



DANDENONG
Bible
Education
Centre

Newsletter

March

2007

Summer days

How were your summer days? Do you like the heat or hate it? Are you enjoying the light evenings with daylight saving hours? Are you looking for the blessings of God around you or grumbling? We are all pretty good at complaining! We wish it would rain because we need the water, but complain when our picnic or barbecue is washed out. This is what the people of Israel were like, and God was not pleased.

“And the people complained in the hearing of the LORD about their misfortunes; and when the LORD heard it, his anger was kindled”
Numbers 11:1



Let us enjoy the gifts of God, even when they are not exactly how we like them. While the summer lasts, enjoy the sunshine. When the autumn comes, enjoy the beauty of the

colourful leaves. In the winter, share your warm house with friends and have a delicious hot meal together. Finally, in the spring, look for the new growth in the garden. If we are looking around for blessings we will find they are there. If we are looking for troubles, guess what our lives will be full of!

Term one courses

Our courses are off to a good start with people keen to learn more about the Bible, and attending our courses. If you wish to attend, but didn't get around to booking in, you can still come along. Whether you are interested in archaeology, want to learn English using the Bible, or want your Bible questions answered, there is a course there for you!

One of the questions answered from the Bible in our course on Tuesday nights was “Do good people go to heaven when they die?” Maybe you think the answer is “yes”. Many people

do. However, the Bible is very clear that this is not the case. Two verses demonstrate the point clearly:

“No one has ascended into heaven ... but the Son of man.” (that is, Jesus) John 3:13

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”
Matthew 5:5

The New Life class

Each Sunday from 11.30-12.30 we hold a class covering a variety of Bible topics. All who attend are invited to stay to share lunch with us. God willing the topics for the next two months will be:

Mar 4 *Where did the Devil come from?*

11 *No class*

18 *The nature of man: good or bad?*

25 *How is Jesus the creator?*

April 1 *Worship and praise morning*

8 *Jesus – the resurrection and the life.*

15 *Mythbusters: All good people go to heaven*

22 *Mythbusters: God and Jesus are one and the same*

29 *Mythbusters: Evil and terror show there is no such thing as God*

Did you know?

For forty years the people of Israel ate the miraculous food “what is it?” When the people complained that they had no food to eat, God rained down some food on the ground for them to pick up and eat. As they had not seen this sort of food before they called it “manna” which means “what is it?”. In this way God provided food for the whole nation while they wandered in the wilderness.

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Camels – special creation of God

A camel is an unusual creature – and maybe not the most beautiful of animals. Yet its usefulness is great. This mammal with the large hump (or humps) can travel vast distances without stopping to drink. God has made this animal so that it can carry heavy loads (hundreds of kilograms), and travel in the desert without water for several days. They are therefore most useful for humans, particularly in hot, dry climates. The Bible speaks of camels on a number of occasions. One notable time was when Abraham sent his servant on a long journey to find a wife for his son Isaac from his relatives who lived a long way away. The servant took ten camels with him, carrying many gifts. When he arrived at the city of Nahor he prayed to God, asking that he would know who was meant to be Isaac's future wife because she would offer to give the camels a drink, as well as him. That may sound like a simple thing to offer, but it was a very generous offer. Ten camels who had come on a long journey would drink an enormous quantity of water – which all had to be drawn out of the well by Rebekah using her water jar, and poured into the animals' trough, time and time again, until they had all finished drinking. What a huge task! You can read about it in Genesis 24.

A camel through a needle's eye?



Jesus used camels in two of his parables – stories with a special meaning. They seem to show that Jesus had a sense of humour. Picture the following examples (or just look at the cartoons!) On one occasion he said:

“... it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” Matthew 19:24

The disciples of Jesus were amazed. They thought that rich people would be the most likely to be in the kingdom of God – hadn't God blessed them with riches? However, riches can distract people from God, and it is sometimes easy to rely on money instead of God. So Jesus is giving us a warning about our money. Let us take care! Although it is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, Jesus said,

“With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Matthew 19:26

Swallowing a camel?



The other time that Jesus spoke about camels in a parable was when he was speaking of the scribes and Pharisees – the religious leaders of the day. He said they were blind guides:

“...straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel.” Matthew 23:24

Can you imagine that? Imagine somebody being so careful to strain a tiny gnat out of their food, and yet not noticing that there was a camel in the dinner. Again it is a funny picture, an exaggeration, showing that the religious leaders worried about small things and yet neglected the important things of God – justice, mercy and faith. Here is another lesson for us. We must remember to do **all** that God commands us, both large and small.

Camel poem

The camel is a beast of old
And beautiful he is not.
But there is this about the camel
That's surely food for thought:
Before the camel can lie down
To go to sleep at night,
He first must get upon his knees
If he's to do it right.
And when the dawn comes inching up
To light the sky of gray
Before the camel can go forth
To greet the brand new day:
Before he rises, proud and tall,
To sniff the morning breeze
And do what camels have to do
He first gets on his knees!
So let me take a lesson from
This gawky, gangly mammal:
To keep things in perspective
I should imitate the camel.
For a moment on retiring, and
Again at days inception
Upon my knees I'll gather strength
With quiet introspection.

