

General Church Education



# Family Lesson: Genesis 39 – 40

## Joseph in Prison

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## Family Lesson 1-N

*Joseph in Prison*  
*Genesis 39 & 40*

**Family Talk:**  
**JOSEPH IN PRISON**

by the Rev. Frederick L. Schnarr

When Joseph first came to the land of Egypt as a young man, he came as a slave. His brothers, because of their jealousy and anger, had sold him as a slave to a passing caravan of Ishmaelites. The Ishmaelites took him to Egypt and there resold him as a slave to Potiphar, the captain of the guards.

We can imagine Joseph's great sorrow in being treated so terribly by his brothers, and especially in being parted from his father Jacob.

But although Joseph was sad about how he came to Egypt, we can imagine his wonder and surprise with what he saw in Egypt. Everything was different from the way he had been raised as a shepherd boy — caring for sheep and cattle, living in tents, searching for grass and water. Wearing clothes made mostly of animal skins, eating simple bread and meat, and on the whole living in and near the things of nature in the land of Canaan.

In Egypt, all of this changed. This was a land totally dependent on the waters of the great Nile River. Along its banks Joseph would have seen great pyramids, monuments, statues, and carvings. He would have seen large cities near the river, with boats bringing supplies from all over the lands of the Great Sea. They had great crops of grain and fruit along the edges of the river, with many slaves to help with the harvest. The Egyptians were not a shepherd people, and their dress, their hair, and their trades were very different from anything Joseph had ever seen.

While Joseph at first did well in the land of Egypt, it was not long before Potiphar's wife got him into trouble by telling lies about Joseph, saying he had tried to hurt her. So Joseph was put into prison where he was to stay for a number of years.

He had no friends to help him, and no one to speak for him and defend him. Again we can understand his sense of loneliness and sorrow. We are not told anything about the prison in which he was kept, but we know from ancient drawings and descriptions that they were usually rather horrible places.

Given all the bad things that had happened to Joseph, is it not amazing that he seemed to do well and knew that the Lord was still with him? When the chief butler and chief baker of Pharaoh were put in prison, and came to Joseph to

have him explain the dreams they had, Joseph reminded them that such explanations belonged only to the Lord.

There are times in our lives when we feel that everything is going wrong for us. Maybe we feel that our family doesn't love us anymore. Maybe we feel that our friends don't treat us nicely, and even that they don't care for us anymore. Maybe we feel that our parents or teachers have treated us unfairly, or accused us of things we didn't really do. Maybe nothing seems to be going well with anything, and even our own bedroom feels like a prison.

Have you ever had any of these feelings? Most people do once in a while. Sometimes we may feel like this when we are children, sometimes when we are adults. When such troubles come we start feeling lonely and sad. At such times we can identify with Joseph and his troubles. The fact that thousands of years have gone by doesn't change this, does it? It helps us to realize that the Word is for all of us and for all time.

Can we sense that the Lord is present with us and doing things for us at such times? Well, the meaning of this story is that we can, and that it is very important for us to do this. We are not just to fold our hands in sorrow and say, "What's the use!" We are not to feel so sorry for ourselves that we just mope around and don't do anything; we are not to get angry with our parents, or sisters and brothers, and our friends, for what we think they are doing to us that is unfair or unjust.

Sometimes things happen to us that really are unfair and unjust. Whatever the answer is to such treatment, this much we know for certain: treating other people unjustly in order to get even does nothing to help us become better people.

In this, Joseph is an excellent example for us. He was treated unfairly and unjustly for many years, and yet he never stopped being kind and gentle. He never stopped looking to the Lord, and seeking the Lord's help.

And in time, look how the Lord turned things around for Joseph. The Lord hadn't forgotten him. The Lord was going to raise him up from being a slave in prison, to being one of the greatest governors that Egypt ever had. The Lord would not only help Joseph to come into peace and prosperity but through him the Lord would help untold thousands of others.

