

# Migdal Eder & the Birth of Messiah

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[sightedmoon.com/migdal-eder-the-birth-of-messiah/](http://sightedmoon.com/migdal-eder-the-birth-of-messiah/)

By Joseph F. Dumond

July 29,  
2016

## News Letter 5852-024

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The Shemitah Year

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The 25th day of the 5th month 5852 years after the creation of Adam

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The 5th Month in the Seventh year of the Third Sabbatical Cycle

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The 3rd Sabbatical Cycle after the 119th Jubilee Cycle

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The Sabbatical Cycle of Earthquakes, Famines and Pestilence

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The Year of letting the land rest

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The Sabbatical year that begins March 10, Aviv 2016 and goes to Aviv 2017

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July 30, 2016

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Shabbat Shalom to The Royal Family of Yehovah,

## Migdal Eder & The Birth of Messiah

This article is presented by Chad and Marilyn Wilhelm, who shared it with me last fall and I have waited until now to share it with you. It fits perfectly with our teaching last week on the birth of Yehshua being on the Feast of Trumpets. Again, stop and think. Mary had given birth and would be unclean for 40 days.

Lev 12:2 Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, If a woman has conceived seed and has borne a male, then she shall be unclean seven days; as on the days of her menstrual impurity she shall be unclean. 3And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. 4And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying thirty-three days. She shall touch no holy thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying are fulfilled.

And the nursing baby Yehshua would have touched her in order to be breast fed and each time the baby touched the unclean Mary, the baby too would be unclean.

Lev 15:19And if a woman has an issue, *and* her issue in her flesh is blood, she shall be in her impurity seven days. And whoever touches her shall be unclean until the evening. 20And everything that she lies on in her impurity shall be unclean. Everything also that she sits on shall be unclean. 21And whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe in water, and be unclean until the evening. 22And whoever touches anything that she sat on, shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until the evening. 23And if it *is* on the bed or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until the evening.

So exactly how would the infant Yeshua be able to go into the Temple on the 8th Day of Sukkot to be circumcised as some teach you that His birth was on the 1st day of Sukkot. Just stop and think for a moment. It is impossible for the infant to go up to the Temple until at least 40 days after His birth. This is just another indicator we have that He was born on the Feast of Trumpets. More again on this next week. But this week I want to share this teaching from Chad.

The Greek and Hebrew fonts do not come across on this web site and are shown as ????. So, if you want them they are all on Chads site which you can link to at the end of the article.

My sincere hope, brethren, is that by the end of this teaching, you will truly get a better picture of the birth of our Messiah rather than the traditional view that has become the norm passed down from the early Church Fathers. Tradition (not the Bible) says that Yeshua's birth place was in a cave over which the Basilica of the Nativity was built in Bethlehem.

According to Origen of Alexandria (185 – 254 CE) the Roman Emperor Constantine, built a Basilica over this cave in the 4th Century at the request of his mother Helena. It was destroyed and the present basilica was built by Emperor Justinian in 530 AD. Origen of Alexandria wrote that it was generally accepted that Yeshua was born in a cave at Bethlehem which could be visited in his day. (*Origen of Alexandria, "Against Celsus" in Volume 1, Chapter 51.* )

There is no evidence that can be found within the Bible to support that claim! Let's turn to a familiar passage of scripture and see what clues we can uncover from the text.

### **Revisiting the Birth: Clues from the Text**

Luk 2:1-20 "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (*And* this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him **in a manger**; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying **in a manger**. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the

angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying **in a manger**. And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.” {KJV} **(emphasis mine)**

