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- **Adventist Mission Website:** <http://wjafc.adventistmission.org/> This website is the new resource provided by the Office of Adventist Mission of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists.
- **Russian Website:** <http://www.boruh.info/> This website is in Russian, many articles and the parasha are posted on it every week.



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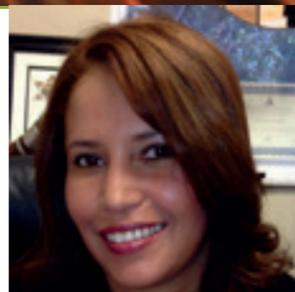
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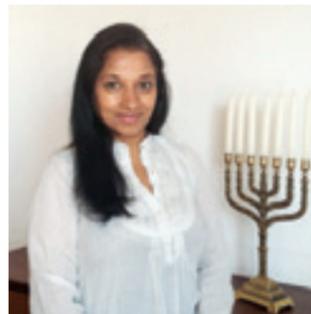
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Weekly
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Journal
of Information

We pray
every week
for leaders of
the Jewish
Ministry,
According
to our list of
prayer for
2016, I sug-
gest that our
partners pray
from January
3 to 9, 2016,
for the World
Jewish
Adventist
Friendship
Center and
its leaders
all over the
world. Let's
pray for their
ministries.



This issue

News	P.1
Parasha's comments	P.2-4
Haftara	P.4-5
Apostolic Writings	P.5
Stories	P.6
Inspirational Corner	P.6,7
Color Sheet for Kids	P.7

NEWS

2016 LIST OF PRAYER

* A new list of prayers has been prepared, if you have not received it and would like to share with us this time of prayer, let us know it and we will send it to you. Our Email: richard@elofer.com

8,000 FRENCH JEWS HAVE MADE ALYAH IN 2015

* According to a report by the Israeli newspaper 'Haaretz' which is based on the latest statistics from the Israel Ministry of Immigrant Absorption. More than 8,000 French Jews have moved to Israel in 2015.



The World Jewish Congress comments: "Whereas in 2014 approximately 7,000 Jews moved from France to Israel —more than double the number of 2013— it is estimated that the figure for 2015 will be at over 8,000, which is unprecedented.

However, figures for 2015 were initially expected to be much higher in the wake of

the terrorist attack at a kosher supermarket in Paris last January. According to 'Haaretz' the initial forecasts were exaggerated.

France will again be the biggest source of immigrants to Israel, followed by Ukraine (7,000 in 2015, 6,000 in 2014).

With an estimated Jewish population of 600,000, France is home to the third largest Jewish community in the world, after Israel and the United States.

Minister of Immigrant Absorption Ze'ev Elkin told the newspaper that the total number of 'olim' coming to Israel in 2015 would be around 30,000, an increase of 13 % over the previous year. "This will be a record high for the past decade," Elkin told 'Haaretz'. "It is a window of opportunity that should not go to waste."

BLESSINGS FROM VENEZUELA

* Jorge Perez shared this news: "This year culminated in many blessings and accomplishments for the Venezuela's Adventist Hebrew Ministry. We are currently twenty registered members and three new brothers were immersed in the Mikveh this year. We have a place of our own where we can come together and practice our Adventist Hebrew liturgy. We have been officially recognized by the Central East Venezuela Conference as an organized group with its own identity and a clear mission.

Parasha Overview: SHEMOT

The Book of Shemot (Exodus) chronicles the creation of the nation of Israel from the descendants of Yaakov.

At the beginning of this week's Parasha, Pharaoh, fearing the population explosion of Israel, enslaves them. However, when their birthrate increases, he orders Israel's midwives to kill all newborn males.

Yocheved gives birth to Moshe and hides him in the reeds by the Nile. Pharaoh's daughter finds and adopts him, although she knows he is probably a Hebrew. Miriam, Moshe's sister, offers to find a nursemaid for Moshe and arranges for his mother Yocheved to fulfill that role.

Years later, Moshe witnesses an Egyptian beating a Hebrew and Moshe kills the Egyptian.

Realizing his life is in danger, Moshe flees to Midian where he rescues Tziporah, whose father Yitro (Reuel) approves their subsequent marriage.

On Chorev (Mt. Sinai) Moshe witnesses the burning bush where G-d commands him to lead the People of Israel from Egypt to Eretz Yisrael, the land promised to their ancestors.



