

Movin' On with God's Protection

Genesis 31

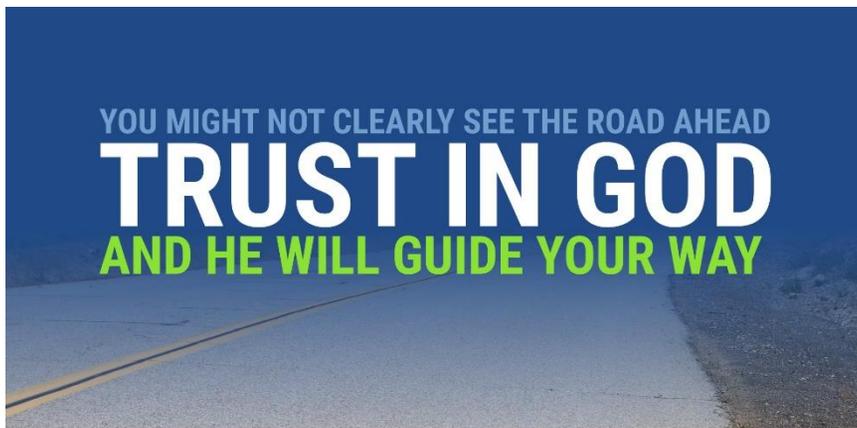
2019 will bring significant changes in many of our lives. It may be a new job, getting married, the birth of a baby, or changing careers. Gen. 31 exhibits the truth that those who obey God and do His will can depend on His protection and blessing as they 'move on' in life.

Plot Line: Jacob Flees, God Protects

- Jacob and his wives agree: It's time to return to Canaan.
- Rachel steals household idols; Jacob and his family flee south.
- Laban angrily pursues Jacob, but God protects him.
- Jacob and Laban make peace, and Laban goes home.

Lessons for the Growing Christian

- *Divine guidance: God's Word, discernment, and trust in God*
- *Greed may yield short-term wealth, but finally leads to ruin.*
- *God promised, God delivered: Always trust in the Lord!*



1. Genesis 31.1-16 recounts how Jacob arrived at the decision to leave Haran and return to Canaan. Unlike his usual mixture of scheming and trickery, Jacob here exhibits a pathway of mature wisdom! What factors can you isolate in these verses which led Jacob to depart? Can believers today apply these same factors in making decisions? How?
2. Old habits die hard, however; Jacob deceives Laban leaving for Canaan while Laban is gone shearing sheep. Based on what we know about Laban, why do you think Jacob did this? To make matters worse, however, Rachel “stole the household idols that were her father’s” (v19). In the superstitious culture of Haran, household idols (*teraphim*) were believed to provide protection and blessing, and signified heirship. Why do you think Rachel stole them? (How would you feel about your father, girls, if he treated you the way Laban treated Rachel?) How do Jacob and Rachel exhibit real solidarity here?
3. God is acting throughout this narrative. We learn that He was the reason for Jacob becoming rich (7b-13), and He instructed Jacob to leave Haran (v3), but He also intervened at a critical point when Laban was planning to harm Jacob (v24). All these actions by God reflect His determination to fulfill His promise to Jacob. What does this observation suggest for our lives?
4. Laban disappears from the narrative here, and since he is such a classic example of sinful motives and behavior, it's important to observe his life, and avoid becoming like him! His character first appears in Gen. 24 (see vv29-31, 53, 55); what motives do you see? What is most important to Laban (Gen. 29.15; 30.28)? In terms of Laban's 'religious' convictions, while he's aware of Jacob's God, his household idols show he is not a true believer. Laban exhibits the self-delusion of sin: He presents himself as a loving father, but how did he treat his daughters? What does he accuse Jacob of in 31.26-27 (the *pot* calling the *kettle* black!)? Bottom line: Laban is selfish and greedy. Read Jesus' warning against this poison in Matthew 6.19-24.