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**EUCCHARISTIC SIGNIFICANCE OF SHEPHERD
IMAGERY IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL**

(John 10:1-21)

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Requirements for the Degree of Master in Theology

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Shepherd imagery is one of the important symbols used in the Scripture, Fathers of the Church and in the Liturgy to signify the intimate relation between God and His people. Shepherding was one of the main occupations of the Israelite people. Therefore God used this imagery to reveal his closeness to His people. In the Old Testament Yahweh was depicted as the shepherd of the people (Ps 23, Ezek 34). In the Old Testament when the leaders of the people failed to fulfil the will of Yahweh, the shepherd, Yahweh abandoned them and promised a future shepherd (Ezek 34:23), who will feed and take care of the sheep, fulfilling the will of Yahweh, the shepherd. This prophesy of Ezekiel fulfilled in the person of Jesus. He calls himself as the good shepherd who feeds the people, searches the lost, binds up the injured, strengthens the weak and lays down his life for the sheep (Lk 15:3-7, Jn10:1-21). Jesus is not only the shepherd of the sheep but he is also the food for the people (Jn 10:9).

Extensive use of the shepherd imagery in the West Syrian Liturgy prompted me to study it thoroughly. In the Holy Qurbano immediately after the final blessing, the celebrant recites Psalm 23. The meditation on this Psalm posed a question in me: What is the relation between Eucharist and Psalm 23? This inspired me to read the good shepherd imagery in John 10. In this parable also I noticed the use of 'pasture' as in Psalm 23. Pasture is used in the Bible in the sense of food. This is the starting point of this thesis. My attempt is to find out the Eucharistic significance of Shepherd imagery in John 10. The book of Joseph Ratzinger named '*Jesus of Nazareth*' that inspired me to go on with this topic. In his book he says "there is an inner connection between the bread discourse in chapter six and shepherd discourse" (Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part I, p. 279).

The title of my thesis is "Eucharistic Significance of Shepherd Imagery in the Fourth Gospel". As the title explains my aim is to find out only the Eucharistic significance of shepherd imagery and not an exegetical study of the text. I have tried to

make an exegetical study of it only as a help for establishing my point. Therefore it is mainly a theological analysis of the text.

The whole thesis is divided in to three chapters. In the first chapter, which is titled as “Imagery of Shepherd (ποιμήν) in the Bible”, my attempt is to make an analysis of the shepherd imagery in the Scripture. In the Scripture the term shepherd is applied mainly: a) to Yahweh, who is the shepherd of the people. b) Kings and rulers, whose duty is to fulfill the will of Yahweh, the shepherd. c) Israelite people, in the sense that they were mainly shepherds. Tradition of the Church is also the source of revelation. Therefore as a support for this Biblical analysis of the shepherd imagery I have tried to give the views of Church Fathers on this subject and concept of Shepherd imagery in the west Syrian Liturgy.

From the Biblical analysis of the shepherd imagery it became very clear that one of the main duties of shepherd is to feed the people. Therefore in the second chapter, which is titled as ‘Feeding duty of Yahweh as the shepherd of the People’, my attempt is analyse the feeding events in the OT and NT. There are numerous feeding events in the Bible. I have selected only those feeding events which have Eucharistic connotation. From this analysis it is very clear that most of the feeding events in the Bible have a Eucharistic connotation. As a proof for this point we have given the teachings of Church Fathers and West Syrian Liturgy.

In the third chapter, titled as “Eucharistic Significance of Shepherd Imagery in the Fourth Gospel”, I concentrate mainly on the shepherd imagery in John 10. The main aim of this chapter is to highlight the Eucharistic significance of the shepherd imagery especially v.9 of John chapter 10. In this chapter I am trying to establish the fact that the concept of ‘pasture’ in Jn 10:9 is Eucharist. As a preparation for this study we will discuss the context of Jn10 and we will make an exegetical analysis of the whole text (Jn 10:1-21). In this chapter based on Bible, Fathers and West Syrian Liturgy I am trying to show the essential relation between ch.6 and ch.10 of John and to bring out its Eucharistic significance. Final point of this thesis is that the concept of ‘Pasture’ in Jn 10:9 is Eucharist.

CHAPTER ONE

IMAGERY OF SHEPHERD (ποιμήν) IN THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTION

One of the strong imageries that we find in the Scripture to signify the close relation between God and His people is the imagery of Shepherd and flock. Shepherding was one the earliest occupations of man. So this imagery was very much familiar to the Palestinian culture. This symbol is used repeatedly in the Scripture to picture God or leaders of the society ruling over the people. Early Church saw Jesus as the Good Shepherd. When we apply this imagery to God and His people it brings to our minds the closeness between God and His people. In this chapter our attempt is to analyse the Biblical concept-both OT and NT- of Shepherd, how it is used by Church Fathers and in the West Syrian Liturgy.

1.1. SHEPHERD IMAGERY IN THE ANCIENT ORIENT

According to Cardinal Ratzinger “the image of the shepherd, which uses to explain his mission both in the Synoptics and in the Gospel of John, has a long history behind it. In the ancient near east, in Royal inscriptions from both Sumer and the area of Babylonia and Assyria, the king refers to himself as the shepherd instituted by God. “Pasturing sheep is an image of his task as a ruler. This image implies that caring for the weak is one of the tasks of the just ruler”¹. Throughout the Biblical period feeding flocks, with agriculture, was in Palestine the basis of the economy. Shepherding was one of man’s earliest occupations². In Sumerian culture the king was described as the shepherd appointed by Deity. In Babylonian and Assyrian cultures ‘*reu*’ (shepherd) is a common epithet for the rulers and its verb ‘*reu*’ is a common figure of speech for ‘to rule’. Gathering the dispersed, righteous government and care for the weak are marks of shepherd functions of the ruler. Gods, too, bear the title of Shepherd. Throughout the

¹ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part 1(Vatican, 2007) 272.

² Flocks and herds consisted specifically of cows, sheep, and goats, but could also include horses, asses, and camels but the principal animal was the sheep.

Mesopotamian history the Shepherd image was commonly used to designate gods and kings. The early third millennium epic hero Enmerkar, King of Uruk, is called a Shepherd when he subjects the city of Aratta. The famous Gilgamesh acting tyrannically over Uruk, was challenged by the People: “is this our Shepherd, Bold, Stately, Wise?” Ur- Nammu, whose name is associated with the first known law code in history, was called the shepherd of his People³. The Great Hamurabi of Babyon is referred to as Shepherd in several places in the prologue and epilogue of his law code; he says of himself, “Hamurabi, the Shepherd called by Enlil”⁴. The use of the symbol shepherd in early Mesopotamia appears to have been an epithet intended to signify rulership as good, just and beneficent for the people. Several Sumerian deities were known as Shepherds. The high god Enlil was called the faithful shepherd. In the Babylonian creation epic, Marduk is celebrated as the fertility god of the land, and in this role he is called as the faithful shepherd. The Semitic sun god Utu or Shamash was called the ‘shepherd of the lower world, guardian of the upper’ and it is from this god that Hammurabi is depicted receiving his law code⁵.

In Egypt as in Mesopotamia the shepherd imagery was used to depict gods, kings, and various other figures, and the people were commonly thought as a herd or flock. This imagery is used to signify ruler’s power and eminence, and especially the nature of his rule, the king’s obligation to maintain order and justice in the land. Kings used the simple shepherd’s crook as an epithet. God Osiris is always depicted with a royal crown, flail and crook and is sometimes called shepherd. In the Karnak temple, Amenhotep III is called ‘the good Shepherd, vigilant for all People’⁶. The image of the ruler of the world to come, who, as a herd tend his flock, protects his subjects as stars is common in the royal funerary (Pyramid) texts of the ancient kingdom, e.g., “thou hast taken them up in thine arms as a herd his calves” or the god of the underworld is said to be “thy herd who is behind thy calves”. From the early middle Kingdom the image of the king as the shepherd of his subjects is then favourite one in literature and King is

³ David Noel Freedman et others, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol.5, O-Sh (USA, 1992), 1188.

⁴ *ANET*, 164.

⁵ David Noel Freedman et others, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol.5, 1188.

⁶ David Noel Freedman et others, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol.5, 1188.

described as a ‘herd for all the people’ or the ‘herd who watches over his subjects’. The same metaphor is used for the gods. In the hymn of the 18th dynasty god Amun is depicted as the ‘strong drover who guards his cattle’. Similarly it is said of men as subjects: “men are well cared for, the cattle of God”⁷.

We find the use of the imagery of Shepherd in the *Illiad* and *Odyssey*. The common phrase used in these works is ‘shepherd of hosts’. But the compassionate features often implied in the Mesopotamian and Egyptian literature are absent here. Here it appears only as a symbol of rank and authority. In Plato’s *Republic* the definitions of justice find analogy in shepherd and flock symbolism, and the inferences suggest that a ruler, who is a shepherd should be concerned only with what is good for his subjects. He uses the symbol to show that the work of a ruler is to serve only for the interest of the people. In the Greek pastoral literature the heroes of the poetry are herdsmen and shepherds like Daphnis, an ancient and archetypal Shepherd⁸.

1.2. SHEPHERD IMAGERY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In the OT, the description of Yahweh as the shepherd of the people is an ancient usage. The application of the shepherd image to Yahweh is embedded in the living piety of Israel. We see in OT number of passages which use rich shepherd vocabulary for Yahweh and depict God as the shepherd who goes before His flock, who guides it, who leads it to pastures and to places where it may rest by the waters, who protects it with his staff, who carries lambs in his bosom and leads the mother sheep (Isa 40:11). In this section our attempt is to analyse the shepherd imagery in OT.

1.2.1. Genesis 46:31-34, 47:3

In these passages Joseph prepares his brethren for an introduction to Pharaoh. Joseph is cautious enough to make sure that every necessary diplomatic step is taken to accommodate his family in Egypt. He wants nothing to happen that would prevent his family’s remaining in Goshen. In addition to the announcement of the arrival, Joseph

⁷ Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol.VI, Πε-Ρ (Michigan, 1969) 486, 487.

⁸ David Noel Freedman et others, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol.5, 1189.

will tell Pharaoh about his family's vocation that they are Shepherds. This is Joseph's way of hinting to Pharaoh that Goshen is the ideal territory to settle his family. Through this Joseph also wishes to communicate that they want to change their residences but not their occupation that they are shepherds⁹.

In verses 33-34 we find the final piece of advice to his family. It is patterned along the lines of frequent counsel given by Moses to the people. For example in connection with Passover observance he sates "And when your children say to you, what do you mean by this service... You shall say, it is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover" (Ex 12:26-27). One person (Joseph, Moses) tells a group (family, Israelites) that in the future they will be asked a question. Then the individual who cites the question provides an answer "you shall say". Here Joseph asked them to say that they-both they and their ancestors-are Shepherds from our youth until now¹⁰.

The thrust of Joseph's last statement is not clear i.e. *every shepherd is an abomination to Egyptians*. We don't find any instance in Egyptian literature that Egyptians considered shepherds as an abomination. Therefore it is better to understand Joseph's remark as applying only to non-Egyptian Shepherds. This statement of Joseph reflects the tension that existed between urbanites and those living in the open country. Another answer is that "it also reflects the tension between Abel who was a shepherd (*Rōēh sō 'n* 4:2, the same expression we find in v.34) and Cain, who was a farmer. Cain and the Egyptians are workers of the land. Abel and Joseph are shepherds. What in Genesis 4 was a fraternal division is in Genesis 46 an international division"¹¹. In Ex 8:22 Moses stated that offering sacrifice in Egypt would be an abomination in the eyes of Egyptians. Both in Ex.8:22 and Genesis 46:34 the word *toeba* is used to pint out what Egyptians considered abhorrent i.e. pastoral pursuits. In any case Joseph is encouraging

⁹ Victor P. Hamilton, *The New International Commentary On the Old Testament: The Book of Genesis Chapters 18-50* (Michigan, 1995) 604

¹⁰ Victor P. Hamilton, *The New International Commentary On the Old Testament: The Book of Genesis Chapters 18-50*, 604

¹¹ R.B Coote and D.R Ord, *The Bible's First History* (Philadelphia, 1989), 197 as given in Victor P. Hamilton, *The New International Commentary On the Old Testament: The Book of Genesis Chapters 18-50*, 604.

his family to be honest with Pharaoh regarding their occupation¹². In Genesis 47: 3 to Pharaoh's "What is your occupation? They answered that they are shepherds (*Rōēh sō n*). From these passages it is very clear that the ancestors of Israelites were shepherds and therefore it was very easy for them to understand Yahweh as the shepherd of Israel¹³.

1.2.2. Genesis 48:15-16

"The God before whom my ancestors Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all harm, bless the boys".

In this passage the imagery of shepherd is used in connection with Jacob's blessing to his two grandsons. Jacob's blessing has three parts: 1) the invocation of God (15-16a), 2) the prayer for blessing (v.16b), 3) the results of the blessing and prayer (v.16c and d).¹⁴ First Jacob bears witness to the religious devotion of his forefathers. Jacob witnesses that they walked before God. Jacob is highlighting the God of his forefathers and the obedience they lived out before God. When he comes to his autobiographical section he shifts the emphasis. If Abraham and Isaac walked before God, God has walked before Jacob. When describing his fathers' behavior before God Jacob uses a verb form i.e. *hithalleku*, which conveys a completed action. But when Jacob describes God's behavior towards Jacob, he uses principles, which expresses continuous action. God *has shepherded* him (*rō'eh*), and delivered him (*gō'el*). From Rebekah's womb to his deathbed in Egypt, Jacob testifies that God has been there with him, leading him and liberating him¹⁵. Here shepherd imagery is used to signify the continuous protection and providence of God.

¹² Victor P. Hamilton, *The New International Commentary On the Old Testament: The Book of Genesis Chapters 18-50*, 604

¹³ Victor P. Hamilton, *The New International Commentary On the Old Testament: The Book of Genesis Chapters 18-50*, 604

¹⁴ Victor P. Hamilton, *The New International Commentary On the Old Testament: The Book of Genesis Chapters 18-50*, 637.

¹⁵ Victor P. Hamilton, *The New International Commentary On the Old Testament: The Book of Genesis Chapters 18-50*, 604

1.2.3. Exodus 2:17, 19 and Ex.3:1, 2

In 2.17 the daughters of the Priest of Midian come to water their flock. But some shepherds came along and drove them away, but Moses got up and came for their rescue and watered their flock. The NRSV says that Moses “came to their defense” but the Hebrew term is *yasa*; he ‘saved’ them, he rescued them, and so their flocks had water¹⁶. Moses is clearly acted as a rescuer and indirectly he acts also a shepherd who waters the flock. In Exodus 3:1, 12 Moses comes to the scene as the one who is shepherding the flock. “Moses drove the sheep from Jethro’s home as far Horeb, so that he passed through a desert with the flock before he reached the pasture land of Horeb. For in this, the most elevated ground of the peninsula, you find the most fertile valleys, in which even fruit trees grow. Water bounds in this district; consequently it is the resort of all the Bedouins when the lower countries are dried up”¹⁷. Moses here acts as a shepherd, who leads the sheep to green pastures.

1.2.4. Song of Songs 1:7, 8

Tell me, whom my soul loves, where you pasture your flock, where you make it lie down at noon; for why should I be like one who is veiled beside the flock of your companions?

In these verses Shepherd imagery is used to express the relation between God and His people. Here God is depicted as a Shepherd and people of God as Shepherdess. It will be very clear when we analyze the exegesis of these verses.7a: *my true love* means one whom my soul loves or the one whom I love. *Nēpeš* (soul) designates the person or self, including all its appetites and desires, physical and spiritual.7b: *pasture*: the verb *r`y* has in the simple stem the double sense like English ‘feed’: to eat or cause to eat. The parallel usage of this verb in Gen 37:16 in which Joseph inquires where his brothers are pasturing their flock. The question is natural for anyone trying to locate a shepherd. The verb *rbš* (fold) applied to the lying down of four footed animals is here used in the causative stem as in Psalm 23:2, where Yhaweh makes the psalmist to fold down. It is very difficult to find a single English word for this action. We choose

¹⁶ Leander E.Keck et others, *The New Interpreters Bible* (Nashville, 1994) 703.

¹⁷ C.F. Keil and F.Delitzsch, *Commentary On The Old Testament*, Vol.1 (Massachusetts, 1989) 437.

somewhat archaic usage of ‘fold’ as ‘confine’. In this verse we find at noon the word *at noon*. Midday is the usual siesta time in warm climates. The siesta of Palestinian shepherds extends from the fourth to the ninth hour of the day affording ample time for a love tryst. According to some scholars the significance of noon hour viz that it is the time for repose and amorous colloquy but this sense misses the point because the rest is for the flock and not for the shepherd. The shepherd is idle for the all day and alone in the field and thus always accessible for a love tryst. These images have for the most part eschatological import, as in Amos 5:18, 20, Isa 5:30. The tests which speak of *midday* present it several times in the sense of happiness (Isa 58:10, Ps 37:6, Job 11:37) while suffering or trial is represented by the image of darkness (Dt 28:29, Isa 59:10, Job 5:14). Thus the time when Yahweh will lead his flock back to Palestine will be midday, that is to say the full day of salvation and unclouded happiness. The bride figures as the flock is still in exile: she languishes for the day, beseeching Yahweh to let her know it¹⁸.

In verse 7d we have the expression *veiled* (*ôtěyāh*). Many modern exegetes adopt the meaning ‘a wanderer’. The word has similar usage in Akkadian, Syriac and Arabic languages and is used more than a score of times in the Bible always of a person wrapping or concealing oneself in a garment. There is another ‘*ty*’ as it is used in Jer 43; 12 of a shepherd delousing his garment. This verse shows so clearly that it is a shepherd and also a country damsel. Since she is a country damsel she had no idea of the occupation of a king and could not imagine a higher and fairer calling than that of a shepherd. Moreover scripture also describes governing as tending the sheep. The messiah of whom Solomon is a type, is specially represented as the future good shepherd. This verse has the connotation to the exile and return. The nation Israel which is outside the Palestine and apparently abandoned by Yahweh, is errant like a woman away from home. In Jer 33:12 and Ezk 34:14-15 Yahweh is depicted as the Shepherd restoring the Israelite People to their former good pastures on mountains of Israel. This

¹⁸ Marvin H. Hope, *Song of Songs*, The Anchor Bible, (New York, 1977) 328.

answers to the question of the bride, as to where Yahweh as the good shepherd leads his flock, Israel. It is to Palestine for there alone is the place of green pastures and repose¹⁹.

In verse 8 the Shepherd asks the bride to follow the tracks of sheep and graze the sheep close to the shepherds' huts. The Hebrew word *miskenot* is used here for huts. But out of the nineteen occurrences nine times this plural word is used in a singular sense. When we give singular sense to this word and sees the shepherds as the kings of the pre-exilic period the point is very clear. The dwelling place of shepherds is Zion and it is to this goal that that the shepherd orients the bride. When she is told to follow the tracks of sheep, this alludes to the first repatriates who were reinstalled in Palestine after the decree of Cyrus in 538 B.C. The people personified under the figure of the bride, should imitate them and make return trip along the route which she had followed in going to Babylon. This verse gives clear proof that the damsel is a shepherdess and the beloved is a shepherd²⁰. As a conclusion we can say that in these verses shepherd imager is used to signify the intimate relation between Yahweh as the shepherd and Israel as the sheep.

1.2.5. Isaiah 13:20

“It will never be inhabited or lived in for all generations; Arabs will not pitch their tents there, shepherds will not make their flocks lie down there”

In this verse shepherd imagery is used to signify the destruction of Babylon. It speaks of human population. In the former verse we find that God will overthrow Babylon like Sodom and Gomorrah and as continuation of it prophet speaks that Babylon will not live forever and the shepherds will not stretch out there²¹. Here we find that the presence of shepherds in the land is a symbol of prosperity.

¹⁹ Marvin H. Hope, *The Anchor Bible: Song of Songs*, 330

²⁰ Marvin H. Hope, *The Anchor Bible: Song of Songs*, 333,334.

²¹ John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The book of Isaiah* (Michigan, 1986) 309.

1.2.6. Isaiah 38:12

“My dwelling is plucked up and removed from me like a shepherd’s tent”

In this verse the poet speaks about the abruptness of the apparent close of his life or human life in general. He uses two similes. The first is the shepherd’s tent. It may have remained in one spot for some time while the grass lasted. In so doing, it would have been given the illusion of some permanence, just as life does. But one day when the grass give out, and in a matter of hours nothing remains but a bit of trampled earth. So also the weaver works on a piece of cloth on her loom day after day. Passerby become used to seeing that particular fabric on the structure. But one day the weaver decides the roll is big enough and with a few sudden stokes cuts it loose and carries it away. Life is like that. Death removes in a moment what had seemed so permanent. Here the imagery of shepherd’s tent is used to highlights the contingency of life²².

1.2.7. Isaiah 40:11

“He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in the arms, and carry the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep”

In this verse Yahweh’s triumphal procession to Jerusalem is pictured. Here Yahweh is depicted as a shepherd who feeds his flock. He is a shepherd who holds the lambs in his arms and holds them against his breast. This beautiful reference to shepherd and flock is similar to Psalm 23:1-3 and Ezekiel 34. It also carries royal overtone, for Shepherd is a common figure for the king. Flock, lambs, and ewes are all part of the large picture of the people of God. The people of god for decades have suffered from neglect since their leaders and the majority of the people were taken in to exile. God’s return promises pastoral, royal concern and care for all of them especially for the weak and needy. Holding them against *his breast* refers to the fold of the shepherd’s robe which can be natural pocket to shelter a lamb. Ewes giving suck are those with new born lambs, who therefore need special attention as the flock move along. Isaiah by

²² John N.Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The book of Isaiah* (Michigan, 1986) 683,684

using the imagery of a good shepherd points out the motherly care of Yahweh for his people.

