



## Connection to Nehemiah 9:1-37

Through prayer, Nehemiah called on the people to return to God and be restored. In his prayer, Nehemiah also described God. God's identity gives people a reason to return to Him.

## Introduction/Opening

For most of us, there is a certain meal or dish that only our mom has perfected. Chicken, spaghetti, macaroni and cheese, pecan pie, blueberry cobbler, etc. (Note: share the items that no one but your mom can/could make to perfection.) That dish is the thing you most missed when you moved out of your parents' home. It's also the dish our mom knew would keep you coming back for a visit. We return because we know what is waiting for us—including that special dish.

Nehemiah called on the residents of Jerusalem to return to God, knowing what waited for them. If they returned, they would find the all-powerful God ready to forgive them. As Nehemiah prayed, he pointed to ways God had demonstrated His power, kept His promises, provided, and been gracious to His people. If they returned, they would once again find God to be trustworthy.

We can return to God with confidence because....

## Outline

1. Because He is powerful (v. 6)
  - a. Seen in His created work
  - b. Seen in His ability to give life (Who else can make such a claim?)
2. Because He is trustworthy (vv. 7-11)
  - a. Seen in keeping His promise to Abraham (name change pointed to the promise)
  - b. Seen in His covenant with Israel
  - c. Seen in His rescuing the Hebrews from Egypt
3. Because He provides (vv. 12-15)
  - a. A defense (against Egyptian army in pursuit)
  - b. Direction
    - i. For life's journey (pillow of cloud/fire)
    - ii. For living (the Law)
  - c. Needs met (bread and water in the dessert)
4. Because He is gracious (vv. 16-17)
  - a. In His forgiveness
  - b. In His love (faithful and will not abandon us)

## **Conclusion**

Jesus told of a young man who abandoned his father and squandered the inheritance reserved for him. The young man finally hit rock bottom and in desperation, returned home with the hope of being allowed to be a simple servant. Instead, the father welcomed his wayward son with open arms. We know this story as the prodigal son (see Luke 15:11-32). The father in that story represents God the Father—the same Father described in Nehemiah’s prayer. In both cases, we find God opening His arms to those who wish to return to Him.

The Father has provided a way for us to return to Him. That way is through faith in His Son, Jesus. There is no other way to the Father. When we turn to Him we find the all-powerful God ready to forgive us and care for us. We can trust that He will provide not just in the now, but for eternity. What keeps you from turning to such a gracious God?