**An Article by Ron Cantor**

**Christmas Clarifications**

You know what I love about Christmas? Well, it is not the eggnog or Santa imposters. Nor is it the trees, stockings, watching “Home Alone” or “It’s a Wonderful Life”. In truth, I have never celebrated Christmas. I did not grow up with it and, here in Israel, December 25this just another day. You could go through the entire day in Tel Aviv and have no idea that it was Christmas.

But what I do love about it is that each year, at this time with so much focus on the story of the birth of Messiah, I find myself drawn afresh to Luke, chapter two. Over the past few years, I have really fallen in love with this story. And, then, something happened last April—something possibly earth-shattering. I saw something that I will share a few details about, at the end of this series.

But, first, there is much about the story of Yeshua’s birth that is slightly off and incorrect. Let’s set the record straight.

**Ruth Needs to be Honored**

The story of Yeshua’s birth really starts with a Gentile who loved the Jewish people. You know Ruth’s story. She was the Moabitess whose husband died. Instead of going back to her own people, she clung to her mother-in-law Naomi, and was eventually spotted by Boaz. Where was Boaz from? Why, Bethlehem, of course. Technically, it was Bethlehem *Ephrathah*.

“Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, ‘We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. Through the offspring the Lord gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.’

**”**…Ruth …  gave birth to a son. The women said to Naomi: ‘Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.'” (Ruth 4:11-17)

Ruth is the great-grandmother of David, and Yeshua is the Son of David. Those blessings over Ruth were prophetic and referred to the coming Messiah. The women referred to Obed as the guardian redeemer, just as Boaz was, and he would continue to the line of Naomi’s deceased husband, but prophetically there were speaking about the Redeemer of all redeemers, Yeshua!

I imagine those elders, who thought they were just taking care of some mundane business, suddenly felt the Spirit of God when Ruth legally was given to Boaz and they prophesied.

When they said, “May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem,” surely they were prophesying where the Messiah would be born! Of course, this is confirmed by the prophet Micah, who said:

“But you, *Bethlehem Ephrathah,*    though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
    one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
    from ancient times.” (Micah 5:2)

When they said, *“Through the offspring the Lord gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez,”* they were saying, *may your family be big and may you family line last,* and they unwittingly were prophesying about the Body of Messiah that would come forth through the spiritual seed of Abraham. Wow!

God was always putting prophetic hints about the Yeshua’s mission in the Hebrew Scriptures. They played out in the lives of Moses, Joseph, Ruth, David and others, including Rachel, as we will see in part two.

Now, it is interesting that the prophecy in Micah and the words in Ruth do not merely mention Bethlehem, but Bethlehem and Ephrathah. There are several theories here:

1. Ephrata was a region and Bethlehem was inside Ephrathah.
2. The area that became Bethlehem was once called Ephrathah.
3. Bethlehem was the region and it was the smaller Ephrathah that was located within those boundaries.

What else do we know about this area called Ephrathah? Naomi and her family were from Ephrathah. Boaz was an Ephrathite. Ruth 1:2 says: “They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem.” This does suggest that they were, at least, slightly different. Otherwise, it would have been redundant. So, it could read, they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, as opposed to different people from Bethlehem; or, conversely, that they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, as opposed to Ephrathites from somewhere else.

Let’s pretend that it is #3: that Ephrathah was inside Bethlehem and that if you were an Ephrathite, then you were also a Bethlehemite. Now, outside of Yeshua, who is the most famous Bethlehemite? David, of course. And David was from Ephrathah. Now look at this passage:

“Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah.” (1 Sam. 17:12)

Is there significance that it goes Ephrathah >> Bethlehem >> Judah? We know that Judah was much bigger than Bethlehem and Bethlehem was in Judah. Thus, can we surmise that Ephrathah was an area within Bethlehem? Maybe.  Dr. John Turner agrees:

Bethlehem Ephrathah, however, is a more specific designation of that area which is near but outside the city where there would be one or more threshing floor for grain, grape press for the making of wine, and olive press for the production of oil. The Ephrath would also be in or near the grazing lands for livestock (goats, sheep, oxen, and cattle).