1.2.8. Isaiah 44:28

“He is my shepherd, and he shall carry out all my purpose”

In this verse Cyrus, the Persian King who is entering Babylon is pictured as Yahweh’s shepherd. By this it is meant that Cyrus belongs to Yahweh. Term shepherd is used frequently for a king or ruler in several places like Zech 10:2-3, 11:3-9, 16-17, 12:7. The emphasis here is on the pronoun *my*. The call of Cyrus and the fall of Babylon prepare for the restoration of Yahweh’s city. Here a king, who is called to fulfill the will of Yahweh, is depicted as the shepherd of Yahweh²³.

1.2.9. Isaiah 63:11

“Then they remembered the days of old, of Moses his servant, Where is the one who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock?”

Then he remembered. Memory is a regular motivation attributed to God. When he remembers Abraham, he moves to get Israel out of Egypt. (Exod 2:24). Here he remembers the age of Moses and his people. *The one bringing them from the sea* could refer to Moses or to Yahweh. *The shepherds* of his flock refers to the leaders of Exodus generation. But here *his flock* here definitely refers to the people of God. So here there is an implicit reference to Yahweh as the shepherd of Israel²⁴.

1.2.10. Jeremiah 3:15

“I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding”

In this verse God promises to Israel that He will give them shepherds after his own heart, who will rule them with knowledge and understanding. One of the important features about the days of the restoration of the people would be that Yahweh’s people would have rulers (rō’îm, shepherds) after Yahweh’s own heart, that is, who rule in

²³ John D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol.25 (Texas, 1987) 286.

²⁴ John D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, Word Biblical Commentary, 332.

accordance with his will (Jer 23: 1-4, Ezek 34:23, 37:24). Such rulers would be in contrast with those who had ruled them over centuries, few of them walked in the ways of David. This new line of kings would rule (rā'â, shepherd, pasture) the people with knowledge and understanding, that is, wisely and well. Here shepherd imagery is used to signify the rulers who fulfill the will of Yahweh²⁵.

1.2.11. Jeremiah 10:21

“For the shepherds are stupid, and do not inquire of the Lord; therefore they have not prospered, and all their flock is scattered”

This verse is the part of the anguished cry of Jeremiah, who is deeply identified with his people. Jeremiah cries about Judah. In this cry reference is made to shepherds and their flock. The shepherds are Judah's leaders, in the first instance perhaps the kings, although the term may include other leaders, political and religious. They are described as *stupid* men, who do not seek after Yahweh. They conduct themselves without reference to Yahweh's covenant and its law and commandments. They do not seek the will of God. All their flock is scattered. This image of 'stupid shepherds' and 'scattered flock' can be seen in Ezekiel 34. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel held the view that the kings through their sacred anointing were Yahweh's representatives to guard God's covenant. It was their task as national leaders to continue the work of Moses and the charismatic judges. Some commentators regard the term *shepherd* as metaphor for prophets, whose task it was to 'inquire of the Lord' (Jer 21:2), But whomever Jeremiah had in mind, king or prophets, when they were interested in playing politics than in carrying out the will of Yahweh, the whole nation would suffer. Here shepherd imagery is used to signify the leaders of Israel especially prophets and kings²⁶.

²⁵ J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Michigan, 1980) 202.

²⁶ J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament.

1.2.12. Jeremiah 12:10

“Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard, they have trampled down my portion, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness”

In this verse the imagery of shepherd is used to denote the kings of foreign countries. They have ravaged the vineyard of Yahweh (2:21, 5:10, Isa 5:1-7), trampled down his field and made his heritage a wasteland²⁷.

1.2.13. Jeremiah 23:1-4

The whole periscope shows the distinction between what the evil shepherds have done and what Yahweh will do. The responsibility of the shepherds was to protect the flock. It was the wild animals who would destroy or scatter the flock. Here shepherds are accused of being wild animals and destroying what they were to protect. Although the term shepherd refers to any of Judah’s leaders, the context seems to refer to the kings. The flock here is designated as the “flock of my (Yahweh’s pasture). Here there is a connotation that Yahweh is the good shepherd of his flock. The shepherds have not ‘visited’ or take care of the flock in a positive sense. Therefore Yahweh will visit or take care of the shepherds in a negative sense. It means Yahweh will visit upon them the evil of their deeds. Yahweh may visit again because of their evil deeds²⁸. In the New International Commentary on the Old Testament gives two translations of this verse: a) “You have not watched over them, but I am watching you to punish you for your evil doings”. Here in the first instance of the use of the verb *pāqaḏ*, it is followed by the sign of a direct accusative ‘*et*’. The meaning is ‘look after’, ‘care for’. In the second instance of the use of the verb in the same verse it is used as *pāqaḏ al* with accusative sign ‘*et*’ before “the evil of your deeds”. The meaning is “call to account”, punish etc. b) “You have not attended to them... I am going to attend you for your wicked deeds”²⁹. In this passage by using the imagery of shepherd, Prophet clearly

²⁷ J. A Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, 358.

²⁸ Peter C. Craigie et others, *Jeremiah 1-25*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol.26 (Dallas, 1991) 326, 327.

²⁹ J. A Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, 487.

explains the faithlessness of leaders of Israel and faithfulness of Yahweh, the good shepherd.

1.2.14. Jeremiah 25:34-36

“Wail, you shepherds, and cry out; roll in ashes, you lords of the flock, for the days of your slaughter have come- and your dispersions, and you shall fall like a choice vessel. Flight shall fail the shepherds and there shall be no escape for the lords of the flock. Hark! the cry of the shepherds and the wail of the lords of the flock! For the Lord is despoiling their pasture”

The whole periscope of Jer 25:30-38 we see the theme of universal judgment of Yahweh in poetic form, but without reference to the specific countries referred to in the earlier prose section (25:17-26). The thrust of this section is Yahweh’s judgment, which is reaching to the ends of the earth. In verses 34-36 we see that shepherd imagery is used to explain the destruction of leaders of Israel. Shepherds are rulers of nations (2:8, 23:1, 2). In this periscope we have an expression “the nobles of the flock” or “lords of the flock” and it appears only here. This word refers to the chiefs and kings and it is parallel to the use of shepherd here. The shepherds are asked to cry or mourn. Mourning here means mourning acts, perhaps, rolling in ashes or dust. The leaders are to cry out because of the impending slaughter. Here slaughter is coming, but paradoxically, it is the shepherds rather than sheep who are to be slaughtered. The phrase “your days have come” is literally in Hebrew “your days are full”. This phrase frequently appears in OT to mean the completion of a time span. Here the time for judgment on the shepherds has come. Usually the sheep are the ones slaughtered; and should the shepherd be lost, the sheep are usually scattered “like sheep without a shepherd” (1Kgs 22:17, Ezek 34:5). Here the shepherds are going to be slaughtered. The last phrase of the verse 34 “you will fall like a precious vessel” concentrates not on the act of falling but on the result. A precious vessel, especially if of ceramic, would shatter upon falling. The image is again that of destruction. There will be no escape for the rulers from the judgment of Yahweh. Verse 36 is not a complete sentence; it an exclamation concerning what is heard: the sound of the shepherds’ cry of distress. The reason for this outcry is Yahweh’s

devastation of pastures. In this periscope the imagery of shepherd is used to explain the judgment of Yahweh upon the leaders of Israel³⁰.

1.2.15. Jeremiah 31:10

“Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him and will keep him as shepherd a flock”

The preceding unit (31:2-6) of this periscope portrays the people established in the land and the section i.e. 31:7-14, which includes v.10, describes how they will get there. In verse 10 the nations are assigned with the task of announcing in the conqueror’s home territory that the Lord has delivered Israel from them. God, and not the victorious enemy, was “the one who had scattered the Israel”. In Jer 30: 17 we find the derisive comment, “no one cares for her”. But here it is replaced by an acknowledgment of the Good Shepherd’s guardianship. Yahweh will gather them and guard them like a shepherd. God’s promises in v 9b (“I will let them walk by brooks of water in a straight path in which they shall walk”) are the actions of a shepherd on behalf of the flock as in Ps 23:2-3. In Jer 31:10 Yahweh is presented as a good shepherd who freed Israel from other nations and who guards them³¹.

1.2.16. Jeremiah 33:12, 13

“Thus says the Lord of hosts: In this place that is waste, without human beings or animals, and in all its towns there shall again pasture for shepherds resting their flocks”

In Jer 33:12, 13 we find the picture of shepherds who make their sheep rest and who counts the sheep as they pass by. The pastoral imagery used in Jer 33:10 is not a picture of restoration. This salvation promise echoes Jer 23:3 but describes the shepherding in vivid terms. The new shepherds will comfort the people by making them “lie down” or “stretch out” as the Lord who is the shepherd does in Ps 23:2, Ezek 34:14-15. These shepherds will count the sheep as they enter the fold for night, just as

³⁰ Peter C. Craigie et others, *Jeremiah 1-25*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol.26, 375, 376. See also in J. A Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, 519, 520.

³¹ Gerald L. Keown et others, *Jeremiah 26-52*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 27 (Texas, 1995) 114.

the Lord “counts the stars and calls them each by name” (Ps 147:4). The intimate knowledge and committed caring suggested by this image is illustrated in the parables of the good shepherd in Luke 15:3-7, where the shepherd goes in search of the lost sheep and in John 10:1-8, where the good shepherd calls the sheep by name and leads them to the fold³².

1.2.17. Jeremiah 43:12

“He shall kindle a fire in the temples of the gods of Egypt; and he shall burn them and carry them away captive; and he shall pick clean the land of Egypt, as shepherds picks his cloak clean of vermin; and he shall depart from there safely”

In this verse the imagery of shepherd picking of lice from his clothing is used to explain Nebuchadrezzar’s activities of humiliating the temples of Egypt and their deities. There is a homely picture here which is well understood by those who have travelled in some parts of Middle East. The picking of lice from one’s clothing. Prophet uses this imagery in order to describe Nebuchadrezzar’s activities when he finally invaded Egypt³³. According to Word Biblical commentary v 12 is reminiscent of the oracle against Moab in Amos 1:14. In both texts, Yahweh ‘kindles the fire’ as a means of judgment. V 12 begins with first person as “I will kindle” but it shifts to third person in the latter parts of the verse. This shift may be intentional because Yahweh kindles the fire even though Nebuchadrezzar is the conqueror. The shepherd is picking clean his cloak, or removing the vermin that would infest it. Here arise the question: are the Judean refugees the ‘vermin’ that are to be removed? The end of v 12 and 13 describe a successful campaign by Nebuchadrezzar against this region of Egypt and all who dwell in it. He will depart as victorious leaving behind the destruction of Egypt’s places of worship as well as the implied destruction of the Judean exile community³⁴. So in v 12 a

³² Gerald L. Keown et others, *Jeremiah 26-52*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 27, 172, 173. See also in J. A Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, 599.

³³ J. A Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, 671

³⁴ Gerald L. Keown et others, *Jeremiah 26-52*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 27, 57, 258.

shepherd imagery is used to signify the destroying the places of worship in Egypt but indirectly it refers to Yahweh who is the good shepherd, who acts through Nebuchadrezzar.

1.2.18. Jeremiah 49:19

“Like a lion coming up from the thickets of Jordan against a perennial pasture, I will suddenly chase Edom away from it; and I will appoint over it whomever I choose. For who is like me? Who can summon me? Who is the shepherd who can stand before me?”

In this verse Yahweh is likened to a lion in search of food coming out of the jungle- like thickets in the region of Jordan to seize one of the sheep which are grazing in the evergreen pastures of Jordan valley. The thicket of the Jordan valley was the Zor, on time of the three physical zones of the Jordan valley: it was the haunt of the Asiatic lion and other wild animals in earlier Biblical time (Amos 5:19). In a similar way like lion Yahweh would chase Edom’s sheep and select the choicest of her arms to devour them. No shepherd in Edom will be able to summon him to explain his actions or stand before him³⁵. He would be as irresistible to shepherds and sheep alike as any jungle lion. The three questions in v 19 highlight incomparability of the Lord: no deity can so summon nature and nations to accomplish the divine purposes, and no foe can thwart the plan of the Lord. In this verse imagery of shepherd is used to signify the leaders of Edom.

1.2.19. Jeremiah 50:44

“Like a lion coming up from the thickets of Jordan against a perennial pasture, I will suddenly chase them away from her; and I will appoint over her whomever I choose. For who is like me? Who can summon me? Who is the shepherd who can stand before me?”

These verses repeat substantially the oracle against Edom in 49:19-21. The question *what Shepherds can stand before me?* is addressed to earthly rulers. None of

³⁵ J. A Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, 722.

these, however powerful, can resist Yahweh or prevent the fulfilment of his purposes, which concern both the overthrow of Babylon and the release of Yahweh's people³⁶.

1.2.20. Jeremiah 51:23

“With you I smash shepherds and their flocks; with you I smash farmers and their teams”

Jer: 51:21-23 is addressed to some unnamed power that is described as Yahweh's hammer. Different views are proposed to Yahweh's hammer: for some it is prophet himself and for some others it is Israel. In the context it seems to refer to Babylon since at the time of Jeremiah the only power in view that had shattered all nations and destroyed kingdoms was Babylon. The theme of Yahweh's hammer appeared already in 50:23 where Babylon is clearly named as such. The thought is consistent with the view of the prophets that Yahweh could and did call in to his service people of all kinds. Thus Isaiah saw Assyria as Yahweh's rod (Isa 10:5-19) and in Jeremiah's view Nebuchadrezzar.

1.2.21. Ezekiel 34

The whole section of Ezekiel chapters 34-39 deals with the promise of salvation and it commences with chapter 34, which deals with the announcement that the Lord will deliver Israel out of the hands of its evil shepherds, who only feed themselves and destroy the flock, and will take care of His own flock, gather them together, feed and tend them on a good meadow, protect the weak sheep against the strong, and through His servant David bring security and blessing to the whole of the flock. This comprehensive promise is carried out still further in the following chapters.

The whole chapter of Ezekiel 34 can be divided in to three parts. 1) Vers.1-10- The shepherds, who have fed themselves and neglected the flock, so that it has been scattered and has become a prey to wild beasts, will be deprived by the Lord of their office of shepherd. 2) Vers.11-12- God will take charge of His own flock, gather it together from its dispersion in the lands, feed and tend it on good pasture in the land of

³⁶ J. A Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, 746.

Israel, and sift it by the extermination of the fat and violent ones. 3)Vers.23-31- He will appoint His servant David as shepherd over his flock, make a covenant of peace with His people, and bless the land with fruitfulness, so that Israel may dwell there in security, and no more be carried off either as booty for the nations or by famine, and may acknowledge Yahweh as its God³⁷.

Vers.1-10

God pronounces woe to the bad shepherds and the reason for the woe pronounced is given in the apposition, who fed themselves, whereas they ought to have fed the flock. The charge that they only care for themselves is still further explained by a description of their conduct vers.3and 4 (*"You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the sheep. You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured, you have not brought back the strayed, you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have ruled them"*). The dispersion of the flock as a result of the carelessness of the shepherds is explained in v.5. V.3 shows how they fed themselves and v.4 shows how they neglected the sheep. They use the flock to feed themselves. They do not even kill the leaner beasts, but those are well fattened and they make use of flesh and the wool of the sheep for their own advantage. They care nothing for the well-being of the sheep and that is stated in the last clause of v.3. This is explained in detail in v.4. In the last clause of v.4, the neglect of the flock is summed up in the positive expression, to rule over them with violence and severity. The result of this is that the sheep are scattered and became food for the wild beasts. This happened because of there not being a shepherd i.e. because there was no shepherd worthy of name. This took place when Israel was carried away in to exile, where it became a prey to the heathen nations. It is the result of the neglect of the theocratic call of their kings. The real meaning of wandering upon all mountains and hills can be found in 1Kgs 22:17, where the people are represented as scattered upon the mountains in consequence of the fall of the king in battle, like a flock that had no shepherd. In vers.7-10, the punishment for

³⁷ Carl Friedrich Keil, *Biblical Commentary On The Prophecies of Ezekiel*, Vol. II (Michigan, 1989), 80.

their unfaithfulness is announced to the shepherds themselves. The Lord will demand His sheep of them because the sheep have been lost through their fault. He will depose them from the office of the shepherd³⁸.

Verses 11-22

All that the Lord will do for His flock is summed up in v.11 and the explanation is given in the following verses. To seek and examine involves the idea of taking affectionate charge. What the Lord does for his people is explained in the following verses. He will gather them from all the places to which they have been scattered. The deliverance of the sheep out of the places to which they have been scattered, consists in the gathering together of Israel out of the nations, their restoration to their own land, their feeding upon the mountains and all the dwelling places of the land and that in good and fat pasture (v.14), strengthens and heals the weak and the sick (vers.15 and 16) that is to say, does just what the bad shepherds have omitted (v.4). The fat and strong sheep are characterized in verses 18 and 19 as those which spoil the food and water of others. The allusion here is to the rich and strong ones of the nation, who oppress the humble and poor. The destruction of these oppressors shows that the loving kindness of the Lord is associated with righteousness. This thought is still explained in verses 17-21. Lord assures that he will judge between sheep and sheep, and put an end to the oppressive conduct of the fat and strong sheep. Here there is a mention of rams and he-goats. The sheep will be separated from sheep i.e. the fat sheep being placed on one side with the rams and he-goats and kept apart from the lean and the sickly sheep (Mt 25:32). It is to this rams and he-goats that verses 18 and 19 are addressed. They eat up the pasture and tread down the remainder with their feet. This alludes to the fact that many Israelites after enjoying an abundant harvest and vintage, grudged the poor. V.22 brings to a close the description of the manner in which God will deliver His flock, and feed it with righteousness³⁹.

Verses 23-31

³⁸ Carl Friedrich Keil, *Biblical Commentary On The Prophecies of Ezekiel*, Vol. II, 82-86.

³⁹ Carl Friedrich Keil, *Biblical Commentary On The Prophecies of Ezekiel*, Vol. II, 86-89.

God will cause to stand, raise up, one single shepherd over his flock. The same idea can be found in Dt 18: 15 and 2 Samuel 7:12. These verses speak about the rising up of a person in history through the interposition of God. Both these passages have messianic connotation in the sense that both of these verses fulfilled in Christ (Acts 3:22). In v. 24 the relation between Yahweh and David is described. Yahweh will be their God and David will be their prince (2 Sam 7:8). In v.25 we see that how God will become God to his people and it is through the pastoral fidelity of David. God will destroy all the wild beasts so that they would be able to sleep safely in the desert and the forests. Verses 26 and 27 we see that God will cause the rain to fall so that the land and filed would yield rich produce. This thought is still further in v.28 and then in v. 29. “I will provide for them splendid vegetation”. This vegetation refers to the blessings that Yahweh gives to the people Israel. This is further explained by the following clause: “they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer insults of the nations”. From this blessing they shall learn that Yahweh is with them and Israel is his people (v.31)⁴⁰.

The whole idea of Ezekiel 34 can be summarized in three points: 1) The Lord will liberate His people from the hands of the bad shepherds and He will feed it as his flock. 2) He will gather it together from its dispersion, bring it back to the land of Israel and feed it there, will take charge of the sheep in need of help and destroy the fat and strong sheep by which the weak ones are oppressed. 3) He will raise up the future David for a shepherd and under his care He will bestow upon his people the promised covenant blessings in richest measure.

When we analyze Ezekiel 34 it will become clear that it has a messianic connotation. Lord raised up his servant David as s shepherd to Israel by sending Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save that which was lost (Lk 19:10, Mt 23:11) and who calls himself as good shepherd (Jn 10:11). Although the deliverance of the Israel commenced with coming of Jesus Christ as the shepherd of the family of David the full realization will only be effected when the conversion of Israel take place, which the

⁴⁰ Carl Friedrich Keil, *Biblical Commentary On The Prophecies of Ezekiel*, Vol. II, 89-93.

Apostle Paul foretells in Rom11:25⁴¹. As a conclusion we can say that Ezekiel chapter 34 brings to our mind the picture of Jesus, who is the good shepherd, who feeds the people with green pastures.

1.2.22. Ezekiel 37:24

“My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall have one shepherd”

Chapter 37 contains two revelations from God: Vers.1-14-the prophet is shown in a vision the resurrection of Israel to a new life.Vers.15-28- Prophet is commanded to exhibit, by means of a symbolical act, the reunion of the divided kingdoms in to a single nation under one king. The shepherd imagery comes in the second revelation in v.24 (*“My servant David shall be a king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes”*). In the beginning of this section (15-28) God asks Prophet to take down two pieces of wood and write down the name of Judah and his associates on the first one and Joseph and his associates on the second one. In vers.21-28 we find further explanation of the symbolic act performed by the prophet. It describes the manner in which God will effect the union of the divided tribes, but also what He will do for the preservation of the unity of the reunited people, and for the promotion of their blessedness. This explanation is arranged in two strophes and each of these strophes contains a twofold promises. The first promises (v.21-23): a) the gathering of the Israelites out of their dispersion, their restoration to their own land and their union as one nation under the rule of David. b) Their purification from all sins and sanctification as the true people of the Lord. Promises of second strophe: a) their undisturbed eternal abode in the land, under David their prince. b) The blessedness conferred upon them through the conclusion of an everlasting covenant of peace. In this section that the shepherd imagery comes. The whole promise is merely a repetition of that contained in ch.34:11-31.The union of the Israelites is accomplished by giving them in David a king who will so rule the reunited

⁴¹ Carl Friedrich Keil, *Biblical Commentary On The Prophecies of Ezekiel*, Vol. II, 94.

people that they will not be divided more in to two peoples and two kingdoms. Here David is pictured as a shepherd to the people⁴².

