

Introduction: Joseph's Dreams (Genesis 37:2-11)

I. Introduction

A. This morning we are starting the last section of Genesis

1. As you probably recall, Genesis is broken into ten sections each starting with the Hebrew word toledot or generations, loosely these are the generations of...
 - a. The first five generations were of the primeval world - the generations of the heavens and earth, of Adam, of Noah, of the sons of Noah and of Shem
 - b. The second five generations focus on the patriarchal family - the generations of Terah, of Ishmael, of Isaac, of Esau and of Jacob - This morning we are starting that last section, the generations of Jacob
2. Also, as you might recall, the stories are usually stories about the descendants of the person named
 - a. The generations of the heavens and earth is primarily about Adam
 - b. The generations of Adam is primarily about Seth
 - c. The generations of Terah is primarily about Abraham
 - d. The generations of Isaac is primarily about Jacob
 - e. So, following suit, the generations of Jacob are about the sons of Jacob
3. This last story in Genesis focuses on one of Jacob's sons, Joseph
 - a. We're all familiar with the story of Joseph, in fact I imagine most of the children here this morning could give me a fairly accurate outline of Joseph's story
 - b. The story of Joseph has many excellent example stories that we can use to make good and fitting applications that are understandable to children and useful to all
 - c. But for the next twelve weeks I want to consider the story of Joseph in a slightly different light and look for the answers to three questions:
 - i. How does Joseph's story fit into the covenant theme that persisted in Abraham and Jacob's stories? Sometimes when we read Joseph's story this theme can seem to fade into the background of the exciting drama taking place.
 - ii. How does Joseph's story fit into the rest of the Bible? Is this merely a story explaining how Israel ended up in Egypt or is there a bigger purpose to the story?
 - iii. How does Joseph's story teach us about Christ? Interpreters of Joseph's story have always seen Joseph as a type of Christ and my view of Biblical Theology would tell me that there must be pointers to Christ throughout this section, so I want to look at Joseph to see Christ.
4. As we look for these themes in the text, we are going to see that this isn't just Joseph's story
 - a. In fact, the last section of Genesis focuses on two of Jacob's sons
 - b. Joseph is one of the sons that is at the center of the text and he get's the lion's share of the story
 - c. But the story also focuses on Judah sometimes completely ignoring Joseph in the story line

B. This morning, as we start the generations of Jacob, like I did with Abraham, I want to give an overview sermon to help us set our path for the next twelve weeks

1. But unlike Abraham, I am going to start my overview by delving right into the text
2. This is because the text starts out with a short story that brings up many questions, questions that are going to be answered in the rest of the generations of Jacob
3. These questions are going to guide us and help us get our bearings before we embark on this section

C. Read Genesis 37:2-11

D. Proposition and Outline:

1. Proposition: God's purpose is to glorify Christ despite and even through sin even when we can't see how
2. Outline:
 - a. Setting the stage for a great drama
 - b. The unexpected pattern of the drama
 - c. The main characters of the drama
 - d. The one character of the drama

II. Setting the stage for a great drama - Genesis 37:2-11

A. As we have gone through the stories of the patriarchs we have seen some great examples of faith, but at the same time we have seen some dreadful examples of sin and disbelief all within the chosen line, even all within the same man

1. Throughout the story these sins have provided tension with the promise of God - how can God keep His promise to those who will not obey His commandments and honor His character?
2. But to this point in the story, God has always returned the patriarch back to faith and has reaffirmed His promises after an episode of sin
3. We might start to wonder if the sins of the patriarchs are ever going to catch up with them, God may be able to keep His promises even to sinful people, but what is going to become of their continued sinfulness?
4. Here at the beginning of the story of Joseph, though, we start to see that the sins of the patriarchs are starting to catch up to them and threaten to tear the promised family apart