***LESSONS FROM BETHLEHEM EPHRATHAH*** *The Astounding Significance of the Place Where Jesus Was Born*

So, David was from *Bethlehem Ephrathah* and, most likely, was born there. He was a type of the Messiah, a king from Bethlehem, as is our Messiah, who, as the son of David, would be born there 1,000 years later. From the time of David, it has been known as the *Town of David.*So how can we know where that is 2,000 years later? Indeed, there is the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. But even Origen, who issued the earliest statement on the present site, was non-committal.

“In Bethlehem the cave is pointed out where He was born, and the manger in the cave where He was wrapped in swaddling clothes. And the *rumor*is in those places, and among foreigners of the Faith, that indeed Jesus was born in this cave who is worshipped and reverenced by the Christians.”

What if Jesus was not born in *the Bethlehem*that is in what they call “Palestine” today? Did you know that Israelis are not even allowed to go there? What if He was born closer to Jerusalem – in Bethlehem *Ephrathah*? The area of Bethlehem was probably bigger then, than it is today. About 100 years after the resurrection of Yeshua, Bethlehem was destroyed by Emperor Hadrian. And it was destroyed and rebuilt several more times.

**Tower of the Flock and Rachel’s Tomb**

What if the traditional site is not where He was born? In order to know, we would need to find two things: Rachel’s tomb and Midgal Eder (Tower of the Flock) Why? Because we know the Messiah would be born inside of the Tower of the Flock, and, because we know that the Tower of the Flock was close to Rachel’s tomb.

So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). Over her tomb Jacob set up a pillar, and *to this day that pillar marks Rachel’s tomb*. Israel moved on again and pitched his tent beyond *Migdal Eder*. (Gen. 35:19-21)

Dr. John Turner tell us that

“In Jacob’s (Israel’s) time, we learn from the account of Rachel’s death that Bethlehem Ephrathah and Migdal Eder (the Tower of the Flock) are closely associated and in the exact same vicinity.”

***Lesson’s from Bethlehem Ephrathah***

Micah tells us not only that He would be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah but also, specifically; *where exactly* within the city He would breathe his first breath.

“And to you, the *tower of the flock*, the hill of the daughter of Zion, your former authority will return to you, the royal authority of the daughter of Jerusalem.” (Micah 4:8 VOICE)

The passage says that the one who will restore David’s kingdom (former and royal authority) will be born at Migdal Eder—that is, the Tower of the Flock.

Traditionally, Rachel’s tomb is about a kilometer north of the center of Bethlehem. If only we could find that pillar!

**The Ben-Oni Blunder**

Rachel gives birth on the way to Bethlehem and dies. With her dying breath, she named her son, *Ben-Oni*. Traditionally, we are taught, and you can see in your NIV footnote, that, in bitterness, she named him *son of my trouble* or *sorrow*. However, whoever came up with that was wrong. It is a mistranslation. In Hebrew, there are two letters that are near silent and, in Modern Hebrew, they sound almost identical: the *aleph*א and the *ayin* ע.

If Omi was spelled with the *ayin*, then, yes, it would mean trouble. But the translator did not realize that it was spelled with *aleph*, and, thus, means “son of my *sexual potency”* (yes that is what the dictionary says) or *seed*. In other words, Rachel is prophesying that the seed of God would be planted in her future *cousin*, Miriam. Miriam, would, in the same geographical area, give birth to the “seed of God”—the Messiah. Jacob does not recognize this and changes his name to Benjamin.

Now you may say, but the Messiah was through Leah (Judah). Well, that is why I said future cousin and not future granddaughter. As a foreshadowing of Miriam (Mary), the Lord spoke through her a prophetic utterance regarding His seed. Rachel gives birth on the very path that Joseph and Miriam would have had to pass on their way to Bethlehem and she is buried within a few hundred meters, if that, of Yeshua’s birthplace.

