

*The celebration of **Hanukkah** focuses on the lighting of the menorah. It is a special time for families and friends to spend together singing, playing, giving gifts, telling stories, and **meditating on the meaning of Hanukkah**.*

Eight Days of Hanukkah

The Feast of Dedication and The Feast of Light

by Michael Gibson, Key2Changes.com

The True Meaning of Hanukkah **The “Conception” of the Light of the World**

*“Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus (Yashua – I am Salvation, I am the Light of the World).” **Luke 1:31***

Hanukkah (day 8 of 8)

The Feast of Dedication and The Feast of Light

On the eighth night:

I want to close this Celebration with a Scripture passage that many Jewish people read of the eighth and last night of Hanukkah. Just as the number eight marks a new beginning in something God will do and serves as the sign for eternity this Scripture looks forward to a new heaven and a new earth in which the glory of the Lord will be its light:

Behold, there will come a time!

And the light of the moon shall become like the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall become sevenfold, like the light of the seven days, when the Lord binds up His people’s wounds and heals the injuries it has suffered.

In that day, there shall be neither sunlight nor cold moonlight but there shall be a continuous day, of neither day nor night, and there shall be light at evening time.

No longer shall you need the sun for light by day nor the shining of the moon for radiance by night; for the Lord shall be your light everlasting, your God shall be your glory.

Your sun shall set no more, your moon no more withdraw; for the Lord shall be a light to you forever.

*Cause a new light to shine upon Zion and soon may all of us be worthy to enjoy its light. **Isaiah 30:26; Zechariah 14:6-7; Isaiah 60:19-20***

Prayer on the eighth night:

Daily Exercise - Lectio Divina (“Divine Reading”, it is a way or method of reading the Scriptures in such a manner that facilitates the reader in receiving a “specific word” from God.)

1. Set aside enough time to complete the exercise so that you don’t have to rush through it. Usually thirty minutes is adequate.
2. Find a quiet place free of distractions.
3. Read the Selected Passage Above of Scripture.
4. Transition from what you have been doing by calming you mind and body. This can be done by taking a few slow, deep breaths and inviting the Lord to speak to you through His word.

Reading

1. Read the passage aloud slowly a couple of times.
2. Be silent for one-to-two minutes.
3. Is there a word or phrase that is meaningful to you?
4. Repeat the word or phrase several times silently as if to memorize it.

* If in a group share it in turn. Do not elaborate simply state what it is.

Meditation

1. Read the passage again.
2. Be silent for two to three minutes.
3. Think about how the reading applies or touches your life today.

* If in a group share it in turn. Briefly state "I hear, I see, I feel ..."

Prayer

1. Talk with God about what he is showing you.

* If in a group pray quietly.

Contemplation

1. Read the passage again.
2. Be silent for two to three minutes.
3. Reflect on "I believe God wants me to _____ today/this week/etc."

* If in a group share in turn. At this point you can elaborate somewhat on what you believe God is telling you to do.

Study/Review on the eighth night:

The Christmas Story:

Based on my knowledge of Scripture, historical facts, the Biblical calendar and Jewish tradition I would like to present the following Christmas story as a plausible way in which the events surrounding Jesus' birth occurred.

It is Saturday night, Kislev 25, in the Jewish year 3755. It is the first night of Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication and the Feast of Light, December 4, 6 BCE. The angel Gabriel comes to the Virgin Mary with a message from God. She will conceive in her womb, bear a son and name him Jesus (Yashua – Joshua – "I AM SALVATION"). The Holy Spirit will come upon her, and the power of the Most High will overshadow her; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.

Mary appropriately Hanukkahs (dedicates – first use for a holy purpose) her body to be the temple of God by saying, "*Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.*"

The Holy Spirit impregnates Mary. She now has the Word of God, eternal life and the light of men dwelling in the darkness of her womb. As it is written: In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with God, and the **Word** was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was **life**, and the **life** was the **light** of men. And the **light** shines in the **darkness**, and the **darkness** did not comprehend it. (John 1:1-5)

Interestingly, on the first night of Hanukkah many Jews quote this passage of Scripture, "*In the beginning God **created** the heavens and the earth. And the earth was **formless and void**, and **darkness** was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, **Let there be light**"; and there was light.*" (Genesis 1:1-3)

Coincidentally we are reminded by the Scripture in **John 9-10:(22)39**, that Jesus declared Himself to be the Son of God on Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication and Light in the Temple at Jerusalem.