B. Playing favorites (verse 2-4)

1. Here in the first three verses of the generations of Jacob we see the long line of sins in the promised family come to a head
 - a. If you think back you'll remember that both Abraham and Isaac were prone to trickery when it suited them, especially with identifying their wives as their sisters
 - b. This trickery is passed down to Jacob who tricks Esau and tricks Jacob forcing him from the promised land where he meets Laban who further tricks him leaving him with two rival sister wives, two more concubines and twelve rival sons
 - c. But, not only has trickery been passed down and resulted in rival sons, but another sin has plagued the promised family, favoritism
 - d. Isaac played favorites between Esau and Jacob, choosing Esau even when God chose Jacob
 - e. And now, Jacob is playing favorites again, loving Joseph more than the sons of his unloved wives
2. So, the sins of the patriarchs have not been without effect, they have slowly been multiplying causing friction within the promised family, and now their sin has been drawn taut as if it were a bow bent and ready to shoot
 - a. So this passage is full of sin and strife that results from these old sins
 - b. Jacob continues the sin of favoritism - verse 3 - *Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors.*
 - c. Joseph responds to the sin of favoritism with a sin of his own - verse 2 - *And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father.*
 - i. This phrase in verse two is almost always used of something that isn't true, a false report
 - ii. The implication is that Joseph knew that he had a favored status and felt justified in tattling on his brothers and trying to make trouble for them, perhaps even telling stories on them that were not quite true that fueled Jacob's dislike for them and love of Joseph
 - iii. He was the classic goody-two shoes brother who likes getting his black sheep brothers in trouble, he may not have had the sinful tendencies of Ruben or Levi and Simeon, but he was sinful as well
 - d. The rest of Jacob's sons also respond to favoritism with sin - verse 4 - *But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.*
 - i. In fact, at the start of the generations of Jacob, the promised family is just about ready to snap
 - ii. Joseph and his brothers, those who are to carry on the promises, those who are supposed to be fruitful and multiply, fill the land and subdue it, those who are to receive the promise of land and the promise of rule given to Abraham, they can't even talk to each other
 - iii. How in the world is God going to keep His promises now? In fact, where is God in the midst of all of this petty sin?
3. These introductory verses cause us to wrestle with the implications of sin in the promised family and how the promises of God can be fulfilled in the midst of so much sin - How is God going to show up and solve this?

C. So, let's turn to that question, where is God? (verses 5-11)

1. One of the changes we are going to notice in the generations of Jacob is that for the most part God doesn't speak in clear, direct speech to the chosen family any more (He does one more time right before they go to

Egypt as the one exception)

2. But God definitely turns up, He turns up in Joseph's dreams, but God doesn't seem to be trying to make peace in the family, instead He throws fuel on the flames
3. While Jacob is favoring Joseph, Joseph is sinfully reveling in his favored status and the rest of the brothers are hating Joseph, God chooses to reveal that first his brothers and eventually the entire promised family are going to bow at Joseph's feet
4. If you were a counselor asked to mediate in this family at this time, this would probably be the last thing you would recommend - throwing something in the mix to make Joseph more stuck up and the brothers more irritated with Joseph, but this is what God does
5. And Joseph quickly spreads his dream around the family, letting them know that God has decided to make him the ruler of the family and, as expected, this only causes more problems
6. Jacob may keep the saying in his mind, but he strongly rebukes Joseph and the brothers were sarcastic and jealous, probably significant understatements of their feelings toward Joseph at this point