Luke 2:7 is one of the most famous and *most misunderstood* passages in the New Testament. Read it in the KJV and then CJB (Complete Jewish Bible) and look for the differences:

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 she gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him in cloth and laid him down in a feeding trough, because there was no space for them in the *living-quarters*.

Now, look at Young’s Literal Translation:

And she brought forth her son — the first-born, and wrapped him up, and laid him down in the manger, because there was not for them a place in the *guest-chamber*.

There are a few differences, but the one I want to focus on is at the end of the verse. Traditionally, we envision Joseph and Miriam searching for a hotel in crowded Bethlehem.

“All the inns were full and nobody would give them space to spend the night. Joseph walked all over the town, knocking on the doors of towns and shops, one after the other, but nobody would allow them to come in.”[i]

Often it is an angry, uncompassionate innkeeper that sends Miriam and Joseph on their way.

**Hospitality in the Middle East**

I took the quote above about the inns being full directly from a cartoon about Christmas. First, it is stupid and improbable. *Hospitality was a major core value in ancient times*—certainly in Israel. In Genesis, we see Abraham and Sarah offering hospitality (Gen. 18). In the very next chapter, Lot extends hospitality to the two angels (Gen. 19).

Hospitality was a necessity for nomadic peoples because there were no hotels in the wilderness. Even within the towns and cities there were often no inns available…hospitality was not offered to everyone.[ii]

No, it was not offered to everyone out of fear of being robbed, but it most certainly would have been offered to a pregnant woman and her husband—particularly because *Joseph grew up there*! The idea that every place in Bethlehem turned away a woman about to give birth is not only unrealistic, but nowhere in the Bible. It doesn’t even mention *an inn* in Greek. If you look at other translations, the Greek word that the KJV translates as inn is:

* Guest chamber (YLT)
* House for strangers (WE)
* Any upper room in the village (TPT) (the upper room, as in *the Upper Room,*was traditionally a place for guests.)
* Normal living quarters (NTE, CJB)
* The place where people stay for the night (NLV)
* Guest Room (NIV, ERV, CSB)
* Guest quarters (ISV)
* Lodging place (HCSB)

The Greek word *katalumati* is more accurately translated as guest room. And they did not just arrive exhausted, searching for a place to stay. Read…

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Miriam, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. *While they were there*, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. (Luke 2:4-7)

In reading the text, it would appear that they had already arrived. It says, “*While they were there*,” the time came for the baby to be born.” Not “as they arrived,” as is commonly depicted. Joseph and Miriam were both of the line of David. They returned to Bethlehem Ephrathah because they had family there. It is probable that they were in close proximity to *Boaz’s threshing floor*and the *Tower of the Flock*—as both were in Bethlehem Ephrathah. For all we know, they were staying at Boaz’s house.

Now, of course they had a place to stay. However, that doesn’t mean that they had room in the guest chamber or upper room, with other relatives staying there because of the census, to give birth to a baby! These guests were all of the household of their ancestors Boaz and King David.

Boaz was the great-grandfather of King David (1 Chronicles 2:12-15, Matthew 1:5-6) of whose lineage came Joseph, wedded to Mary, who gave birth to Yeshua known as the Messiah. Boaz owned a threshing floor in Bethlehem, which, by right of inheritance, was handed down to succeeding generations within the lineage of David.

Just think of the hand of God. His genius in finding a way to make sure the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and yet come from Nazareth, as the [prophets predicted.](http://messiahsmandate.org/was-matthew-a-false-prophet/) A census!

Have you ever been in the delivery room, while giving birth? If you have (3x for me), then you know it is chaotic! Now, keep in mind two things:

1. It is possible, even probable, that they hid Miriam’s pregnancy. Showing up to see your relatives with your *pregnant girlfriend!!!* is not cool! Now to be clear, they were as good as married, betrothed, except they were not allowed to consummate the marriage before the *hupah*or actual ceremony. So, knowing that the house was crowded, there was, “no guest room available” for them to discreetly give birth to Yeshua.
2. If the other relatives *did*know about Miriam’s pregnancy, you can only imagine the stares, the gossip and the judging. Surely she did not want to give birth in the presence of these judgmental relatives.

