God’s Restoration Plan

Read Jeremiah 33:2-11

Key verse: “I will bring back the captives of this land” (Jeremiah 33:11).

Good news, bad news, good news. That’s the movement of Jeremiah 33:2-11.

First, the good news: God gave the prophet Jeremiah a wonderful promise—“Call to me and I will answer and reveal to you wondrous secrets that you haven’t known” (v. 3). For Jeremiah, this was a promise of God’s prophetic revelation. For us today, verse 3 is a promise that, if we will call to God in prayer, God will hear and answer and reveal his guidance and direction to us.

Next, the bad news: Because of Judah’s sin and rebellion against God, judgment is coming. “I hid my face from the people of this city because of all their evil deeds” (v. 5).

Finally, the good news: God will forgive and restore the people of ancient Judah and Israel. “But now I will heal and mend them. I will make them whole and bless them with an abundance of peace and security. I will bring back the captives of Judah and Israel, and I will rebuild them as they were at first. I will cleanse them of all the wrongdoing they committed against me, and I will forgive them for all of their guilt and rebellion” (vv. 6-8).

The movement of Jeremiah 33:2-11 is, at a larger level, the movement of the gospel of Jesus Christ: good news, bad news, good news.

First, the good news: God loves us and created us for relationship with himself.

Next, the bad news: Our sin and rebellion separates us from God. “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23a).

Finally, the good news: Through faith in Christ, we can receive forgiveness, restoration, and eternal life. “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her
husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’ He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’’’ (Revelation 21:1-5a).

Good news, bad news, good news.

Rubell Shelly wrote about the “system restore” feature in Microsoft Windows: “Suppose you suffer a system crash on your computer this Thursday. You’re not a computer expert, and you don’t know how to recover the last two weeks of financial information you entered Wednesday, your daughter’s history report she started writing Monday, or your favorite game. All you have to do is select ‘system restore’ and specify the date to which you want your machine reset. Voila! Problem solved. All the things you somehow messed up are put back in their configuration as of that earlier day.

“Wouldn’t you like to market that feature for human lives? Do you think you could supply it fast enough to keep up with the demand? Bob would ‘system restore’ to the day before he began the affair. Sue would go back to the day before she tampered with payroll data. Ivan would choose the day before the big fight that caused his son to run away from home.

“Maybe you can remember the day when things crashed for you—and you’d give anything you own to restore things to the way they were. God won’t erase all the consequences of our actions, but he promises things far better: to forgive us, to work for the highest good even through what is bad, and one day to make all things new” (Christianity Today).

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