This verse also has a messianic connotation in the sense that a future king is promised from the family of David 2 Sam 7:12 and there we read that this new king will be a son to God and God will be a Father to him. This is fulfilled in Jesus because Jesus is the son of God (Lk 1:32, 9; 35). Moreover David is here depicted as shepherd of all people. Lord raised up his servant David as shepherd to Israel by sending Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save that which was lost (Lk 19:10, Mt 23:11) and who calls himself as good shepherd (Jn 10:11).

1.2.23. Psalm 23

This psalm praises Yahweh as the shepherd and host of His own people. It is a song of trust and a royal prayer. In this psalm the Psalmist professes Yahweh as his savior and finds his shelter in Yahweh. There are different opinions regarding the background of this psalm. One accepted opinion is that it expresses the inner happiness of a devotee in the temple. We see in this psalm a devotee who fully trusts in God and who submits himself in the providence and protection of God. This psalm depicts the context of a banquet either the believer offers in the temple or the one in which he participates⁴³.

On the basis of depicting Yahweh as Shepherd and Host, this psalm can be divided in to two: vv. 1-4 Yahweh as Shepherd, vv.5-6 Yahweh as Host. Though two themes are presented here in this psalm it is a single unit because the images of shepherd and host are closely related in ancient near eastern thought.⁴⁴

Vers.1-3: *“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake”*. Psalmist calls Yahweh as the shepherd, who uniformly and graciously provides and guides him and all who are His people. In the later prophesies

⁴² Carl Friedrich Keil, *Biblical Commentary On The Prophecies of Ezekiel*, Vol. II, 130,131

⁴³ Dr, Abraham Pezhumkattil (ed.), *Sankīrttanangal Pāṭhavum Vyākhyānavum* (Malyalam), (Kochi, 1991) 144.

⁴⁴ Gerald L. Keown et others, *Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 27, 331.

we see the visible appearing of this shepherd (Isa. 40:11, Ezek. 34). This is fulfilled in Jesus when he says: *ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός* (Jn 10:11). He who has Yahweh as the shepherd has all things, he lacks nothing. Yahweh leads him to green pastures of fresh and tender grass, where one lies at ease. Here both the ideas of rest and enjoyment are combined. Green pastures in Hebrew in its primary meaning is a resting or dwelling place, specifically an oasis, i.e. a verdant spot in desert. Waters refers to the most pleasant resting place where the weary finds rest and where he refreshes himself. Yahweh leads his devotee to this resting place of still waters. “*He restores my soul*” signifies to bring back the soul that is as it were flown away, so that it comes to itself again, to impart new life. This Yahweh does to the soul, by causing it amidst the dryness and heat of temptation and trouble, to taste the very essence of life which refreshes and strengthens it⁴⁵. Yahweh leads him in the right path and leads him to the right goal and this is Zion, where the name of God dwells⁴⁶.

Vers. 4-5: *Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows*”. The rod and staff here is used here not in a sense of a pilgrim, But they belong to Yahweh, the shepherd as in Mic 7:14. Rod and staff are means of guidance and defense. The one rod, which the shepherd holds up, is used to guide the flock. This rod and staff in the hand of God comfort him and preserve him in the feeling of security. Even when he passes through a valley where death is hidden he fears no misfortune because Yahweh the shepherd is with him⁴⁷.

After the figure of the shepherd fades away in vers.4 the figure of host appears. His enemies see how Yahweh cares his devotee. Yahweh anoints him with sweet perfumes and prepare banquet for him in the presence of his enemies. He fills his cup in excess. The context of it can be seen in 2 Sam 17: 27-29, where we find that David and his army are fed with sufficient food even in the midst of danger and threat from

⁴⁵ F.Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Psalms*, Vol. V (Michigan, 1982) 330.

⁴⁶ Dr, Abraham Pezhumkattil (ed.), *Sankīrttanangal Pāṭhavum Vyākhyānavum* (Malyalame), 145.

⁴⁷ F.Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Psalms*, Vol. V, 330.

Absolom. This verse has a future connotation. It is a gift from heaven. When we analyse it in the background of NT the table which Yahweh prepares for his people is the table of Lord's Supper. In the previous verses we have already found that Yahweh leads the devotee to green pastures. Here green pasture is depicted as a banquet. In the NT, the banquet which God prepares for the salvation of the world is Eucharist (Mt 26:26-29, Mk 14:22-26, Lk 22:14-23). We will analyse it in detail in the last chapter. *My cup* refers to the content of the cup and the cup is full satiating even to the excess⁴⁸. Cup also has a Eucharistic significance. In NT we find that Jesus speaks about his passion and death as the cup to drink (Mk 10:35-40, Mt 20:20-28). St. Paul in 1Cor 11:23-26, when he speaks about Eucharist, he refers to the cup as the '*cup of new covenant in my blood*'. In the West Syrian Liturgy this Psalm is used in the context of Eucharist. Priest recites this psalm during the time of thanksgiving prayer at the end of the Eucharistic liturgy.

V.6- "*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long*". The devotee finds strong and sure shelter in the house of the Lord. If the enemies followed him in the outside now the mercy and goodness of Yahweh follow him in the house of God. The devotee wishes to be in the house of Yahweh till the end of his life enjoying the goodness and mercy of Yahweh⁴⁹.

1.2.24. Psalm 74:1

"O god, why do you cast us off forever? Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture?"

Psalm 74 is considered to be a communal lament by seeing the destruction of the temple. This psalm can be divided in to three: vv.1-11- first invocation of God to remember and save his people, vers.12-17- recollection of God's power in creation, Vers.18-23- second invocation of God⁵⁰. In v. 1 we find the expression the *sheep of*

⁴⁸ F.Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Psalms*, Vol. V, 33.

⁴⁹ Dr. Abraham Pezhumkattil (ed.), *Sankīrttanangal Pāṭhavum Vyākhyānavum* (Malyalame), 146.

⁵⁰ Dr. Abraham Pezhumkattil (ed.), *Sankīrttanangal Pāṭhavum Vyākhyānavum* (Malyalam), 411.

your pasture. It refers to Israel, the people of God. In this verse we find an indirect depiction of Yahweh as the good shepherd, who leads the people to green pastures. Israel as the flock belongs to Yahweh, the good shepherd.

1.2.25. Psalm 95:7, 100:3

“For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand”

According to C.F Keil and F.Delitzch, in psalm 95:3-7b the adorableness of God receives a threefold confirmation: He is exalted above all gods as king, above all things as creator, and above His people as shepherd and leader. In v.7 we find the expression *“the people of His pasture and the sheep of his hand”*. In Ps 100:3 also we find the same expression *“we are his people and the sheep of His pasture”*. It refers to Israel, the people of God, the flock under his protection, the flock led and defended by His skilful, powerful hand. It is the flock of his charge. Israel is Yahweh’s work. In these verses also Yahweh is depicted as the shepherd of the people, who leads his people to pastures.

1.2.26. Amos 1:1, 2

The words of Āmos, who was among the shepherds of Tekōa...And he said: The Lord roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shpherds wither, and the top of Carmel dries up.

These verses serve as an introduction to the whole book. V.1 tells who Amos is. It is said that he was among the shepherds of Tekoa. It is used in past tense as *‘who was’*. According to Anchor Bible the use of this past tense gives historical perspective to this detail. It could be the past in relation to his career. He used to be a sheep raiser and he became a prophet. In 7:14 and 15 we find Amos’ own testimony. In v.14 he introduces himself as a herdsman. In v.15 he says: *“Yahweh took me from following the flock”* and this clearly describes the clean break from his former vocation when he became a visionary⁵¹. According to James L. Mays Amos was one of the herdsmen (*nōqedīm*). This word *nōqedīm* is used only one other text in the OT i.e. 2 Kgs 3:4, where Mesha, king of Moab is called *nōqedīm*. The term appears once in the Ugaritic

⁵¹ Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Amos*, The Anchor Bible (New York, 1989) 186.

text as the title of herdsman who served the cultic establishment. The use of the term in OT and Ugaritic text suggest that Amos was not an ordinary shepherd, but a breeder of sheep who would have belonged to the notable men of his community⁵².

V.2: The voice of God is the thunder, the earthly substratum in which the lord manifests His coming to judgment (Joel 3:16). Amos connects his prophecy with his predecessor Joel, not so much in with the intention of confirming the latter, but for the purpose of alarming the sinners who were at ease in their security and overthrowing the delusive notion that the judgment of God would only fall upon the gentiles. This false notion he meets with the declaration that at the threatening of the wrath of God the pastures of the shepherds (the pasture ground of the land of Israel) and the head of the forest-crowned Carmel, will fade and wither⁵³. Here the shepherd imagery is used by Amos, a shepherd, to signify the Judgment of God upon Israel.

1.2.27. Zechariah 10:2, 3

For the teraphim utter nonsense and the diviners sees lies; the dreams, and give empty consolation. Therefore the people wander like sheep; they suffer for lack of a shepherd. My anger is hot against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders.”

Zechariah here uses the imagery of sheep and shepherd. According to Anchor Bible although it is very difficult to determine the subject of the simile ('sheep'), from the context it seems that it refers to exiled Israelites. This is further explained by the use of the imagery of shepherd: "*they have no shepherd*". Sheep without shepherd can hardly survive. The prophet here may be using the language of 1 Kgs 22, which uses the imagery of sheep without shepherd (v.17) in relation to the bad effects of questionably prophetic activity. The Hebrew word for sheep is *sō'n*, which means goats or flock. It is also frequently used in figurative language as a metaphor for dependent people, usually Israelites. In this context it refers to the exiled Israelites who have no leaders or prophets⁵⁴.

⁵² James Luther Mays, *Amos: A Commentary* (W&J Mackay& Co. Ltd, 1969) 19.

⁵³ C.F. Keil and F.Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol.10 (Massachusetts. 1989) p.241.

⁵⁴ Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *The Anchor Bible: Zechariah 9-14* (New York, 1993) 193.

The Hebrew word for shepherd is *rō'eh*. There are different opinions regarding the subject of the imagery shepherd used in vers.2 and 3. In v.2 singular term is used. One of the justifiable answers to this question we can find in Anchor Bible. According to Anchor Bible the imagery of shepherd can be found in several different parts of Second Zechariah, and its meaning differs from place to place. The singular noun in v.2 apparently refers to a prophet who, as in Jer 23:4 would be a legitimate leader and protector of the flock. In the context of the first two lines of this verse which deal with false prophecy this last line might also be a reference to their lack of a true prophet. In v.3 the context is negative, that the image of the shepherd is surely an appropriate characterization of some sort of leadership. When we analyse the text of Zechariah this leadership is none other than the group of false prophets. Because in the preceding verse we find that the prophet criticizes the false prophets (teraphim, diviners, dreamers etc.) and from Zechariah 9-4 we find the ongoing tension between true and false prophecy⁵⁵. So in these verses shepherd imagery is used in two senses: singular term is used to signify the true prophet and plural term is use to denote the false prophets.

1.2.28. Zechariah 11:3-17

When we analyse the book of Zechariah we find substantial difference between chapters 1-8 and chapters 9-14. Some of the scholars argue that the second part is written by some other hand than the author of chapters 1-8. This led the scholars to divide the whole book of Zechariah in to two: 1-8 as first Zechariah and 9-14 as second Zechariah. So the text for our study comes in the second section. Second Zechariah comprises two collections: chapters 9-11 and 12-14, each designated as an oracle.

According to New Interpreters Bible in v.3 we see the wailing of shepherds where as in v.2 the cypress and oak trees were called to wail for the fallen cedars. Shepherds will wail because their glory is ruined. The term used for glory is *adderet*, which in other places means “robe” or “mantle” Zech 13:4, Jonah 3:6- Assyrian King’s royal robe). The same veiled allusion to sovereignty occurs in the last part of verse 3, where young lions roar because the thickets of Jordan are ruined. In 10:11 the thickets is

⁵⁵ Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *The Anchor Bible: Zechariah 9-14*, 194.

the pride of Assyria. In Jer 49:19 and 50:44, Yahweh promises to come like a lion from the thickets of Jordan against a safe pasture and asks “who is the shepherd who can stand before me? By taking over the phrase thickets of Jordan Zechariah alludes both to the pride of Assyria and the shepherds whom Yahweh opposes.

According to C.F Keil and F.Delitzch cedars, cypresses and oaks are not figures representing earthly rulers. For them these verses mean the desolation of the land of Israel with all its powerful and glorious creatures. The desolation of the land involves the desolation of the people living in the land and its institutions. The devastation of Lebanon is a figurative representation of the destruction of the Israelite Kingdom, or of the dissolution of the political existence of the ancient covenant nation. This judgment was executed upon the land and people of Israel by the imperial power of Rome. This position seems to be justifiable. In verse three the shepherds refers to the leader of Israel.

Vers. 4-14 contains a symbolic act. By the command of Yahweh, the prophet assumes the office of a shepherd over the flock, and feeds it, until he is compelled by its ingratitude to break his shepherd’s staff, and give up the flock to destruction. This symbolic act is to be regarded as of importance through which the faithful care of the Lord for His people is symbolized and exhibited. The prophet does not come forward here as a performing these acts in his own person, but that he represents another, who does things in vers.8,12 and 13,which in truth neither Zechariah nor any other prophet ever did, but only God through His son. In vers.10 He is identified with God. The person who breaks the staff is the prophet, and the person who has made the covenant with the nations is God.

As we conclude the analysis of shepherd imagery in the OT we can draw certain conclusions based on this analysis: 1) Yahweh is the shepherd, who leads the people to green pastures. Though God is seldom called a shepherd, the concept was common and remained a favorite metaphor throughout Israelite history. 2) Human leaders, prophets or kings were called as shepherds.3) One of the main duties of the shepherd is to feed

the sheep or to lead them to green pastures (Ps 23:2, Ezek 34:13, Zech 11:4-17, Song of songs 1:7).

1.3. SHEPHERD IMAGERY IN THE LATER JUDAISM

In Palestinian Judaism we find two different views regarding the shepherd imagery: a) In a Rabbinic list of thieving and cheating occupations we find that of the shepherds. Like the publicans and tax collectors they were deprived of civil rights. They could not fulfil a judicial office or be admitted in court as witnesses⁵⁶. b) Though shepherds were despised in everyday life, even in later Judaism, on the basis of the OT statements, God was described as the shepherd of Israel who led his flock out of Egypt' guides them in the present, will one day gather again the scattered flock and will feed them on the Holy Mountain. Moreover the leaders of Israel are also called shepherds. Moses and David are extolled as faithful shepherds. In Essene community their leaders were called *mebaqqer* and he is compared to a shepherd and this comparison of the leader of the community with the shepherd is the closest analogy to the similar statements in NT. In the Rabbinic literature Messiah is compared to a shepherd⁵⁷.

In the writings of Philo also we find the use of the shepherd imagery. According to him mind (*νοῦς*) is the shepherd of the irrational powers of the soul. Philo compares the ruling of the nation by a ruler with the watching of a shepherd over his flock. He also describes sheep-herding as a good preparation for rule. Like OT he never uses this title for the kings of Judah and Israel. He uses this title for God also. God is shepherd and king, and He feeds the world and all that therein is representatively through his *Logos*⁵⁸.

1.4. SHEPHERD IMAGERY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus uses the image of shepherd to explain his mission both in the synoptics and in the Gospel of John. According to Pope Benedict XVI "pasturing sheep is an image of the task of a king as a ruler. This image implies that caring for the weak is one

⁵⁶ Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol.VI, (Michigan, 1969) 488.

⁵⁷ Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol.VI, 489.

⁵⁸ Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol.VI, 490.

of the tasks of the just ruler. One could therefore say that, in view of its origins, this image of Christ the Good shepherd is a gospel of Christ the king, an image that sheds light upon the kingship of Christ”.⁵⁹ In this section we concentrate on the NT use of shepherd imagery.

1.4.1. Mathew 9:36

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd”

In Mt 9:35 we find a summary statement: *“Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness”*. It sums up the two pillars of Jesus’ public ministry- teaching and healing. Mathew uses this summary statement twice as a technique of inclusion to indicate the beginning and end of literary unit. He starts to narrate about Jesus teaching and healing ministry with these words in 4:23. Mathew narrates Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7) and presents Jesus’ healing ministry in chs 8-9. He repeats the summary statement in 9:35 to indicate that his account of this part Christ’s public ministry is ending. As soon as the Pharisees accuse Jesus of working with Satan (9:34), Mathew closes the section (9:35) and launches a new literary unit and the theme of this unit is leadership in Israel (9:36) and Jesus establishes the new leadership in the twelve apostles, the new shepherds of the people (9:37-10:42)⁶⁰.

In 9:36 shepherd imagery is used to show Jesus’ concern and care for the people. His heart was moved with pity for them and it shows deep emotional concern. Church Father Hilary asks the question: “why Jesus is so moved with compassion for these people? According to him “clearly the Lord has pity on these people held in the sway of an unclean spirit and burdened by the law, no shepherd was about to restore to them the guardianship of the Holy Spirit”.⁶¹ Lacking leaders to guide them they are like

⁵⁹ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part 1(Vatican, 2007) 272.

⁶⁰ Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Mathew*, (Michigan, 2010) 138.

⁶¹ Manlio Simonetti (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament 1b, Matthew 1-13* (Illionois, 2002) 190.

sheep without shepherd. The Greek word used for shepherd is *ποιμνα* and the Syriac word used in P'shitta is ܩܘܢܐ. It alludes to Ezek 34, where we find the image of sheep without shepherd. It describes the suffering of God's people due to the corrupt leaders of Israel. In Ezek 34 itself God foretold that God himself would come to shepherd the people, uniting them under one shepherd, a Davidic king. By using the imagery from Ezekiel to describe the crowds as the 'sheep without shepherd' Mathew wants to tell us that Jesus is the fulfilment of this prophecy. He is the new shepherd foretold by Ezekiel and he will gather the people of Israel. This verse is an implicit critique of the leaders of Jesus' day. Instead of shepherding the people toward the Messiah, certain leaders accuse him of blasphemy. In this verse Jesus is depicted as the new shepherd who feeds the people⁶².

1.4.2. Mathew 25:31, 32

“When son of man comes in glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as shepherd separates the sheep from the goats”.

These verses are part of the eschatological discourse of Jesus given in the gospel of Mathew (24:45-25:46). The opening verse sets the scene. Son of Man comes in glory, surrounded by angels and sits majestically on his glorious throne. Christian tradition interprets this as a vision of last judgment. The son of man's first action is to assume the role of a shepherd who divides the flock from the goats. The Greek word used here is *ποιμνην* and the Syriac word is *Royo*. Normally the goats and sheep graze together. But here there is separation. From the context we can understand that the sheep represents the saints, for they are placed at the Lord's right, which in ancient cultures represented the good, fortunate, or honorable place (1 Kgs 2:19, Ps 110:1), while the left represented the bad⁶³. According to Church Father Epiphanius: “He our Lord, who knows our thoughts, who foresees all human works and knows how to judge

⁶² Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Mathew*, 139.

⁶³ Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Mathew*, 325.

righteously, will separate them according to the merits of each person, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats”.⁶⁴

1.4.3. Mathew 26:31, Mark 14:27

“Then Jesus said to them, you will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered’”.

On his way to the Mount of Olives, Jesus makes three predictions about the future. He has warned the disciples that one of them will be traitor (26:21) and now he foretells that all of them will abandon him. Their faith will be shaken and they will flee from their master’s side. This was already foretold by Zechariah (Zech 13:7). Zechariah foretold about messianic shepherd being struck down, only to have his sheep scattered in all directions. These words will be fulfilled that night (26:56). According to Pope Benedict XVI “on the way to the mount of olives after Last Supper, Jesus tells his disciples that the prophecy foretold in Zechariah 13:7 is about to be fulfilled: “I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered”. Zechariah does in fact present this passage the vision of shepherd who by God’s will patiently suffer death and in doing so initiates the final turn of events”.⁶⁵ According to John Chrysostom by quoting the prophesy of Zechariah “He was urging them to be attentive to what has been prophetically predicted of his death and resurrection, and at the same time he wanted to make it plain that he was indeed crucified according to God’s purpose”.⁶⁶ According to Jerome “the good shepherd is struck, however, that he may lay down his life for his sheep and that out of many flocks of wandering sheep there may be one flock and one shepherd”.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Manlio Simonetti (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament 1b: Matthew 14-28* (Illionois, 2002) 231.

⁶⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part 1, 274.

⁶⁶ Manlio Simonetti (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament 1b:Matthew 14-28*, 251.

⁶⁷ Manlio Simonetti (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament 1b, Matthew 14-28*, 251.

1.4.4. Mathew 18:12-14

In Mt 18:10-14 we find that Jesus warns that his disciples are not ones to despise. Such contempt for his little ones would be very opposite of what he said in 18:5. In the following verses he makes it clear through two illustrations. First, he shows tremendous value of every disciple by noting that all have their angels in heaven. In his second illustration, Jesus shows how care should be extended even to those who have gone astray. Here he uses the metaphor of shepherd and sheep. Jesus refers to a common OT metaphor depicting Israel as a flock of sheep and God as a shepherd (Ps 23, 95:7, Jer 23:1-4, Ezek 34). Particularly this story of lost sheep reflect the prophesy of Ezek 34, which foretold that God himself would become Israel's shepherd, seeking the sheep who have gone astray. For a shepherd each sheep is valuable and so precious that the Shepherd leaves the ninety-nine safe sheep and seeks the lost. In the same way little ones are valuable that the heavenly Father will go to great lengths to rescue him. In this story of lost sheep Jesus presents himself as the good shepherd foretold by Ezekiel: *"I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak"* Ezek 34:15, 16)⁶⁸. For Jerome Shepherd that seeks lost sheep is Christ and the lost sheep is sinful humanity: "when he said "see that you dot despise one of these little ones", he is calling us to be merciful. The he adds the parable of the ninety-nine sheep left in the mountains and the one stray that because of its great weakness could not walk. The good shepherd carried it on his shoulders to the rest of the flock. This, some say, is the shepherd "who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself".⁶⁹ For Epiphanius the sheep strayed is Adam. According to him: "for anyone who has sheep is a shepherd". No one is more truly a shepherd than Christ Our God. One of his sheep has strayed... This one sheep is the man Adam"⁷⁰.

