

## DECLARING THIS NEW YEARS' SEASON MAHANAIM

**Gen 32:1** *And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.*

**Gen 32:2** *And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.*

At this point in Jacob's life, he had suffered at the hands of two people for 20 years: Esau and Laban. It was because of Esau that he was a refugee in Haran separated from his family and the promise of God in the Land of Canaan. In Haran, he was tormented by his uncle Laban. This is perhaps why Jacob accepted his sufferings in Haran for so long – he was too afraid to return to Canaan because of Esau. When we do not have the strength to return to where we should be in the Lord, thank God that he himself intervenes and pushes us towards his will and promises. God told Jacob: “And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee” (Gen 31:3). When Jacob decided to return to the land of promise, the Bible says that he saw two companies of angels – for that is what Mahanaim means: two camps of angels. Hallelujah! One camp of angels went behind him to close the door to Laban and the past 20 years, and another camp of angels to face Esau and the future. I want to call this time of the year, as we head to 2023, Mahanaim – the Lord Jesus will send two camps of angels: one to close the door on the pain and sufferings of 2022 and another to lead us to confront 2023. Praise Jesus!

**Isaiah 60:20** *Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.*

I don't need to remind you of some of the hardships we have experienced in the last few years. Covid-19, church division, inflation and financial struggles etc. Laban has been troubling us a while now. Our blessings are ahead of us in 2023, but we need to pray and know Jesus' band of angels will close the door on the Laban of our past and go before us to neutralize the Esau of our future in 2023. Let us say, Mahanaim together! God does not want the past to torment us. When he delivers us, he delivers us totally. When Pharaoh and his army pursued after Israel at the Red Sea, God's cloud went behind to bring separation and darkness upon the Egyptians, but light unto the Israelites at night. “And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave

light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night” (Exodus 14:19,20). Jesus will blind the forces of our past which tormented us for so long. Let us believe and declare by faith that this will happen during this season of Mahanaim. Please go behind us Jesus and blind the Pharaoh of 2022, 2021 etc. Let them not see us as we enter into 2023! Hallelujah! As we close in on 2023, the God of Mahanaim is moving in two directions: to push away the Labans and Pharaohs of our past, and ahead of us to confront the Esaus and Amalekites and Canaanites ahead of us. Can we worship the Lord for this by faith in advance!

***Rev 1:8** I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

The scripture above agrees with our main text and theme today: Jesus is our Mahanaim! Alpha and Omega means the beginning and the end. Our beginning and our end is the Lord Jesus Christ: not Laban or Esau. Jesus told Nathaniel, “And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man” (John 1:51). Jesus is our Bethel. At Bethel, Jacob first saw angels ascending and descending on a ladder towards the throne of God. Now, from Bethel the angels of God followed Jacob to Haran to lead him to Canaan through Bethel. Once you and I meet our Bethel (Jesus), then the angels will follow us to always bring us to Bethel and into the promises and will of God. The God of Mahanaim will never leave nor forsake us. Can we believe that whatever forces we have been dreading or hiding from these last few years, or even 20 years like Jacob, will be defeated in this Mahanaim. There was another great man of God, David, who also encountered great blessing at this same place named Mahanaim by Jacob, his blessed ancestor.

***2Sam 17:27** And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,*

***2Sam 17:28** Brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentiles, and parched pulse,*

***2Sam 17:29** And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.*

David was in great danger at this time because of his rebellious son, Absalom, who dethroned him and sought to kill him. Jerusalem was blocked and Absalom also crossed the Jordan after David. Crossing the Jordan represents the future, as Elijah crossed into heaven at the Jordan. “Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the

men of Israel with him” (2 Sam 17:24). It was at this moment, between the past and future, that David came to Mahanaim. Praise Jesus! At Mahanaim God sent many blessings to comfort and strengthen David: imagine that an Ammonite, sworn enemies of Israel, came in the form of Shobi the son of Nahash. Barzillai was a very rich and honorable man. “Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man” (2 Sam 19:32). Jesus will send us Shobis and Barzillais in this season of Mahanaim as we enter 2023! Say Amen by faith! God will send angels and good people to bless, strengthen and comfort us in Mahanaim. Why don’t we just call this conference in Norway Mahanaim this year! Those of you who are travelling to be with us in Norway this conference and season, let us declare that we are travelling to Mahanaim (tell the immigration office that you are off to a conference called Mahanaim – God will honor our declaration and faith. God will convert our enemies into our friends, as he did Esau and Shobi the Ammonite. He will give us favor for 2023.

***Jeremiah 29:11*** *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*

I want to conclude by also exhorting those who are still in Haran afraid to confront Esau. I am thinking of those who are living in sin and have not made their peace with the Lord Jesus Christ. As God commanded Jacob, he now commands you: “And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee” (Gen 31:3). How long will you be tormented by Laban? Is 20 years not enough? Believe in the Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ and obey the Apostle who said, “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). Once you do your part, Jesus will send two camps of angels to your Mahanaim: one camp will ensure that the Pharaohs and Labans of your past will not even see you, and the other will go ahead to face your Esaus in 2023. A blessed and happy Mahanaim to all of you this season!