

## The Restoring Builder

### Nehemiah 2:11-20

I was at a light when I looked to the side and saw a familiar sign that read “We Buy Ugly Houses.” Apparently the persons or companies who post these signs are interested in renovating “ugly houses” in order to sell them for a profit. The original home was undervalued because of its various flaws; the refinished product is intended to have good return on investment.

As the popularity of refurbishing old dilapidated and neglected homes there is something in us that roots for the makeover; we long to see something come back to its previous appeal.

Jerusalem had been a distinguished city, the political and spiritual capital of the nation of Israel under David’s leadership (1 Chronicles 11:4-9; 15). Solomon added to its greatness by the magnificent temple that he built there (2 Chronicles 3). However, following the division of the nation and the rise of ungodly kings who allowed idolatry and accompanying abhorrent practices to flourish in the land.

140 years after the release of the Jews, Jerusalem is still in disrepair and Nehemiah serves as God’s voice of leadership in a desperate time. Nehemiah’s response to the role of principle architect in this makeover project is to pray, fast and confess his sins and the sins of his people.

Nehemiah was interested in renovating an “ugly city,” the once great city of Jerusalem. He wanted to address a condition of disrepair and confusion in Jerusalem, but his deeper motives and his leadership skill in so doing still have much to teach us today.

- I. Surveying the City (Nehemiah 2:11-16)
  - A. Arriving and Waiting (v.11)
    1. The journey from Susa, the capital city of the Persian Empire, to Jerusalem was nearly 1,100 miles.
    2. The trip took about 3 months so the three days’ rest was needed
  - B. Diagnosing the Damage (vv.12-16)
    1. Nehemiah was aware of the fact that not everyone in the territory was on board with what he was planning to do (Neh. 2:10) (v.12a)
      - a. Only a few others needed to accompany Nehemiah on his mission (v.12b)
      - b. Nehemiah was secretive about his intention to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls and gates. (v.12c)
    2. The Walls and gates mentioned by Nehemiah seem to represent only the southern portion of the city. (v.13)
    3. The Fountain Gate was possibly situated in the southeastern wall of Jerusalem. The rubble at the pool was so excessive that the mount Nehemiah was riding could not get through. (v.14)
    4. The valley mentioned here is probably the Kidron, a name also attached to the accompanying brook east of Jerusalem. (v.15)
    5. In these initial planning stages, there was wisdom in gathering information and considering his plans carefully without questioning from a large group of people. (v.16)