⁶⁸ Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Mathew* (Michigan, 2010), 230.

⁶⁹ Manlio Simonetti (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament 1b:Matthew 14-28*, 74.

⁷⁰ Manlio Simonetti (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament 1b:Matthew 14-28*, 75.

1.4.5. Mark 6:34

“As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without shepherd; and he began to teach them many things”.

This verse is part of the feeding of five thousand in the gospel of Mark. When Jesus sees the crowd he had compassion for them. The word used for this compassion is *εσπλαγγνίσθη*. *πλαγγνα* is the root and it shows the motherly care of God. The reason for this compassion is that they were like sheep without shepherd. In the gospel of Mathew this expression comes at the end of Jesus healing ministry in chapters 8 and 9. The Syriac word used for shepherd is *ܩܪܝܢܐ* and the Greek word is *ποιμένα*. This phrase sheep without shepherd reflects an OT image used of Israel. It places the miracle under the motif of Jesus as the good shepherd, the promised eschatological shepherd, who feeds the sheep and this is the fulfillment of the Ezekiel’s prophesy: “ I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them and be their shepherd” (Ezek 34:23)⁷¹. Jesus as the good shepherd when he had compassion over them he began to shepherd them at once by teaching and feeding⁷².

1.4.6. Luke 2:8-20

In this passage the Good News of the birth of Jesus, the savior, is announced to a group of shepherds. There is enough in the OT tradition about Bethlehem and David to explain the relation of the shepherds to the birth of Jesus. Shepherds are not to be taken as examples of sinners but to whom the word of salvation is now brought by heavenly messengers. Their presence in the infancy narrative of Luke is another example for Luke’s preference for poor. According to Anchor Bible in the announcement of the Angel to the Lord (vers. 9-12) one of the five elements of the usual announcement story is missing i.e. objection. The other four elements are: the appearance of the angel of the Lord, the fear on the part of the shepherds, the heavenly message and the giving of a sign of reassurance. The essential message to shepherds is that in God’s providence a child is born who is to become for the world savior, Messiah and Lord. After the angel

⁷¹ Robert A. Guelich, *Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 34A (Dallas, 1989) 340.

⁷² R.C.H Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark’s Gospel* (Minnesota, 1964) 263.

of the Lord has announced his message to the shepherds he is joined by a group of the heavenly host that praises God at this announcement of the birth of the savior. In vers. 15-20 Luke records the reaction to the announcement of the birth of the savior. The first reaction is that of shepherds, who go in haste to verify what they had been told. They come and see. They find the child lying in the manger, and Mary and Joseph with him. The scene ends with their departure and further reaction of praise and glory to God for what they had seen and heard. They are symbols of spontaneous faith. In this passage Luke presents shepherds as the first who heard the message of savior's birth and projects them as examples of simple faith. On this passage Origen makes a beautiful comment "Listen, shepherds of the churches! His angel always come down from heaven and proclaims to you, "Today a savior is born for you, who is Christ the lord". For unless that shepherd comes, the shepherds of the churches will be unable to guard the flock well".⁷³

1.4.7. Luke 15:1-7

The three parables of chap.15: the lost sheep (vv.4-7), the lost coin (vv.8-10) and the lost prodigal son are distinctive of the Lucan portrait of Jesus that this part of his account has been called the 'heart of the third Gospel'. They make a major contribution to the Lucan theme of God's mercy and love for sinful humankind and of Jesus' call for repentance and conversion. In the parable of the lost sheep the shepherd leaves the ninety- nine sheep to go and search for the lost one. When he finds it he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices with his friends and neighbors. This imagery of shepherd who searches the lost sheep has a reference to Ezekiel 34:16: "I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak". This prophesy is fulfilled in Jesus because He is the good shepherd who came to the world in search of the lost. Pope Benedict XVI makes a beautiful comment about this parable: "faced with the murmuring of Pharisees and scribes over Jesus' table fellowship with sinners, the Lord tells the parable of the ninety nine sheep who remained in the fold and the one lost sheep. The shepherd goes after the lost sheep, lifts

⁷³ Arthur A, Just Jr., *Ancient Christian Commentary: New Testament III: Luke,40.*

it joyfully upon his shoulders and brings it home. Jesus put this parable as a question to his adversaries: Have you not read God’s word in Ezekiel? I am only doing what God, the good shepherd foretold: I wish to seek out the sheep that are lost and bring the strayed back home”⁷⁴. According to Ambrose “who are the Father, the shepherd and the woman? They are God the Father, Christ and the Church. Christ carries you on His body, he took your sins on himself”⁷⁵. For him the lost sheep on the shoulders of Christ is Adam who is saved through Christ: “Let us rejoice that the sheep that had strayed in Adam is lifted on Christ. The shoulders of Christ are the arms of the cross. There I laid down my sins. I rested on the neck of that noble yoke”⁷⁶. According to Tertullian it is the patience of the Shepherd that makes him seek and find the sheep: “There is a breadth of patience in our Lord’s parables, the patience of the shepherd that makes him seek and find the straying sheep”⁷⁷.

1.4.8. Ephesians 4:11

“The gifts he gave were that some would be Apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers”.

Ephesians 4:1-6 speaks about unity in the church. In this section v.11 gives a list of different ministries in the church. Christ has given this ministers as part of the overall purpose for which he ascended i.e. his work of filling all things might be brought to completion. The first two groups of ministers listed here are Apostles and prophets. The definite article, which has been employed for each of the three categories mentioned so far, is repeated before pastors but omitted before teachers. Therefore some argue that these two categories are identical and for them the translation is ‘teaching shepherds’. In Acts 13:1 those designated teachers in Antioch are exercising leadership, while in the pastoral letters teaching is a major role of the church leader. Almost all pastors were teachers and not all teachers were pastors. The omission of definite article therefore suggests the close association of these functions. The word here used for pastor or

⁷⁴ Joseph Ratzinger, Jesus of Nazareth, Part 1, 273,274.

⁷⁵ Arthur A, Just Jr., *Ancient Christian Commentary: New Testament III: Luke* (Illionois, 2003), 244.

⁷⁶ Arthur A, Just Jr., *Ancient Christian Commentary: New Testament III: Luke*, 244.

⁷⁷ Arthur A, Just Jr., *Ancient Christian Commentary: New Testament III: Luke*, 244.

shepherd is ποιμενας. Though this term is used of Christ himself in Jn 10:1 in Heb 13:20, it is now employed for Church leaders. Only here in the NT that this word is used in this sense.⁷⁸

1.4.9. Hebrews 13:20

“Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of eternal covenant”

The fact that God is invoked as “the God of peace may suggest that community was in disunity and it has to be healed if the pleasure of God was to be wrought out in their midst. Peace in the Old Testament has the fuller sense of well-being and salvation.

This is the only place in the epistle where the title shepherd is given to Jesus; but it is a title which comprehends the other roles which are here assigned to him. The form of title is derived from Is 63:11: “where is the one who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? The words in their original context refer to Moses- or if the plural “shepherds” it refers to Moses and Aron as in Ps 77:20. Here it is applied to Jesus as the second Moses, who was wrought from the realm of dead. In the Exodus typology of the New Testament the “sea of reeds” which Israel crossed on the way out of Egypt is a token of the death and resurrection of Jesus in to which His people are baptized⁷⁹. So in Heb 13:20 shepherd imagery is used to signify Jesus as the second Moses.

1.4.10. I Peter 2:25

“For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your soul”

In this verse Christ is depicted as the shepherd and overseer of soul. The word ‘sheep’ refers to Jewish Christians who were in the fold as sheep and then wandered away and have now returned. Now they have returned to Christ. Now these slaves who are being addressed by Peter, like all other readers, are under Christ who is their shepherd (Jn 10:13). By adding overseer Peter makes it more emphatic. Wandering

⁷⁸ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Hebrews*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, 1990) 248,249.

⁷⁹ F.F Bruce, *The Epistle to Hebrew* (Michigan, 1981) 410, 411.

sheep have no one to look after them and are thus doomed to perish. But Christ look after his sheep. *Επισκοπος* is the word used for overseer (guardian) and *ποιμνενα* is the word used for shepherd. It denotes one who is placed over us. The use of this word with reference to Christ has nothing to do with the congregational office. Peter has in mind only the figure of the sheep who once went astray now came to Christ who cares them. They have Christ as their overseer and shepherd⁸⁰.

1.4.11. 1 Peter 5:4

“And when the chief of shepherds appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away”

With a beautiful analogy Peter calls Christ as “the chief of shepherds” (*ἀρχιποίμενος*) and the syriac word is (*Rab Rovavoso*), which recalls Jesus’ own words about himself as “good shepherd”. He is the supreme shepherds of the flock, all others are shepherds under Him, who must learn their shepherding from Him. ‘Having been manifested’ refers to Parousia of Christ. Then the elders and shepherds will receive fadeless glory for themselves. The Greek word *στέφανοις* used for glory and it refers to a chaplet or encircles the head (James 1:12). It denotes highest honour and distinction⁸¹. Here Christ is presented as the good shepherd who comes to judge the world.

As a conclusion to our study of NT imagery of Shepherd we can draw the following conclusions: 1) Christ is primarily the Good shepherd who seeks the lost, feeds the people, judges the world and who is the overseer of the soul and the chief of shepherds. 2) Ministers of the Church are called shepherds in so far as they carry out the duties entrusted to them by Christ, the good shepherd. 3) One of the primary duty of the shepherd is to feed the flock.

1.5. SHEPHERD IMAGERY IN THE CHURCH FATHERS

Church Fathers were the real defenders of faith in the early centuries of Christianity. They paved way for the growth of the theology and faith of the Church.

⁸⁰ R.C.H Lenski, *The Interpretation of I and II Epistles of Peter* (Minnesota, 1969) 125, 126.

⁸¹ R.C.H Lenski, *The Interpretation of I and II Epistles of Peter*, 221.

Though we don't find systematic exposition or intellectual frame work in the writings of Fathers we can see the expression of their deep Christ experience in their writings. Their writings are biblical. They have written enormously on Biblical themes. In this section our attempt is to analyse the concept of shepherd in the writings of Fathers.

1.5.1. Apostolic Tradition

In Apostolic tradition indirectly the title shepherd is assigned to both Christ and Bishop: “*grant your servant, whom you have chosen for the episcopate, to feed your Holy flock*”⁸². Here church is called as ‘your holy flock’ and ‘your’ here refers to Christ.

1.5.2. Cyprian

In the letter of Cyprian to Stephen of Rome the title shepherd is applied directly to the leaders or ministers of the Church and indirectly to Christ: “*so that if anyone of our college attempts to fashion heresy and to wound and lay waste the flock of Christ, the others may intervene and as useful and merciful shepherds, gather the Lord's sheep in to the flock*”.⁸³

1.5.3. Aphraates the Persian Sage

Aphraates while giving many titles to Christ, he calls Jesus as shepherd: “*But still it is for us a certainty that Our Lord Jesus is God, the son of God; and the King, the Son of the King; Light from Light; Creator, and counsellor, and guide, and the way, and the savior, and the shepherd, and the Gatherer, and the Gate, and the Pearl, and the lamp*”⁸⁴.

1.5.4. Martyrdom of Saint Polycarp

In this document Christ is depicted as the shepherd of the Catholic Church: “*Now with the Apostles and all the just he is glorifying God and the Father almighty, and he is blessing Our Lord Jesus Christ, the savior of all souls, the Helmsman of our bodies and the shepherd of Catholic Church throughout the world.*”⁸⁵

⁸² William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol.1 (Minnesota, 1970) 167

⁸³ William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol.1, 235.

⁸⁴ William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol.1, 305.

⁸⁵ William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol.1, 31.

1.5.5. Synodal letter of St. Ambrose and others to Pope Siricius

Ambrose applies the title shepherd to both Christ and ministers of the Church: *“We recognized in the letter of Your Holiness the vigilance of the good shepherd. You faithfully watch over the gate entrusted to you and with pious solicitude you guard Christ’s sheepfold, you that are worthy to have the Lord’s sheep hear and follow you. Since you know the sheep of Christ you will easily catch the wolves and confront them like a wary shepherd, lest they disperse the Lord’s flock by their constant lack of faith and their bestial howling”*.⁸⁶

1.5.6. Shepherd of Hermas

In this writing Jesus is titled as the master of the flock and ministers of the church as shepherds: *“Be of one spirit and put away these wicked divisions. Remove them from your midst, so that the master of the flock may rejoice in His sheep. He will rejoice if all be found whole. But if He finds some of them fallen away, woe to the shepherds. And if the shepherds themselves be fallen away, how shall they answer for the flock? That they have fallen away because of the sheep? They will not be believed. It is beyond credibility that a shepherd should be harmed by his sheep; and their punishment will be the greater because of their lie. I, too, am a shepherd, and I have the gravest obligation to give an account for you”*.⁸⁷

1.5.7. Cyprian of Carthage

Cyprian calls the ministers of the Church as shepherds; *“...all are shepherds, and the flock is shown to be one, fed by all the Apostles in single-minded accord”*.⁸⁸

1.5.8. St. Damasus I, Pope

He calls Christ as the shepherd: *“the arrangement of the names of Christ, however is manifold: Lord, because He is Spirit...Shepherd because He is guardian”*.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol.2 (Collegeville, 1979) 148.

⁸⁷ William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol.1, 37.

⁸⁸ William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol.1, 220.

⁸⁹ William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol.1, 405.

1.5.9. Narsai

Narsai in his homily ‘on the Church and priesthood’ uses the shepherd imagery to signify both Christ and priests. Christ is called as good shepherd who freed the sheep from slavery through his suffering and death: “*Shepherds of reasonable sheep they are called by our Lord; and according to the needs of the flock, so also is the spiritual nourishment. To them was spoken that word to Simon, that they should pasture the sheep and the reasonable lambs and ewes. Hear the words of that interrogation, O ye priests of the Church; and how the love that Simon showed to our savior. Pasture (your sheep) well according to the command of the Good Shepherd; and tend his flock with great love that befits His love. See and examine, how He bought with His blood the flock of men; and on the summit of the cross He wrote and set it free from slavery. See how he suffered from wrongdoers for the sake of His flock, and despised and made light of all sufferings that it might not perish*”.⁹⁰ From the study of the Church Fathers it is very clear that they apply the imagery of shepherd to both Christ and the ministers of the Church. Ministers of the Church are shepherds because they are called and appointed by God, the good shepherd. One of the important duties of the Shepherd is to feed the flock.

1.6. IMAGERY OF GOOD SHEPHERD IN THE WEST SYRIAN LITURGY

One of the specialties of the Antiochean Liturgy is that it is highly Scripture centered. We can find extensive use of imageries and themes from Bible in it. Most of the songs and hymns used in West Syrian Liturgy are that of St. Ephrem and Jacob of Serug and one of the features of their writings is that it is highly Biblical. Comparing to other Liturgy the West Syrian Liturgy enormously uses the imagery of good shepherd. In this section our attempt is to find out this imagery in the West Syrian Liturgy. For this I have selected only three liturgical texts: Thaksa, *S’himo Namaskaram* (book of daily prayers) and Order of the service of Holy Week

⁹⁰ Dom R.H. Connolly, *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai* (Cambridge, 1909) 69.

1.6.1. Holy Qurbono

In the *Huthomo* at the end of *Thuyobo* service in the Holy Qurbono the priest prays: “have mercy upon your flock”⁹¹. Here there is an implicit mention of Jesus as the shepherd. In one of the *sedros* of Holy Qurbono the priest prays “kindly accept us in heaven with your sheep at the right hand”⁹². Here there is a reference to Mathew 25:31-46, where Jesus as the shepherd separates the sheep and goats. In one of the *proemions* of Holy Qurbono Christ is depicted as the true shepherd (*Royo Sariro*) who sustained His flock with his blood and body: “praise be to the true shepherd with whose body His flock is sustained and with whose precious blood, the thirst of His Church is quenched”⁹³. The same idea is found in another Sedro; “the good shepherd who gave himself as food for his flock and mixed His blood a drink for his sheep”⁹⁴. In another sedro Christ is pictured as the good shepherd who sacrificed himself for his flock: “praise to the good shepherd who sacrificed himself for his own flock”⁹⁵ and this same idea can be found in another *Proemion*, where it is said “praise be to the Holy High Priest who became an accepted oblation to His Father for the sake of His Flock”⁹⁶. In another Sedro Christ is depicted as the good shepherd slaughtered for the sheep⁹⁷. In the Anaphora of St, James in the prayer just before the lifting up of *shushefo* we find the concept of Shepherd who came in to the world in search of lost sheep: “O God the Father, who by Your great love toward mankind, did send Your son in to the world to bring back the sheep that had gone astray”⁹⁸. In the thanksgiving prayer at the end of the Holy Qurbono the priest recites psalm 23, which calls Yahweh as the shepherd.⁹⁹

⁹¹ Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil (ed), *Trilingual Eucharist Service Book (Thakso d Kurobo)* (Cheeranchira, 2008) 38.

⁹² Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil (ed), *Trilingual Eucharist Service Book (Thakso d Kurobo)*, 51.

⁹³ Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil (ed), *Trilingual Eucharist Service Book (Thakso d Kurobo)*, 72.

⁹⁴ Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil (ed), *Trilingual Eucharist Service Book (Thakso d Kurobo)*, 90.

⁹⁵ Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil (ed), *Trilingual Eucharist Service Book (Thakso d Kurobo)*, 74.

⁹⁶ Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil (ed), *Trilingual Eucharist Service Book (Thakso d Kurobo)*, 73.

⁹⁷ Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil (ed), *Trilingual Eucharist Service Book (Thakso d Kurobo)*, 94.

⁹⁸ Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil (ed), *Trilingual Eucharist Service Book (Thakso d Kurobo)*, 124.

⁹⁹ Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil (ed), *Trilingual Eucharist Service Book (Thakso d Kurobo)*, 185.

1.6.2. Daily Prayers (*S'himo*)

In the bovooso (hymn of supplication) of Mar Jacob, Christ is pictured as the good shepherd that seeks the lost sheep: “the good sheep that goes in search of lost sheep, save us from the devil that desires our life”.¹⁰⁰ In the *Kolo* of Friday evening we find the concept of Jesus as the Master of shepherds: “*Wolves has killed the sheep and the sheep has scattered in different places, there is no shepherd. Halleluiah- The master of Shepherds kindly gather your flock*”.¹⁰¹ Here there is a reference to Ezek 34. In the *kolo* of the *Suthoro* of Tuesday we find an indirect mention of Christ as the shepherd who goes in search of lost sheep and when he find he carries it in his shoulders.¹⁰² In the *Kolo* of Thursday evening the ministers of the Church are called shepherds¹⁰³. In the *kolo* of Friday night Christ is called as Shepherd: “Shepherd sleeps in the in the wings of the cross and the flock is scattered in all around Jerusalem”¹⁰⁴. In the *Kolo* Friday morning another concept of Christ as the heavenly shepherd, who comes to judge the world: “I pasture myself in green pastures with the sheep and I rejoice in the still waters. Shepherd will come and what I will do? I am the misfortunate one, who is in the side of goats. Heavenly Shepherd! Make me a good sheep”¹⁰⁵

1.6.3. Prayer book of Holy Week

In the hymn on Monday of Holy Week evening we find that Christ is presented as the one who came to sacrifice himself for the flock: “he came from heaven and became man in order to sacrifice himself for the flock”¹⁰⁶ and in the hymn on Tuesday night Church prays: “Good Shepherd we keep our eyes alert to hear your Good news. Your passion became a fort for the Church. Drive away the wolf, which tried to steal the sheep”.¹⁰⁷ In another prayer of the same day we find: “Shepherd came and visited sheep and spoke to them. He invited sheep to the place of His Father, which is filled with

¹⁰⁰ *S'himo Namaskaram* (Mal.) (Trivandrum, 2009), 78.

¹⁰¹ *S'himo Namaskaram* (Mal.), 205.

¹⁰² *S'himo Namaskaram* (Mal.), 292.

¹⁰³ *S'himo Namaskaram* (Mal.), 378.

¹⁰⁴ *S'himo Namaskaram* (Mal.), 401.

¹⁰⁵ *S'himo Namaskaram* (Mal.), 415.

¹⁰⁶ *Hasa Ashchayile Prarthana Kramam* (Mal) (Trivandrum, 2008) 32.

¹⁰⁷ *Hasa Ashchayile Prarthana Kramam* (Mal), 129.

green pastures and still waters”.¹⁰⁸ The same idea can be found in one of the prayers on Wednesday night: “Good Shepherd visited the flock. He directed it to the peaceful land. He suggested means to enter in to the presence of the Father spiritually”.¹⁰⁹ In one of the *Ekbos* on Wednesday night, Church blesses Christ, the good shepherd: “Blessed is the one who is the shepherd of the sheep and blessed is the one who became sacrifice for us”.¹¹⁰ In the prayers of Holy Week we find another idea that Christ took the form of sheep and saved them from the hands of merchants: “the Just one willed to become man and saved the flock that is enslaved by Satan. He took the form of sheep and liberated them from the hands of merchants”.¹¹¹ Another specific idea that we find in the prayers of the Holy Week is presenting Habel, the shepherd as the pre-figuration of Christ, the Good Shepherd: “Blessed is the shepherd, who pastured His flock... Habel pre-figured our Shepherd and his sacrifice through his sacrifice. His pastoral nature and His nature as victim were already pre-figured”.¹¹² In one of the prayers of Good Friday evening asks the Church, the flock, to sing praise to God, who said that I am the Good Shepherd and who saved us through his blood and body.¹¹³ In the prayer on Saturday night we recite: “your suffering did not prevent you from seeking your sheep. You sought him in the midst of departed ones in the Hades and you found out. You did not abandon it. You entered in to Hades and sought your image like the one who is baptizing and it entered in to the garden, which is its right”.¹¹⁴ As a conclusion we can say that West Syrian Liturgy extensively uses this imagery of Shepherd to highlight the relation between Christ, the bridegroom and Church, the bride.