Trusting in the Lord when we are in times of difficulty and stress seems such a simple lesson. Yet the Lord repeats this message for us in the Word many, many times, and in many different ways. The reason is clear isn't it? It is so important to everything in our lives to *really believe this*. *Amen.*

# Pharoah's Dream

Based on Genesis 41

Lori Odhner

D A D G D G A A7 D G

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 fat cows came out of a  
 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 full heads grew up - on a  
 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 good years shall there come to

A D G D A A7 D

ri - ver. They fed in a mea - dow in Pha - raoh's Dream.  
 grain stalk, with the east wind blow - ing in Pha - raoh's Dream.  
 E - gypt. So Jo - seph said a - bout Pha - raoh's Dream.

D A D G D G A A7 D G A D

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 thin cows came out of the ri - ver. They  
 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 thin heads grew up - on a grain stalk, with the  
 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 bad years shall there come to E - gypt. So

G D A A7 D G A

fed in a mea - dow in Pha - raoh's Dream. And then the se - ven  
 east wind blow - ing in Pha - raoh's Dream. And then the se - ven  
 Jo - seph said a - bout Pha - raoh's Dream. First se - ven years of

G A G A A7 D 1, 2  
G D

thin - ner cows ate up the se - ven fat ones. And Pha - raoh woke up  
 thin - ner heads ate up the se - ven full ones. And Pha - raoh woke up  
 plen - ty and then se - ven years of fa - mine. So

A A7 D 3  
G D A A7 D

from his dream. Jo - seph said a - bout Pha - raoh's Dream.  
 from his dream.

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Some of Lori and John Odhner's *Songs from the Word* are available on tape and in a binder of sheet music from the General Church Book Center, Cairncrest, P.O. Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009 Telephone (215) 914-4920, e-mail [bookctr@newchurch.edu](mailto:bookctr@newchurch.edu)



**Joseph in Prison**

**Genesis 39, 40**

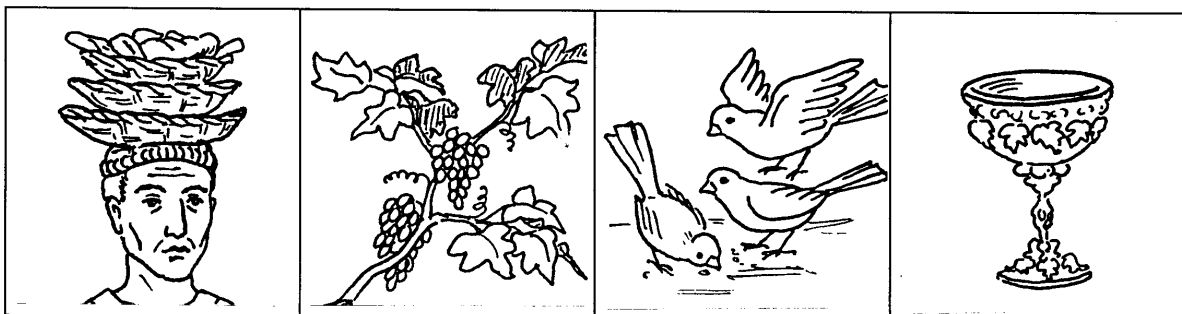
**LEVEL 1 - THE BUTLER AND THE BAKER**

**Materials Needed**

Scissors and glue

The Chief Butler's Dream	The Chief Baker's Dream
 <p data-bbox="256 1350 786 1381">What was the chief butler's dream?</p>	 <p data-bbox="846 1350 1375 1381">What was the chief baker's dream?</p>

Cut out the boxes below and paste them over the butler or baker to show their dreams:



**Joseph in Prison**  
**Genesis 39 & 40**  
**LEVEL 2 – HIDDEN WORDS PUZZLE**



Here is a puzzle with hidden words used in the story of Joseph in prison, waiting for you to find them. The words are in the box below. When you find a word, use crayons to color in the right letter boxes. Use a different color for each word.