In verses 7,12, and 16 I have put in **bold** what the KJV has translated from the Greek Text. These are the words with the ‘Strong’s Concordance’ reference: “ **in**<sup>G1722</sup> **a manger**;<sup>G5336</sup> “ however, when one looks at this particular text through an actual Greek Interlinear there is a missing Greek word. Here is what the text looks like from the Interlinear: “ **??**<sup>G1722</sup> **IN** **??**<sup>G3588</sup> **THE** **?????**<sup>G5336</sup> **MANGER** “ the Greek word **??**<sup>G3588</sup> is not translated as it should be- although it is of my opinion that the translators in an attempt to smooth out the text inserted “a” instead of “the”. Let’s now take a look at this interesting Greek word. According to the Thayer Greek Dictionary, this Greek word is defined as ‘the definite article’, “the” in its masculine, feminine or neuter gender...the demonstrative pronoun. Examples: “this”, “that”, or “these”. The next word that should be studied in this passage of Luke chapter 2 is “manger”. The Greek word here is **G5336** **??????** phatne’ *fat’-nay* (from the Strong’s Concordance). This word comes from the Greek word **????????** pateomai (to *eat*); a *crib* (for fodder): – manger or **stall**. Listed below are the Hebrew words that are most similar to the Greek word **??????** phatne’ (these are also the Septuagint related words).

H18 **?????** evus: a manger, **stall** (from H75 [ abas ] –to fodder, fatted, **stalled**)  
H723 **????** urvah : a **herding place** for an animal  
H1098 **?????** belil  
: feed, fodder H7517  
**???** rephet: a **stall**

This word **G5336** **??????** phatne’ could be translated as ‘manger’ but if we look into the ancient time and culture during Yeshua’s day, I’m of the opinion that this ‘manger’ was more of a stable or stall to house livestock. We will discuss this further in a bit.

**Luke 2:15 “...Let us now go to Bethlehem...”**

After the shepherds were told about the Messiah, how did they know where to go?

Luk 2:15-16 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Where would the shepherds have known to go in Bethlehem to find baby Yeshua? There were no directions provided... (more on this later as well).

## What we know from the Bible about Micah 5:2 and Luke 2:1-20

Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem (Beit –lechem – ‘house of bread’– Micah 5:2). Luke records the birth place of Messiah as Bethlehem in Luke 2:11. Bethlehem is the city of David and of his father’s inheritance (1 Sa 16:4, 17:15, 20:6).

Although the Brit Chadashah does not tell us where in Bethlehem Yeshua was born, the Tanakh does.

### Location of Yeshua’s Birth

We are all familiar with this verse: Mic 5:2 “And thou, Beit-Lechem Ephratah, Little to be among the chiefs of Judah! From thee to Me he cometh forth—to be ruler in Israel, And his comings forth *are* of old, From the days of antiquity.”

But do we go back and read the verses for context? Micah 4:1 – 5:4

Mic 4:1 “But in the last days it shall come to pass, *that* the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make *them* afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken *it*. For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever. In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.

Mic 4:8 And thou, **O tower of the flock**, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem. Now why dost thou cry out aloud? *is there* no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail. Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go *even* to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the LORD shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies. Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth. Mic 5:1 Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time *that* she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return

unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.”

To summarize: YHWH explains what it will be like in the millennial reign of Messiah (4:1 – 4:7). Micah 4:8 – 5:4 explains what will happen before that day !

### **The significance of ‘Migdal Eder’**

Mic 4:8 “And thou, O **tower** **of the flock**, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.”

**H4026** / migda?l / migda?la?h **BDB Definition:**

Tower 1a) tower 1b) elevated stage, pulpit 1c) raised bed

**H1431 (ROOT WORD)** ga?dal **BDB Definition:** 1) to grow, become great or important, promote, make powerful, praise, magnify, do great things 1a) (Qal) 1a1) to grow up 1a2) to become great 1a3) to be magnified

What did the Sages of Israel think about Micah 4:8 and 5:1-2?

Targums: Micah 4:8 “And you, **O Messiah of Israel**, who has been hidden away because of the sins of the congregation of Zion, the kingdom shall come to you, and the former dominion shall be restored to the kingdom of the congregation of Jerusalem.”

Targums: Micah 5:1 “And you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, you who were too small to be numbered among the thousands of the house of Judah, **from you shall come forth before me the Messiah**, to exercise dominion over Israel, he whose name was mentioned from of old, from ancient times.”