I and the Father Are One

²² At that time the **Feast of Dedication** took place at Jerusalem. It was winter,²³ and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. ²⁴ So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." ²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, ²⁶ but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one."

³¹The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. ³²Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" ³³The Jews answered him, "**It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.**"³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'?" ³⁵If he called them gods to whom the word of God came – and Scripture cannot be broken – ³⁶do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' **because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?** ³⁷If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; ³⁸but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may **know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.**" ³⁹Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. **John 10:22-39**

Timeline of John the Baptist and Jesus' Conceptions and Births (6-months apart):

Pentecost – June/Feast of Weeks/Pentecost (Conception of John the Baptist) Luke 1:1-23

Luke 1:5-80

Birth of John the Baptist Foretold

⁵In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was **a priest named Zechariah**, of the division of Abijah. And **he had a wife** from the daughters of Aaron, and **her name was Elizabeth**. ⁶And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. ⁷But they had no child, because *Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.*

⁸Now **while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty**, ⁹according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

Zacharias was of the division of Abijah. A thousand years earlier, King David had reorganized the priests by families and had created 24 "courses" of priests to minister for a week at a time in the temple (David's reorganization program is recorded in 1 Chron. 24:3, 4). Each "course" or "division" ministered twice during the year, accounting for 48 weeks. The other four weeks in the year were at the time of the feasts when they all served as needed in the temple . . . The eighth in the list was Abijah (1 Chron. 24:10) . . . Hence, **the eighth division of priests arrived early on the day of Pentecost Sunday, seven weeks later, to minister in the temple . . . Luke does not tell us which day of the week he was the one honored to burn incense in the temple, but it is likely that he did so on that first morning, Pentecost Sunday. It was the year 3 B.C., for John would be born around the following Passover. (<https://godskingdom.org/studies/books/dr-luke-healing-the-breaches-book-1/chapter-2-zacharias>)*

Sixth Month of Elizabeth's Pregnancy – December/The Feast of Hanukkah (Conception of Jesus) Luke 1:26-45

Ninth Month of Elizabeth's Pregnancy, she Gives Birth – March/Passover (Birth of John the Baptist) Luke 1:57-80

Ninth Month of Mary's Pregnancy, she Gives Birth (6-months after John the Baptist's Birth) – September/the season of "When the King is in the Field" and near the time of the Feast of Trumpets (Birth of Jesus)* Luke 2:1-38

**Elul 7/September 9th 5BC, the Sabbath Reading of "WHEN YOU GO OUT to battle against your enemies," Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19; 23-days later was the beginning of the "Feast of Blowing/Trumpets" (Tishri 1/October 2nd 5BC), when all Israeli King's births began their counting and when all Israeli King's coronation were commenced; and 44-days later was the 8th Day of the "Feast of Tabernacles", also known as "Hossana Rabba/The Great Day of Salvation", fulfilling Mary's 40-days of Purification (Leviticus 12:1-4 & Luke 2:22), the future fulfillment of our Entering into Eternity with God, and the fulfillment of the consolation of Israel, prophesied to Simeon (Luke 2:22-35).*

Forty weeks (Forty weeks – is the period of human gestation) after His conception Jesus is born. It is Friday night, Elul 7, in the Jewish year 3756. This corresponds to our Gregorian calendar date of September 9, 5 BCE. It is the beginning of the weekly Sabbath. The Jewish people have a particular name for every Sabbath and they read specific passages of Scripture on those Sabbaths. The one on which Jesus is born is called KiTeitzei, "**WHEN YOU GO OUT to battle against your enemies**" (*enemies* – 1 John 3:7-9 ⁷Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.** ⁹No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.). On that Sabbath night Jesus

goes forth from the womb. And the next morning in the Temple and in every synagogue **Isaiah 54:1-10** is read. It begins this way:

"Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have borne no child; break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not travailed; for the sons of the desolate one will be more numerous than the sons of the married woman," says the LORD.

On the following Sabbath, being the eighth day Jesus is circumcised. The Jewish people call this particular Sabbath, KiTavo, "When you enter". On that day Jesus entered into the Mosaic Covenant through His circumcision. And in the Temple and every synagogue the prophet **Isaiah 60:1-22** is read. It begins this way:

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness the peoples; but the LORD will rise upon you, and His glory will appear upon you. And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes round about, and see; they all gather together, they come to you.

And in verse six of that passage of Scripture it prophesies the coming of the Magi to see Jesus. It reads this way:

A multitude of camels will cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba will come; they will bring gold and frankincense, and will bear good news (myrrh - a sweet smelling aroma) of the praises of the LORD.

