

Year Of The RAT



The rat is the first animal in the Chinese zodiac. Today, urban living is described as a rat race. In the rat race everyone strives to earn more money, to be more successful, and to climb higher up the social ladder. You will be mercilessly sucked into the rat race unless you take stock of your life. What do you live for? Will it be worthwhile in the end? What happens next? The answers to these questions might lie in an ancient incident connected with the rat.

The bubonic plague is an infectious disease caused by a bacteria carried by rats. The Bible records a plague that swept through the land of the Philistines in about 1000 BC. The Philistines had captured the Ark of the Covenant from the nation of Israel. The Ark was the sacred gold-plated box symbolising the presence of God among His people. The statue of the Philistine god fell down on its face before the Ark. It fell again, breaking its head and hands. Then, the plague swept from one city to another, killing so many people. This was no ordinary plague, for we are told that “the hand of God was very heavy there”.¹ The plague was to humble the Philistines so that they would acknowledge the God of Israel as the one, true, God.

When the Ark was in the tabernacle of worship, God’s presence was shown by the shining cloud above the cover. Within the Ark were the two tablets of stone on which were written the Law of God. Once a year, the High Priest had to sprinkle the blood of animal sacrifices on the cover to show that the blood of a suitable sacrifice must come between God and those who have broken His Law.² All of us have broken God’s Law in thoughts, words, and deeds. We are all under God’s wrath and deserving of eternal damnation for our sins. The Son of God has come in the person of Jesus Christ to die as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”.³

Life begins to make sense only when we are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. The answers to the questions about life are found in Jesus Christ alone. We do not want to wait till stricken by a tragedy before humbling ourselves to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

1. 1 Sam. 5:11; 2. Lev. 16:14; Heb. 9:27-28; 3. John 1:29

鼠年



鼠是十二生肖之首。如今，城市生活正如一场竞赛。在这场竞赛中，每个人都尽其所能地赚更多钱、更成功、迈向更高的社会阶级。除非你盘点你的生活，否则将被卷入这场残酷的竞赛中。你是为了什么而活？到最终会值得吗？接着又会发生什么？关于这些疑问的解答也许与老鼠古老的事迹有关。

鼠疫是鼠类所带来的传染病。圣经也曾记载着，公元一千年前在非利士国里肆虐的鼠疫。非利士人从以色列国夺走了神的约柜。约柜是神圣的镀金盒，象征着神与祂子民的同在。可是，非利士人的神像却扑倒在约柜前，脸伏于地。次日那神像又扑倒在约柜前，其头和双手都折断了。之后，鼠疫便横扫各个城市，导致多人死亡。这不是一场普通的鼠疫，圣经说“神的手重重攻击那城”¹。这场鼠疫的发生为的是谦卑非利士人承认以色列的神耶和華是独一无二、真神。

当约柜在会幕里，神便透过那发光的云彩显现在约柜盖上。约柜里存有二块石版，记载着神的律法。每年一次，祭师长会把赎罪祭的血洒在约柜盖上，意味着合适的祭血必须介入神与违背神律法的人之间²。所有人在思想上、言语上、行为上都违背了神的律法。我们在神的震怒下，得为我们的罪受永死的惩罚。神的独生子来到世上，道成肉身成为耶稣基督受死，正是“神的羔羊，除去世人罪孽的”³。

惟有藉着耶稣基督我们与神和好，生命才会变得有意义。关于人生的疑问惟有在耶稣基督里得到解答。我们不要等到被悲剧所困时，才来谦卑自己去承认耶稣基督为救主。

1. 撒 5:11 ; 2. 利 16:14; 希 9: 27-28 ; 3. 约 1:29 。