The sages of old understood Micah 4:8 and 5:1-2 to be about the coming Messiah !

### **Yeshua’s Birth at Migdal Eder**

Where have we seen these words before? Migdal Eder?

Gen 35:16-21 And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. 17 And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. 18 And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name

Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin. 19 And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which *is* Bethlehem. 20 And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that *is* the pillar of Rachel’s grave unto this day. 21 And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond (from) **tower of Eder** **[Migdal Eder]**.

Why is this significant? Because even the sages of old understood this passage of scripture was a prophecy concerning Messiah! They understood that Genesis 35:21 and Micah 4:8 were connected! According to Targum Jonathan (Jonathan Ben Uzziel) Genesis 35:21 is written this way:

**Gen 35:2** “**And Jakob proceeded and spread his tent beyond the tower of Eder, the place from whence, it is to be, the King Meshiha (Messiah) will be revealed at the end of the days.**” **(emphasis mine)**

## Shadow Picture of Messiah Yeshua

Just as the naming of Leah's children reveals YHWH's plan of Messiah: The Messiah came as Elohim's **Son** [Reuben – 'see, a son']. He was **heard** [Simeon – to hear] by some and **joined to** [Levi – joined] by others. We should **praise** him [Judah – praised] because he paid the **wages** [Issachar – wages] of sin. Soon he will come to **dwell** [Zebulun – habitation] with us and He will **rule/judge** [Dinah – Judgment] over the whole world.

Also note how Rachel's children are thematically connected to Messiah Yeshua:

Joseph: bread man, suffering servant, exalted to the right hand of Pharaoh, savior of Egypt

Yeshua: bread of life, suffering servant, exalted to the right hand of the Father, savior of the world.

## What about Benjamin?

How is Rachel's other son Benjamin a shadow picture of Messiah [thematically related]?

Gen 35:18-19,21 And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni **son of( sorrow)**: but his father called him Benjamin (**son of right hand**). And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which *is* Bethlehem. 21 And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond (from) **tower of Eder [Migdal Eder]**. Messiah was also born in Bethlehem, at Migdal Eder. He came the first time as a suffering servant, a **son of sorrows** (Isaiah 53:4). Yeshua now sits at the **RIGHT HAND** of the Father (Mark 16:19)... Our Heavenly Father will send him again a second time to return to put down iniquity and evil, set up the Kingdom, and rule/reign for a thousand years (Rev 19 & 20)!

## Location of Migdal Eder

After Jacob left Bethel he came to **Migdal Eder** (the tower of the flock) and there Rachel began hard labor and as she delivered Benjamin she died and was buried there in "...*Ephrathah which is Bethlehem*" (Gen. 35:19). After burying Rachel,

Jacob moved his flocks beyond **Migdal Eder** (tower of Eder/Flock). This would pinpoint the location as being near (to the North) to what is present day Bethlehem. This establishes that **Migdal Eder**, "the tower of the flock" was in Bethlehem.

Keep in mind that the area which is called Bethlehem in biblical times covered a larger area than does present day

Bethlehem and Migdal Eder was in that city, or just on the outskirts of the city. The oldest tradition based upon Gen 35 and

48 places ancient Ephrathah northeast of the current day city and about 4 miles south of the Old City of

Jerusalem. This puts Migdal Eder very close to the modern day marker of ??? ??? (Kever Rakhel)- the tomb of Rachel. Isn't it interesting that it is the third holiest site in Judaism. Our brother Judah continues to pray for Rachel and her children (tribes of Yosef and Benyamin)!

## Significance of Migdal Eder and the Holy Temple

Now that we have begun to uncover some clues about where Yeshua was born, let's see if we can incorporate anything to do with the Holy Temple and the Temple services. When the Temple stood,

there was the twice-daily offering of a male lamb instructed in the Torah called the Tameed (continual burnt offering (Num 28:3). It was the first and last offering of the day in the Holy Temple. This offering was specific in that it could only be a male lamb without spot or blemish. It had to be perfect, or Tameem (complete, perfect).