SHEMOT - EXODUS

The Parasha states: **"These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household" (Exodus 1:1)** The word "with" in Hebrew is *im* ('ain-mem) *Im Yaacov*, but the author uses *et* (*aleph-tav*) *Et Yaacov*. Rabbi Hirsch says that, "*Et Yaacov* denotes a connection much more intimate than *Im Yaacov*" and he adds that "A characteristic feature of the Hebrew language is that words that signify connection usually also signify separation. There can be no strong connection without separation from others 'with Jacob each with his family'" All of them together are part of the same ancient stem, but each one has become a separate, independent branch, the center of a family of his own. There are all still the children of Yaacov, but now they also have children of their own.

That is why the narrative shifts from the life stories of individuals and families to the history of the nation, and the transition is made by recalling the names of

individuals already known to us as foundations stones of the Israel national community. **Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in Egypt." (Exodus 1:1-5)**. This is the heart and soul of the Nation, all the families together.

Each son builds his own home as a branch of his parents' home, and even father lives on in his children and grandchildren. Parents with their children and children with their parents, knit together and united forever — this is the root of eternal God's people herein lies the secret of the eternity of God's people. **"the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them." (Exodus 1:7)**.

This connection between the ancestors and their descendants is so important, that just before the coming of the Messiah, one of the missions of God's people, symbolized by Eliyahu Hanavi, will be to **"turn the hearts of**

PARASHA FOR THIS WEEK

Shemot

שְׁמוֹת

Exodus 1:1 - 6:1

the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers;" (Mal 4:6). We are at the time of the coming of the Messiah, that means it is our privilege to fulfill this prophecy: **"to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children"** The people of the Messiah and the people of Israel are separated, a great effort has to be done to make connection and reconciliation between these two branches of God's people.

TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

The Torah gives the names of the tribes of Israel:

"Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Yehudah; (Ex 1:2)

Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; (Ex 1:3)

Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher." (Ex 1:4).

The grouping of the names are significant: the first four are Leah's first sons, Rabbi Hirsch says that "those were originally destined to her; for after the birth of Yehudah it says **"Then she stopped having children" (Gen 29:35)**. Issachar and Zebulun were the youngest children of Leah, but she got them much later, after Bilha gave birth to Dan



and Naphtali and after Zilpa gave birth to Gad and Asher. Benjamin is linked to Issachar and Zebulun because he was the youngest, his mother, Rachel, died when she gave birth to him, and since he was an orphan, Leah, his aunt adopted him and raised him with her youngest sons Issachar and Zebulun. These eleven were the children of Yaacov **"who went to Egypt with Jacob" (Ex 1:1)**. Yosef was already in Egypt, that is why he is not mentioned in this list. Thus if we add to this list Ephraim and Menashe, we have thirteen tribes. However, the land will be divided between twelve of them, since Levi will not have a full territory in Canaan but some cities all over the country.

LET'S REMEMBER

Parashat Shemot tells about the enslavement of the Jewish people in Egypt, which began only after Yaakov and his sons passed away.

As long as Joseph ruled the country, Yaakov and his family lived in the province of Goshen and enjoyed the "best of the land." After Yaakov and his children passed

"Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months." (Exodus 2:1-2)

away, the Egyptians enslaved Yaakov's descendants.

The Torah tells us, **"Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph." (Exodus 1:8)** Pharaoh and the Egyptians chose to forget all the good Joseph did for them. They chose to forget that Joseph saved their country from the famine. They chose to forget that with Yaakov's coming to Egypt, the famine stopped, although it was supposed to last another five years. Instead of paying back good for good they enslaved Yaakov's descendants

Although the stories of the Torah occurred thousands years ago, many lessons can be learned from them. Rabbi Shaul said, **"These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come." (1 Cor 10:11)** This is especially true with the story of the enslavement of the people of Israel and then getting their freedom from Egypt. That is why the Torah says 14 times that we should remember the slavery of Egypt. **"You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt;" (Deuteronomy 16:12)**

MOSES' BIRTH

Moshe's parents, Amram and Yocheved, already had two children, Miriam and Aaron, before Moshe was born. When Pharaoh ordered that every newborn boy be thrown into the river, According to the Jewish tradition, Amram didn't want to have anymore children and divorced his wife Yocheved. Other Jews followed his lead and also divorced their wives. Miriam said to her father, "Your decree is even harsher than Pharaoh's! His decree affects only boys. But by not having children you will be, in effect, preventing girls from living as well." Amram realized that his daughter was right. He remarried Yocheved. As a result of Miriam's intervention, Moshe was born.