Mary waited the prescribed 40 days for her purification (Read Leviticus 12:1-4) from the blood of childbirth before presenting her son, Jesus at the Temple. It was Thursday, Ethanim 21 (Ethanim is the seventh month of God's calendar. It falls within our September/October time frame. The Jewish people currently call this month Tishri.), of the Jewish year 3756 or our October 20, 5 BCE. The Jewish people call the day Hossana Rabba or "The Great Day of Salvation". It is the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles (In Hebrew the feast is called Sukkoth, which is translated as tent, hut, tabernacle or booth and indicates a temporary dwelling.) (Sukkoth).

The Feast of Tabernacles is the most joyous feast of the year for Israel and it has four major themes associated with it. Let's see how these four themes are linked to Jesus' first appearance at the Temple.

The first theme is the **ingathering of various tree branches**. Jesus, "the **Branch**" spoken of by Isaiah the prophet (Isaiah 11:1-10) concerning the messiah is brought into Jerusalem during the feast. It was written of Him: *"Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit."*

Jesse was King David's father. Therefore, the messiah had to be a descendent of King David, which Jesus was according to the genealogies. The **shoot** or **branch** in the prophecy can also be rendered from the root Hebrew word **Nazir** meaning **"unpruned vine"** from whence we get the word **Nazarene**. This is why the Bible references Jesus as the **Nazarene** or Jesus from **Nazareth**.

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Nazarene/Nazareth: the word is used to translate two related terms that appear in the Greek New Testament: *Nazarēnos* (Nazarene) and *Nazōraios* (Nazorean). The phrases traditionally rendered as *"Jesus of Nazareth"* can also be translated as *"Jesus the Nazarene"* or *"Jesus the Nazorean"*, and the title *"Nazarene"* may have a religious significance instead of denoting a place of origin. Both Nazarene and Nazorean are irregular in Greek and the additional vowel in *Nazorean* complicates any derivation from Nazareth.

The Gospel of Matthew explains that the title Nazarene is derived from the prophecy *"He will be called a Nazorean"*, but this has no obvious Old Testament source. Some scholars argue that it refers to a passage in the Book of Isaiah (Isaiah 11:1), with *"Nazarene"* a Greek reading of the Hebrew *ne-tser* (branch), understood as **a messianic title**. Others point to a passage in the Book of Judges which refers to Samson as a Nazirite, a word that is just one letter off from Nazarene in Greek.

The Greek New Testament uses *"Nazarene"* six times (Mark, Luke), while *"Nazorean"* is used 13 times (Matthew, Mark in some manuscripts, Luke, John, Acts). In the Book of Acts, *"Nazorean"* is used to refer to a follower of Jesus, i.e. a Christian, rather than an inhabitant of a town. *"Notzrim"* is the modern Hebrew word for Christians (*No-tsri*, נוצרי) and one of two words commonly used to mean "Christian" in Syriac (*Nasrani*) and Arabic (*Naṣrānī*, نصراني) . . . many languages employ the word **Nazarene** as a general designation for those of the Christian faith.

Ne-tser (נֶצֶר, n-ts-r), meaning "branch", "flower", or "offshoot". Jerome (c. 347 – 420) linked *"Nazarene"* to a verse in the Book of Isaiah, claiming that *"Nazarene"* was the Hebrew reading of a word scholars read as *ne-tzer* (branch). The text from Isaiah

11:1 is: "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a **Branch** shall grow out of his roots." Here **Branch/Nazarene** is metaphorically "descendant" (of Jesse, father of King David). In Acts, Paul of Tarsus is called, "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazoreans," thus identifying Nazorean with Christian. Although both "Christianios" (by Gentiles) and "Nazarenes" (by Jews) appear to have been current in the 1st century, and both are recorded in the New Testament, the Gentile name "Christian" appears to have won out against "Nazarene" in usage among Christians themselves after the 1st century.