According to the Mishnah (Baba K. 7.7), expressly forbids the keeping of flocks throughout the land of Israel, except in the wilderness and the only flocks otherwise kept, would be those for the Temple-services (Baba K. 80a) [*Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Edersheim pg131*]

### **Who were the 'Shepherds'?**

"...and, accordingly, that the shepherds, who watched over them, were not ordinary shepherds." [*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Edersheim pg 131*]

More than likely, these shepherds resided near Bethlehem were none other than the shepherds from 'Migdal Eder' who were well aware what the sages of old taught that the Messiah might well be announced from 'Migdal Eder' in Bethlehem. There is a good possibility that these Shepherds were either 'Levites' or designated Shepherds specifically trained to watch over sheep for Temple Services. I believe that they would have cared for and inspected each newborn lamb of any defects or blemishes and it was these 'Levites' (in my opinion) that declared whether or not these 'newborn' clean animals were acceptable for Temple service.

### **The sign:'a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a THE manger'**

The Greek word used here for 'swaddling cloths' is ?????????? sparganoo? *spar-gan-o'-o* G4683 [Strong's] From

???????????? sparganon (a *strip*; from a derivative of the base of G4682 meaning to *strap* or *wrap* with strips); to *swathe* (an infant after the Oriental custom): – wrap in swaddling clothes. It is interesting that this Greek word is used because it comes from the Greek word ?????????? sparasso? G4682, a verb, meaning to convulse or tear. Continuing on with the Strong's definition: A Related Word by Thayer's/Strong's Number: prolongation from **spairo** (to grasp, apparently strengthened from G4685 through the idea of spasmodic contraction).

What I am getting at here is that this Greek word translated as 'swaddling cloths' was more applicable to preventing an newborn animal or baby from scratches or injury. To further emphasis my point, In the book "The Chronological Gospels" by Michael Rood, Rood comments on the swaddling cloths from Luke 2:7: "A child of the King and potential heir to the throne was salted and swaddled as part of the initial dedication of the child and in recognition of the parents' responsibility to raise the child according to the straight path (Eze 16:4). Soon after birth, the child was washed with salted water and bound in the swaddling cloths with all of his limbs made straight...Swaddling cloths were made from priests' garments that were no longer serviceable. This cloth was used for the wicks in the Temple menorah and for swaddling the sons of kings..." (pg. 52).

Harold Smith , in "The Birth- Revisited" writes: Approaching this subject from the Hebrew perspective will show, that while swaddling "cloths" were used in the handling of newborn babies, swaddling "bands" (as referenced in Job 38:9 (and Eze 16:4)) were used for subduing animals prior to sacrifice. These "swaddling bands" were strips of gauze-like cloth used to restrain a lamb being prepared for inspection before sacrifice to prevent thrashing that they not "blemish" themselves.

Could Yeshua, the 'Lamb of Elohim, that takes away the sins of the world' have been born at the birthing place (Tower of the Flock/ Migdal Eder) that was used to bring forth newborn lambs destined for the Temple? The place where the shepherds used to inspect the lambs of any blemish to determine if they could be used for Temple sacrifices? Not only the 'Tameed' offering (continual burnt offering), but also the **Passover lambs** for Israel and the High Priest? Could Yeshua have been wrapped in the clothing of the garments of Temple Levites?

**"...Let us know go to Bethlehem..." (continued)**

How did the shepherds know where to go? Harold Smith writes: "There was no need for the angels to give these shepherds directions to the birth place because they already knew. These were the men who raised sacrificial lambs that were sacrificed in the Temple. When the angelic announcement came, they already knew exactly where to go, as Luke 2 indicates, for the sign of **the manger** could only mean the manger at the base of the Tower of the Flock, as it is found in the original Greek wording of Luke 2:7,12 and 16! You cannot explain the meaning or direction of the sign they were given or their response unless you have the right manger (stall), the right shepherds and the proper Hebraic perspective." **Extra Thoughts...**

Messiah Yeshua, who is The Passover Lamb, came into Jerusalem riding on a donkey

Rabbinic tradition has the High Priest riding on a donkey going to and from Bethlehem (perhaps Migdal Eder?) with his Passover Lamb back into Jerusalem through the 'Sheep gate'- why is this significant? In the book of Nehemiah we read the following: **Neh 3:1** "Then **Eliashib [H475]** the **High Priest** rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel." ***[This was the 1<sup>st</sup> gate listed in Jerusalem] (emphasis mine)***

The meaning of Eliashib is a contraction of two words, 'el' and 'shuv', meaning El (God) will restore.