The Guemara relates that when Moshe was born, the house filled with light. Amram kissed Miriam on the forehead and told her "Your prophecy has been fulfilled." However, when Moshe was thrown into the Nile (to hide him from the Egyptians), Amram went over to Miriam and slapped her on the forehead and asked, "Now what happened to your 'great prophecy?'"

Moshe protests that the People of Israel will doubt his being G-d's agent, so G-d enables Moshe to perform three miraculous transformations to validate himself in the people's eyes: transforming his staff into a snake, his healthy hand into a leprous one, and water into blood.

When Moshe declares that he is not a good public speaker G-d tells him that his brother Aharon will be his spokesman.

Aharon greets Moshe on his return to Egypt and they petition Pharaoh to release Israel.

Pharaoh responds with even harsher decrees, declaring that Israel must produce the same quota of bricks as before but without being given supplies.

The people become dispirited, but G-d assures Moshe that He will force Pharaoh to let the Israel leave.

Haftara Overview Ashkenazim Isaiah 27:6-29:23 Sephardim

Jeremiah 1:1-2:3

In the parasha, Yaakov (Israel) is oppressed by a foreign power even though Israel has been a blessing for that nation. “And he blessed Joseph and said, ‘The G-d before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the G-d who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys; and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.’” (Genesis 48:15-16). This experience will be repeated several times during the history of the people of Israel. After being a blessing for their hosts, these nations persecuted Israel.

In the haftarah read this week by Ashkenazim people the accent is put on the blessings upon Yaakov (Israel, His Vineyard) who is removed from Egypt and will be fully blessed by the L-rd: “In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots,



Rabbi Yissocher Frand says that it is in this context that we begin to understand the meaning of the pasuk “And his sister stood away from him at a distance.” (Ex 2:4) The reward that Miriam later received was not just for standing at the Nile for a few moments, it was for being the heroine of the whole story of Amram and all the Jews taking back their wives. It was for being responsible for the birth of the person who became the leader of the Jewish nation. She saved her brother and in effect the entire nation because she refused to give up hope.

Miriam taught us the timeless lesson of not giving up hope when things look bleak. This valuable lesson, symbolized by her waiting to see what would happen to Moshe in the Nile, is certainly worthy of the payback of waiting for Miriam when she was not able to travel.

WATER IN THE EXODUS

Water plays a prominent role in this Parasha. In the beginning of the Parasha, Pharaoh decreed that every Jewish boy shall be drowned in the Nile River (Exodus 1:22).

Later when Moshe was born, his mother put him in a basket

“Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, ‘This is one of the Hebrews’ children.’” (Exodus 2:5-6)

and placed it on the river (Exodus 2:3). Moshe was found by Pharaoh’s daughter, Batiya, who raised the baby as her son (Exodus 2:6).

The Torah tells us that the name “Moshe” was given him by Batiya who said, “From the water I have pulled him.” (Exodus 2:10), “Moshe” alludes to the fact that he was, “pulled from the water.”

Later, when Moshe flees Egypt, water again plays an important role. Upon reaching the land of Midian, he stopped at a well. There, his future wife, Tzipora, was bringing her father’s sheep to drink. When the other shepherds tried to chase Tzipora and her sisters away, Moshe intervened, “he stood up and helped them and watered their flock.” (Exodus 2:17)

Later, when G-d commands Moshe to go tell the Jewish people that G-d will take them out of Egypt, He gives Moshe three signs to perform. “...And if they do not believe even these two signs... then you shall take from the water of the river and pour it upon the dry land, and the water shall become blood upon the dry land.” (Exodus 4:9).

Water is also found in Moshe’s sister’s name, “Miriam.” The name Miriam comes from two words “Mar” (bitter) and “Yam” (water). It alludes to the bitterness of the Jewish plight at the time of her birth, with Pharaoh’s decree of drowning every baby boy in the river.

The Exodus was done through the “Red Sea” The Red Sea was for Israel a spiritual mikve were they

have been purified, that is why Rav Shaul said to the believers who were living in Corinth “I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were immersed into Moses in the cloud and in the sea...” (1Cor. 10:1, 2).

Let’s remember that a rock was following Israel in the desert and from this rock water was given to Israel.

This rock was spiritually a representation of the Messiah who has the capacity to give water to his followers. Yeshua said to a Samaritan woman, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” (John 4:10-14)

Shaul said about the rock that follow Israel in the wilderness “all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.” (1 Cor. 10:4).