Either way, it makes sense that they sought out an alternative maternity ward.

But let’s get back to the Tower of the Flock. This is fascinating! The Tower of the Flock, or, what some call Shepherd’s Field, was no ordinary place. This was where lambs were raised for use in temple ministry as well as for Passover. You will recall that Passover lambs had to be one-year-old and without spot or blemish. The Messianic Jewish 19thcentury scholar, Alfred Edershiem, highlights this in his masterpiece, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah.*

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.

These priestly shepherds kept watch over the flock, day and night. When one was ready to give birth, she would be brought into the Tower of the Flock or Migdal Eder, and there she would give birth. The priestly shepherds would inspect the newborn to look for any defects. They would determine if he was worthy to be a sacrifice. Sound familiar? They would wrap the newborn in—wait for it—*swaddling clothes*!

Unlike the portrayal we see in movies and cartoons, this was no normal stable with donkeys, chickens and cows—just lambs. But not just any lambs. These were lambs consecrated for holy use. Through revelation cousin John prophesied of Yeshua, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” (Jn. 1:29) Where else would we expect the Lamb of God to come into the world, but in the very place that the Passover lambs came were born? Like these lambs, he was not an ordinary man—He was the God-man, *the ultimate* Passover Lamb with a holy duty.

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Messiah, *a lamb without blemish or defect*. (1 Peter 1:18-19)

To qualify as the Lamb of God that would be led to the slaughter, as Isaiah 53 says, he had to be born at the place that all the other lambs for sacrifice were born. Think about this: God used the census to get them to Bethlehem. Then he used the fact that her pregnancy was scandalous to get her out of the house. And where do they go? To the Tower of the Flock, just as Micah prophesied.

Now imagine you are one of these priestly shepherds. Surely you know the prophesy of Migdal Eder and Bethlehem. It is where you spend most of your days. If the Magi from the east knew of the prophecies (Matt. 2:6), then certainly the temple shepherds did. And then one night, as they were out with the lambs of God, a heavenly host appears. *Oh, how I love this story!*

The angel startled them. I mean, who sees an angel in the middle of the night on the hills of Bethlehem? It was, indeed, terrifying. But then he utters those words that bring me to tears when I read them:

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:10-12)

Just stop for a minute and shout praise to the Lord! While most of earth was unaware, the greatest of celebrations was taking place in the heavenlies—and the shepherds had the privilege to join in. It had to be a secret—there were enemies, as we shall soon see; those who would seek the life of the Savior. But God could not keep all this joy to Himself. He sought the companionship of these priestly shepherds—much like with Abraham—to rejoice over His marvelous plan of redemption.

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” (Luke 2:13-15)

They were in the hills outside of Bethlehem. But they went back to the Migdal Eder—the Tower of the Flock. How did they know to go there? He could have been anywhere in Bethlehem. First, they knew the prophecy of Micah 4:8, that the restoration of Israel’s royal authority would come from Migdal Eder; and from Micah 5:2, that it was not merely Bethlehem, but Bethlehem Ephrathah—the town of David, the home of Boaz, where the Messiah would be born.

Secondly, he said that the baby would be in a manger. I have to honest, most of my life, growing up Jewish and not fully understanding or caring about the nativity story, I assumed that “away in a manger” meant *in a crib.*But a manger is not a crib—in fact; it is a most unfitting place for a *new-born king.*It was a feeding trough for sheep! I needed to pay better attention:

Away in a manger, *no crib for His bed*
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head

Paul said that Yeshua humbled Himself by coming from heaven to earth (Phil 2:5-8), but that is not even the half of it. He was placed in a dirty manger and like a newborn lamb, wrapped in swaddling clothes. This was the custom of the priests to keep the lambs from hurting themselves.

