

“No, no,” said Joseph’s ten brothers. “We are no spies. We are the sons of one man, who lives in the land of Canaan; and we have come for food, because we have none at home.” “You say that you are the sons of one man, who is your father? Is he living? Have you any more brothers? Tell me all about yourselves.”

And they said: “Our father is an old man in Canaan. We did have a younger brother, but he was lost; and we have one brother still, who is the youngest of all, but his father could not spare him to come with us.”

“No,” said Joseph. “You are not good, honest men. You are spies. I shall put you all in prison, except one of you; and he shall go and bring that youngest brother of yours; and when I see him, then I will believe that you tell the truth.”

So Joseph put all the ten men in prison, and kept them under guard for three days; then he sent for them again. They did not know that he could understand their language, and they said to each other, while Joseph heard, but pretended not to hear: “This has come upon us because of the wrong that we did to our brother Joseph, more than twenty years ago. We heard him cry, and plead with us, when we threw him into the pit, and we would not have mercy on him. God is giving us only what we have deserved.”

And Reuben, who had tried to save Joseph, said: “Did I not tell you not to harm the boy? And you would not listen to me. God is bringing our brother’s blood upon us all.”

When Joseph heard this, his heart was touched, for he saw that his brothers were really sorry for the wrong that they had done to him. He turned away from them, so that they could not see his face, and wept. Then he turned again to them and spoke roughly as before, and said: “This I will do, for I serve God. I will let you all go home, except one man. One of you I will shut up in prison; but the rest of you can go home and take food for your people. And you must come back and bring your youngest brother with you, and I shall know then that you have spoken the truth.”

**(SEE PART II)**

**WHAT DID JOSEPH SAY THEY HAD COME FOR?**



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## ***The Mystery of the Lost Brother***

### ***Part - I***

When Joseph was made ruler over the land of Egypt, he did just as he had always done. It was not Joseph's way to sit down, to rest and enjoy himself, and make others wait on him. He found his work at once, and began to do it faithfully and thoroughly. He went out over all the land of Egypt, and saw how rich and abundant were the fields of grain, giving much more than the people could use for their own needs. He told the people not to waste it, but to save it for the coming time of need.

And he called upon the people to give him for the king one bushel of grain out of every five, to be stored up. The people brought their grain, after taking for themselves as much as they needed and Joseph stored it up in great storehouses in the cities; so much at last that no one could keep account of it.

The king of Egypt gave a wife to Joseph from the noble young women of his kingdom. Her name was Asenath; and to Joseph and his wife God gave two sons. The oldest son he named Manasseh, a word which means "Making to Forget."

"For," said Joseph, "God has made me to forget all my troubles and my toil as a slave."

The second son he named Ephraim, a word that means "Fruitful." "Because," said Joseph, "God has not only made the land fruitful; but he has made me fruitful in the land of my troubles."

The seven years of plenty soon passed by, and then came the years of need. In all the lands around people were hungry, and there was no food for them to eat; but in the land of Egypt everybody had enough. Most of the people soon used up the grain that they had saved; many had saved none at all, and they all cried to the king to help them.

"Go to Joseph!" said king Pharaoh, "and do whatever he tells you to do."

Then the people came to Joseph, and Joseph opened the storehouses, and sold to the people all the grain that they wished to buy. And not only the people of Egypt came to buy grain, but people of all the lands around as well, for there was great need and famine everywhere. And the need was as great in the land of Canaan, where Jacob lived, as in

other lands. Jacob was rich in flocks and cattle, and gold and silver, but his fields gave no grain, and there was danger that his family and his people would starve. And Jacob—who was now called Israel also—heard that there was food in Egypt and he said to his sons: "Why do you look at each other, asking what to do to find food? I have been told that there is grain in Egypt. Go down to that land, and take money with you, and bring grain, so that we may have bread, and may live."

Then the ten older brothers of Joseph went down to the land of Egypt. They rode upon asses, for horses were not much used in those times, and they brought money with them. But Jacob would not let Benjamin, Joseph's younger brother, go with them, for he was all the more dear to his father, now that Joseph was no longer with him; and Jacob feared that harm might come to him.

Then Joseph's brothers came to Joseph to buy food. They did not know him, grown up to be a man, dressed as a prince, and seated on a throne. Joseph was now nearly forty years old, and it had been almost twenty-three years since they had sold him. But Joseph knew them all, as soon as he saw them. He wished to be sharp and stern with them, not because he hated them; but because he wished to see what their spirit was, and whether they were as selfish, and cruel, and wicked as they had been in other days.

They came before him, and bowed, with their faces to the ground. Then, no doubt, Joseph thought of the dream that had come to him while he was a boy, of his brothers' sheaves bending down around his sheaf. He spoke to them as a stranger, as if he did not understand their language, and he had their words explained to him in the language of Egypt.

"Who are you? And from what place do you come?" said Joseph, in a harsh, stern manner.

They answered him very meekly: "We have come from the land of Canaan to buy food." "No," said Joseph, "I know what you have come for. You have come as spies, to see how helpless the land is, so that you can bring an army against us, and make war on us."