

...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* (Bava Kamma 80a) 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 Mishnic passage also leads us to infer, that these flocks lay out *all the year round*...