The shepherds knew exactly which manger to go to, despite the fact that there were certainly dozens, if not more, in the area. It was the one of which the prophet Micah spoke—the Tower of the Flock.

When they arrived they found “Miriam and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.” (Luke 2:16) Then they became the very first evangelists:

When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. (Luke 2:17-18)

Incidentally, this is why I believe that Yeshua was not born on December 25th or even in the fall, during the Feast of Tabernacles. Certainly a case can be made for the latter, as He did come to “tabernacle among us” (John 1:14). However, it would have been unwise to call for a census when Jews were traveling to Jerusalem for the feast. Everyone had to return to his or her hometown. The fall holidays point to the second coming of Yeshua, while the spring ones point to His birth, death and resurrection.

It was in the spring that the Passover lambs were birthed. How do we know? Because the lambs for Passover had to be one-year-old (Ex. 12:5). They would have been born during the lambing season, the year before. This explains why there were shepherds in the field in the middle of the night. Normally, they would be sleeping, but because it was lambing season—the time when lambs give birth—they were out all night, in case one of the mothers went into labor.

WOW! What imagery! They are looking for lambs to be birthed, when right under their nose, Miriam was giving birth to *the* Lamb of God. [Jonathan Cahn](https://www.wnd.com/2014/11/clue-to-christs-birth-date-revealed/) goes further and teaches that Yeshua was born on Nissan 1. Nissan is the first month of the year (March-April), a time for new beginnings. But it would not be a time of pilgrimage or in the dead of the cold, wet winter. Cahn makes the case that every other major event in Yeshua’s life and kingdom coincides with a Jewish feast day:

* Passover > His death
* First Fruit Offering is brought  (Lev. 23) > His resurrection
* Shavuot (Lev. 23) > Birth of the church (Acts 2)
* Rosh Hashanah > the Second Coming
* Yom Kippur > End time forgiveness (Zech. 13:1)
* Feast of Tabernacles > Wedding Supper of the Lamb (Is. 25, Rev. 19, Zech. 14)

So, it makes sense that His birth would also fall on a significant day on the Jewish calendar in the spring with the other prophetic events that point to His first coming. The first of Nissan is 14 days before Passover, which begins between the 14thand 15thday of Nissan.

Yes, Yeshua, the Passover lamb, may have been born with other lambs just before Passover.

There is a prophecy in Jeremiah where Rachel is weeping for her children. It is a strange word in the middle of a prophecy about Israel’s restoration. Like so many prophecies (Is. 7:14, Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11), there was a *current* fulfillment and a *future* fulfillment.

“A voice is heard in Ramah,
    mourning and great weeping,
Rachel weeping for her children
    and refusing to be comforted,
    because they are no more.”

In Hebrew, Ramah simply means ‘height’, and there are dozens of cities and regions that have Ramah(t) in their names. The most famous of these is the Golan Heights, or in Hebrew, *Ramat HaGolan*. However, most scholars believe that Jeremiah was referring to an area five miles north of Jerusalem that served as a deportation center as the Jews were being exiled to Babylon. Exile was judgment. God’s heart was broken, as, too, was Israel’s faithful. We see the pain of exile in this most famous verse from Psalm 137:

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion… our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!” How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land? If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill. May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy. (Ps. 137)

Jeremiah depicts Rachel crying, even weeping, over her children who are taken away into captivity. But Matthew, who knew that Rachel’s grave was in Bethlehem, reveals a deeper meaning.

Herod, the murderous king, was searching for the Messiah. He was scared that this newborn Israelite king would dethrone him. He did not know that His kingdom was from another realm (John 18:36). Seeing the prophecies that this boy-king would be born in Bethlehem, “he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under.” It was a devastating calamity—known as the Massacre of Innocents. Imagine little Jewish boys being ripped from their mothers’ arms and murdered before their eyes.