The apostles who were before us had these names for him: "*Jesus, the Nazorean, Messiah*", that is, "*Jesus, the Nazorean, the Christ*". The last name is "*Christ*", the first is "*Jesus*", that in the middle is "*the Nazarene*". "**Messiah**" has two meanings, both "*the Christ*" and "**the measured**". "*Jesus*" in Hebrew is "*the redemption*". "*Nazara*" is "*the Truth*". "**The Nazarene**" then, is "*the Truth*". "*Christ*" has been measured. "**The Nazarene**" and "*Jesus*" are they who have been measured.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarene_\(title\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarene_(title))

The second theme of the feast is **God comes to tabernacle or dwell with His people**. For the past week, all the Jewish people had been living in temporary dwellings or booths made out of tree branches. It was meant to remind them of the Exodus, when God's presence was manifest among His people, leading and protecting them day and night. Jesus arrives among the people as **Immanuel ... "God With Us"** to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. "*Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.*"

The third theme of the feast is **the salvation of God's people**. The angel commanded Joseph to name the child, Jesus because He would save His people from their sins. In Hebrew, Jesus' name is Yashua or Joshua, which means, "**I AM salvation**". God told Moses to tell the Israelites that "I AM" (Exodus 3:14) had sent him to deliver them from the Egyptians. In today's world we just hear a person's formal name and it has no particular meaning to us. But in Jesus' day peoples name were actual statements. So every time Jesus introduced Himself, the people heard the statement, "**I AM salvation**".

The fourth theme of the feast is **great joy**. While the people were rejoicing in God outside the Temple, Jesus was presented before God, in the Temple, as was the custom. At that time old Simeon and Anna were filled with the **joy of the Holy Spirit** and began prophesying because they had seen the consolation of Israel.

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Where was the Birth Place of the Lord Jesus?

Tradition, not the Bible, says that Jesus' birth place was in a cave over which the Basilica of the Nativity was built in Bethlehem. 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* (185 - 254 AD) wrote that it was generally accepted that Jesus was born in a cave at Bethlehem which could be visited in his day.**

* Origen of Alexandria, "Against Celsus" in Volume 1, Chapter 51. "In regards to the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, if anyone, after studying Micah's prophecy and the history recorded in the sacred writings by the disciples of Jesus. If needing to have additional sources of evidence, let him be aware that the Scriptures are confirmed and the Gospel involving his birth, for there can be seen the cave located in Bethlehem where He was born and the manger where He was wrapped in swaddling-clothes. And this site is talked about with great interest in all the surrounding countries. Even among the enemies our faith it is being said that in this cave Jesus was born, the One who is worshiped and revered by the Christians."

Clearly the city of Jesus' birth was Bethlehem as **Micah 5:2** prophesied:

*But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old,
from ancient days.*

... and as the Gospels of Matthew, Luke and John confirm (Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:4, 15; John 7:42). Luke proclaims the birth place as Bethlehem, "*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*" 1 Samuel 17:15, confirms Bethlehem as the City of David, "*But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.*" **But where in Bethlehem was Jesus born?** The fact is that the New Testament does not mention the exact place in Bethlehem of where Jesus was born. **Nowhere does the Bible record that Jesus was born in stable attended by donkeys, chickens, and cows as many nativity scenes present.** In the past it was speculated that because there was no room for Joseph and Mary in the Inn, and that he was born in the stable behind the inn where the animals were kept. This conjecture is false and is a good example that shows us we should not apply speculation to God's word. All the New Testament specifically says is that Jesus was laid in a manger in Bethlehem.

The popular conception that the word "*manger*" refers to a trough where animals were fed may be accurate. However, it could mean simply a stall. The Greek word which is translated in our English Bibles "*manger*" is *Yatnh phat-ne* (pronounced fat'-nay).

The definition of the word is of a “stall” where animals are kept and in Luke 13:15 is translated as such. In the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) the word means a stall or a crib (See Proverbs 14:4). The question is what kind of “stall” or “manger” is the New Testament referring to and what kind of animal was fed or housed there.

Although the New Testament does not tell us where in Bethlehem Jesus was born, the Old Testament does. **Micah 4:8** states:

“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.” Thus, the Old Testament clearly states that the Messiah would be born at the “tower of the flock” (Hebrew: Migdal Edar).

The phrase “tower of the flock” is the Hebrew phrase “Migdal Edar” [(mig-dawl) ay-der] and means a “watch tower of the flock”. In ancient times this was a military tower erected to view into the valley on the edge of Bethlehem to protect the city. Several of these military towers are recorded in the Old Testament (See Judges 8:71, 9:46, 9:51; 2 Kings 9:17, 18:8; Nehemiah 3:1). The tower at Bethlehem is first mentioned in **Genesis 35:21**, “And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar” (“tower of Edar” - Migdal Edar). After Jacob left Bethel, he came to Edar (the tower) and there Rachel began hard labor and as she delivered Benjamin she died and was buried there in Ephrath which is Bethlehem” (**Genesis 35:19**). After burying Rachel, Jacob moved his flocks beyond the tower of Edar. This would pinpoint the location as being near to what is present day Bethlehem. Clearly, this establishes that Migdal Edar, “the tower of the flock” was in Bethlehem in Bible times.

