaven, except for this: There are emotions in heaven, there is action. I don't believe that it is as the voices say, that we will sit peacefully on a cloud and strum our harp every day for all eternity.

There's more to say about heaven than, "Um, I don't know." Jesus talks about the kingdom of heaven in many ways. He even once said, "The kingdom of heaven is in your midst."

Weitere Informationen

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