(CUPBEARER is another name for the butler who tasted the Pharaoh's food and wine).

DREAMS    CUPBEARER    BAKER    PHARAOH    JOSEPH    PRISON

U	B	R	T	C	L	V	A	R	W	D	Z	E	G	X	O
M	P	F	I	G	J	T	L	D	R	E	A	M	S	H	A
O	N	B	K	S	Y	P	G	J	O	D	W	Z	B	Q	L
D	F	J	O	R	C	W	S	D	T	E	U	V	F	I	R
G	S	A	Q	Z	L	B	Y	W	C	Y	M	A	W	B	E
Q	L	O	C	U	P	B	E	A	R	E	R	C	D	U	Y
A	Y	T	E	O	H	F	A	M	O	N	M	V	R	B	D
P	S	C	A	D	F	J	Q	B	Q	F	D	E	O	W	X
G	X	O	Y	U	D	B	A	K	E	R	Z	M	D	G	K
B	L	J	F	P	H	A	R	A	O	H	N	P	S	P	R
L	X	A	O	K	M	T	I	K	C	R	F	J	E	S	B
W	C	L	H	Q	N	H	B	J	O	S	E	P	H	V	M
R	G	P	R	I	S	O	N	P	Z	U	D	Y	Q	E	S
Y	I	K	Z	V	A	X	O	J	M	Z	G	L	O	T	C
N	J	A	Q	G	W	B	R	Y	C	G	J	R	K	U	T

## Answers

U	B	R	T	C	L	V	A	R	W	D	Z	E	G	X	O
M	P	F	I	G	J	T	L	D	R	E	A	M	S	H	A
O	N	B	K	S	Y	P	G	J	O	D	W	Z	B	Q	L
D	F	J	O	R	C	W	S	D	T	E	U	V	F	I	R
G	S	A	Q	Z	L	B	Y	W	C	Y	M	A	W	B	E
Q	L	O	C	U	P	B	E	A	R	E	R	C	D	U	Y
A	Y	T	E	O	H	F	A	M	O	N	M	V	R	B	D
P	S	C	A	D	F	J	Q	B	Q	F	D	E	O	W	X
G	X	O	Y	U	D	B	A	K	E	R	Z	M	D	G	K
B	L	J	F	P	H	A	R	A	O	H	N	P	S	P	R
L	X	A	O	K	M	T	I	K	C	R	F	J	E	S	B
W	C	L	H	Q	N	H	B	J	O	S	E	P	H	V	M
R	G	P	R	I	S	O	N	P	Z	U	D	Y	Q	E	S
Y	I	K	Z	V	A	X	O	J	M	Z	G	L	O	T	C
N	J	A	Q	G	W	B	R	Y	C	G	J	R	K	U	T

**Joseph in Prison**  
**Genesis 39 & 40**  
**LEVEL 3 – DREAMS**

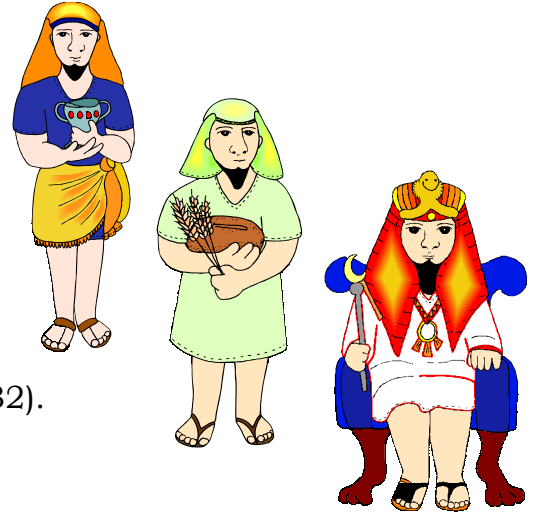
Read the stories in the Word about:

1. Joseph's dream (*Genesis 37:5-10*)
2. The three dreams Joseph interpreted:

the Butler's Dream (*Genesis 40: 9-15*)

the Baker's Dream (*Genesis 40:15-23*)

Pharaoh's Dream (*Genesis 41:1-7, 14-32*).



