

~**MAHANAIM (163)**  
(Ma-ha-na'im) [Two Camps]

- A site East of the Jordan where Jacob, after parting from Laban, encountered a company of angels. Jacob then called the place **Mahanaim**.
- And as for Jacob, he got on his way, and the angels of God now met up with him. (**Genesis 32:1**)
- Immediately Jacob said, when he saw them; The camp of God this is! Hence he called the name of that place **Mahanaim**. (**Genesis 32:2**)
- The meaning of the name, **Two Camps**, may allude to the camp of God, as represented by his angels, and to the camp of Jacob. Apparently sometime later a city was built on the site. In the **15th Century B.C.E**, this city was first assigned to the Gadites and then to the Levite Merarites.
- Furthermore, Moses made a gift to the tribe of Gad, the sons of Gad by their families. (**Joshua 13:24**)
- And from Heshbon to Ramath-mizpeh and Betonim and from **Mahanaim** to the border of Debir. (**Joshua 13:26**)
- And the families of the sons of Merari, the Levites who were left over, had out of the tribe of Zebulun Jokneam and its pasture ground, Kartah and its pasture ground. (**Joshua 21:34**)
- And out of the tribe of Gad, the city of refuge for the manslayer, namely, Ramoth in Gilead, and its pasture ground, and **Mahanaim** and its pasture ground. (**Joshua 21:38**)
- While David ruled from Hebron, **Mahanaim** served as the capital for the rival kingdom of Saul's son and successor Ish-bosheth. This suggests that it was fortified and occupied a strategic position.
- As for Abner the son of Ner the chief of the army that had belonged to Saul, he took Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, and proceeded to bring him across to **Mahanaim**. (**2 Samuel 2:8**)

- And to make him king over Gilead and the Ashurites and Jezreel and over Ephraim and Benjamin and over Israel, all of it. (2 Samuel 2:9)
- Forty years old Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, was when he became king over Israel, and for two years he ruled as king. Only the house of Judah proved themselves followers of David. (2 Samuel 2:10)
- And the number of the days that David proved to be king in Hebron over the house of Judah came to be seven years and six months. (2 Samuel 2:11)
- As for Abner and his men, they marched through the Arabah all that night and went crossing the Jordan and marching through the entire gully and finally came to Mahanaim. (2 Samuel 2:29)
- Evidently in this city Ish-bosheth was assassinated.
- And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, proceeded to go and come to the house of Ish-bosheth about when the day had heated up, as he was taking his noonday siesta. (2 Samuel 4:5)
- And here they came into the middle of the house as men fetching wheat, and then struck him in the abdomen, and Rechab and Baanah his brother themselves escaped detection. (2 Samuel 4:6)
- When they went into the house, he was lying upon his couch in his inner bedroom, and then they struck him so that they put him to death, after which they removed his head and took his head and walked on the road to the Arabah all night long. (2 Samuel 4:7)
- Later David, fleeing from his rebellious son Absalom, came to Gilead where he was kindly received at Mahanaim. He remained there at the request of his supporters and did not share in the battle that completely defeated Absalom's attempt to seize the throne.
- As for David, he came to Mahanaim, and Absalom himself crossed the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. (2 Samuel 17:24)

- Joab now blew the horn, that the people might return from chasing after Israel, for Joab had held back the people. (2 Samuel 18:16)
- And Barzillai was very old, being eighty years of age, and he himself supplied the king with food while he was dwelling in Mahanaim, for he was a very great man. (2 Samuel 19:32)
- And here there is with you Shimei the son of Gera the Benjaminite from Bahurim, and he it was that called down evil upon me with a painful malediction on the day that I was going to Mahanaim, and he it was that came down to meet me at the Jordan, so that I swore to him by Yehowah, saying; I shall not put you to death by the sword. (1 Kings 2:8)
- During the reign of David's son Solomon, Mahanaim was under the jurisdiction of the deputy Ahinadab.
- And Solomon had twelve deputies over all Israel, and they provided the king and his household with food. It would devolve upon each one to provide the food one month in the year. (1 Kings 4:7)
- Ahinadab the son of Iddo, in Mahanaim. (1 Kings 4:14)
- Come back, come back, O Shulammite! Come back, come back, that we may behold you! What do you people behold in the Shulammite? Something like the dance of two camps! (Song of Solomon 6:13)
- The dance of two camps may also be rendered, the dance of Mahanaim, AS, or the Mahanaim dance. AT Perhaps the reference is to dancing associated with a certain festival that was held at Mahanaim.
- Finally they said; Look! There is a festival of Yehowah from year to year in Shiloh, which is to the north of Bethel, toward the east of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem and toward the south of Lebonah. (Judges 21:19)
- And you must look, and, there now, when the daughters of Shiloh come on out to dance in circle dances, you must also come out from the vineyards and carry off for yourselves by force each one his wife from the daughters of Shiloh, and you must go to the land of Benjamin. (Judges 21:21)

- The exact location of **Mahanaim** is uncertain, but it was East of the Jordan and evidently North of the Jabbok.
- As for Abner and his men, they marched through the Arabah all that night and went crossing the Jordan and marching through the entire gully and finally came to **Mahanaim**. (2 Samuel 2:29)
- And he proceeded to run away and to get up and cross the River, he and all he had. After that he directed his face to the mountainous region of Gilead. (Genesis 31:21)
- Immediately Jacob said, when he saw them; The camp of God this is! Hence he called the name of that place **Mahanaim**. (Genesis 32:2)
- Later during that night he rose and took his two wives and his two maidservants and his eleven young sons and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. (Genesis 32:22)
- Some suggest **Khirbet Mahneh** or, **Mihna**, about 19 kilometers (12 miles) North of the Jabbok and about the same distance East of the Jordan, but many feel that it is too far North of the Jabbok.
- Yohanan Aharoni identifies **Mahanaim** with **Tell edh-Dhahab el-Gharbi**, on the North bank of the Jabbok, about 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) East of the Jordan. [The Land of the Bible, translated and edited by A. Rainey, 1979, pp. 314,439]