APOSTOLIC WRITINGS — MARK 14:10-21

We continue our reading of the parasha in connection with the *Besorah* of Mark. This week we start reading the book of Exodus which relates the slavery of Israel in Egypt and later the Exodus. The first chapter of Exodus mentioned a betrayal of the people of Israel by Pharaoh. We remember that the people of Israel came to Egypt to join Joseph who was living there and who saved the Egyptians from a severe famine. Pharaoh was grateful for what Joseph did for his country. However, as soon as Joseph and Pharaoh died the new Pharaoh came on the throne “who did not know Joseph.” (Exodus 1:8). This statement is surprising, because the Egyptians had a very good way to remember what happened in their history. Thus Pharaoh’s attitude can be perceived as a betrayal, which is in parallel with another betrayal at the beginning of the *Besorah* of Mark: “Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them” (Mark 14:10). Judas was one of the disciples of Yeshua, he followed Yeshua during his three years of ministry, attended his teaching, and his miracles, witnessed his love and compassion for people. But Yeshua did not meet his expectations and decided to betray him.

Then the narration shifted to another scene: it is the time of *Pesach* (Passover), “And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the *Pesach* lamb, his disciples said to him, ‘Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the *Pesach*?’” (Mark 14:12). A beautiful parallel with the parasha and the book of Exodus, be-

cause the narration of the first twelve chapters of Exodus is the story of *Pesach*, which will be the foundation of the *Haggadah* recited during the *Seder*, on the first night of *Pesach*. There is an allusion to the concept of a feast in the chapter 5 of the Exodus. “Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, so that they may celebrate a festival to me in the wilderness.’” (Exodus 5:1). It is clear that this feast Moses wanted the people of Israel to celebrate is not the *Pesach*, because the *Pesach* will be ordained by God, later, after 9 plagues as the people of Israel will leave Egypt in a hurry after the death of the Egyptian firstborns. The feast of the fifth chapter of Exodus is in fact the *Shabbat*. God has given the *Shabbat* to humanity from the creation of the world (Genesis 2:1-3), this special day was given to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the people of Israel, but being slaves in Egypt for the last two centuries, it was impossible for Israel to keep and remember the *Shabbat* day. God wanted to link again his people with the creation and the day of worship (Exodus 16).

Here too there is a parallel with the story of Yeshua and *Pesach*, the *Besorah* says that it was the day of the sacrifice of the lamb, that means the day after would be the *Shabbat* day of *Pesach*, indeed, according to the Bible the first day of *Pesach* had to be considered as a day of *Shabbat*, that means a day of rest: “On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work.” (Leviticus 23:7). However, the *Besorah* does not say that Yeshua and his disciples celebrated

the *Pesach* immediately, but they had to make a big preparation: “And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, ‘Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, where is my guest room, where I may eat the *Pesach* with my disciples?’ And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us.’ And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the *Pesach*.” (Mark 14:13-16). This preparation is in parallel with the text of the parasha, which is a preparation of the first *Pesach* of Israel, in fact it will take three *parashot* to prepare the first *Pesach*. But the *Besorah* is shorter than the Torah, that is why just after the preparation, Yeshua celebrates this special *Seder* with the disciples: “And when it was evening, he came with the twelve.” (Mark 14:17) After Yeshua announced what would happen, the text says that “They began to be sorrowful” even though *Pesach* is a joyful feast which celebrate the freedom of Israel, in the parasha, it is not yet time of joy, the people of Israel are still in slavery. Even though Moses received his call to go back to Egypt and to speak to Pharaoh, the people are not yet free, Moses announced it. In the same way this text of Mark is announcing the great joy of the world who would be saved from slavery of sin. In the parasha the savior was symbolized by the *Pesach* lamb and this *Besorah* of Mark starts to tell us that *Masbiach* is the *Pesach* lamb who will die for the world.

and fill the whole world with fruit.” (Isaiah 27:6) “Therefore thus says the L-rd, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob: No longer shall Jacob be ashamed, no longer shall his face grow pale. For when he sees his children, the work of my hands, in his midst, they will sanctify my name; they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and will stand in awe of the G-d of Israel.” (Isaiah 29:23)

Moshe was called by G-d in the parasha, to be his prophet, but at the first time he refused: But Moses said to the L-rd, “O my L-rd, I have never been eloquent... (Exodus 4:10)

The Sephardic people read the Haftarah in Jeremiah, where Jeremiah was called by G-d and as Moshe tried to refuse: Now the word of the L-rd came to me saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” Then I said, “Ah, L-rd G-d! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.” (Jeremiah 1:4-6).