The oldest tradition, based upon **Genesis 35:16-20; 48:7**, points to a place one mile north of present-day Bethlehem and 4 miles from Jerusalem. We do not know what were the bounds of ancient Bethlehem when Christ was born there, but we know the area called Bethlehem was larger than it is today. The references to present day Migdal Edar are in reference to present day Bethlehem and not the Bethlehem of biblical times which was certainly greater. **Genesis 35:19** and **48:7** both state that Rachel was buried at “Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.”

“And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.” **Genesis 35:19**

“And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.” **Genesis 48:7**

It must be noted that Ephrath or Ephrathah was the ancient name for the area that later was called Bethlehem. According to **Genesis 35:19**, after Jacob buried Rachel, he “moved his flocks beyond the tower of Edar” or “Migdal Edar”. The location of Rachel's tomb today is outside, on the outskirts of present-day Bethlehem, but clearly it was not when Jacob, buried his wife there. Clearly the area which is called Bethlehem in biblical times covered a greater area than does present day Bethlehem and the Tower of the Flock was in that city.

This watch tower from ancient times was used by the shepherds for protection from their enemies and wild beasts. It was also the place ewes were safely brought to give birth to the lambs. In this sheltered building/cave the priests would bring in the ewes which were about to lamb for protection. These special lambs came from a unique flock that was designated for sacrifice at the temple in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Short states, “According to Edersheim in *The Life And Times Of Jesus The Messiah*”, in Book 2, Chapter 6, states, “This Migdal Edar was not the watchtower for the ordinary flocks” that pastured on the barren sheep ground beyond Bethlehem, but it lay close to the town, on the road to Jerusalem. A passage from the *Mishnah** (Shekelim 7:4) leads to the conclusion that “the flocks which pastured there were destined for Temple sacrifices.” In addition, Migdal Edar is also mentioned by the Jewish *Targums** and is translated “The Anointed One of the flock of Israel”.

* *The Mishnah* was the first recording of the oral law of the Jews or its Rabbinic Judaism. The word means “repetition” which means it was memorized material. It is the major source of rabbinic teachings of Judaism. Next to the Scriptures the Mishnah is the basic textbook of Jewish life and thought, and is traditionally considered to be an integral part of the Torah revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai.

* *The Targum* is an Aramaic translation of the Hebrew Bible (Tanak) which was written during Israel's seventy-year captivity in Babylon. Aramaic is one of the Semitic languages, an important group of languages known almost from the beginning of human history and including also Arabic, Hebrew, Ethiopic, and Akkadian (ancient Babylonian and Assyrian).

Thus, Targum Yonatan, cited by Rabbi Munk, paraphrases **Genesis 35:23** and **Micah 4:8**, “He spread his tent beyond Migdal Edar, the place where King Messiah will reveal Himself at the end of days.” What are we to make of all of this information from the writings of the rabbis? First, we know that Migdal Edar was the watchtower that guarded the Temple flocks that were being raised to serve as sacrificial animals in the Temple. These were not just any flock and herd. The shepherds who kept them were men who were specifically trained for this royal task. “They were educated in what an animal, that was to be sacrificed, had to be and it was their job to make sure that none of the animals were hurt, damaged, or blemished.” These lambs were apparently wrapped in “swaddling clothes” to protect them from injury and also were used to wrap the Lord Jesus.

Thus, with the establishment of Temple worship in Jerusalem, the fields outside of Bethlehem became the place where a special group of shepherds raised the lambs that were sacrificed in the Temple. Being themselves under special Rabbinical care, they would strictly maintain a ceremonially clean stable for a birthing place. The Tower of the Flock was used for birthing

ewes, and the surrounding fields were where these shepherds grazed their flocks. These shepherds customarily kept their flocks outdoors twenty-four hours a day every day of the year, *but brought the ewes in to deliver their lambs where they could be carefully cared for. It was to this place that Joseph took Mary. It was in this special place at “Migdal Edar” that Christ was born!* How do we know? *Micah 4:8 tells us so!:*

*And you, O tower of the flock,
hill of the daughter of Zion,
to you shall it come,
the former dominion shall come,
kingship for the daughter of Jerusalem.*

