

Bible Devotions: Lock Stock & Barrel
Devotional Reading for Outdoorsmen
(Old Testament)

Genesis 32:1-2

This Is God's Camp

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.

Many people camp and for many different reasons. Some folks camp to escape the urban grind. Some camp during a hunting or fishing trip. Some people, like young boys, enjoy the thrill of sleeping outdoors under cover of darkness, with all those strange noises, and all those scary shadows. ZOOM!!... Well, some boys do enjoy a few hours in the backyard before dashing for the safety of the house.

When I was fresh out of high school, a friend and I went on a combined hiking and camping trip. On one particular trail, we encountered a young man and woman. He was a big, muscular guy who reacted smartly by thrusting out his chest, spreading his shoulders, and centering himself in the middle of the route. It was clear that he wasn't going to yield any part of the path.

Just as we squeezed by the couple from the edge of the trail, the man tripped over a small, exposed root. He recovered quickly as if nothing had ever happened. We laughed quietly with tight grins on our faces. Suddenly, his girlfriend busted out laughing and as we hustled down the trail, we too could not contain ourselves. Like a gobbler in full strut for a pretty little hen, this guy was showing off for his girlfriend. But I've never seen a gobbler stumble... yet.

Fresh from a dangerous-turned-peaceful encounter with his Uncle Laban, Jacob and his caravan went on the move again, bound for a confrontation with his estranged brother, Esau. Suddenly, they met the angels of God on the trail. No one was showing off. Angels weren't stumbling over roots. Jacob wasn't running wildly down the trail. Instead, serious things were happening.

Jacob recognized what he saw. *"This is God's camp,"* he said. It was clear to him that he had come upon the camp of God. It must have been a powerful time of worship for both camps.

The Bible doesn't give any details about the setting. We can only imagine what that holy campsite looked like. One thing we do know: Jacob was about to confront a potentially deadly adversary, his brother Esau. But before the encounter, God gave a glimpse of His own camp, a glimpse of heaven perhaps, and the peace and safety afforded those who are tired and fearful of the life they live.

God's camp is only accessible by believing in His Son, Jesus. Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"* (John 14:6). There is no other way to come into the presence of the Heavenly Father, into God's camp, except by faith in Him.

God's camp is free of the sticks and stones that make earthly life bumpy, sloppy, and just plain ugly. This clearing of sin comes when we ask Jesus to forgive us of our sins. When we confess our sins, *He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (I John 1:9).

God's camp is safe. Once inside, there's eternal fellowship with the Heavenly Father, the risen Savior, and with all those He has saved. Nothing can change that, now or later. Jesus said, *"And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand* (John 10:28).

We can't imagine what Jacob saw that day. Nor can we imagine how the two camps, Jacob's and God's, compared. It is certain that one was earthly and one was heavenly. Our own campsites are in that same extreme, on the earthly side of course. But we have this assurance: when our little camp meets God's camp, it is a holy, righteous, redemptive experience. Whoever or whatever is waiting for us down the trail just doesn't matter.

Bible Devotions: Hook Line & Sinker (study guide)

Genesis 32:1-2
This Is God's Camp

HOOK

1. What and/or where is the most memorable hike or nature walk you've enjoyed?

2. List a few camp courtesies every camper should honor.

3. Describe in detail your top three priorities for locating and setting up a campsite.

LINE

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What do you think the angels were doing in God's camp? What would be your response if you saw the event that Jacob saw (if you saw God's camp)?

Describe your relationship with Jesus. If you do not know Jesus as Savior and Lord, what do the verses above say about Him? What will you do with Him? Ask a Christian friend to help you.

SINKER

Take a few minutes to write your thoughts on this devotional. Reflect on your own experiences.

Key words: camp trail heaven