STORIES AND TRADITIONS

GIVING CHARITY

The Talmud relates that when giving charity, the sages would make great effort that the poor should not know who their benefactor is in order that they should not be embarrassed.

SARAH AND YOCHAVED

A group of beggars were complaining how stingy people were and how small their collections were as a result.

One of them said, "Things are not so bad. I recently received a whole ruble from a rich man." The men were amazed. "Really? When did this happen?" they asked.

"On the holiday of Purim," the man replied. The beggars laughed, "If it would have happened on a regular day, we would have been impressed. But on Purim, what's the big deal? Everyone is charitable on Purim!"

The same logic applies to the Torah's descriptions of Sarah and Yochaved. Sarah lived in ordinary times, so giving birth at 90 was unusual and worthy of mention. However, Yochaved lived at a time when G-d openly performed so many miracles for the Jewish people. In this case, there was nothing special when another miracle happened and Yochaved gave birth at 130!

ISRAEL SURVIVED

Why did G-d choose to be revealed to Moshe through a burning bush that was not con-

sumed? No other nation has experienced the sufferings, persecutions and executions over the years as the Jewish people. Yet, through it all, we survived as a people with a unique identity.

No other nation has spent more years in exile than in their own homeland, yet, we have kept the same laws and traditions for over three thousand years. No other nation found its culture, learning and educational system under such attack as did the Jewish people. Yet, we have not only survived but flourished.

Rabbi Meir Shapiro was a member in the Polish Seim (parliament). A member of the Seim once asked him, "Why do Jews place a hard boiled egg on the Seder Plate?"

Rabbi Meir replied, "Other foods, the longer they are cooked, the softer they become. But the longer you cook eggs, the harder they get. The egg at the Seder symbolizes the Jewish people. Just like the egg, the sufferings and pain inflicted on the Jewish people have not broken us. Rather, they have made us harder and stronger.

With the burning bush G-d showed Moshe that, just as the bush burned yet was not consumed, so too, the Jewish people, will endure adversity, but will never be destroyed. Over three thousand years have passed and it is indeed one of the great miracles of all times that the Jewish people survived and are strong and vibrant."

DO WE WANT HELP?

Rabbi Label Lam who moved to Israel years back was having a problem integrating his younger son

into school. The boy was having a hard time finding his place amongst the other students. Either they weren't welcoming him or he wasn't warm to them but the problem lingered and festered.

The father asked another close friend who has since become a sought after educational consultant what he should do for his son. He was advised to tune into his children's radio hour that evening with his son Yehudi. On the program Yehudi's problem was presented to the listening audience and callers were invited to offer Yehudi a solution. The hope was that the boy would identify some clue or suggestion of help while unaware that the discussion was about him.

A strange thing happened. Yehudi himself asked his father if he could call the radio program. He did. He suggested that the boy should bring to school candies and goodies for all the other kids in his class and that might help them accept him more. It sounded like such a good idea that the father actually implemented it and guess what? It worked! Yehudi had found his own solution and he has not looked back since.

When the daughter of Pharaoh sent out her hand it was not to grasp the ketchup or mustard. It was a Jewish child at risk amongst the bull-reeds. Sometimes a person may have to reach impossibly far to help another and the results may prove to be disproportionately favorable if one just stretches as far as they can first. There is another factor here, though. The person has to be a willing participant in being helped, and he may likely be the key-holder to his own salvation.

KIDS PARASHA SHEMOT

שְׁמוֹת



Exodus 1:1 - 6:1

"Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of G-d. And the angel of the L-rd appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." When the L-rd saw that he turned aside to see, G-d called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." And he said, "I am the G-d of your father, the G-d of Abraham, the G-d of Isaac, and the G-d of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at G-d." (Exodus 3:1-6)

<http://www.bnai-tikkun.org.nz>

Inspirational Corner

❖ The mother's earnest prayers had committed her child to the care of G-d; and angels, unseen, hovered above his lowly resting place. Angels directed Pharaoh's daughter thither. Her curiosity was excited by the little basket, and as she looked upon the beautiful child within, she read the story at a glance. The tears of the babe awakened her compassion, and . . . she determined that he should be saved; she would adopt him as her own. (PP 241-243)

Inspirational Corner

❖ Aaron, being instructed by angels, went forth to meet his brother, from whom he had been so long separated; and they met amid the desert solitudes, near Horeb. . . . Together they journeyed to Egypt; and having reached the land of Goshen, they proceeded to assemble the elders of Israel. (PP 257)