¹⁰⁸ *Hasa Ashchayile Prarthana Kramam* (Mal), 131.

¹⁰⁹ *Hasa Ashchayile Prarthana Kramam* (Mal), 189.

¹¹⁰ *Hasa Ashchayile Prarthana Kramam* (Mal), 173.

¹¹¹ *Hasa Ashchayile Prarthana Kramam* (Mal), 175.

¹¹² *Hasa Ashchayile Prarthana Kramam* (Mal), 178.

¹¹³ *Hasa Ashchayile Prarthana Kramam* (Mal), 321.

¹¹⁴ *Hasa Ashchayile Prarthana Kramam* (Mal), 425.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have conducted an analysis of Shepherd imagery in Bible, Church Fathers and West Syrian Liturgy. From this analysis we can draw certain conclusions with a view to our further study. Shepherd imagery is used in Bible, Fathers and Liturgy to denote the close relation between God and his people. The leaders or ministers of community are also called as shepherds because they have to fulfill the will of God, the Good shepherd. The main duties of the shepherd are to watch over the sheep and to make sure that the sheep has enough food and water. Feeding is the main duty of the shepherd and we will deal with it in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

FEEDING DUTY OF GOD AS THE SHEPHERD

INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter we have done an analysis of the shepherd imagery in the Bible. From the analysis it is very clear that shepherd imagery is one of the important symbols used in the Holy Scripture to depict the relation between God and His people. From this analysis we can draw certain points: 1) Israelites were mainly shepherds, 2) the leaders and rulers of Israelite community were called shepherds, 3) Yahweh is pictured as the shepherd of the people. 4) In the NT Jesus is the good shepherd. 5) Ministers of the Church are also called shepherds. Another important thing that we understood from the analysis of the shepherd imagery is that one of the main duties of the shepherd is to feed the sheep i.e. to make sure that sheep has enough food and drink. Therefore in this second chapter our aim is to see how God feeds the people as their shepherd. For this study we have taken the main feeding events in the Bible through which God feeds the people. We know that there are so many feeding events in the Bible and we cannot analyze all these events. So for the purpose of our study we have taken only those feeding events which have Eucharistic significance because it will shed light on our theme of third chapter.

2.1. FEEDING EVENTS IN THE OT

From our analysis of Old Testament concept of shepherd imagery we come to know that the primary duty of the Shepherd is to feed the people. Yahweh is the shepherd of the people. The main duty of Yahweh as the shepherd is to feed His sheep (Israel). In Isaiah 40:11 we find: *“He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in the arms, and carry the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.”* In Ezekiel 34: 13, 14 Yahweh depicts himself as the good shepherd who feeds the people: *I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie*

down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel". In Psalm 23 Psalmist presents Yahweh as his shepherd who feeds him with green pastures: "He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters". In this section our attempt is to find out concrete examples of this feeding by Yahweh or to analyse how this promise (I will feed) of Yahweh is realized in different feeding events.

2.1.1. Passover Meal (Exodus 12-13)

The Hebrew term for Passover is 'pesah'. The etymology of the word is disputed. In general it is understood that this word is derived from the verb 'psh', which means 'to limp' or 'to jump'. Thus it would refer concretely to the fact that in the tenth plague Yahweh 'jumped over' the houses where this rite had been properly observed. In Greek the equivalent word is 'pascha', which is a transcription of the Aramaic word 'pasha'. In the OT this word stands for the sacrificial rite of the paschal lamb starting after mid-day on the 14th Nisan and ending by the ritual meal after sunset. This is also the starting point of the feast of unleavened bread¹¹⁵. According to Jean Danielou "the series made up of the anointing of the posts and lintels of the doors of the Hebrews with the blood of the paschal lamb, to preserve the first-born from the destroying angel, an anointing which was accompanied by the eating of the lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. These two aspects of the Pasch correspond to the two translations of the word pascha given by the Fathers of the Church. The majority, following, Philo, translate it by *diabasis* "crossing", and it understand to mean the crossing of the red sea, but others, in particular Thodoret, express it by *hyperbasis* "to pass over", and understand it to mean, that the destroying angel passed over the houses marked with the blood of the lamb; this is the meaning, moreover, which corresponds to the true significance of the word".¹¹⁶

Exodus 12-13 consists of God's instruction to Moses and Aron regarding Passover which is to be conveyed to people (12: 1-20), Moses' speech to the people

¹¹⁵ Dr. Joseph Kottackal, "The Jewish Passover and Jesus' Last supper" in *Biblehashyam*, Vol.IV, No.1 (March 1978, Kottayam), 18.

¹¹⁶ Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame, 1956) 163.

regarding Passover ritual (21-27), the response of the people (27b-28), narrative section which describes the killing of the first born and the Israelites' coming out of Egypt (29-39), another set of instructions by Yahweh to Moses (43-49), people's obedient reaction (v.51), Yahweh's speech to Moses (13:1-2) and Moses' instruction to people (13:3-16).¹¹⁷

In the event of Passover what is important for our study is that Yahweh here feeds the people as their shepherd. In Exodus chapter 12 and 13 Yahweh feeds the people with paschal lamb and unleavened bread and leads them out of Egypt. This event alludes to Isa 40:11 where Yahweh is depicted as the shepherd, who feeds the flock and gathers the lambs in the arms, and carries the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom, and gently leads the mother sheep. It also has a reference to Isaiah 63:11 where we find: *"Then they remembered the days of old, of Moses his servant, where is the one who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock?"* In Ezekiel 34:13 we find *"I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country"*. In the Passover event through the eating of the paschal lamb, sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb, eating of the unleavened bread Yahweh is preparing the people to lead them to the green pastures of Promised (Ps 23:2).

Now let us turn our attention to the Eucharistic significance of this event. A Jewish Passover was the "hour" fixed by the father for Jesus, towards which Jesus consciously moved, according to the Gospels. Jesus died as our 'Paschal Lamb' our Passover (1Cor 5:7, Jn 19:34, 36, 1Pet 1:18). Jesus' farewell meal, on which is founded the Eucharistic anamnesis re-presenting the Christ-event, is brought in to connection in the synoptics with an OT Passover meal of the Jews.¹¹⁸

The theology of the Jewish Passover is centered on the fundamental saving acts of Yahweh. God freed Israel from the slavery of Egypt and led them to the Promised

¹¹⁷ Dr. Joseph Kottackal, "The Jewish Passover and Jesus' Last supper" in *Biblehashyam*, Vol.IV, No.1 (March 1978, Kottayam),18.

¹¹⁸ Dr. Joseph Kottackal, "The Jewish Passover and Jesus' Last supper", 28.

Land and it happened through the killing and eating of the paschal lamb also because of the sprinkling of its blood. These events symbolize the sacrifice of Christ, the New Testament Paschal lamb, the salvation of the world from the bondage of sin and death through the blood of Christ¹¹⁹. For the Israelites the blood of the paschal lamb was a sign and a reality of their salvation from evil powers. For us Christians the blood of Christ, the paschal lamb, is a sign and reality of salvation from sin and death, which is continuously offered in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.¹²⁰

The OT Passover foreshadowed God's true redemption. God's redemption is not simply a political liberation from an Egyptian tyrant, but involves the struggle with sin and evil, and the transformation of life. Similarly the slaughtered lamb becomes the symbol of God's redemption. I Peter makes the move of bringing together the Passover lamb with the suffering servant (2:22). The Christian testifies to his redemption by sharing in Christ's suffering from the sins of the world. The celebration of the Eucharist likewise points to the dimension of new life as identification with Christ's death and resurrection¹²¹.

According to Danielou "like the banquet of Wisdom and the meals in the temple, the Paschal meal was considered in Judaism as a figure of the Kingdom to come, considered as a messianic feast"¹²². According to J. Leenhardt "the thought of the paschal meal was dominated by the memory of the redemption that had already been accomplished and by the waiting for a new redemption which should fulfill definitely the virtualities of the first"¹²³. We find in the NT the echo of this eschatological interpretation: "I have greatly desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer. For, I say to you, I will eat it no more until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God" (Lk 22:15). Thus the Pasch, eaten by the Lord with His disciples before the passion, is a figure of the messianic banquet to which Christ will invite His own in the Kingdom of the Father.

¹¹⁹ Dr. Joseph Kottackal, "The Jewish Passover and Jesus' Last supper", 28.

¹²⁰ Dr. Joseph Kottackal, "The Jewish Passover and Jesus' Last supper", 29.

¹²¹ Brevard S. Childs, *Exodus: A Commentary* (London, 1977) 209.

¹²² Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 168.

¹²³ F.J. Leenhardt, *Le sacrement de la sainte cene*, 21 as cited in Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 168.

Between the Jewish Paschal meal and Messianic banquet, the Eucharist meal is an intermediate link. It is the anticipated realization of the Messianic banquet prefigured by the Paschal meal.¹²⁴

When we analyse the teachings of Church Fathers we find this Connection between Eucharist and paschal meal. In the *Paschal Homilies* of Pseudo- Chrysostom we see that the sprinkling of the blood is understood as the pre-figuration of the baptism and eating of the paschal lamb as the symbol of Eucharist¹²⁵. Cyril of Alexandria develops the Eucharistic Symbolism of Paschal meal. He interprets the precept of eating the Pasch in the evening as meaning the fact that the Sacramental Eucharist is reserved to this present life. The text prescribes that meat should be eaten in the night, that is to say, in the present world. For this is what Paul called it, when he said: “The night is passed, the day is coming”. By the day he means the future age of which Christ is the light. The text, then, says that the meat should be eaten in this world. Indeed as long as we are in this world, it is by the holy flesh and the precious blood that we communicate in Christ in a way that is still imperfect. The paschal meal, celebrated by the people while it was still night before the day of their celebration, is a figure also of the Eucharist, as being a form of communion with Christ in the present life and a figure of the feast of the world to come¹²⁶. Cyril of Alexandria connects the character of the Eucharist with the relation of the paschal lamb to the death of Christ. According to him “the communion in the holy body and the drinking of the saving blood contains the confession of the passion and the death received for us by Christ. He said Himself in instituting for His own the laws of the sacrament: ‘Whenever you eat this bread and drink of this chalice you announce the death of the Lord’. In the present world, then, by communion in these realities, we announce His death; when we shall be in the glory of the Father, it will be time no longer to confess His passion, but to contemplate him purely, as God, face to face¹²⁷. For Cyril “paschal lamb was the sacrament of the Old Covenant, recalling God’s free choice of the people of Israel. So Eucharist is the ‘blood

¹²⁴ Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 168.

¹²⁵ Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 171.

¹²⁶ Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 169.

¹²⁷ Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 169.170.

of the New Covenant, shed for remission of sins' not only for the Jewish people, but of a great multitude".¹²⁸

In the West Syrian liturgy in the *Sedro* of evening prayer on Maundy Thursday we pray "*how wonderful is the mysterious room, where the one aged Lamb of the OT was eaten and the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world was eaten as the victim of the sacrifice*".¹²⁹ In the same *Sedro* we find a beautiful prayer in comparison with the OT Passover Meal: "*Make us worthy to receive your body and blood befittingly. Kindly save us from the destroyer (evil one) so that he may not enter in and destroy the pure thoughts about your saving passion and death. Kindly make us worthy to eat this by girding truth as our belt, peace as the sandals, the victorious cross as the staff. Kindly make us to receive it by adding truth as salt, boiled in the fire of love and stand firm in true faith*".¹³⁰ In the *Sedro* of the Morning Prayer on Maundy Thursday we find: "*On this day you sealed the Old Law and wrote the new. On this day you, who is our Lord, broke the body and mingled it with blood and gave it to your twelve disciples*".¹³¹

In the Paschal meal we find the rite of eating unleavened bread. Cyril of Alexandria sees Eucharistic symbolism in it. According to him "the text prescribed that the Jews eat unleavened bread, signifying figuratively that those who have partaken of Christ should nourish their souls with desires unleavened and pure, making themselves familiar with a way of life that is innocent and with no admixture of malice".¹³² From the above analysis we can draw the following conclusion regarding Paschal meal: 1) Yahweh is the shepherd who feeds the people, 2) Paschal meal is the pre-figuration of the body and blood of Christ, the meal prepared by Christ, the good Shepherd.

¹²⁸ Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 172.

¹²⁹ Hasa Azchayile Proemion Sedra (Mal.) (Trivandrum, 2013).

¹³⁰ Hasa Azchayile Proemion Sedra (Mal.), 64.

¹³¹ Hasa Azchayile Proemion Sedra (Mal.), 70.

¹³² Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 174.

2.1.2. Giving Water at Marah (Exodus 15:22-27)

During their journey in the desert, the Israelites were given not only food but also drink. When they came to Marah there was no good water to drink. People complained against Moses. Moses cried out to the Lord and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. Moses threw it in to the water and the water became sweet. In Psalm 23:2 we find that Yahweh as the shepherd leads the sheep to still waters. In Ezekiel 34:14 we see “*I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the water courses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land*”. Here in this passage Yahweh gives sweet water to the people. This event also has a Eucharistic significance. The wood which God showed to Moses and by which he makes the water sweet refers to tree of life in the Paradise (Gen 2:9, 3:22, Rev 12:2)¹³³. In the West Syrian Liturgy Eucharist is considered to be the fruit of the tree of life. In the Baptismal Liturgy when Holy Communion is given to the baptizing person community recite: “the fruit which Adam did not taste in the Paradise is placed on your tongue on this day”¹³⁴. In the west Syrian tradition the sanctuary (*Madbaha*) is considered to be the earthly paradise. The book of the four gospels placed on the table of *Evangelion* symbolizes the four trees in the Garden of Eden. Cross placed on the altar is the symbol of the tree of life. The body and blood on the altar, in front of the cross symbolize the body and blood of Christ¹³⁵. St. Ephrem in his commentary on Exodus says: “the tree was a symbol of the cross, by which the bitterness of the nations was going to be sweetened”.¹³⁶

In the same account in Ex 15:27 God leads Israelites to the place called Elim. Elim is a place of plentiful water and fruits. It is true that the distance from Howara is short, but made them to encamp at Elim so that they get enough food and water. By this Israel has to understand that Yahweh as good Shepherd could make His people to lie down in green pastures, and lead them beside still waters, even in the barren desert of this life¹³⁷. In the West Syrian tradition church is called spiritual Elim because church is

¹³³ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on Old Testament*, Vol.1 (Massachusetts, 1989) 59.

¹³⁴ *Koodasakramam* (Mal.) (Trivandrum, 2008) 36.

¹³⁵ Fr. Geevarghese Paniker, *Malankara Qurbana Theerthdakasabhayil* (Mal.), (Charummodu, 2015) 71.

¹³⁶ Alison Salvesan, *The Exodus commentary of St. Ephrem* (Kottayam, 1995) 49.

¹³⁷ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on Old Testament*, Vol.1, 60.

the resting place in our Pilgrim to heavenly Jerusalem. In this resting place we have sacraments especially Eucharist as green pastures and waters¹³⁸.

2.1.3. Giving Manna (Exodus 16)

It is the food which Israelites ate during the forty years of their journey in the desert. According to Exodus 16, it was the bread from heaven (v.15); it was white and sweet (v.31). According to the book of Numbers, it could be ground and made in to cakes (Num 11:7-8). In the book of Psalms Manna is the bread of the angels and the grain of heaven Ps 78:24-25).

The basis for the English word *manna* is the Septuagint version of Numbers 11:5, 6. The Hebrew word *man* that appears in these verses was translated in to manna, which through vulgate got acceptance in English. The Hebrew word *man* comes from the rare verbal form *manan* which means ‘to divide’, ‘to give’ or ‘to distribute’. This meaning goes well with Ex 16:15: “*It is the bread that Lord has given to you to eat*”. Therefore *man* means ‘a gift’. Thus, *manhou* means ‘it is a gift’. Therefore the correct rendering of Exodus 16:15 would be “When the people of Israel saw it they said to one another ‘it is a gift’. They did not know what it was. They see it as a gift from God. God had already told them through Moses, “*I will rain bread from heaven for you*” (Ex 16:4). In Deuteronomy manna is more seen as a spiritual food. According to Deuteronomy from the event of Manna, Israel had to learn the lesson that Man lives not by bread alone, but by the word of God coming from the mouth of the Lord (Dt 8:2-3). Manna was intended to make Israel conscious of their dependence on God (Dt 8:15-18)¹³⁹.

Jesus in his Eucharistic discourse in John 6 brings the Old Testament concept of Manna. Jesus presents himself as the bread from heaven (6:35). He told them further that those who ate Manna in the wilderness died but those who eat the bread, which he gives will never die. He identified this bread with his body (Jn 6:51). At that moment Jesus had probably in mind the Old Testament image of Manna. Jesus is the heavenly

¹³⁸ Fr. Geevarghese Paniker, *Malankara Qurbana Theerthdakasabhayil* (Mal.), 73.

¹³⁹ Dr. Thomas Kayalaprampil, “Old Testament Figures of the Eucharist” in *Biblehashyam*, Vol. IV, No.1 (Vadavathoor, March 1978) 10. 11.

bread that gives eternal life to men: *“I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh”* (Jn 6:51). Therefore Manna can be seen as the pre-figuration of the Eucharist. In Judaism Manna had an eschatological significance. As God nourished His people with miraculous food in the time of the Exodus of old, so He would do again in the time of new eschatological Exodus. This significance of the Manna appears in the NT. In Rev 2:17 we see: *“To him who conquers, I will give a hidden Manna”*. Here Manna is a figure of participation in the divine blessings in the world to come.¹⁴⁰ This eschatological nourishment is already present in the Church by the Eucharist (Jn 6: 49, 50)

Church Fathers always consider Manna as the type of Eucharist. According to Theodore *“The events of the old were figures of new... The sea is the figure of the baptismal pool; the cloud of the spirit; Moses, of Christ the savior; his staff of the cross; Pharaoh, of the devil; the Egyptians, of demons; the Manna, of the divine food; the water from the rock the blood of the Savior”*.¹⁴¹ For Ambrose Manna is the figure of the Eucharist and he emphasized the superiority of Eucharist over Manna. According to him *“the manna was a great marvel, the Manna that God rained down on the fathers. The heavens nourished them with daily food, as it is written: ‘Man ate the bread of angels (Ps 75:25). And nevertheless, those who ate this bread died in the desert. But this nourishment that you receive, the bread descended from heaven, communicates to you the substance of eternal life. It is the body of Christ. As the light is greater than the shadow, the truth than the figure, so the Body of the creator is greater than Manna”*¹⁴². According to St. Augustine *“the Manna signifies the Eucharistic Bread, the altar of God signifies the Eucharistic bread. But these already were sacraments”*¹⁴³. As a conclusion we can say that Yahweh as the Good Shepherd leads the sheep to the fold (Promised Land). In this journey he feeds the people with Manna, a heavenly gift. This

¹⁴⁰ Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 150.

¹⁴¹ Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 148.

¹⁴² Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 149.

¹⁴³ Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 149.

heavenly bread was really the pre-figuration of the bread that Jesus the Good Shepherd gives i.e. his body and blood.

2.1.4. Water from the Rock (Exodus 17: 1-7)

When the Israelites camped at Rephidim there was no water to drink. People murmured against Moses. This murmuring Moses called ‘tempting God’. Moses cried out to God. God asked Moses to go the rock of Horeb with the staff with which he smote the Nile, taking some of the elders with him and smite upon the rock with the staff and water would come out of the rock. God promises him that he will stand before him at the mount Horeb. The elders were to be eye-witnesses of the miracle, that they might bear their testimony to it before the unbelieving people. Jehovah’s standing before Moses upon the rock, signified the gracious assistance of God. Yahweh condescended to come to the help of Moses, and assist His people with His almighty power. His gracious presence caused water to flow from the dry rock¹⁴⁴.

Theodore and John Chrysostom see water from the rock of Horeb as the figure of Eucharist, the manna being the figure of the bread and water from the rock of the wine.¹⁴⁵ St. Ambrose in his Catechesis called *De Mysteriis* connects water from the rock with Eucharist and brings out the superiority of Eucharist: *“the water flowed from the rock for the Jews, the Blood of Christ for you; the water slaked their thirst for an hour, the blood quenches your thirst forever. The Jews drank and thirsted once more; when you have drunk, you need never thirst again. That was a figure, this is the truth. If the figure seem wonderful to you, how much more the reality the figure of which you admire”*¹⁴⁶ St. Ambrose again in his Catechesis called *De Sacramentis* makes a comparison between the miracle of water from the rock and Eucharist: *“What does it contain, the prefiguration given to us in the time of Moses? We see here that Jewish people were thirsty and that they complained because they did not find any water. Then Moses touched the rock and it produced water in abundance, according to the word of the Apostle: ‘They drank of the spiritual rock that followed them. And this rock was*

¹⁴⁴ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on Old Testament*, Vol.1, 76. 77.

¹⁴⁵ Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 150.

¹⁴⁶ Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 151.