D. So, what are the purpose of the dreams? Why does God show up like this?

1. As I pondered this question, I think there are three related reasons for God to reveal this to Joseph in dreams
 - a. First, it points back - it connects Joseph's story to the previous story in Genesis
 - b. Second, it points forward - it tells us where Joseph's story is going to end up
 - c. Third, it connects the two - it prepares us to receive a pattern of fulfillment that undergirds the story
2. First, it points back - God's revelation connects the toledot of Jacob to the toledot of Isaac
 - a. Surprisingly (or perhaps unsurprisingly?) God once again reveals that He is going to choose one of the younger sons to lead the family
 - b. This connects Joseph's story to the chain of past revelation, God chose Isaac, not Ishmael, God chose Jacob, not Esau and now God chooses Joseph over his brothers
 - c. The choice is not as severe as in the other cases because the other brothers remain part of Israel, but it is related to those previous choices all the same and thus relates Joseph's story back to the same themes
 - d. Joseph is not different from the time of Jacob but expands the theme of Jacob's revelation
 - e. Remember that Jacob teaches us that God is sovereign and He demonstrates that sovereignty by
 - f. So, we should expect this theme of sovereignty to continue in Joseph's story, but in Joseph's story God is not only going to be sovereign over His people, God is going to be sovereign over His enemies and over evil itself in order to fulfill His purposes
 - g. Now, we haven't seen this yet, but we should be looking for how God is going to demonstrate His sovereignty because the opening act of Joseph's story connects it to the previous theme
3. Second, it points forward - God's revelation tells us how the toledot of Jacob is going to end
 - a. God has said that Jacob and his sons will bow down to Joseph, we know this is how things have to end
 - b. But knowing the ending doesn't make the story boring, it actually makes the story more suspenseful because a large part of Joseph's story doesn't seem to be heading toward this goal
 - c. So the revelation provides tension when this doesn't appear to be happening and calls us to ponder how God is going to fulfill His promise and (perhaps more importantly) why God has chosen to take this path
 - d. Again, this connects us back to the theme of God's sovereignty, as we ponder why God is choosing to take Joseph through this path we are forced to understand God's sovereignty even deeper than before - God has chosen this path to demonstrate His sovereignty over evil for the good of His people
4. Third, it connects the two - God's revelation sets up the motivation for the next story
 - a. This brings us back to where we were a minute ago, why does God seem to stoke the fire of the enmity between the brothers? Why does He fan the flames? He could have shown up in power and glory to reveal His will to Jacob and the brothers, but instead He does it in a dream?
 - b. At the end of the day, the answer seems to be that God wanted to stoke the fire of the brother's enmity
 - c. This seems harsh, and I need to state it carefully, but God wanted the next story to take place, He wanted the brothers to sin against Joseph so that He could set in motion this great drama
 - d. We're treading close to one of the greatest controversies among Christians - how does God relate to sin? - so I will tread lightly, but boldly, because this is a significant part of Joseph's story
 - e. God ordained that the brother's would sin against Joseph because God wanted that sin to be used to display His glory and His sovereignty and it allows God to set up a pattern that the story is going to follow, which leads us right into our second point this morning

III. The Unexpected Pattern of the Great Drama

A. I have started the last section of Genesis this morning by just jumping into the first story because the rest of the Toledot of Jacob deals with two questions:

1. How are these visions going to come true?
2. What do these visions have to do with the covenant and promise of God?
3. In other words, the entirety of this last story is wrapped up with these visions and what they mean for Abraham's family
4. God answers these questions by setting up a play with three main acts: adversity, exaltation, and blessing
5. This is the pattern that we are going to follow in the toledot of Jacob, but as we look at it we will see that Joseph isn't the only one who follows this pattern, he is not the only main character - Judah does too

B. Adversity - Joseph and Judah are humbled (Gen. 37-40)

1. The first four chapters of Genesis are focused on the adversity and humiliation of Joseph and Judah
2. We see this easily in Joseph's story, his story here is one of the greatest tragedies of all time
 - a. First, his brothers try to kill him
 - b. Then, his brothers sell him into slavery
 - c. Then, after earning his new master's trust, his master's wife betrays him and has him thrown in prison
 - d. Then, after earning the trust of the jailer and the other prisoners, they forget him and he languishes
3. But right in the middle of this stream of tragedies, the narrative is broken into by what initially appears to be a totally unrelated story about Judah
 - a. But when we get there we'll see that at the center of Joseph's story Judah is going to be humbled as well
 - b. And Judah's humiliation is going to deepen our understanding of the purpose of humiliation in this story

C. Exaltation - Joseph and Judah are raised up (Gen. 41:1-47:26)

1. In the next seven chapters, the bulk and center of the toledot of Jacob, the tide turns and where adversity and humiliation were met at every turn in the previous story, now exaltation and authority are bestowed
2. Again, we see this easily in Joseph's story
 - a. First, the other prisoner finally remembers Joseph and recommends him to Pharaoh
 - b. Then Pharaoh recognizes Joseph's God given wisdom and makes him ruler over the kingdom
 - c. Then Joseph's brothers come into his reach and bow before him and are tested by him
 - d. And eventually even Joseph's father comes and dwells under Joseph's authority
 - e. In every way that Joseph was humbled Joseph is now raised up
 - f. He is exalted and endowed with incomparable authority
3. But, again, Joseph's story is broken up by stories back in Canaan that focus on Judah
 - a. Judah also experiences exaltation and authority in a way
 - b. Judah starts to take the lead among his brothers, he is the one who speaks on their behalf to Jacob and he is the one who speaks on their behalf to Joseph and he has success in both representations