Play the game

Now you are ready to play this game of Joseph in Prison with a brother, sister, friend, or by yourself (it is a two player game).

1. The game board is on the next page.
2. Glue the two gamecard pages (pages 3 and 4) together, back to back so that the squares match up. Cut out the game cards.
3. Stack them in a pile on the game board with the answer sides face down.
4. Take turns picking the top card and telling whose dream goes with the words on the card.

If you guess correctly, put the card on your side of the playing board in the correct square.

If you guess incorrectly, put the card back at the bottom of the pile. (*Remember to keep the answer side face down*).

When all cards are guessed correctly, add up your score (point values given on the gameboard).



	<b>JOSEPH'S DREAMS</b>  2 points each card	
	<b>PHARAOH'S DREAM</b>  3 points each card	
	<b>BAKER'S DREAM</b>  5 points each card	
	<b>BUTLER'S DREAM</b>  5 points each card	
<b>PLAYER A</b>		<b>PLAYER B</b>

<b>BIRDS EAT</b>	<b>RIVER</b>	<b>VINE</b>
<b>BINDING SHEAVES</b>	<b>3 WHITE BASKETS</b>	<b>BLOSSOM</b>
<b>PHARAOH'S CUP</b>	<b>MEADOW</b>	<b>7 COWS – UGLY and GAUNT</b>
<b>7 COWS – FAT and FINE</b>	<b>SUN, MOON AND STARS</b>	<b>BAKED GOODS</b>
<b>3 BRANCHES</b>	<b>7 HEADS OF GRAIN -THIN</b>	<b>RIPE GRAPES</b>
<b>PRESS GRAPES</b>	<b>IN THREE DAYS YOU WILL BE HANGED</b>	<b>7 HEADS of GRAIN - PLUMP and GOOD</b>
<b>7 YEARS of PLENTY</b>	<b>IN 3 DAYS YOU WILL BE RESTORED</b>	<b>11 SHEAVES BOW TO MY SHEAF</b>
<b>ALL BOW TO ME</b>	<b>7 YEARS OF FAMINE</b>	<b>ON MY HEAD</b>

VINE (Baker)	RIVER (Pharaoh)	BIRDS EAT (Butler)
BLOSSOM (Joseph)	3 WHITE BASKETS (Baker)	BINDING SHEAVES (Butler)
7 COWS – UGLY & GAUNT (Butler)	MEADOW (Pharaoh)	PHARAOH'S CUP (Pharaoh)
BAKED GOODS (Pharaoh)	SUN, MOON AND STARS (Joseph)	7 COWS – FAT & FINE (Baker)
RIPE GRAPES (Butler)	7 HEADS OF GRAIN -THIN (Pharaoh)	3 BRANCHES (Butler)
7 HEADS OF GRAIN -PLUMP & GOOD (Butler)	IN THREE DAYS YOU WILL BE HANGED (Baker)	PRESS GRAPES (Pharaoh)
11 SHEAVES BOW TO MY SHEAF (Pharaoh)	IN 3 DAYS YOU WILL BE RESTORED (Butler)	7 YEARS OF PLENTY (Joseph)
ON MY HEAD (Joseph)	7 YEARS FAMINE (Pharaoh)	ALL BOW TO ME (Baker)

## **Joseph in Prison**

### **Genesis 39 & 40**

#### **LEVEL 4 – FOUR KINDS OF DREAMS**

#### **MATERIALS NEEDED**

The Word or a Bible  
Pen or Pencil

### **Four Kinds of Dreams**

Dreams. Everyone has them. Sometimes dreams are puzzling, sometimes pleasant, sometimes frightening. Ever since humans were created we have been having dreams.