*Christ'. Drink, you also, so that Christ will accompany you. See the mystery. Moses is the prophet; the staff is the word of God; the water flows; the people of God drink. The priest knocks; the water flows into the chalice for life everlasting".*¹⁴⁷ Augustine also sees the miracle of the water from the rock as the figure of Eucharist: *"All drank of the same spiritual drink. They drank one kind of drink, we another. But these differ only in visible appearance, for they signify the same thing by their hidden power. How did they drink the same drink: 'they drank of the rock that followed them, and this rock was Christ.' The rock is the figure of Christ, the true Christ is the Word united to the flesh. And how did they drink it? The rock was struck twice by the staff. This double blow is a figure of the two arms of the cross".*¹⁴⁸ Ancient Christian tradition saw in the water flowing from the rock in the desert, the figure of the blood flowing from the pierced side of Christ.¹⁴⁹ In Psalm 23 we see that Yahweh the good shepherd leads the sheep *'beside still waters'*. In the OT in the miracle of water from the rock at Horeb Yahweh leads Israelites beside still waters and in the NT Christ is the Shepherd and quenches the thirst of his sheep by giving his blood from his pierced side.

2.1.5. Feeding Elijah on his way to Horeb (I Kgs 19:1-10)

When Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and all, how he had slain all the prophets of Baal, she sent a messenger to Elijah with a threat, which she confirmed by an oath, that in the morning she would have slain him like the prophets whom he had put to death. In this situation Elijah fled to a desert he expresses his weariness before God. After a long day's journey he slept under broom tree. Then the Lord came with his power to the help of the despairing man. An angel touched him and said: 'wake up and eat'. He saw at his head bread and water. He ate and drank and lay down again. But the angel wakened him a second time, and called upon him to eat with these words: "for the way is too far for you (v.7). He woke up ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to the mount of God at Horeb (v.8)

¹⁴⁷ Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 151.

¹⁴⁸ Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 151.

¹⁴⁹ Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 151.

The food which was given to Elijah for the second time was not mere material food but something which gives strength to him on his way to Horeb. It was a food for the way. Eucharist is the food for the way. In the West Syrian Liturgy during the time of the final blessing the priest blesses the people by saying: “*Depart in peace our brethren and beloved ones, while we entrust you to the grace and mercy of the Holy and Glorious Trinity, with the food for the way.*”¹⁵⁰ God gave food to Elijah, who was very zealous for the Lord and Eucharist is the source of the strength for the one who is zealous for God¹⁵¹.

2.2. FEEDING EVENTS IN THE NT

In the OT we find that it is Yahweh, who as the shepherd of the people feeds the people. But in Ezekiel 34:23, 24 God already promised a Good shepherd in the future to feed His people: “*I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them.*” The same idea can be found in 2 Sam 7:12-14: “*When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me*”. In 2 Sam 7:12f God promises a son to David and this son will be a King. God will be his Father and he will be God’s son. In Matthew 1:1 Jesus is called as David’s son and in Luke 1:32 Jesus is called as the son of the most high: “*He will be great, and will be called the son of the Most High*”. Therefore Jesus is the son promised in 2 Sam 7:12f. We also find the element of eternal kingdom here: *I will establish his kingdom forever*. In Luke 1:32f we find: “*God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end*”. Jesus is the eternal king promised to King David.

In Ezekiel 34:23 a future shepherd is promised, who will feed the people. Lord raised up his servant David as a shepherd to Israel by sending Jesus Christ, who came to

¹⁵⁰ *Trilingual Eucharist Service Book (Thakso d Kurobo)* (Cheeranchira, 2008) 170.

¹⁵¹ Francis Kodyan, *Visudha Qurbana Devasastra Preshitha Darsanagal*, (Thamarassery, 2006) 22. 23.

seek and to save that which was lost (Lk 19:10, Mt 23:11) and who calls himself as good shepherd (Jn 10:11). In Ezekiel also we find the same idea of 2 Sam7:12f that Yahweh will be their God and David will be the prince among them. This echoes the image of Christ because Christ is the Son or prince of God (Lk 1:32, Lk 9:35). In the NT Jesus is the Good shepherd, who is promised by God, the Father. The main duty of Jesus as the good Shepherd is to feed the sheep (Jn 10:9). Therefore in this section our attempt is to make an analysis of the feeding events in the NT.

2.2.1. Feeding the five thousand (Mt 14:13-21, Mk 6: 30-44, Lk 9:10, 17)

The feeding of the five thousand is the only one of Jesus' many miracles recorded in all four Gospels and it testifies to its uniqueness. In each Gospel account this miracle is placed at the climax of Jesus' ministry. Although this miracle is mentioned in all the three Synoptic Gospels for our study purpose we limit only to Matthew's account¹⁵².

When Jesus heard about the death of John the Baptist he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place. It is a convenient way from Jesus to pull away from the crowds. But when the crowds heard of this they followed Him on foot. But Jesus showed no signs of being irritated by this. Instead his heart was moved with pity. The Greek word used for here for pity or compassion is ἐσπλαγγισθη. The word σπλαγγνα is the parallel of the Hebrew word Rahem, which means womb. Maternal womb can represent all the maternal feelings. In Hebrew this word is used to denote the love of God. In Luke 1:78 we find the use of this word, where Jesus is depicted as the σπλαγγνα of the Father. In Luke 7:13 when Jesus saw the widow's son he has σπλαγγνα to her and raised her son. In 10:33 also we find the word σπλαγγνα. When Samaritan saw the wounded person he had σπλαγγνα to the person and he went down to him. In Lk 15:20

¹⁵² John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, 1987) 40.

we find the use of the word. When the prodigal son came back to the father, the father had *σπλαγγνα* towards him. So *σπλαγγνα* is the basic nature of Jesus¹⁵³.

In Mark's Gospel the reason for the *σπλαγγνα* of Jesus towards the people is that "*because they were like a sheep without a shepherd*". It places the miracle under the motif of Jesus as the good shepherd, the promised eschatological shepherd, who feeds the sheep and this is the fulfilment of the Ezekiel's prophesy: "I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them and be their shepherd" (Ezek 34:23). Jesus as the good shepherd shows *σπλαγγνα* to people by teaching, curing and feeding them¹⁵⁴.

When evening began to fall the disciples advised to send the people away to buy food. To this recommendation Lord responded: "*they need not go away; you give them something to eat*" (Mt 14:16). All they had on hand were a few loaves and fish. For Jesus this is enough to work with. So he made the people to sit down. Like the feast of a Jewish host he looked up to heaven, blessed, broke and gave them to the disciples to distribute it.

We find the similar miracles of food in the OT. We find the miracle of Manna that rained from heaven to feed the Israelites in the wilderness (Ex 16:4-21). Elijah, when he stayed with a poor widow of Zarephtha, caused her empty jar of meal and her depleted cruse of oil to supply the household with food throughout an extended famine (1 Kgs 17:8-16). Elisha multiplied twenty loaves for one hundred men and still had some left over (2 Kgs 4:42-44). So Jesus is greater than other Prophets because with fewer loaves than Elisha and fed a large crowd¹⁵⁵.

The multiplication of loaves not only draws our mind back to the OT; it also points us forward to the institution of the Eucharist. Both the events of multiplication of bread and institution of Eucharist take place at the same time i.e. evening (14:15, 26:20). Those who participate in both these events assume the same posture i.e.

¹⁵³ Dr. Andrews Mekkattukunnel, *Ente Chirakin Keezhil* (Mal.), (Vadavathoor, 2010) 76-81.

¹⁵⁴ Robert A. Guelich, *Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 34A (Dallas, 1989) 340.

¹⁵⁵ Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Mathew*, (Michigan, 2010), 190.

reclining (14:19, 26:26). In both these events Jesus performs the same actions with the bread in the same sequence i.e. took, blessed, broke, and gave (14:19, 26:26). According to Hilary of Poitiers “*having taken the bread and fish, the lord looked up to heaven, then blessed and broke them. He gave thanks to the Father that, after the time of the law and the prophets, he himself was soon to be changed in to evangelical food*”.¹⁵⁶ The recipients in these two events are same i.e. the disciples. Therefore Matthew considers multiplication of the loaves as an anticipatory sign of the Eucharist to be distributed as communion to multitudes of people¹⁵⁷. Eucharist is prefigured in this event¹⁵⁸. According to St. Ephrem “*in the desert from a small bread Our Lord made so many loaves; and in Cana he changed water in to wine. Thus until he gives his body and blood he tried to introduce this bread and wine to their mouths. In order to lead them to the abundance of his body and blood he allowed them to taste the abundance of the temporal bread and wine. In order to know that this precious gift is gratuitous gift he gave them these lower things of bread and wine. He gave them free what they can buy by paying the price. They can pay for the bread and wine but they cannot pay for his blood and body... The lower things that are the bread and wine are tasteful for the mouth. But his blood and body are useful for his soul*”¹⁵⁹.

In this feeding event Jesus as the shepherd, who has compassion towards his sheep feeds them and this feeding is the prefiguration of the great feeding of Jesus through Eucharist.

2.2.2. Feeding the five thousand in the Fourth Gospel (Jn 6:1-14)

This feeding miracle begins with the mention that *Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee*. According to Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture there are three notices that set forth the scene of the feeding sign. First, a large crowd followed Jesus because they saw the signs he was performing on the sick (v.2). Second Jesus went up to the mountain (v.3). This detail echoes Moses, who went up to the mountain to receive

¹⁵⁶ Manlio Simonetti (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament 1b, Matthew 14-28*, 8.

¹⁵⁷ Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Mathew* (Michigan, 2010) 190.

¹⁵⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1335.

¹⁵⁹ G. Chediath, Mar Aprem, *Suviseshabhashyam* (Kottayam, 2002) 171, 172.

Torah. Third, the Jewish feast of Passover was near (v.4). This detail explains the relation between Jesus and exodus¹⁶⁰.

Upon seeing a large crowd approaching, Jesus asks Philip, “*Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?*” But Philip replies in terms of money. Andrew intervenes in the conversation by drawing attention to a young boy with five barley loaves and two fishes. Mention of barley loaves recalls the incident at the time of Prophet Elisha, feeding more than one hundred men with twenty barley loaves (2Kgs 4:42-44). Jesus acts on his intention to feed the people. He first tells the disciples to *have the people recline*. It means to get them ready to eat. One of the important ideas is the mention of grass and it recalls Psalm 23:2, where Yahweh is depicted as the good shepherd. He makes the sheep to lie down in green pastures. Here Jesus as the good shepherd leads the people to green pastures¹⁶¹.

Jesus' actions in this miracle resemble the last supper in the Synoptics: *he took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to them*. The Greek verb for ‘give thanks’ is *Eucharisteo*. Another important detail is the one who feeds the crowd. In the Synoptics, Jesus gives the bread to the disciples, who then feed the crowd (Mat 4:19, Mk 6:41, Lk 8:16). But John does not mention any role of the disciples; Jesus feeds the crowd directly. It brings to our mind the Eucharistic significance of this miracle. After the crowd has eaten, Jesus orders his disciples to gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted. Only John records this Jesus' command to collect the fragments. By this Jesus brings to our mind the Old Testament concept of Manna. In each morning the Israelites were to gather only enough Manna for the day, and a double amount before the Sabbath (Ex 16: 16-24). If any Manna was kept for the next day, it would perish. But unlike the manna Jesus orders his disciples to gather the fragments of the bread so that they will not perish. So bread that Jesus gives is both like Manna and unlike Manna¹⁶². Therefore we can conclude that this feeding event in the gospel of John has Eucharistic significance. In this miracle, Jesus as the good shepherd feeds the

¹⁶⁰ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John* (Michigan, 2015) 115.

¹⁶¹ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 115.

¹⁶² Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 115.116.

people and this feeding pre-figures the perfect feeding of Jesus through his body and blood.

2.2.3. Feeding the four thousand (Mt 15:32-39, Mk 8:1-10)

The feeding of the four thousand is nearly identical to the feeding of the five thousand in 14: 13-21. The circumstances are the same, the actions of Jesus are the same, and the nature of the miracle is the same. The number of the bread and crowd are different. In Mt 14:13-21 we have five loaves and five thousand people. But here we have seven loaves and four thousand people¹⁶³.

The most important difference consists in the fact that most of the scholars suggest that here we have a crowd made up of Gentiles rather than Jews. This is suggested because of the setting of the miracle, which appears to be the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. Much of this area falls in the region of the Decapolis, a federation of ten Hellenistic cities of predominately gentile population. Second, the episode appears to illustrate the principle enunciated in the preceding event, where the Canaanite woman declared that “even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters” (15:27). Now the Gentiles are granted a share of the bread that God is giving to the children of Israel. If the first miracle was the feeding of Israel, then the second miracle is the feeding of the Gentiles. Third, the number seven is also in favour of this interpretation. If the twelve baskets in 14:20 point to the twelve tribes of Israel, then perhaps the seven baskets in this account point to the classic Duetronomic notion that Canaan was originally the land of ‘seven nations’ (Dt 7:1). Perhaps Matthew even intended us to see this link when he described the Gentile woman of the preceding scene as a ‘Canaanite’. The messianic blessings intended for Israel are destined to reach to the Gentiles as well. According to Hilary of Poitiers “the bread of passion is for Gentiles and Jews. This was in response to everything that had happened before. So we must probe the corresponding reason for this entire situation and especially of the

¹⁶³ Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Mathew*, 198.

relation of Jews and Gentiles. We will then see that the promises that had earlier applied to the Jewish people were to be received by the Gentile people".¹⁶⁴

According to Catechism of the Church this event is the pre-figuration of Eucharist (1335)¹⁶⁵. In this event also Jesus feeds the people because he has *σπλαγχνα* towards the people. This feeding event has also Eucharistic significance. Like the institution of the Eucharist here also the participants assume the same posture of reclining (Mt 15:35, 26:26). As in the institution of Eucharist Jesus performs the same actions with the bread in the same sequence i.e. took, blessed, broke, and gave (14:19, 26:26). The recipients in these two events are same i.e. the disciples. So this feeding event also is the pre-figuration of Eucharist. From this event it is very clear that Jesus is not the good Shepherd of the people of Israel but the Shepherd of Gentiles also. In this event he feeds the people of Gentile community. According to Theodore of Heraclea *"He does this not only once but also a second time, in order that we should know his strength. This strength by which he feeds the people when he wishes and without bread finds its source in his divinity. He does this in order to bring them to believe that he himself is the one who earlier had fed Israel for forty years in the wilderness"*¹⁶⁶.

2.2.4. Last Supper (Mt 26:17-30)

According to synoptic gospels the last supper of Jesus was a Passover supper and traditionally called Seder meal. Redemption and thanksgiving are the two themes of this celebration. It commemorates Israel's exodus deliverance from Egypt and the covenant between God and his people. In ancient Israel, these events were celebrated with a meal of lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs (Ex 12:8). The lamb was sacrificed and eaten in memory of their deliverance from Egypt. Unleavened bread symbolizes the haste with which Israel fled from slavery (Ex 12:33-34). Bitter herbs symbolizes the bitterness of slavery in Egypt (Ex 1:13-14)¹⁶⁷. Every Passover is special

¹⁶⁴ Manlio Simonetti (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament 1b, Matthew 14-28*, 35.

¹⁶⁵ Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Mathew*, 199.

¹⁶⁶ Manlio Simonetti (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament 1b, Matthew 14-28*, 36.

¹⁶⁷ Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Mathew*, 336.

for Jewish people. But this Passover would be unique, for it marked the appointed time for Jesus to accomplish the redemption (Mt 26:18), which is greater than that of the redemption in OT.

The high point of Passover Seder was the main meal, which began with the host taking up a piece of unleavened bread. According to Jewish tradition the host has to identify it as the bread of affliction (Dt 16:3). But here Jesus is not giving any interpretation regarding it. But he utters the words of consecration: *Take and eat*, he says *this is my body*. The symbolism of the Passover bread is now connected with Christ's body being broken on the cross. The bread has become a sign of his passion and death (1 Cor 11:26). The unleavened bread is now identified as Christ's body. Jesus has placed himself as the center of Passover meal. From now onwards the Paschal lamb, whose body is to be eaten during the celebration is no more the focus of attention. It is that Jesus' body that the people are urged to eat. Now Messiah is the true paschal lamb (Jn 1:29, I Cor 5:7-8)¹⁶⁸.

Drinking wine was part of the Paschal celebration. Here Jesus takes a cup of wine, offers prayer of thanks to the father and passes it to his disciples. This is the normal custom of the celebration. But Jesus does something new and unexpected by declaring over the cup: this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. According to Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture "few words in the gospel encapsulate much theological significance"¹⁶⁹. It points out three theological significances of this verse: 1) Jesus identifies the wine with his blood- the very blood that is soon to pour out of his crucified body. 2) The expression blood of the covenant is taken from the sacrificial liturgy that ratified Sinai covenant in Exodus 24. Moses poured the blood of the animal on the altar and on the people, sealing the covenant between people and God. By using these words Jesus is now establishing a new covenant through the shedding of his blood. By saying that this blood has the power to effect the forgiveness of sins, Jesus is alluding to the prophesy

¹⁶⁸ Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Mathew*, 336. 337.

¹⁶⁹ Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Mathew*, 337.

of Jeremiah about a new covenant that will eradicate sin from the lives of people (Jer 31:31-34). 3) Jesus interprets his death as a vicarious act for many¹⁷⁰. At last Jesus mentions about an eschatological banquet and the joy of this banquet is symbolized by the expression fruit of wine. In the last supper Jesus as the Good shepherd gives his body and blood as the food for the sheep. In John 10:11 we find: “*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep*”. In the Last supper through the institution of Eucharist Jesus offers himself symbolically and it is fulfilled at the time of his death on the cross.

St. Jerome in his *commentary on Matthew* says: “*After the typical Passover meal was over and he had eaten the flesh of the lamb with his apostles, he took the bread that strengthens human hearts and moved on to the true sacrament of Passover. Thus even as Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God, had prefigured Christ by offering bread and wine, so Jesus would exemplify this with his real body and blood*”.¹⁷¹ Regarding the Passover setting of Eucharist Chrysostom observes: “*why was this sacrament ordained at the time of the Passover? That we might learn that he is the giver of the law and that the things that are foreshadowed in the law are fulfilled in him. The Old Testament was a type of the things to come. He is the truth of those things*”.¹⁷²

In the West Syrain Liturgy in the Sedro of the prayer of third hour on the Wednesday of Holy Week we find: “*in that Holy Supper you gave your body and blood as food and drink for us in order to sanctify us*”¹⁷³ In the Sedro of the evening of Maundy Thursday also we find the same idea that Christ gave his body and blood to the people in the last Supper: “*like the dead you broke your body and blood for us. At the same time like the living one you eat and drink from it.*”¹⁷⁴ Another important idea that we find in the Sedro of the ninth hour of Maundy Thursday is the use of the imagery of shepherd in connection with Last Supper: “*You gave the life giving body and the*

¹⁷⁰ Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Mathew*, 337.

¹⁷¹ Manlio Simonetti (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament 1b, Matthew 14-28, 35*, 248.

¹⁷² Manlio Simonetti (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament 1b, Matthew 14-28, 35*, 250.

¹⁷³ *Hasa Azchayile Proemion Sedra* (Mal.), 54.

¹⁷⁴ *Hasa Azchayile Proemion Sedra* (Mal.), 64.

sanctifying blood as food and drink for the flock of sheep."¹⁷⁵ In the Proemion of evening of Good Friday we pray: "*While you are alive, you gave your body and blood in the last supper by your own hands to the disciples as their food and drink.*"¹⁷⁶ In the Sedro of the evening of Good Friday also we find the idea that in the last supper he gave his body and blood by his own hands: "*in this evening you broke your body by your hands and gave it to the disciples to eat; and make them to drink his blood.*"¹⁷⁷ From all these analysis it is very clear that Jesus as the shepherd feeds his sheep with his body and blood.

2.2.5. Emmaus Event (Lk 24:28-35)

The event of Christ's appearance to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus can be divided in to four Parts: 1) The Meeting (vv. 13-16). Two dejected disciples goes from Jerusalem to Emmaus three days after the crucifixion; on their way Christ appears to them. But they fail to recognize him. 2) The Conversation (vv. 17-27). Christ inquires about the topic of their conversation and they explain the events that happened in those days at Jerusalem. Then Christ teaches them to understand the scriptures by opening their minds. He sought to turn their dejection and gloom in to faith and hope. 3) The Emmaus meal (vv.28-32). Coming to Emmaus, they realize that their companion would go further, but they ask him to stay with them. When Christ reclines at table with them, he takes bread, utters blessing, breaks it and offers it to them. Their eyes are finally opened. They recognize him in the breaking of the bread. 4) The return to Jerusalem (vv.33-35). They set out to Jerusalem. There they find that the eleven and others have gathered and already aware that the Lord has been raised and appeared to Simon (v.34)¹⁷⁸.

Our concentration is on the third part i.e. Emmaus meal. Christ reclining at table with the disciples of Emmaus, taking bread, uttering a blessing, breaking the bread and offering to them (v.30) recalls the last supper (22:19) and it is the classic Lucan way to

¹⁷⁵ *Hasa Azchayile Proemion Sedra* (Mal.), 81.

¹⁷⁶ *Hasa Azchayile Proemion Sedra* (Mal.), 84.

¹⁷⁷ *Hasa Azchayile Proemion Sedra* (Mal.), 84.

¹⁷⁸ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV* (New York, 1985), 1559.

refer to Eucharist. Though he is the guest he assumes the role of the host. Two words *labon* ('taking') and *klasas* ('breaking') echo the words of last supper (22:19). Risen Christ performs the same actions that he had performed at the multiplication of loaves and at the last supper. The lesson of the story is that henceforth the risen Christ will be present to his disciples in the breaking of the bread. So they will know him, recognize him, because he will be present among them¹⁷⁹. This brings to our mind the picture of the shepherd goes in search of the lost sheep (Lk 15:4-7). Here Jesus as the good shepherd goes in search of the lost disciples and feeds them with Eucharist.