D. Blessing - Joseph and Judah receive the promises (Gen. 47:27-50:26)

1. The last three chapters of the toledot of Jacob come back to the theme of covenant that dominated Abraham and Jacob's stories as Jacob passes down the blessings of the covenant to his sons
2. In this section we'll see that burial in Canaan is emphasized in three stories pointing to a continued trust that God would fulfill His promises even though the promised family is not in the promised land
3. But at the center of this section we see two blessing passages, Jacob blesses Joseph's sons and then his sons
4. Both because Jacob gives a special blessing to Joseph's sons and because Joseph's blessing is the longest blessing in the blessings of the sons we see that the promises are going to somehow be especially associated with Joseph in the future
5. But, again, Judah appears here two, one other son gets a long blessing in the list of sons, Judah's blessing also sets him out as a recipient of the promises in the future
6. God is going to continue keeping His promises and those promises will be especially associated with Ephraim and with Judah as the next steps are taken in God's great drama
7. Which again leads us right into our next point

IV. The Main Characters of the Great Drama

- A. As we have just considered, unlike the last two stories, Abraham's and Jacob's, which had one main character (although with supporting characters alongside), the toledot of Jacob has two main characters, Joseph and Judah**
1. As we move to our next point, I want to consider why?
 2. Why does the story have a dual focus as we finish out the story of Genesis?
 3. Why are Joseph and Judah chosen as main characters as opposed to either one main character or focusing on all twelve of the brothers?
- B. The answer to this question is found as we step back and look at the bigger picture of Biblical history and fit the toledot of Jacob into this running history**
1. First, let's look back to Abraham's story
 - a. You'll recall that as we went through Abraham's story we saw that God made two promises to Abraham
 - i. God promised Abraham a land
 - ii. And God promised Abraham a Son
 - b. And these two promises were at the core of Abraham's story, in fact they were so important that we outlined Abraham's story based on these two promises
 - i. Genesis 12-14 focused on the promise of land
 - ii. Genesis 15-21 focused on the promise of a son
 - iii. And Genesis 22-24 focused on Abraham's faith in these promises
 2. As we move forward to the next story, Jacob, we see that Jacob's story is about passing down these promises
 - a. The promises get passed to Isaac and then they get passed to Jacob
 - b. And we see that God is sovereign to choose to whom He will pass the promises
 - c. And we see that God is sovereign to bring those to whom He gives the promises to faith
 - d. But these two promises still lie at the foundation of Jacob's story, the toledot of Isaac
 3. So, as we come to the toledot of Jacob, we expect these two promises to continue somehow
 - a. And the two promises continue by attaching to two different sons
 - b. We'll consider this at more length when we come to Genesis 49 and start to close this final story
 - c. But as we preview this morning we are going to see that Joseph is associated with and receives the first promise of God, a promised place
 - d. And Judah is associated with and receives the second promise of God, a promised son or a promised rule (the royal son)
 4. As we start to look forward to how these promises are fulfilled in Israel's history, we see two leaders emerge that lead the fulfillment of these promises
 - a. The promise of land is recognized in the book of Joshua as Joshua leads the people into Canaan and defeats the Canaanites
 - i. The reason I point this out is that Joseph is from a certain tribe, the tribe of Ephraim
 - ii. And the tribe of Ephraim is descended from Joseph's younger son, Ephraim, the son who we will see blessed by Jacob
 - iii. Joseph has the promise of land associated with him here at the end of Genesis and it is a descendant of Joseph who brings the people into the land
 - b. Looking a little farther forward, the promise of a royal son is recognized in the book of II Samuel as David is raised up to reign over the people of God as God's appointed king
 - i. And again, David is from a specific tribe, the tribe of Judah
 - ii. Judah has the promise of a royal son associated with him here at the end of Genesis and it is a descendant of Judah who will eventually reign over the people of God
 5. So, returning to the question, why does the toledot of Jacob focus on two sons?
 - a. It is because there are two promises and this story starts to form the basis for the rest of Biblical history in how these promises are going to be realized
 - b. This last story of Genesis, the last story of the patriarchs is preparing us for the next two epochs of Biblical History and clueing us in to watch for a son of Joseph and a son of Judah to appear and fulfill the promises of God

