

## 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”.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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”.<sup>3</sup>

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

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