Petri Paavola, in his research of "Jerusalem's gates spiritual meaning" writes the following: "The high priest Eliashib with his brethren and priests built the Sheep Gate and set up its doors. This is first gate mentioned. Spiritual meaning of the Sheep Gate is that the high priest was building it and that through the Sheep Gate lambs and sheep were brought to the temple, in which they were offered."

Messiah Yeshua is the High Priest of the renewed Covenant, who is the Lamb, who was offered for the sake of our sins. The Spiritual meaning of the Sheep Gate is the death and offering of the Lamb (Messiah), through which sacrifice, blood and resurrection bring us forgiveness of sins and redemption. According to Nehemiah 3:1, the High Priest was setting up the doors of the Sheep Gate, which means that He is the Door of the sheep. What did Yeshua proclaim? John 10:7 "...**I am the door of the sheep.**"

\*[Side Note] In my opinion, Yeshua came in through the sheep gate, 'destined' to be 'offered'. Yeshua was hoisted on the execution tree at the same time the 1<sup>st</sup> Tameed offering was offered up in the Temple (the 3<sup>rd</sup> hour) and after the last Tameed offering at the 9<sup>th</sup> hour, Yeshua said "It is finished"... dying on that tree to **redeem us** of our sins (and to **restore us back to the Father.**) Just as Eliashib (meaning El will restore), the High Priest rebuilt the door to the 'Father's House' – so too, does our High Priest Messiah Yeshua, who is the door, **restores us back to the Father !!!**



## **Putting all the clues together**

What we know is that Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem (Mic 5:2). He was revealed from Migdal Eder (Mic 4:8). This Tower more than likely laid close to the town near the road to **Jerusalem** (old Hebron road – Hwy 60 in modern day Israel) and not far away from where the Tomb of Rachel is located (current day). The Mishnah tells us that the flocks which pastured there were destined for Temple sacrifices (Shekinah 7:4). The Mishnah tells us that the shepherds (who I believe were Levites) watching over them were specifically trained to inspect the newborn lambs for any defects. This same location of where newborn lambs were born and inspected, destined for sacrifice at the Holy Temple, is the same place that Messiah Yeshua was 'born'. He was 'inspected' to be unblemished, and destined to be offered for us!!! The Shepherds (Levites) would have known the exact place to go look for this 'sign' at none other than Migdal Eder.

Here's what I find fascinating about all this. First, it places Yeshua's birth in the traditional location for Passover lambs to be born. Fitting, since He became the Passover Lamb of Elohim who took away the sins of the world. Second, it explains how the shepherds knew where to go to find the newborn baby — and why being wrapped in swaddling clothes would be a significant clue. Finally, it explains why those shepherds were notified as it was their holy calling to certify Templeapproved & Passover lambs upon birth. **Something else to think about...**

Think of Messiah, as a newborn baby, wrapped or bound at the birthing place of the lambs 'destined' for Temple-Sacrifice. The Shepherds (who I believe were of the Levitical Priesthood), who had heard of the sage teachings of Migdal Eder, the Prophecy of Micah 4:8, 5:2 and Genesis 35:21 and the place where Messiah would appear. Think of all the connections of Messiah from his birth until his crucifixion... How much deeper can we draw from this then the Traditional 'Nativity' scene that so many people have come to believe?