V. The One Character of the Great Drama

A. As I mentioned a few minutes ago, probably all of us know that Joseph is a type of Christ, but why?

1. Again, I'm pretty sure most of you could give me several good reasons that Joseph is a type of Christ
2. And as we go through this story over the next twelve weeks, we will see multiple reasons Joseph and Judah point to Christ
3. But, this morning as we do an overview, I want to look at how the whole story points to Christ
4. And the story of Joseph and Judah points to Christ because the pattern they follow will be the pattern that Christ fulfills
5. So, again, the pattern for the story of Judah and Joseph is humiliation, exaltation and blessing

B. Christ is the one who humbled Himself

1. As we go through the Old Testament story of Judah and Joseph our New Testament theme verse is going to be Philippians 2:5-11 because this verse sums up the story of Joseph, intensifies it and applies it to Christ
2. So, as we consider Christ as the one who humbled Himself, let's turn to the first half of that verse, Philippians 2:5-8 - *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*
3. Both Joseph and Judah are humbled at the beginning of the story because Christ is the one who would be humbled, who would even voluntarily humble Himself - Joseph and Judah point forward to Christ
4. But they don't only point forward to Christ, they teach us about Christ in His humiliation, so as we go through the first four chapters of the toledot of Judah we are going to consider what these stories teach us about Christ's humiliation

C. Christ is the one exalted by the Father

1. Joseph and Judah's humiliation point to Christ, but Joseph's and Judah's exaltation also point to Christ
2. Moving on in Philippians 2:9-11 - *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
3. Joseph and Judah were humbled and then Joseph and Judah were exalted because after His humiliation Christ would also be exalted by the Father to the highest of positions - Joseph and Judah point forward to Christ
4. But, again, they don't only point forward to Christ, they teach us about Christ's exaltation, so as we go through the next seven chapters we are going to consider what these stories teach us about Christ's exaltation

D. Christ is the Blessed One who fulfills the two promises

1. Christ fulfills the first two parts of Joseph and Judah's story and He clearly fulfills the last cycle as well, the promises given to Abraham are finally passed down to Christ who obtains them in their final glory
2. In Galatians 3:16 it says, *Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ.*
3. And in Romans 15:8 it says, *For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,*
4. The blessing being passed down to Joseph and Judah points forward to the blessing ultimately coming to Christ who fulfills both sides of the promise - Joseph and Judah point forward to Christ who brings His people into the land and is the royal son ruling over God's people
5. And Christ has not only received the promises, He has fulfilled the promises in a way that Joseph and Judah never could, so that Paul can say in II Corinthians 1:20 - *For all the promises of God find their Yes in him.*
6. But, once again, Joseph and Judah don't only point forward to Christ, they also teach us about the blessing Christ will receive, so as we go through the last three chapters we are going to consider what these stories teach us about the blessing of Christ

E. So the entire pattern of Joseph and Judah points forward to Christ and teaches us about Christ

1. This is why Joseph has always been understood as a type of Christ, every part of his story is ripe with connections to Christ
2. And this overarching view of Christ's fulfillment of this story is going to lead and guide as we consider how each individual story in this drama teaches us something about Christ
3. Each week, we're going to take this broad theme and examine it closer in light of the story of Joseph or Judah to help us understand something about Christ
4. So, before I move on to our last point, I want to look at the ten verses that we read this morning and consider how they teach us about Christ

F. Christ is the one who is announced as the king long before He takes up His reign

1. One thing we see about Joseph this morning is that God announces Him as the ruler of His family long before it ever happens
2. In fact, his announcement as the ruler of his family is angrily resisted by his family to the point where they reject him and the brothers try to kill him
3. Amazingly, this once more points to Christ
4. For all of history, God has been announcing Christ as the king, and we could go to passages in the histories and the prophets that point us to Christ the coming king, but assuredly from Christ's birth, God's testimony that Christ was the promised king was clear
5. So, I want to just go back to the first announcements of Christ's birth and see the strong parallels with Joseph's story
6. Luke 1:30-33 - *And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*
7. At Christ's birth, the angel announced that Christ would reign specifically over the house of Jacob, the same position that is given to Joseph
8. Luke 2:15-19 - *When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.*
9. When the shepherds came and shared their revelation, Mary treasured up all of these things in her heart wondering what would become of these prophecies, which is again strongly parallel to Jacob's reaction Genesis 37:11 - *And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.*
10. John 1:10-11 - *He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.*
11. And just like Joseph was rejected by his brothers, by those whom he was appointed to rule over, so Christ was rejected by His own people, and the announcement of His kingship happened long before the consummation of His reign
12. In fact, in many ways we are still between those two poles, Christ has been announced as the king and there are ways that at His resurrection He assumed His authority, but in many ways we are still looking forward to that reign
13. But just as Joseph's reign was delayed, but was assuredly brought to pass by God, we know that the consummation of Christ's reign is sure, so we can live in obedience to Him now so that when it is fully consummated we can rejoice and not shrink from Him in fear