#### **The Butler and the Baker**

The Butler and the Baker each had a dream which made them upset. They were upset because they didn't know what their dreams meant. They did know that their dreams came from the spiritual world and were telling them something. They needed an interpreter.

#### **Joseph Interprets Dreams**

Joseph had shown himself to be a good man by always trying to do what the Lord wanted and by doing all the jobs he was given well. Joseph also knew that the Butler's and Baker's dreams were from the spiritual world. He said, "Do not interpretations belong to God?" (Genesis 40:8) Because he was a good man Joseph was able to interpret the dreams.

#### **Prophetic or Representative Dreams**

The dreams that the Butler and Baker had were a special kind of dream. Their kind of dream is called a prophetic and representative dream. The people of the Old and New Testaments had this kind of dream. Remember some of the dreams you have learned about in the Word—Jacob's dream of the ladder or stairway to heaven; Joseph's dream of the sheaves of wheat and the sun, moon, and eleven stars; Pharaoh's dream of cattle and wheat. Also, the Wise Men's dreams of warning and Joseph's dream of taking Mary and the infant Lord to Egypt.

The kinds of things these people dreamed about in their dreams were objects and scenes from the natural world around them. The things in their dreams represented other things that could be interpreted as prophecy and sometimes a warning. The Lord used this kind of dream to reveal His truth to the prophets and other men who wrote down the Word.

#### **Paradisaal Dreams**

There is another kind of dream that was used by the Lord to reveal His truth. It is called a paradisaal dream. The people of the Most Ancient Church had this kind of dream. In their dreams they saw objects and scenes from heaven. They knew the correspondences of the things they saw and could interpret their dreams to learn the truth from the Lord. When the people of the Most Ancient

Church became more and more evil, they lost their knowledge of correspondences and ability to see the things of heaven. The Lord could no longer teach them through paradisaal dreams. This is why He gave revelation through prophetic and representative dreams in Old and New Testament times.

### Modern Dreams

After the time the Lord lived on earth, people could not be taught by prophetic and representative dreams either. Modern people have other kinds of dreams.

You are a modern person. What kind of dreams do you have? Don't you sometimes wake up with a good feeling about your dream? Maybe you'd like to go back to sleep and dream some more of it. This kind of dream is pleasant and inspired by good spirits around you. Sometimes you have the kind of dream which is about ugly frightening things. You wake up scared or crying. This is a disturbing dream. Evil spirits have gotten a hold of your mind and made you think about these frightening things through fantasy and illusion. The things you dream about in this kind of dream seem to be real but they are not. The Lord protects you and you wake up before this kind of dream hurts you.

Sometimes it seems as if our dreams are trying to tell us something. We can often figure out why we dreamed something. But our dreams cannot be interpreted in the same way that the paradisaal dreams of the Most Ancient people or the prophetic and representative dreams of the Old and New Testament people were interpreted. The Lord does not use our dreams to reveal His truth to us. We must learn His truth through the written Word.

### **Application**

On the next page you will find columns labeled with the four kinds of dreams people have had since they were created. Write the words or phrases from below into the columns labeled with the kind of dream that they describe. They can be put into more than one column. Look back through the lesson to check your answers.

MOST ANCIENT PEOPLE

OLD and NEW TESTAMENT PEOPLE

REVELATION FROM GOD

OBJECTS from the WORD

MODERN PEOPLE

INSPIRED BY GOOD SPIRITS

WARNING

HEAVENLY OBJECTS and SCENES

INSPIRED BY EVIL SPIRITS

ANGELS

OBJECTS of HELL

INTERPRETATIONS

BEAUTIFUL EARTHLY THINGS

FANTASY AND ILLUSION

SCARY and UGLY THINGS

<b>PARADISAL</b>	<b>PROPHEPHETIC/ REPRESENTATIVE</b>	<b>PLEASANT</b>	<b>DISTURBING</b>

## ***Joseph in Prison***

### ***Genesis 40***

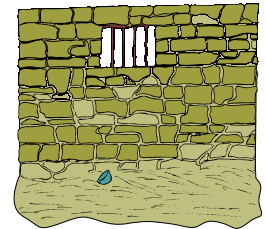
#### **LEVEL 5 – FALSE IDEAS FROM IGNORANCE AND EVIL**

##### Joseph's Slavery and Imprisonment

Joseph came to Egypt. His treatment in Egypt is a picture of how the spiritual things that are forming in us are treated by the worldly knowledge we have in us and around us.

