



CMJ TOUR TO ETHIOPIA. As part of CMJ's 2009 Bicentenary Celebrations, we are sponsoring a tour to Ethiopia January 16 - 30. This will be led by Jean Herrick, who was a CMJ Missionary in the country for 15 years. In particular, we will focus on the work of CMJ, the history of the Jewish people there and Ethiopian Christianity. There will also be time for relaxation and visits to nature reserves.

As there are only a couple of places left, if anyone is interested please get in touch with the CMJ office as soon as possible, as internal flights need to be booked.



DEBORAH'S PIANO. Music at Christ Church Jerusalem is nothing new. In 1842, Deborah Alexander, the wife of Jerusalem's first Anglican bishop, brought the first piano to the Holy Land and delighted Jerusalem's residents with music. Most recently, to celebrate the festival of Succot, Christ Church hosted a piano concert and art exhibition. Featured artists were Italian pianist, Mattia Peli, and local sculptor, Rick Wienecke, presenting works inspired by biblical themes. The musical performance was nothing short of outstanding and Rick's work, well known in many Christian circles, added a visual treat for a delightful evening.



continued- A Hebrew Christmas Carol

from Jesus' Hebraic culture. In *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge is described as having an evil eye.

"No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such place, of Scrooge. Even the blindmen's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, 'no eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!'"

A CHRISTMAS CAROL, *Charles Dickens.*

Of the many peculiar and difficult sayings of Jesus is the section on "the lamp of the body" (Matt. 6:22-23). "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness."

These verses have caused translators and commentators much consternation and disagreement. "Good" in this verse is usually translated in one of three ways: if your eye is sound/healthy; single/clear; or, good/generous. This Greek word can be translated any of these ways, but the clue to this text is found in Hebraic culture.

Let's first look at Proverbs 22:9 in the Hebrew Bible. "He who has a good eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor." And in Proverbs 28:22 "A man with an evil eye hastens after riches." So, someone with an evil eye is greedy; Dickens called him "Scrooge."

Returning to the New Testament, Mark 7:22 finds Jesus detailing the sins that comes out of man's heart: "sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, an evil eye, malice, deceit, etc." The NIV properly translates "evil eye" here as greed.

Now let's return to "lamp of the body" passage. In context the meaning becomes more clear. The passages surrounding Matt. 6:22-23 are: not hoarding treasures on earth; you cannot serve both God and mammon; not to worry, but seek first his kingdom and all needs will be provided.

Today in Israel, throughout Jewish history as well as in Jesus' teaching, a "good eye" and an "evil eye" define generosity and greed. So in the midst of our Christmas merrymaking let's not forget the Bob Cratchit we work with or the Tiny Tim who needs new crutches. A good eye is a lifestyle of unselfishness - treating everyone we meet as if they are created in the image of God.

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