VI. Applications

A. Sin has consequences

1. Although the patriarchs have demonstrated faith, they have also been full of sin yet God has often spared them the full effect of their sin, but now in Joseph's story all of that sin is coming back to reap its reward
2. So as we consider this story, I think one thing we need to recognize is that sin always has consequences
 - a. Paul makes this clear in Galatians 6:7-8 - *Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.*
3. The patriarchs' stories are a useful reminder of this fact, because they are emblems of God's grace and His purpose to turn away the ultimate consequence of sin
 - a. But, though God is turning aside His wrath, He is not suspending the laws of cause and effect
 - b. Sin is not something God has capriciously commanded us not to do but something that will hurt us
 - c. So we cannot overlook sin in our lives because it will always have consequences
 - d. Yes, God redeems us from the sin's ultimate consequence, but natural consequences still occur
4. This should make us think more soberly about sin, Is there any sin in your life are you are not fighting against with all your effort? Are you ok with it lingering in your life knowing that God will give you grace?
 - a. Don't be! That sin will reap its rewards eventually - and the scary thing is it may not reap its full reward even in your life, it may be passed down and reap its full reward generations from now
 - b. This doesn't mean that there is not grace in Christ, but sin does have real consequences

B. We can't always predict God's purposes

1. As we look back at the story of Joseph, we can see what God's purposes were in each part of the story and how they work toward the fulfillment of God's plan, but in the story the characters don't get that benefit
2. In our story this morning, God has revealed His final purpose for Joseph in a dream, but He has not revealed how He is going to get there
3. It could have been easy for Joseph to start anticipating how God is going to fulfill His purposes, it would make sense that God wants Joseph to start acting like he's in charge, to start acting with authority in the family
4. But, knowing the end of the story, we know that is not how God moves the story to the end, but this thought experiment demonstrates the folly of pretending we know how God is going to fulfill His purposes
5. Joseph knew how the story would end, but he had no idea how the story is going to get there, in the same way we know how the story is going to end, but we have very limited revelation on how it is going to get there
6. Instead of making emphatic statements of how God is going to pursue His purposes in our world, instead we should remind ourselves of the verse in Isaiah 55:9 - *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*
7. We can't always predict how God is going to act, how He is going to fulfill His promises, so we shouldn't be trying to act like we can, instead we can simply obey the straight-forward commands He has left us with until He acts to fulfill His purposes

C. Even when sin has consequences and we can't predict God's purposes, we can rest in Christ

1. The last two applications may be a little scary as applications, in fact they ought to be a little scary
 - a. It ought to cause some fear that your sin will assuredly have consequences
 - b. And there is fear as we admit we don't know what the future is and how God is going to finish the plan
2. But, we don't need to end this sermon on a fearful tone, because we have considered what the pattern and purpose of Joseph and Judah's story is - this story points to Christ
 - a. Sin may have consequences, but Christ has humbled Himself to deal with sin and has been exalted as the victor over sin and has destroyed its ultimate consequences and is destroying its power in our lives
 - b. Christ has fulfilled the story and has broken the power of sin in our lives so that we need not fear, we can rest in Christ - yes, fight against sin, but don't fear, rest in Christ
 - c. And again, we may not know the future, but Christ knows the future because He was humbled but now He is exalted and sits at the right hand of the Father who has revealed to Christ all of His will
 - d. Christ has fulfilled the story and has already passed through the worst parts of the story and stands to assure us, even if we meet hard times in the story, that God wins and glory is coming
3. If the whole story points to Christ, then we can simply rest in Him - He has done it
 - a. Sure, I'm going to give you applications to work on and work hard on in your life based on these texts
 - b. But this work must be based on resting in Christ who has already fulfilled and accomplished these stories