

**Report to the Ruggles Board of Directors**  
**Thursday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024**

There is a curious story in Genesis 32, especially in the first two verses of the chapter. “So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, “This is God’s camp.” And he called the name of that place Mahanaim.” (Gen. 32:1,2)

This verse has always intrigued me and like most of the Bible, there are meanings on the surface and there are often many layers that lie beneath. A couple of notes:

- 1) I think many of us actually get a glimpse of the mystery of this verse every time we cross the threshold of Ruggles Camp. It has been testified to often---words such as “*I actually feel something in my soul when I pass through the gates of Ruggles---it is like....well, it is like what Jacob said “This is God’s Camp.” Truly crossing the gate is a heart-warming experience.*”
  - All four of the seasons bring a great beauty to Ruggles---but the “*lushness*”, “*new-lifeness*”, and the “*greenness*” of spring seems to bring this feeling to a greater depth. The cold of winter is gone and the warmth of beauty of a new day “splashes” upon us by the Unseen Hand of the Master.
  - I remember what Gary Biddle, a long time Song Leader at Ruggles Camp Meeting said once during service “*It seems that every year at Ruggles the Lord opens up the floors of heaven and throws the angels down upon the grounds of Ruggles Camp!*” I think we can relate---maybe this is what our Lord is doing—having angels meet us--similar to Jacob, “*the angels of God met him.*” (Gen. 32:1)
- 2) But something else is going on in the naming of the camp by Jacob—he called it “**Mahanaim**”. I had to look it up—in Hebrew it sounds like “*Ma-ha-NAH-eem*” and it literally means “Double Camp”. The story of Jacob is rich and lengthy—it covers about 10 chapters in Genesis and is filled with all kinds of drama. Much of the drama deals with the scoundrel-like behavior that “*kept camp*” INSIDE of Jacob. Jacob was a manipulator, a deceiver, he was—well truly—a *scoundrel* on many fronts. The Bible is NOT silent about the darker side of the human heart.

\*Yet God is not in the business of abandoning His children---God is in the business of transforming His children. Paul speaks of this inward tension of the soul in Romans 7, “*...I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind....o wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?* (Rom. 7:23,24)

Like a loving heavenly Father, God longs to bring wholeness to the brokenness of individuals, of families, of communities of this world---yes God longs to “*set up camp*” within every one of us---this “camp”—this Kingdom—will last forever! It’s a journey of highs and lows, it’s a journey called *holiness* and *sanctification*—of heart and life for our Lord’s sake!