

Let us Camp in Migdal Eder

So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem; which in Hebrew is written as Beit-Lechem, literally the house of bread). Jacob set up a pillar over her grave; that is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day. Then Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder (Migdal Eder). (Gen. 35:19-21)

Migdal Eder is not one of the most commonly known place names in the *Tanakh*. Why, then, would we want to camp in *Migdal Eder*? The answer is because we can see the Messiah there. In discovering the answer to this question we are led to one of the most fascinating Messianic revelations in the *Torah*.

The Tower of Eder

In exploring the name and location of *Migdal Eder*, we find that it means literally the “tower of the flock.” Its location is found in Genesis 35:21, and it is the same location found in the writings of the Second Temple period. According to Edersheim, this *Migdal Eder* was not the watchtower for the ordinary flocks that pastured on the barren sheep ground beyond Bethlehem, but lay close to the town, on the road to Jerusalem.

A passage in the Mishnah Shekelim (7:4), leads to the conclusion that the flocks, which pastured there were destined for Temple sacrifices...

Not only does the *Mishnah* cite the importance of *Migdal Eder*, but, in addition, it is also mentioned by the *Targums*. Thus, *Targum Yonatan*, cited by Rabbi Munk, paraphrases Genesis 35:23 and Micah 4:8,

He spread his tent beyond Migdal Eder, 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 Eder* was the watchtower that guarded the Temple flocks – those who 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 a kosher animal was to be and were taught to make sure that none of the animals were hurt, damaged, or blemished. This area of the Temple herds and flocks was the land south of Jerusalem, between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Our father Israel (notice that the *Torah* uses the name Israel in Genesis 35:21 while using Jacob in Genesis 35:20)

The Special Lamb of Migdal Eder

These details shed amazing light on the account of the birthplace of *Yeshua* in the *B'rit Chadasha*. We know that He was born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1), the region of the *Migdal Eder*. The earthly father of *Yeshua* (*Yosef*) apparently intended to settle in the Bethlehem area. He probably had relatives in the vicinity. We also know that, like the other lambs, He was also destined to die an atoning death in Jerusalem. He was the Messiah!

Moreover, who was it that came to see the incarnation of the Messiah? Shepherds! Why? Because they were the royal shepherds whom, Edersheim says were designated to take care of the sacrificial flocks. Perhaps they also knew the tradition that Messiah was to appear in the latter days at *Migdal Eder*. Do you remember that Rachel means ewe (female sheep), and she is first introduced in the *Torah* as a shepherdess watching her father's flocks! Coincidence or God-incidence? What do you think? *Yeshua* is also destined to be a lamb without blemish – a perfect sacrifice! So, who came to see *Mashiach* and honor him? The royal shepherds of *Migdal Eder*! These men who knew a perfect lamb when they saw one, came to inspect baby *Yeshua*! Rachel's pillar is still overlooking her father's flock after her death; Rachel oversaw the birth of the Messiah of Israel (Jacob)!

The Comforter of Jacob (Israel)

Why did the Holy One see to it that out of nowhere the text in Genesis 35:21 mentions that Jacob encamped (which by implication means he slept) in *Migdal Eder*? Is it that God did so in order that we might receive as complete a revelation of the Messiah as possible! Here was Jacob, mourning over the death of his beloved Rachel. With the tears still fresh in his eyes, he pitched his tent in *Migdal Eder* – the place where one day a special Lamb would be born. This Lamb would come to comfort Jacob. He would be born a son of Jacob, would receive the worship and adoration of shepherds who were also sons of Jacob. Then this Lamb, who was born where the sacrificial lambs were raised, will one day offer Himself for the sins of Jacob. He would die an atoning death in the city of Jacob's God, Jerusalem. He would also rise from the dead, go back to the heavenly throne from whence He first came.

Then, as the years would multiply and Jacob's troubles would increase, He would always be there to save and deliver Jacob from all of his trials. Finally, at a specified time yet to come, this Lamb who was once incarnated near *Migdal Eder*, will return to Jacob's troubled land and miraculously deliver Jacob's descendants who would be besieged by their enemies. They will see this Lamb again. Only this time they will mourn, just as Jacob mourned the loss of Rachel at *Migdal Eder*.

Then the Lamb would also reveal Himself as a mighty Lion. Only instead of attacking the lost sheep of Jacob, He would devour all of Jacob's enemies! In the end, the Lion/Lamb the Messiah would be seated on His royal throne as the glorious Son of David, the greatest King of Jacob and tend the sheep of the House of Jacob and all those from the nations who have come to reside in that house.

Thus, Israel will finally be comforted from all his troubles, trials, and heartaches. There will be no more mourning and tears from *Migdal Eder*. The lowly Lamb, who was incarnate there, will be Jacob's (Israel's) Comforter, and King, and Shepherd, and Messiah forever and ever

Yeshua gave us a comforter so we would not ever be alone. He is from the Lord; He is with us; He cares for us; He is an expert in comforting when there are sorrows (see John 17).

When you walk through a storm, hold your head up high, and don't be afraid of the dark. At the end of the storm is a golden sky, and the sweet silver song of a lark.

Walk on through the wind, walk on through the rain, tho' your dreams be tossed and blown. Walk on, walk on with hope in your heart, and you'll never walk alone. You'll never walk alone.
(Lyrics by Rodgers & Hammerstein from Carousel)

{Let us pray. I believe some of us are dis comforted, and some of us are hurting, and some of us are sorrowful. We are desperately in need of comfort and the Lamb of *Migdal Eder* has decreed that we should be comforted. You see, *Yeshua* cares for you and I and *Yeshua* wants us to be still and know that He is God. As we play *I Believe/You'll Never Walk Alone*, sung by Barbra Streisand (starting at the 3:25min mark), come up to the front, kneel if you wish. Ask *Yeshua* to speak peace to your soul and to your heart. Give Him your burden today, He stands ready to lighten up your load and speak *shalom* you your soul, and heal the pain. Come one, come all... }