Prophetically, “Migdal Edar” is the exact place in Bethlehem for Christ to be born. *Micah was God's prophet* who was warning Israel of the coming captivity. *He used the authenticating prophecy of the Assyrian captivity of the Northern Kingdom (soon to occur when he foretold it) to serve as a reminder to Israel of God's promised Kingdom.* God wanted them to know that even though they would be taken from their land because of their disobedience that He would restore them in time. **Micah 4:7** establishes the context of the passage and clearly is a Messianic prophecy of the coming of the Millennial Kingdom when Jesus Christ will reign over Jerusalem forever. “. . . **LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even forever.**” In other words, God was assuring Israel that He would fulfill His promises to them of the Kingdom. In **Micah 4:8** the word is rendered “**tower of the flock**” (marg., “Edar”), and is used as a designation of Bethlehem, which figuratively represents the royal line of David as sprung from Bethlehem.

In this setting, Micah (Micah 4:8) uses the prophecy of the Babylonian captivity of the Southern Kingdom as a pledge to guarantee (authenticating prophecy) of the birth of Christ at “**Migdal Edar**” at Bethlehem which is exactly where it took place! **Micah prophesied that as surely as Assyrians would soon carry away Israel in the North, so the Messiah would come and establish His kingdom**, the “*first dominion, the kingdom shall come to Jerusalem.*” The verse states that as surely as Babylon would carry away the tribe of Judah, in the South, into captivity, so the Messiah would arrive at **the Tower of the Flock**. This prophecy was one other evidence that later proved that Jesus was the Messiah, but one that Israel ignored in rejecting Him as their Messiah.

Who were the shepherds who first received the news of the birth of the Messiah? **Luke 2:8-18** records that there were shepherds in the fields keeping watch over their sheep by night. **Who then were these shepherds?** Without question these were shepherds who resided near Bethlehem. **They were none other but the shepherds from “Migdal Edar” who were well aware that the Targum hinted and many of the rabbis taught that Messiah might well be announced from “Migdal Edar” at Bethlehem.** The angels only told the shepherds that they would find the Babe wrapped in “*swaddling cloths and lying in a manger*”. **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 knew exactly where to go, as Luke 2 indicates, for the sign of “a manger” could only mean their manger at the tower of the flock!** You cannot explain the meaning or direction of the sign they were given or their response unless you have the right manger and the right shepherds!

Typically, “Migdal Edar” (the tower of the flock), at Bethlehem is the perfect place for Christ to be born. **He was born in the very birthplace where tens of thousands of lambs, which had been sacrificed to prefigure Him. God promised it, pictured it, and performed it at “Migdal Edar”.** **It all fits together, for that's the place the place where sacrificial lambs were born!** Jesus was not born behind an inn, in a smelly stable where the donkeys of travelers and other animals were kept. **He was born in Bethlehem, at the birthing place of the sacrificial lambs that were offered in the Temple in Jerusalem which Micah 4:8 calls the “tower of the flock.”**

John the Baptist in **John 1:29** proclaimed of Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” Jesus is presented in the Bible as being “in type” as a *sacrificial lamb*. It was not by chance but by choice that Christ identified His death with the time of the observance of the Passover. Peter spoke of our redemption as wrought by the “*precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*” (**1 Peter 1:19**); and Paul told us that “*Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*” (**1 Corinthians 5:7**). Even the *first fulfilled type by which Christ is to be revealed in Heaven is as the Lamb* (**Revelation 5:6-13**).

The site has a long history as the place of the birth of Christ going back to Origen of Alexander in the 2nd Century who said that Jesus was born in a cave located in Bethlehem.

It is entirely possible that this cave or grotto was used to keep sheep and that this is where the **tower of the flock** was located, but it has not been proved. Others have purported the location of the “**tower of the flock**” in another location in the vicinity which has not been thoroughly excavated. The **tower of the flock** being a tower built of stones does not exist today and archaeology has not found its ruins. However, based on biblical record, **Micah 4:8**, and other evidences we must conclude that it was not the stable of an inn where donkeys and other animals were kept was not a tower.

God's word tells us that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, of Judah in the city of David at a place called the **"tower of the flock"**.

"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." **Galatians 4:4-5**

by Cooper P Abrams III
<http://www.bible-truth.org/BirthPlaceofJesus.html#2>

The True Meaning of Hanukkah The "Conception" of the Light of the World

"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus (Yashua – I am Salvation, I am the Light of the World)." **Luke 1:31**