

Attention:

There is no problem so great that you cannot return to God. Jesus is waiting for you to come home. Christ knew that you would encounter unforgiveness and bad decisions.

Need:

God has not canceled your purpose. You can come back from anything: from wasted years, from disappointments, failures, and wrong choices. Your history may explain where you've been, but it does not have the authority to determine where God is taking you. Your past doesn't get the final word over your life. God says, “Now arise.”

Background:

Genesis 31:13–14 does not happen in isolation. It is the result of years of conflict, manipulation, injustice, and divine preparation in Jacob’s life. Jacob had left Canaan years earlier after [deceiving his father Isaac](#) and [taking the blessing that belonged to Esau](#). Fearing for his life, Jacob fled to Paddan-aram, where he went to the household of his uncle Laban. [What Jacob thought would be a temporary escape became a twenty-year season](#) of labor, marriage, family building, and being repeatedly taken advantage of.

Jacob originally [agreed to work for Laban seven years](#) in order to marry Rachel. But on the wedding night, Laban deceived Jacob and gave him Leah instead. Jacob then [had to work another seven years for Rachel](#). After that, Jacob remained in Laban's household and worked for his flocks. Laban [repeatedly changed Jacob's wages](#), taking advantage of him because Jacob's labor had made Laban wealthy. Jacob later describes the situation himself: “your father hath deceived me and [changed my wages ten times](#)” (Genesis 31:7). Jacob had spent years under someone else's control, working hard while someone else continually changed the rules.

But something important was happening during those years: God was blessing Jacob despite Laban's manipulation. Jacob's prosperity was not ultimately determined by Laban. God was positioning Jacob for something greater. The man who had arrived in Paddan-aram with very little now had wives, children, servants, livestock, and substantial possessions. What looked like Jacob being stuck was actually God preparing him for his next assignment.

By this point, Jacob had learned something that he could not have learned at Bethel: [God could prosper him in an environment that was designed to exploit him](#). [He learned that his future could not remain tied to Laban's house](#). He had been blessed there, but he was not supposed to stay there forever. There comes a moment when what once served as your place of preparation becomes the place you must leave.

So Genesis 31:13–14 is really a departure scene. [God is calling Jacob out of a place where he has experienced both blessing and brokenness](#). He is leaving behind Laban, the manipulation, the changing wages, the old family dynamics, and twenty years of history. [But he is not simply running away from something—he is moving toward something God promised him](#).

The larger biblical movement is powerful: Jacob left Canaan running from Esau, but now he is leaving Paddan-aram because God is sending him back to Canaan. He left as a fugitive; he returns as a man carrying God's blessing. *He left with a staff; he returns with a household and great possessions. He left afraid of his brother; he returns because God has told him it is time.*

1. God Has Not Canceled Your Purpose (v. 13a).

- a. The Lord spoke to Jacob and reminds him He is the God of Bethel.
 - i. God has seen the way that Jacob was treated by Laban.
- b. Your past mistakes are part of your story but not the conclusion.
 - i. *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28, NKJV).*
- c. There are some seasons you didn’t even recognize yourself.
 - i. You can come back from bad decisions. You can come back from wasted years. You can come back from failures, disappointments, and wrong choices.
- d. Your history explains where you've been but not determine where God is taking you.

2. You Can Come Back From A Season That Took Something From You (v. 13b).

- a. God is calling Jacob to get out of Paddan-aram and return to his native land.
- b. **Laban didn't get the final word over Jacob's life.** God says, *“Now arise.”*
- c. When the season was over, you felt like it had taken more from you than it gave you.
 - i. *“And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, The cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, My great army which I sent among you.” (Joel 2:25, KJV).*
 - ii. You gave years to something, served faithfully, and got a small return.
- d. You cannot recover while continually living in the environment that wounded you.
- e. God can restore what the season stole, but you have to get up and go.

3. Stop Looking Back and Keep Moving Toward the Promise (v. 14-16).

- a. God was calling Jacob and his family back to the promise, in Bethel.
- b. You cannot enter a new season while constantly negotiating with your old one.
 - i. *“But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”” (Luke 9:62, NKJV).*
- c. You have to step out of the familiar to experience God’s power.
- d. Your comeback begins when you believe God's word more than your circumstances.