

After the Exile



"Eyes on Both Horizons"

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First Sunday of Lent, February 21, 2021

"We are using this season of Lent to envision God's mission for Highland on the other side of the Coronavirus Exile"

Historical Context

Nehemiah is in Susa (western Iran, 960 miles east of Jerusalem)

Jerusalem had fallen to the Babylonians in 586BC

The first waves of Jewish exiles had returned in 538BC

The second temple was completed in 515BC

Ezra had initiated reforms in 458BC

The date now is 444BC when Nehemiah hears about Jerusalem's condition

Naming Reality

The remnant is in great trouble and shame: 1:3

The walls of Jerusalem are broken down: 1:3

The gates are burned with fire: 1:3

Why this mattered: walls advanced the heart of a culture

Looking Back: How We Got Here

Naming corporate and personal sins: 1:6-7

Remembering God's words: accountability and promise: 1:8-9

Remembering God's great actions: 1:10

Asking for God's help to change things: 1:11

Looking Forward: Envisioning a Possible Future

Sees the possibility of an alternative future for good: 2:3

Plans preceded by prayer: 2:4

The bold vision articulated: 2:5

How it might be done: 2:6-8

Highland Pandemic Parallel

- **Looking Back**

Has the Pandemic exposed any previous or new weaknesses in us?

Looking back by being searched: **Psalm 139:23**

“See if there be any grievous way in me” **Psalm 139:24**

Looking up first at God as He looks at us

Input welcome to jeff@highlandcovenant.com; **925.708.1361**

- **Looking Forward**

Has the Pandemic opened up new opportunities for good?

Looking up first at God as He looks at us

Wanting His unique particular will for us

“Lead us in the everlasting way” **Psalm 139:24**

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