Shalom & blessings, Chad [www.returnoftheremnant.com](http://www.returnoftheremnant.com)

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rs0AACIbJbI>

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Where was the Birth Place of the Lord Jesus? – Cooper P Abrams III

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<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/faithwalkers/2012/12/was-jesus-born-away-in-a-manger-at-migdal-eder/#ixzz3RZw43lZ2>

Jerusalem Talmud

Babylonian Talmud

Mishnah Targum Jonathan

KJV

I, Jacob Howard, wrote Dr. Charlie Dyer, who is the speaker on the Land and the Book Radio, a question about Migdal-Eder, mentioned in Micah 4:8.

This was Dr. Dyer's response.

Jacob,

Thank you for your e-mail, and thanks as well for your kind words! Denny and I both appreciate the privilege God has given us to serve Him in this way. You have encouraged us both!

As far as Migdal Eder is concerned, there is no universal identification of the site. But I do believe it was a real site. The best thing I've read on the subject is from Alfred Edersheim's *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. (You can find his complete work online at Google Books.) I'll include his quotation here, and then I'll follow it with a few observations. (I'll also highlight the key point he makes in the quote.)

But as we pass from the sacred gloom of the cave [i.e., he was just talking about the birth of Jesus in a cave] out into the night, its sky all aglow with starry brightness, its loneliness is peopled, and its silence made vocal from heaven. There is nothing now to conceal, but much to reveal, though the manner of it would seem strangely incongruous to Jewish thinking. And yet Jewish tradition may here prove both illustrative and helpful. That the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, was a settled conviction. Equally so was the belief, that He was to be revealed from Migdal Eder, "the tower of the flock." This Migdal Eder was not the watchtower for the ordinary flocks which pastured on the barren sheep ground beyond

Bethlehem, but lay close to the town, on the road to Jerusalem. A passage in the Mishnah leads to the conclusion, that the flocks, which pastured there, were destined for Temple-sacrifices, and, accordingly, that the shepherds, who watched over them, were not ordinary shepherds. The latter were under the ban of Rabbinism, on account of their necessary isolation from religious ordinances, and their manner of life, which rendered strict legal observance unlikely, if not absolutely impossible. The same Mishnaic passage also leads us to infer, that these flocks lay out all the year round, since they are spoken of as in the fields thirty days before the Passover—that is, in the month of February, when in Palestine the average rainfall is nearly greatest. Thus, Jewish tradition in some dim manner apprehended the first revelation of the Messiah from that Migdal Eder, where shepherds watched the Temple-flocks all the year round. Of the deep symbolic significance of such a coincidence, it is needless to speak.

—Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, pp. 186-87

If Edersheim is correct (and I believe he is), the location for Migdal Eder would be north of Bethlehem and near the old road from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. (That road is the old "Hebron road" one drives on between Jerusalem and Bethlehem today!) I believe this puts the location somewhere between the Jewish kibbutz of Ramat Rachel and Bethlehem, probably just to the west of Har Homa. There used to be an actual sheepfold in this area where I would take our groups but, sadly, it has been covered over by the modern road that now goes to Har Homa.



A key point here. Edersheim indicates that Migdal Eder was an actual spot, but he is not saying it was a town or village. Rather, the name means “watchtower of the flock” which seems to identify it as a specific pasture area for sheep. And the sheep that grazed here were those specifically destined for Temple sacrifice. In that sense the shepherds keeping watch over the temple sacrifices were the ones to whom God announced the birth of the ultimate “sacrificial lamb.”

I'm attaching a screen shot from Google Earth that might be of help in identifying the location for Migdal Eder. Note that Ramat Rachel is at the top of the picture and Bethlehem is at the bottom. The road running along the left side of the picture is the old Hebron Road, and Homat Shemu'el/Har Homa is just to the right of center in the picture. Based on Edersheim's description, I would place Migdal Eder almost in the center of the picture...north of Bethlehem, just to the west of Har Homa, and east of the road from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. Since the word means “tower of the flock” it is likely a high spot in this area where sheep would graze. The hills right around (or right at) Har Homa are probably the best possible location.

I hope this is helpful!

Charlie