2.2.6. Feeding the disciples after Resurrection (Jn 21:1-14)

John 21:1-14 centers on the self-revelation of the risen Jesus to the disciples. John communicates this point by framing the account with two mentions of the verb revealed, in verse 1 and 14. Two narratives- the miraculous catching of fish and the meal that Jesus provides-deal with the theme of revelation. Both are signs leading to the recognition that the risen Jesus is 'the Lord' (21:7, 12). The resurrection appearance occurs at the sea of Tiberias in Galilee (Mat 28:16, Mark 16:7). This site recalls the multiplication of loaves and fish, which took place alongside the same lake (6:1-5). Both accounts present Jesus as providing food to those in need¹⁸⁰. It brings to our mind the picture of Shepherd who leads the sheep in to green pastures and still waters.

We focus our attention only on the feeding event of this chapter. When disciples came to the shore they see that Jesus has been preparing food for them: a charcoal fire with fish on it and bread. This recalls the miracle in which Jesus multiplied a little bread and fish to a great crowd (6:5-13). After providing a miraculous catch of fish Jesus feeds his disciples.

Jesus then instructs the disciples to bring the catch to him. Most important detail here is that *net was not torn*. It alludes to Jn 10:16 i.e. Jesus' disciples are to one flock.

¹⁷⁹ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, 1559.

¹⁸⁰ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 348.

Jesus invites his disciples to eat. None of the disciples dare to ask him “who are you?” the disciples now recognize that the one who feeds them is the risen Lord¹⁸¹.

John’s description of Jesus’ actions- took the bread and gave it to them, and in the like manner fish- recalls the multiplication of bread in 6:11 and other New Testament texts concerning Eucharist (Mk 14:22-23). The food that risen Jesus provides for his disciples and to which they are to draw all believers is Eucharist¹⁸².

CONCLUSION

Feeding events in the Scripture show the mercy and care of God towards his people. These feeding events bring to our mind the picture of a mother, who feeds his children or of a Father, who protects his children. It also brings to our mind the beautiful picture of a shepherd who tenders and feeds his flock. In OT Yahweh is the Shepherd who feeds his people and this feeding becomes more perfect when God sent his only Son to the World. Jesus is the good shepherd, who feeds the people in the most perfect way (Jn 10:11). OT feeding events are fore-shadows of the feeding through Jesus. The most perfect food that Jesus offers for his sheep is his body and blood (Eucharist).

¹⁸¹ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 350.

¹⁸² Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 350. 351.

CHAPTER THREE

EUCCHARISTIC SIGNIFICANCE OF SHEPHERD IMAGERY IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL (Jn 10:1-21)

INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter we have made an analysis of the shepherd imagery in the Scripture. From this analysis we come to a conclusion that Shepherd imagery is used in the Bible to depict the relation between God and His people. In the OT, Yahweh is the shepherd of the people. In OT itself Yahweh promised a future shepherd through whom He will tender his flock (Ezek 34:23). This promise fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus calls himself as the Good shepherd (10:11). One of the main duties of the shepherd is to feed the flock. Therefore in the second chapter we concentrated on the analysis of the feeding duty of God as the shepherd. For this analysis we have taken the feeding events in the Scripture. Most of the Feeding events in the Scripture have a Eucharistic connotation. Therefore we draw a conclusion that feeding events are foreshadows of the great feeding through Christ (the good shepherd) i.e. Eucharist (his body and blood). Third chapter is the concluding chapter, where we concentrate only on the shepherd imagery in the gospel of John chapter 10. In this chapter also we find an element of feeding in 10:9. In this chapter our focus is to find out the Eucharistic significance of this shepherd imagery.

3.1. CONTEXT OF JOHN CHAPTER 10

John 10 contains two major sections, both of which take place in Jerusalem. First, the Good shepherd discourse (10:1-21) and it continues the story in 9. This story features a series of contrasts, including faith and unbelief, sight and blindness, and the relationship between different religious authorities and their disciples. John 9 ended with the formerly blind man professing faith in Jesus and Jesus pronouncing the Pharisees, the religious authorities, to be spiritually blind on account of their unbelief in him. The Good shepherd discourse develops the theme of religious leaders and

disciples, but with a different set of images: shepherds and sheep. The second section (10:22-42) recounts an incident several months later at the festival of dedication¹⁸³.

According to Raymond E. Brown “*Johannine stories, particularly those marking the major divisions in the book of signs, tend to look both forward and backward; they resume themes already seen and point forward to themes to come. This seems to be the case with the discourse on the sheepgate and the shepherd which, though it is not major division of the book, does terminate the discourse at the feast of tabernacles and introduce the discourse at Dedication*”¹⁸⁴. According to him chapter 10 has to be related to what has preceded in ch.9. No new audience is suggested. It is possible to think that Jesus is continuing his remarks to the Pharisees to whom he was speaking in 8:41. Indeed in 10:21, after Jesus has spoken about the sheepgate and the shepherd, his audience recalls the example of blind man, while others repeat the charges of madness¹⁸⁵.

Raymond E. Brown points out two principal objections to connecting the discourse on the sheepgate and shepherd to what has preceded. a) There is an abrupt change of topic in 10:1-18. The whole theme of 9 was that of light; there was no reference to the theme of sheep imagery which dominates in 10. As an answer to this objection he says that the evangelist envisaged the same audience for 10 as for the end of 9. And, although the imagery may have changed, the theme at the beginning of 10 seems to be an attack on the authorities (expressions like bandit, thief, strangers, the hired hand etc.) and this was also the theme at the end of 9. The example of blind man who refused to follow the guidance of the Pharisees and turned to Jesus echoes the example of sheep in 10:4-5, who will not follow a stranger but recognize the voice of their true master¹⁸⁶. b) The second objection is chronological. The feast of the tabernacles takes place in September/October; the Feast of Dedication, which is the next time indication in 10:22, takes place in December. Thus, the Gospel places a span of

¹⁸³ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John* (Michigan, 2015) 186.

¹⁸⁴ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (i-xii)* (New York, 1966) 388.

¹⁸⁵ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (i-xii)*, 388.

¹⁸⁶ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (i-xii)*, 388.

three months between the incidents of chapter 7 and those of chapter 10:22ff. While chapters 9 and 10:1-21 are placed in the general context of tabernacles, these chapters are not so tightly tied to the feast as are chapters 7 and 8. Therefore even if we take the present sequence literally, there is nothing to indicate that the incident in 9 and the discourse in 9:1-21 may not have taken place between Tabernacles and Dedication, and thus not be separated from the remarks in 10:26-27 by three months. More important, we should give to this problem the same answer that is applicable to the gap that created between chapters 5 and 7, where over a year, Jesus is still talking about the healing of the paralytic on the Sabbath (7:21-23 in reference to chapter 5). According to Brown the Evangelist does not seem to have been preoccupied with the problems of how the audience hearing Jesus would have known of the earlier action or words; the evangelist is addressing gospel readers who have just read about the earlier actions and words¹⁸⁷.

Chapter 10:1-21 points forward and serves as a transition to the Feast of Dedication (10:26-27). Raymond E. Brown finds reasons for seeing the motifs of Dedication in the discourse on Shepherd. The historical event of the rededication of the Temple by Judas Maccaabeus which was recalled in the feast was reminder of the high priests, like Jason and Menelaus, who had betrayed their office by contributing to the Syrian desecration of the holy place. Jesus' mention of thieves, robbers and hired hands may be referring to them who betrayed the flock. All the regular readings on the Sabbath nearest dedication were concerned with the theme of sheep and shepherds. In particular, Ezek 34, is the most important OT background for John 10, served as the prophetic reading at the general time of dedication in the second year of the cycle¹⁸⁸. Based on these arguments we can say that 10:1-21 functions as a bridge between Tabernacles and dedication.

¹⁸⁷ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (i-xii)*, 389.

¹⁸⁸ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (i-xii)*, 389.

3.2. EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF JOHN 10: 1-21

Our focus in this chapter is to highlight the Eucharistic significance of the shepherd imagery in chapter 10. Before considering this main theme, an exegetical study of this passage is essential. Therefore in this section we will make an exegesis of this whole account.

The Good Shepherd discourse divides in to two sections: a) 10:1-6, b) 10:7-21. In the first section, Jesus gives his teaching in a mysterious way, using the imagery of sheep and shepherds, but he does not indicate what these images mean. After John specifies that Jesus' hearers did not understand him (10: 6), Jesus moves to the second section of the discourse (10:7-18), where he interprets the meaning of the shepherd, sheep, gate, pasture given in the first section¹⁸⁹.

3.2.1. First Section (verses 1-6)

Figures found in these verses appear frequently in the Synoptics. In Mark 6:34 compares the crowds who come to hear Jesus to sheep without shepherd. Jesus attacks the Pharisees' lack of care for outcasts with the parable of the lost sheep in 15:3. Thus fourth Evangelist is being quite true to the traditional picture of Jesus' ministry in using this shepherd imagery to depict the ministry of Jesus¹⁹⁰.

These verses contain a *παροιμία* (figure of speech) (v.6), which is a contrast between the shepherd (*ποιμήν*) and the thief and the robber (*κλέπτης καὶ ληστής*). A contrast is made by the fact that the Shepherd goes in to the fold through gate (*θύρα*), while the thief chooses another way. The gate which is spoke of here is the gate which leads to the sheep, and in as much as the *παροιμία* is about Jesus' person. Jesus is the one whom the sheep follow as their rightful and familiar shepherd¹⁹¹.

In vv. 1-2, still introducing the Pharisees from John, Jesus introduces two opposing parties: a thief and a robber against the shepherd. The thief does not go through the gate, but climbs over elsewhere. The 'thief and the robber' points out the

¹⁸⁹ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 187.

¹⁹⁰ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (i-xii)*, 391.

¹⁹¹ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Oxford, 1971) 358.

persons who use sheep for personal benefits. The term ‘robber’ implies violence (John 18:40- Barabas the revolutionary, Mat 27: 38, 44- two criminals crucified with Jesus). This imagery resembles Ezekiel’s accusation of Israel’s leadership for their exploitation of God’s people (Ezek 34:2-8). Unlike the robber and thief one who enters through the gate (θύρα) is shepherd. The theme of sheep develops the theme of discipleship from John 9:28 (“*you are that man’s disciples; we are disciples of Moses*”) ¹⁹². These verses describe shepherd’s right of ownership over the sheep; and consequently at the same time it describes his relationship to them, which is based on his right of ownership ¹⁹³. According to Raymond E. Brown it reminds of Synoptic passages where Jesus uses both the imagery of the gatekeeper (Mk 13:34) and the imagery of the coming of a thief (Lk 12:39) in order to teach watchfulness. Therefore this parable of the shepherd and thief and robbers is a warning to the authorities that they should fulfill their role as watchman for God’s people (Jer 6:7, Ezek 3:17). This warning carries a tone of eschatological urgency, an urgency that is expressed in NT in terms of judgment standing at the gate (Mk 13:29, Rev 3:20). ¹⁹⁴

According to Augustine “*it is he who enters by Christ is the one who enters by the door. He is the one who imitates the suffering of Christ.*” ¹⁹⁵ Augustine also says: “*Christ’s sheepfold is the Church. Whoever would enter the sheepfold, let him enter by the door; let him preach the true Christ.*” ¹⁹⁶ Joseph Ratzinger in his book ‘Jesus of Nazareth’ while commenting on the first verses of John 10 says: “*this can only mean that Jesus is establishing the criterion for those who will shepherd his flock after his ascension to the Father. The proof of a true shepherd is that he enters through Jesus as the door. For in this way it is ultimately Jesus who is the shepherd-the flock belongs to him alone.*” ¹⁹⁷ According to John Chrysostom the door through which shepherd enters is Scripture: “*Observe the marks of a robber. First, that he does not enter openly. Second, he does not enter according to the scripture, for this is, “not by the door.” Here*

¹⁹² Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 187.

¹⁹³ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 372.

¹⁹⁴ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 392.

¹⁹⁵ Joel C. Elowsky, *Ancient Christian Commentary, IV A*, 338.

¹⁹⁶ Joel C. Elowsky, *Ancient Christian Commentary, IV A*, 338.

¹⁹⁷ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth, Part 1*, 276.

also Jesus refers to those who had been before and to those who would come after him... He rightly calls the scriptures "a door", for they bring us to God and open to us the knowledge of God. They make us his sheep... For whoever does not use scripture but "climbs up some other way", that is, who cuts out for himself and an unusual way, "the same is a thief". When our God calls himself the door (v.9), we should not be surprised... In that he introduces us to the father, he is the door; in that he takes care of us, he is the shepherd.¹⁹⁸ According to Theodore of Mopsuestia only the shepherd has the authority to use the entrance: "the thief comes from wherever it is possible for him to hide. His desire is to steal. But the shepherd who has authority to use the entrance leads the sheep out to pasture."¹⁹⁹ For him "shepherd of the sheep is the one who is worthily endowed with the gift of teaching. He is the one who uses the lawful entrance, that is, who lives with all his heart according to the doctrine of law and enters in to the sheepfold, as is only right".²⁰⁰ According to Clement of Alexandria the gate through which the shepherd enters is the tradition of the Church²⁰¹.

Joseph Ratzinger compares these verses with the event in John 21, where Peter is entrusted with Jesus' own ministry as shepherd. Three times Jesus asks Peter to 'feed my lambs'. According to him Peter is appointed as the shepherd of Jesus' sheep and established in Jesus' office as shepherd. To carry out the mission of shepherd Peter has to enter through the 'door'... Peter has to take care of the sheep not as his own but as Jesus' flock. It is because he comes through the door i.e. Jesus. Sheep listen to his voice, the voice of Jesus himself. It is not Simon that leads the sheep but Jesus himself. The event of entrusting sheep to Simon comes to an end by the command of Jesus: "follow me."²⁰²

VV.3, 4- The gatekeeper opens the door for the shepherd. There is no clue in the Gospel to identify who is this gate keeper. But we can identify it as the Father. The gatekeeper gives the shepherd the access to the sheep, and it is the Father who has given

¹⁹⁸ Joel C. Elowsky, *Ancient Christian Commentary, IV A* (Illionois, 2006), 338.

¹⁹⁹ Joel C. Elowsky, *Ancient Christian Commentary, IV A*, 338.

²⁰⁰ Joel C. Elowsky, *Ancient Christian Commentary, IV A*, 339.

²⁰¹ Joel C. Elowsky, *Ancient Christian Commentary, IV A*, 338.

²⁰² Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth, Part 1*, 276, 277.

the disciples to Jesus (10:29, 6:37, 17:6, 9, 11:12, 24). The gatekeeper opens the gate through which the shepherd leads out his sheep to the pasture of eternal life (10:27-28) and it is the Father who sent Jesus to the world to save the world (3:16-17)²⁰³. Fathers differ in their views regarding door keeper. According to Augustine Christ or Holy Spirit is the door keeper.²⁰⁴ For Chrysostom Moses is the door keeper because for him the oracles of the Lord were committed.²⁰⁵ According to Cyril of Alexandria it is either the angel who is appointed to preside over the churches or the savior himself, who is at the same time both the door and the Lord of the door²⁰⁶.

According to Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture several elements of Jesus' words resonate with the theme of leaders and disciples. First, walks ahead and follow characterize the relationship of the teacher, who leads, and the disciples, who follow (Jn 13:36-37, 15:20). Second the Greek verb for driven out was used in 9:34, when the Pharisees 'threw out' the formerly blind man. This creates a contrast between Jesus and the Pharisees as the religious leaders. Pharisees rejected the healed man but Jesus leads out his sheep to good pasture (10; 9, 28). Third Jesus says 'the sheep follow him', because they recognize his voice. A true disciple is the one who hears the voice of Jesus (8:47, 18:37). Fourth, Jesus calls his own sheep by name. In the gospel Jesus calls several disciples by name- Peter (1:42, Lazarus (11:43, Mary Magdalene (20:16)²⁰⁷.

According to Raymond Brown these verses explains the close relationship between sheep and shepherd. The figure of the true shepherd of the flock who leads the sheep out to pasture reminds us of the symbolic description of Joshua in Numbers 27:16-17: "Appoint a man over the congregation... who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep without shepherd". It also brings to our mind the parable of lost sheep in which the shepherd goes in search of the lost sheep.²⁰⁸ This parable teaches that the shepherd knows his sheep and therefore

²⁰³ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 187.

²⁰⁴ Joel C. Elowsky, *Ancient Christian Commentary, IV A*, 339.

²⁰⁵ Joel C. Elowsky, *Ancient Christian Commentary, IV A*, 339.

²⁰⁶ Joel C. Elowsky, *Ancient Christian Commentary, IV A*, 339.

²⁰⁷ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 188.

²⁰⁸ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 392.

he calls the sheep by name. The sheep are known to Christ because they have given to him by the Father and for them that he dies²⁰⁹.

vv. 5, 6- The sheep follow the shepherd because they recognize his voice and they do not follow the strangers for they do recognize his voice. The shepherd and sheep know each other personally. The sheep have only one shepherd and they are attentive to the voice of the shepherd. They do not listen to any other leader because no other knows them as the shepherd does. In v.6 we find the reaction to the parable. The reaction is that they fail to understand what Jesus said. Jesus spoke figure of speech. The word used here is *παροιμία*, a term that ordinarily means ‘proverb’ or wise saying. In John it is used in the sense of figurative or veiled speech, which is not immediately understood (16:25, 29)²¹⁰. The failure is not primarily an intellectual problem; it is an unwillingness to respond to the challenge of the parables. In the synoptic Gospels that challenge is centered around the Kingdom of heaven; in John it is centered around Jesus himself. The familiar synoptic phrase is “the kingdom of heaven is like” and in John the usual phrase is “I am (*ἐγὼ εἰμι*)...”²¹¹

3.2.2. Second Section (vv. 7-10)

In v.7 beginning with another ‘amen, amen I say to you’ Jesus says *I am the gate for the sheep*. According to Raymond E. Brown this metaphorical identification is capable of at least two different interpretations. The first interpretation is found in v.8, sees Jesus as the gate whereby the shepherd approaches the sheep. This interpretation lies very close to the parable itself, for once again we hear of the thieves and bandits who avoid the gate. The expression bandits and thieves refer to the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus’ time. The second interpretation of Jesus as the gate is found in vv. 9-10. Here he is the gate leading to salvation, a gate, not for the shepherd but for the sheep. All must pass through the gate that is Jesus in order to be saved; he has come to bring life (v.10)²¹². Jesus develops the contrast between the thief and the shepherd in regard to their actions toward the flock. The activities of the thief are harmful to the

²⁰⁹ James Montgomery, *The Gospel of John*, Vol.3 (Michigan, 1980) 79, 80.

²¹⁰ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 188, 189.

²¹¹ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 393.

²¹² Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 394.

sheep: he comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy. The Greek word used to signify ‘destroy, is ἀπολεση. By contrast Jesus’ mission is life giving: I came so that they might have life (ζωη). This contrast explains why Jesus came in to the world: “God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish (apollymi) but might have eternal life (ζωη)” (3:16). The Father offers abundance of life and love to the world through Jesus.²¹³ According to Augustine “Our Lord just said now that he was shepherd. He also said he is gate... He is gate in the head and the shepherd in the body... Who is the one who enters by the door? The one who enters by Christ. And who is that? The one who imitates Christ’s passion.”²¹⁴ We will do the exegesis and significance of v.9 in the next section of this chapter.

vv. 11-16- Jesus presents himself as the model shepherd. (11, 14). Raymond Brown points out two interpretations for this statement. In the first interpretation, found in vv.11-13, Jesus is the model shepherd because he is willing to die to protect his sheep. The association of death with being a shepherd is found in other sayings of Jesus (Mk 14:27, John 21:15-19)²¹⁵. Whereas the thief seeks personal gain at the sheep’s expense (Jer 23:1-8, Ezek 34), the good shepherd does the opposite: he allows himself to be harmed for the sheep’s gain. This is what makes the shepherd “good”. The Greek expression for good shepherd is ποιμήν ὁ καλός and literally it means noble shepherd. Jesus makes a free, voluntary gift of his life on the cross, through which his sheep come to receive life in abundance (Heb 13:20-21). In v.12-13 Jesus contrasts the good shepherd and the hired man. The hired man is not a shepherd and his sheep are not his own. The good shepherd and the hired man act differently in face of danger. The danger comes from the wolf, the typical threat to sheep (Matt 7:15, 10:16). The main opponent of Jesus is the devil. When confronted with danger, the hired man abandons the sheep, and the wolf catches and scatters them. Hired man works for pay and has no concern for the sheep²¹⁶.

²¹³ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 191.

²¹⁴ Joel C. Elowsky, *Ancient Christian Commentary, IV A*, 343.

²¹⁵ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 393.

²¹⁶ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 192.

The second interpretation according to Brown is found in vv.14-16, Jesus is the model shepherd because he knows his sheep intimately. In v.3b we find that Jesus knows his sheep by name and in v.4 we see that sheep recognize his voice. These verses are commented on in v.14: *I know my sheep and mine know me*. God's intimate knowledge of his people is stressed here²¹⁷. Jesus compares the mutual knowing of shepherd and sheep (*I know my sheep and mine know me*) to the mutual knowing within God (*Just as the father knows me and I know the Father*). As the good shepherd he will lay down his life for the sheep.²¹⁸ According to Cyril of Alexandria "when Jesus says, I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father, it is equivalent to saying, I shall enter in to a closer relationship with my sheep, and my sheep be brought in to a close relationship with me, according to the manner in which the father is intimate with me, and again I also am intimate with the Father"²¹⁹. V.16 stresses the purpose of this intimate knowledge between shepherd and sheep. The purpose is to bring these followers (sheep) in to union with one another and also with father and Jesus. The expression that there are other sheep who do not belong to the fold introduces the gentile mission²²⁰. Before passion Jesus prays for this future believers (17:20-21). In both John 10 and 17, the end result is same: the unity of believers gathered together with Jesus the shepherd²²¹. According to Brown the unique feature in the Johannine picture of the shepherd is his willingness to die for the sheep. This is not clearly we find in OT. It is a combination of elements from the OT descriptions of shepherd and of the suffering servant²²².