When we see how Joseph was defamed and mistreated by Potiphar's wife we are reminded of how difficult it is for the spiritual ideas of conjugal love to exist in a world that is influenced by so much that is disorderly and unclean.

If too many false and ugly things surround our forming conjugal ideals, it is as though we have put them in prison. We have, at least temporarily, lost the ability for our spiritual ideals to come down into our rational thought and action.



##### The Butler and the Baker

The story of the butler and the baker, and their dreams, describes how we try to free ourselves from the unpleasantness and confusion of disorderly things that hold us in "prison."



##### The Butler

The butler represents false ideas that we have from ***ignorance***. These false ideas can be removed by reading the Word and reflecting about what we have read. This helps us to gradually grow in our understanding of truth. Many people, especially children, have such butler type false ideas. In the story, this is why the butler was saved.



##### The Baker

The false ideas that come from ***evil*** are another matter. These are born from our hereditary inclinations. They are the feelings that urge us to think, imagine, and do what is wrong. And then, having done what is wrong, we try to make the wrong seem all right. Worldly arguments lead us to believe that evil is good. That's why the baker, who represents these kinds of ideas, must be rejected and destroyed.

*The internal sense of the story of Joseph's slavery and imprisonment is clear and beautiful. We can understand why it holds such an important place in the Word.*

**Application**

On the next page are some passages from the *Arcana Coelestia* 5072 and 5077.

First read these passages, then read the previous page again.

Now write what you have learned about the internal sense of the butler and the baker:

The Butler and the Baker

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### ***Arcana Coelestia 5072***

The internal sense of this chapter continues to deal with the state of temptations, by means of which bodily things could be brought into a state of agreement. Rightly called bodily ones, those things are the powers of the senses, of which there are two kinds, some sensory powers being subordinate to the understanding part of the mind, others to the will part. Those subordinate to the understanding are represented by the cupbearer to the king of Egypt, and those subordinate to the will part by the baker. The eventual retention of the former but the casting away of the latter is represented by the fact that the cupbearer returned to the position he had held previously, whereas the baker was hanged.

### ***Arcana Coelestia 5077***

The cupbearer of the king of Egypt means among the things of the body which are subject to the understanding part of the mind...And the baker means among the things in the body which are subject to the will part...

It is well known that the external or bodily senses are five in number – sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch – and also that these constitute the entire life of the body. For without those senses the body has no life at all, for which reason also when deprived of them it dies and becomes a corpse. The actual bodily part of the human being therefore is nothing else than a receiver of sensory impressions and consequently of the life resulting from these...

A person's external senses are directly related to his internal ones, for they have been given to a person and placed within his body to serve his internal man while he is in the world and to exist subject to the sensory powers of that internal man. Consequently when a person's external senses begin to rule his internal ones he is done for. When this happens his internal sensory powers are regarded as no more than servants whose function is to reinforce whatever the external senses imperiously demand. When this is the state in which the external senses operate, order in their case has become turned around...

One sensory power specifically subject to the understanding is sight. Another subject to the understanding, and after that to the will also, is hearing. Smell, and more especially taste, are subject to both simultaneously, while the power subject to the will is touch...

In addition it should be recognized that all truths that are called the truths of faith belong to the understanding part, and that all forms of good which are those of love and charity go with the will part. Consequently it is the function of the understanding to believe, acknowledge, know, and see truth – and good also. But the function of the will is to feel an affection for that truth and to love it; and whatever a person feels an affection for and loves is good.