Rachel is weeping over these children. And, amazingly enough, the name given to the hill overlooking Bethlehem where these children were murdered is *Ramat Rachel*—the Heights of Rachel. The people, who named it that, made no connection to Matthew’s narrative, as they were Jews—not believers in the New Testament, and probably not very religious. They simply knew that Rachel’s grave was in the near distance. But those very two words Ramah(t) and Rachel are in Jeremiah’s prophecy.

**The Kingdom Suffers Violence**

*The entrance of Messiah from heaven to earth was violent*. There was war in the heavenlies that resulted in bloodshed on earth. Satan sought to snuff out the life of Yeshua and was merciless in his pursuit. God hid His plan within prophecies that the enemy could not understand. Matthew, who, of all the gospel writers, is the most familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures, finds the fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy. He sees in Jeremiah 31 that the restoration of Israel is deeply connected to the advent of the New Covenant.

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.” (Jer. 31:31)

Just a few verses before, he sees Rachel weeping even as the New Covenant comes forth. To the common reader, the passage seems out of place. But, in truth, the violence against these babies is deeply connected to the declaration of a New Covenant.

But Rachel, whose tomb is near the place of Yeshua’s birth, is weeping over the slain of Bethlehem, just as she did over the exiles of Israel. We see elements of the Exodus here, which begins with Pharaoh seeking to kill Jewish baby boys. Yeshua escapes to Egypt and then reenacts another part of the Exodus by coming from Egypt to the Promised Land: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”(Hos. 11:1) Maybe it is better said, Moses and the children of Israel were prophetically acting out what their Messiah would do many years later.

Matthew’s discovery of the connection between 1) the restoration and Israel (Jer. 31:1-14), 2) Rachel’s weeping over the babies in Bethlehem (Jer. 31:15) and the 3) New Covenant advent (Jer. 31:31-33) could only have been through the divine revelation!

The traditional spot where Yeshua was born is the heart of Muslim-dominated, Palestinian-controlled Bethlehem. But there is little, if any, evidence to support this. We simply know that 170 years later, Origen heard that it was the place, but called it a rumor. But what if the actual place of His birth was inside Israeli-controlled territory, just on the other side of the hill? *Can you imagine the impact!?*

Some archeologists have suggested that the Bethlehem of Yeshua’s time was closer to Ramat Rachel (clearly inside of Israel), as some have claimed that there is evidence of Rehoboam’s fortification of Bethlehem (2 Chr. 11:6) there, while not at modern day Bethlehem. We plan to do more research here.

Not long ago, I visited a place just north of Bethlehem on the road to Jerusalem. I cannot say where it is at this time as it affects many people. Hopefully, I will be able to in the future. A new friend explained to me several things. First, we looked a place that may indeed be the actual tomb of Rachel. Remember, Rachel was buried in or near Bethlehem, in the vicinity of the Tower of the Flock.

In my tour of the area, I was shown a threshing floor. Could it have been Boaz’s? When Joseph and Miriam came to town, they surely would have had family in Boaz’s residence that had been passed down through David to Joseph’s relatives. When Joseph realized Miriam was in labor and the home was full of people, maybe they looked for a safe place close by…yes, the *Tower of the Flock*…where lambs are birthed. It was near enough.

I was taken to an area that had a cave, not more than 100 yards from Boaz’s threshing floor. Unlike what we see in the movies and cartoons, the birthing area for these lambs would have been located in small caves. As I approached—and I typically don’t get excited about real estate—I was filled with awe. Was I looking into the cave where Yeshua’s manger once held Him? Just beyond Boaz’s threshing floor, not far from Rachel’s tomb, in the original Tower of the Flock? Tears began to well up. Could it be, that hiding in plain sight—like the Dead Sea Scrolls for 2,000 years—was the birthplace of the Messiah? I was overwhelmed.

That is all I can say at this point. I am scared to even say that much. But just imagine if the true birthplace of Jesus is in Jewish territory, not Muslim.