VV.17-21- In v.17 we find: *This is why my Father loves me, because I lay down my life*. The meaning of this verse is not that the Father's love for Jesus is the result of Jesus' laying down of his life. But it means that the self-giving love of Jesus, the laying down of his life for the sheep illustrates or reveals the love of the father. Jesus lays down his life in order to take it up again. His self-gift does not end in death but in the

²¹⁷ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 396.

²¹⁸ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 193.

²¹⁹ Joel C. Elowsky, *Ancient Christian Commentary, IV A*, 349.

²²⁰ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 396.

²²¹ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 193.

²²² Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 398.

glorified life of the resurrection, of which he gives believers a share (6:39-40). In v.18 we find that the Jesus' laying down of his life on the cross is a perfect gift: *I lay down it on my own*. His statement, *I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again*, refers to God's sovereign power over life and death. Since Jesus has power of God, he has the power to overcome his own death in the resurrection. The father has given Jesus the command to lay down his life for the sheep.²²³ In vv.19-21 we find the reaction of Jews. The reaction to the parable in vv.1-5 was failure to understand. The reaction to the explanation of the parable in vv.7-18 is division among Jews.

3.3. ESSENTIAL LINK BETWEEN CHAPTER 6 AND CHAPTER 10 AND EUCHARISTIC SIGNIFICANCE OF SHEPHERD IMAGERY

In this section our attempt is to find out the essential link between bread discourse and shepherd discourse. We can bring out the following points in order to highlight this relation. This link between these two discourses sheds light in to the Eucharistic significance of shepherd discourse.

a. According to Joseph Ratzinger there is an inner connection between the bread discourse in chapter 6 and the shepherd discourse in chapter 10: in both cases the issue is what man lives on²²⁴. The main theme in these two discourses is life is ζωη (life). In 6:33 we find: *the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life (ζωην) to the world*. In 10:10 we see: *I came that they may have life (ζωην), and have it abundantly*. In the bread discourse we find the theme of life in vv.35, 40, 47, 48, 51, 53, 54, 57 and 58. In the shepherd discourse we find the theme of life in vv.10, 11,15,17,18. Therefore the basic theme of these two discourses is life. Bread discourse presents Jesus as the bread of life that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. Shepherd discourse presents Jesus as the shepherd who lays down his life for the life of the world.

b. Ratzinger explains beautifully the connection between bread discourse and shepherd discourse as: "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (10:11). Just as the bread discourse does not merely allude to the Word, but goes on to speak of the

²²³ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 193.

²²⁴ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part 1, 279.

Word that became flesh and also ‘gift for the life of the world’ (Jn 6:51), so too the shepherd discourse revolves completely around the idea of Jesus laying down his life for the ‘sheep’. The cross is at the center of shepherd discourse”²²⁵.

c. In shepherd discourse we find that Jesus lays down his life for the sheep not because of any force from outside but as a free gift of his self. In the same way Bread of i.e. the flesh and body of Christ is a free gift of himself to the world. According to Ratzinger “and it is portrayed not as an act of violence that takes Jesus unawares and attacks him from outside, but as a free gift of his very self: “I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord” (Jn 10:17f). Here Jesus interprets for us what happens at the institution of Eucharist: He transforms the outward violence of the act of crucifixion in to an act of freely giving his life for others. Jesus does not give something, but rather he gives himself. And that is how he gives life.”²²⁶

d. In bread discourse v. 35 we find that: *I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me never be hungry. And whoever believes in me will never be thirsty* and in 10:9 we find a similar verse: *I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture*”. In both these verses we find an element of feeding. Jesus is the bread of life and who believes in him will never be hungry and never be thirsty. In 10:9 Jesus is the gate and who enters through him will find pasture. In both these instances Jesus feeds the one who comes to him. This brings to our mind the picture of shepherd in Psalm 23:2: *he makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters.*

e. Another link between these two discourses is that both of it refers to the resurrection of Jesus. In Jn 10: 17 we find that: *“For this reason the father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again.* His self-gift does not end in death but in the glorified life of resurrection, of which he gives believers a share. The

²²⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part 1, 280.

²²⁶ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part 1, 280.

same idea can be seen in John 6:39-40: *And this is the will of him whom sent me that I should lose nothing of all that has given me, but raise it up on the last day.*²²⁷

f. In Jn 10:15,16 we find: *I know my own and my own know me. Just as the father knows me and I know the father... I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.* The same theme we can find in 6:37: *Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who come to me I will never drive away.* What the Father gives to Jesus is the people and they will come to Jesus and in the shepherd discourse it is said that sheep will listen to the voice of the shepherd and thus it will become one flock.

g. In both these discourses we find the concept of mutual relation between Jesus and people. In Jn 10:14 we find the concept of mutual knowing: *I am the shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.* In 6:56 we find the idea of mutual indwelling: *Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them*²²⁸.

h. Reactions at the end of both these discourses are same. At the end of the bread discourse we find that there is division among disciples. Many of them turned back because of his teaching (Jn 6:60-71). In the same manner we find division among Jews at the end of shepherd discourse. From the above said points it is very clear that there is an essential link between bread discourse and shepherd discourse and it is also very clear that shepherd discourse has Eucharistic significance.

3.4. EUCHARISTIC SIGNIFICANCE OF V. 9

In the last section of our thesis our attempt is to concentrate on v.9 of shepherd discourse and to bring out its Eucharistic significance. In v.9 we find: *I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.* Here we will discuss two concepts: θύρα (gate or door) and νομή (pasture).

²²⁷ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 193.

²²⁸ Francis Martin and William M. Wright IV, *The Gospel of John*, 193.

3.4.1. Concept of θύρα (door)

In v.9 Jesus presents himself as the gate or door leading to salvation. All must pass through the gate that is Jesus in order to be saved. In v.1 we find that one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. Here Jesus is the gate and the shepherds refer to the leaders of the church. They should enter through gate i.e. Jesus. There is a parallel to the Johannine concept of door to salvation in Mt 8:13. In The concept of gate of salvation is found in Psalm 118:20: *This is the gate of the Lord; and the righteous shall enter through it.* Clement of Rome applied this verse to Jesus. The interpretation of Jesus as the gate to salvation can be found in the patristic writings. According to Ignatius “*Jesus is the gate of the Father, through which Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the prophets, the Apostles and the Church enter*”.²²⁹ According to shepherd of Hermas “*the door in to the Kingdom of God is the son of God; no man can enter otherwise than through the son*”.²³⁰ Gregory of Nazianzus calls Jesus as the way because he leads us through himself: “*he is the way, because he leads us through himself. He is the door who lets us in, the shepherd who makes us dwell in green pastures, bringing us up by waters of rest and leading us there.*”²³¹ In the West Syrian tradition in the evening prayers on Monday of the Great lent we pray: *Lord! You are the one door and true life and through you we enter in to your father. Lord open your door for us.*²³² In the evening prayer on Wednesday of Great lent, we find: “*the bridegroom will be happy in seeing you and will open his door to you and will make you to enter in to the bridal chamber.*”²³³ Jesus is the open door through which we enter in to salvation and good pasture, which he later identifies as ‘eternal life’. In the Eucharistic discourse Jesus presents eating of his body as the means for eternal life: *I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever*”.

²²⁹ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 394.

²³⁰ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 394.

²³¹ Joel C. Elowsky, *Ancient Christian Commentary, IV A*, 343.

²³² *Valiya Nombileyum Moonnu Nombileyum Prarthana Kramam* (Mal) (Trivandrum, 2015) 12.

²³³ *Valiya Nombileyum Moonnu Nombileyum Prarthana Kramam* (Mal) (Trivandrum, 2015) 148.

3.4.2. The Concept of Pasture (ποιμή)

Already we have seen that Jesus is the door through which we enter in to salvation and good pasture. This brings to our mind the shepherd imageries in Psalm 23 and Ezekiel 34. According to Ratzinger *“Jesus promises that he will show the sheep where to find pasture-something they can live on- and that will truly lead them to the springs of life. We are ought to hear echoes of Psalm 23 in this: “He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me besides still waters... Thou prepare a table before me in the presence... Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life” (Ps 23:2, 5f). There is an even more immediate echo of the shepherd discourse from Ezekiel: “I will feed them with good pasture, and upon the mountain country of Israel shall be their pasture” (Ezek 34:14).”*²³⁴ Ratzinger here highlights the Eucharistic significance of Ezekiel’s reference. According to him *“the Fathers saw Ezekiel’s reference to the mountain country of Israel and the shady and well-watered pastures on its uplands as an image of the heights of Holy Scripture, of the life-giving food of God’s word. Although this is not the historical sense of the text, in the end fathers saw correctly and, above all, they understood Jesus himself correctly. Man lives on earth and on being loved by the truth. He needs God, the God who draws close to him, interprets for him the meaning of life, and thus points him toward the path of life”*.²³⁵ For Ratzinger, Pasture to which the Shepherd leads the sheep is Christ himself. Eucharist is the perfect gift of Christ by which he offers himself to us. Before we enter in to the Eucharistic significance of pasture in v.9 let us now move on to the concept of pasture in the Scripture.

3.4.2.1. The Concept of ‘Pasture’ in other Parts of the Scripture

In Gen 47:3 we find this word is used in the sense of food for the sheep. It is in this same sense that this word is used in 1Chronicle 4:39, 40, 41²³⁶. In Job 39:8: From the human perspective such places are the opposite of fruitful, habitable land. They are rather place of punishment .Yet for the wild ass they are home. Wild ass is also an

²³⁴ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part 1, 278.

²³⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part 1, 279.

²³⁶ Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (Michigan, 1970) 734.

object of divine care²³⁷. In psalm 65:12, 13 we find: *the pastures are clothed with flocks*. Here the psalmist offers a specific example of the way God provides satisfaction. Abundance of pastures is the symbol of prosperity and the protection of God²³⁸. In Psalm 23:2 we find that Yahweh as the Shepherd makes the sheep to lie down in green pastures.

In Isa 30:23: *on that day your cattle will gaze in broad pastures*. Isaiah 30:18-26 is the announcement of future salvation. The whole passage has an eschatological connotation. Here ‘pasture’ for the feeding of cattle is the symbol of this salvation²³⁹. In Isa 32:14 also we find the word pasture is used in the sense of food for the flock. In Isa 49:9: *their pastures shall be in the high places*. Isaiah 49:7-12 is the proclamation of salvation. It speaks about the servant’s success in liberating people. They understand servant as a prophet like Moses, who is responsible for a new exodus like the first. The servant is a covenant to the people. In this exodus people feed themselves along the ways and bare heights will be their pastures²⁴⁰. It brings to our mind the Exodus event through Moses. In that Exodus God fed the people along the way and fed them with Manna, quail, water etc. It has a messianic connotation in the sense that suffering servant is the symbol of Christ. Through Christ that happened the second exodus. The fulfilment of this verse we find in Messiah, who leads the people to the pastures of his body and blood.

In the book of Jeremiah we find two occurrences of this word pasture: a) Jer 23:1: *Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture*”. Here leaders are called as shepherds. People is depicted as the sheep of God’s pasture. In Ezekiel 34:31 also we find the same expression: *you are my flock, the flock of my pasture*. In Ps 74:1 also the people is depicted as the *sheep of thy pasture*. We find similar expressions in Ps 79:13, 95:7 and 100:3²⁴¹. Yahweh is the good shepherd who

²³⁷ Carol A. Newsom, “Job” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. IV (Nashville, 1996) 610.

²³⁸ Clinton McCann, “Psalms” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. IV (Nashville, 1996) 934.

²³⁹ Gene M. Tucker, “The Book of Isaiah 1-39” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. VI (Nashville, 2001) 255.

²⁴⁰ Christopher R. Seitz, “The Book of Isaiah 40-66” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. VI, 334.

²⁴¹ Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, 734.

feeds his flock. This is points out the covenantal relation between people and God. In Jer 25:36: *for the Lord is despoiling their pastures*. The nations and more specifically the rulers are alluded to here with the imagery of shepherd and flock. The judgment of the lord over them is explained here because they failed to tender the flock. In the punishment God will damage their pastures²⁴².

In the book of Ezekiel 34:14 we find that: *I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture... and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel*". Here Yahweh depicts himself as the shepherd of the people who will lead the sheep to green pastures. Church Fathers saw this green pastures on the mountains of Israel as the heights of the Word of God through which Yahweh the shepherd feeds the people²⁴³.

In Joel 1:18, 19: Joel proclaims that the day of the Lord has not yet come but that it is near. He speaks about final judgment. Most pathetic is the plight of cattle, who wander the barren fields, lowing in their hunger. Even the sheep, who prefer the dry pastures of the steppe and who do not need rich, moist pasture land, stand perplexed. Pasturing is the symbol of the care and protection of God but due to the sin of the people this pasture is destroyed by God²⁴⁴. In Hosea 13:6 we find: *When I fed them according to their pastures*. God fed them in green pastures and they were satisfied but they forgot God²⁴⁵. Pasture here refers to the nourishment and protection of God. It brings to our minds the Exodus event. God led them out of Egypt and fed them but they forgot god. In Joel 2:22 when the prophet explains about the joy of salvation he uses the word 'pastures'. When God's salvation comes, nature too will be healed. So the soli and the wild animals are invited to join the joy to come. Wild animals are advised not to fear because the pastures are green. Green pastures here is given as the symbol of salvation²⁴⁶.

²⁴² Patrick D. Miller, "The Book of Jeremiah" in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. VI, 766.

²⁴³ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part 1, 279.

²⁴⁴ Elizabeth Achtemeier, "Joel" in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. VII (Nashville, 1996) 314.

²⁴⁵ Gale A. Yee, "Hosea" in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. VII, 292.

²⁴⁶ Elizabeth Achtemeier, "Joel" in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. VII, 322.

3.4.2.2. 'Pasture' (βομή) as Eucharist

Let us now turn our attention to the concept of 'pasture' in v.9. a) According to Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture pasture refers to eternal life. Jesus is the open door through which we enter in to salvation and good pasture, which he later identifies as 'eternal life' (10:28). Raymond brown also sees pasture as the fullness of life. Therefore Jesus is the gate that leads to eternal life. In Jn 6:51 it is the Body of Christ that leads to eternal life: *I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh*". In this sense 'pasture' is Christ himself who leads to eternal life.

b. According to John Chrysostom "*I am the door if anyone enters by me, he shall go in and out, and shall find pasture. That is, He will be in security and safety (and in the word 'pasture' He included the care and nourishment of the sheep and supervision and guardianship over them) and he will remain inside and no one will put him out.*"²⁴⁷ According to him the word pasture includes nourishment. It is through his body and blood that Christ nourishes his Church.

c. According to Gregory of Nyssa "where do you pasture your sheep, O good Shepherd who carries all your flock on your shoulders? For the one lamb that you took up is the entire human race, which you raised on your shoulders. Show me then the place of pasture, make known to me the waters of rest, lead me out to the good grass, call me by name that I, your sheep, may listen to your voice and may your call be the gift of eternal life... "Show me, then," she says, "where your feed" so that I may find the pasture of salvation and be filled with the food of heaven which all people must eat if they would enter in to life."²⁴⁸ Gregory of Nyssa qualifies 'pasture' as pasture of salvation and food of heaven. Eucharist is the heavenly food given for the salvation of the world: "*For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world*". Therefore the pasture to which Lord leads his people is bread from heaven i.e. Eucharist.

²⁴⁷ Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin (Trans.), *Saint John Chrysostom* (New York, 1960) 128.

²⁴⁸ Joel C. Elowsky, *Ancient Christian Commentary, IV A*, 344.

d. In the West Syrian Liturgy immediately after the final blessing priest silently recites Psalm 23²⁴⁹. This Psalm Yahweh as the shepherd and Yahweh as the host. Yahweh as the shepherd leads the people to green pastures and still waters. Yahweh as the host prepares table for the psalmist in the presence of his enemies. Fathers see still water as the symbol of baptism. According to Athanasius *“the water of repose without doubt signifies holy baptism by which the weight of sin is removed”*²⁵⁰ Theodoret also gives the same idea: *“The water of rest is the symbol of that in which he who seeks grace is baptized: he strips himself of the old age of sin and he recovers youth.”*²⁵¹ Yahweh as the host prepares a table and For Fathers it is the symbol of Eucharist. According to Cyril *“the sacramental table is the flesh of the Lord, which fortifies us against our passions and the demons.”*²⁵² Yahweh as the shepherd and Yahweh as the host are presented as parallels in this Psalm. Yahweh as the host feed the people by preparing table and Yahweh as the shepherd Feeds sheep by leading them to pastures. Table is the symbol of Eucharist and therefore pasturing is the symbol of Eucharist. We find the fulfillment of it in Jn 10:9²⁵³.

e. In v.9 we find that those who enter by the door i.e. Jesus, will find food or pasture for them. In the West Syrian tradition it is very clear that the food to which our Lord led his sheep is his body and blood. In the Proemion of the Ninth hour on Maundy Thursday we see: *“you gave your life giving body and the precious blood as food and drink for you flock.”*²⁵⁴ In one of the *proemions* of Holy Qurbono Christ is depicted as the true shepherd (*Royo Sariro*) who sustained His flock with his blood and body: *“praise be to the true shepherd with whose body His flock is sustained and with whose precious blood, the thirst of His Church is quenched.”*²⁵⁵ The same idea is found in another Sedro; *“the good shepherd who gave himself as food for his flock and mixed His blood*

²⁴⁹ Order of the Holy Qurbono of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church (Trivandrum, 2012) 164.

²⁵⁰ Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 181.

²⁵¹ Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 181.

²⁵² Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 183.

²⁵³ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 394.

²⁵⁴ Hasa Azchayile Proemion Sedra (Mal.) 81.

²⁵⁵ Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil (ed), *Trilingual Eucharist Service Book (Thakso d Kurobo)*, 72.

a drink for his sheep."²⁵⁶ In short we can say that the 'pasture' to which Lord leads his sheep is his body and blood.

f. According to Raymond Brown as Jesus supplies living water in ch.7 and bread of life in ch.6, now he offers pasture of life. Pasture of life is parallel to the bread of life. Therefore it is the symbol of Eucharist.

g. According to Ratzinger "*the Johannine shepherd discourse is not immediately connected with the understanding of Jesus as Logos, and yet-in the specific context of the Gospel of John- the point the discourse is making is that Jesus, being the incarnate Word of God himself, is not just the shepherd, but also the food, the true 'pasture'. He gives life by giving himself, for he is life.*"²⁵⁷ From the above said points it is very clear that the concept of 'pasture' in Jn 10:9 is Eucharist.

CONCLUSION

In the last chapter of our thesis our attempt is to find out the Eucharistic significance of good shepherd imagery in John ch.10. For this purpose we have done an analysis of the context of John ch.10. It functions as a bridge between the previous section and the following section. In order to make our study more precise we have done an exegetical analysis of the whole account. Shepherd discourse has an intimate relation with the bread discourse in ch.6. Therefore it has Eucharistic significance. In the last part of the chapter we tried to establish that 'pasture' to which the shepherd leads people in v.9 is nothing but Eucharist.

²⁵⁶ Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil (ed), *Trilingual Eucharist Service Book (Thakso d Kurobo)*, 90.

²⁵⁷ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part 1, 279.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

West Syrian Liturgy is basically Biblical. In it we can find many imageries from the Scripture. One of the beautiful imagery used in the West Syrian Liturgy is the Shepherd imagery. This extensive use of shepherd imagery in the Liturgy inspired me to find out its significance in the Liturgy especially in the Eucharist. For this study I have taken Jn 10:1-21 as the basic text. My aim was to bring out the Eucharistic significance of shepherd imagery in the fourth Gospel. As a conclusion to this thesis we can draw the following points:

1. Shepherd imagery is used in the Bible to signify the close relation between God and people. Yahweh is the shepherd of the people (Ps 23, Ezek 34). This imagery is used in the ancient Orient to signify the rulers of the people. The ancestors of Israelites were mainly shepherds. In the OT itself God promised a future shepherd who will feed the people: *I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them* (Ezek 34:23). This prophesy is fulfilled in Jesus. Lord raised up his servant David as a shepherd to Israel by sending Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save that which was lost (Lk 19:10, Mt 23:11) and who calls himself as good shepherd (Jn 10:11). One of the important duties of the shepherd is to feed the flock. West Syrian Liturgy is rich in its use of shepherd imagery. West Syrian Liturgy presents Jesus as the shepherd, who goes in search of sheep, who sacrifices himself for the sheep and who nourishes the Church with his body and blood.
2. One of the main duties of the shepherd is to make sure that sheep has enough food and drink. God is the shepherd of the people. Therefore the main duty of God as shepherd of the people is to feed the people. In OT we can find many instances of Yahweh Feeding the people. For our study we have taken five instances of feeding events in the OT: Passover meal, giving Manna, giving water at Marah, giving water from the rock. Feeding events in the OT

are pre-figurations of perfect feeding of God through the Messiah i.e. feeding through the blood and body of Christ. In the NT we find instances of Jesus feeding the people. We have taken six events: Feeding the five thousand, feeding the four thousand, feeding the five thousand in the fourth gospel, Last Supper, Emmaus event, feeding the disciples after resurrection in the fourth gospel. All these feeding events also have Eucharistic significance. They all are symbols of perfect banquet of Jesus Christ i.e. Eucharist.

3. In Ezekiel 34:23 God promised a perfect and model future shepherd. This promise is fulfilled in the person of Jesus. Jesus is the good shepherd. In John 10:1-21 we find the beautiful description of this good shepherd. From our analysis it is very clear that there is an essential link between bread discourse in ch.6 and Eucharistic discourse in ch.10. The main theme of both these discourses is life. In Jn 6:51 we find: *I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.* In Jn 10:9 we read: *I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.* The pasture to which the shepherd leads the people is nothing but his body and blood. It is through his body and blood that he nourishes his sheep.

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