

Community Bible Church

The Book of Genesis

Chapter 40

The topic of dreams plays a significant role in the narrative of **chapter 40**. Joseph himself had interpreted two dreams in **chapter 37**, both of which led to a difficult family situation. The two dreams of fellow prisoners form the basis of the story in **chapter 40**. As a general principle, dreams today are not considered to be an accurate method of God's revelation to man. In the era in which Joseph lived, it appears that God did occasionally reveal His will through dreams. Joseph himself said in **40:8**: "***Do not interpretations belong to God?***" Joseph was encouraged in his faith when he realized that his own interpretations were correct. While a number of dreams are described in the Old Testament, Joseph and Daniel were the only Hebrew men who correctly interpreted dreams. **Chapter 40** can be outlined as follows:

Joseph's Character 40:1-4
Prisoner's Confusion 40:5-8
Joseph's Clarification 40:9-19
Pharaoh's Conclusion 40:20-23

1. There are several persons mentioned in the first paragraph of **chapter 40** in **40:1-4**. It appears that the title "**Pharaoh**" was given to the "**king of Egypt**" as they are the same person. The **cupbearer** and the **baker** were high-ranking officials in the court and served the king in the dining area. The "**captain of the bodyguard**" (**40:3**) has been previously identified as **Potiphar**. Read this passage and give a brief description of what was going on in the jail.
2. Dreams and their interpretation take center stage in this story in **40:5**. Read **40:5-8**. What impressed you about Joseph in this passage?

3. The interpretation and clarification of these dreams is explained by Joseph in **40:9-19**. First, describe the dream of each official.
 - a. The cupbearer (**40:9-11**)
 - b. The baker (**40:16-17**)

4. Next, describe Joseph's interpretation.
 - a. The cupbearer (**40:12-13**)
 - b. The baker (**40:18-19**)

5. Finally, what did Pharaoh do with these two men after celebrating his birthday?
 - a. The cupbearer (**40:21**)
 - b. The baker (**40:22**)

6. There is a "backstory" in this narrative. Read **40:14** and describe the request made by Joseph. What happened in **verse 23**?

7. We will learn in **chapter 41** that Joseph remained in prison for another two years. One author wrote a book entitled "***Forlorn and Forgotten***" about Joseph from this chapter. How was God preparing him for future responsibilities and what might he be learning while unjustly incarcerated?

8. What personal applications do you see from this segment of the life of Joseph in **chapter 40** that are relevant for you today?

