

# Of Sheep, Shepherds, and Temples: A Social Identity Reading of the Good Shepherd *Paroemia* on the Way to a Destroyed Temple

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## Abstract

The Good Shepherd *paroemia* of John 10 is often read as an inserted soliloquy between the once-blind-man of John 9 and Jesus's actions in the temple at the Feast of Dedication. In this context many readings perceive a two-level engagement drawing upon the perceived intertextual allusions to Ezekiel 34—and the further host of shepherd imagery in the Hebrew bible—and relating it to the context of a Johannine Community. From this perspective the Good Shepherd narrative is read as a condemnation of the Pharisees, and the “sheep of another fold” is taken as a reference to the incorporation of Gentiles in a “post-parting of the ways” or *Birkat Haminim* context. However, this two-level reading regularly dislocates the Ezekiel intertext from its own context of exile. Furthermore, although readings of John 10 recognize the presence of an intertext with Zechariah 10–11,

they rarely invest it with the significance of Ezekiel 34. Therefore, this paper seeks to read the Good Shepherd *paroemia* through the lens of Social Identity Theory in the temple-removed context shared by Zechariah and Ezekiel, and the context of John's audience in a post-70 CE environment. From this context we will look at the shepherd and flock imagery in order to consider whether the integration of flock (10:17) and the sheep of another fold (10:16) fit better in a diaspora Jewish context struggling with the destruction of the Jerusalem temple under Titus in 70 CE. Through this lens we will see how the intra-group dynamics of the Good Shepherd monologue contribute to the ongoing social discourse around Jewish ethno-cultic practices without the Jerusalem temple.

## Keywords

Fourth Gospel, John 9, *paroemia*, Zechariah 10–11, Ezekiel 34, intertextuality, social identity theory, Temple destruction, parting of the ways, sheep of another fold

## About the Author

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Bible-based. Christ-centred. Spirit-led.

## 1. Introduction

The John 10 *paroemia*—figure of speech or saying—has caused significant consternation within scholarship coming as it does after the John 9 pericope where J. L. Martin identified a two-level reading between the Johannine Community’s conflict with the synagogue apparatus, and the level of the historical Jesus. In this context the story of the Good Shepherd and his sheep takes on a new tone given the context of who the sheep may be and, therefore, who are the “sheep not of this fold.” Within this framework we are going to consider the nature of the Good Shepherd *paroemia* and the intertextual references to which it may be linked. Taking into consideration that the predominant reading of the shepherd analogy here comes from that of the Ezekiel 34 connection, I contend that a better fit may be found with the less engaged intertextuality of the “bad shepherd” analogy found in deuterio-Zechariah. To do this, we will first engage with the narrative and rhetorical context of the saying and story before moving to the intertextual connections found in Ezekiel 34 and noting how the portions of deuterio-Zechariah influence a reading of the text. Finally, we will consider the social context generated by this narrative and how a reading that primes Zechariah over Ezekiel may highlight a salient social identity formation for those reading the John 10 narrative within the context of a post-temple environment and especially as refugees from the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus in 70 CE.

## 2. The Good Shepherd *Paroemia*

The Good Shepherd narrative is often read as an interpolation after the scene of Tabernacles and that of the Feast of Dedication, and as such, some read the pericope separated from its embedded context (Klink 2016, 458). However, in a received reading of the gospel, this pericope coheres well with

the prior trial scene of the once-blind-man of John 9. Within this pericope the narrative can be separated into three distinct structural scenes. The first comes as a saying in 10:1–6 where initially the audience hears about those who enter a sheepfold incorrectly and are construed as “thieves and bandits” (10:1). Initially this engagement comes with no significant introduction to the character referents for the “one” and the “sheep,” and yet the combination of the agrarian metaphor and the extended sheep and shepherd trope is drawn from the shared schematic narrative of the Old Testament (Keener 2003, 801–802; Bultmann 1971, 366). In contrast to the negative assessment of the thieves and bandits, the pericope then turns to the interior of the sheep pen. First, the shepherd is introduced (10:2), then the sheep who are known by name (10:3), then the authority of the shepherd is outlined by highlighting the sheeps’ correct method of entering the pen. Next comes the drawing out of the actions of the shepherd, which emphasizes his interaction with and care for the sheep through calling them by name (10:4). While, in the next verse, the actions of “a stranger” (10:5) are placed in direct contrast with those of the shepherd. Overall, this contrasting rhetorical structure emphasizes the actions of the shepherd, and parallels the “stranger” (10:5) with the “thief and bandit” (10:1) in a chiasmic form (Beutler 2017, 269). As a whole, this *paroemia* functions as the narrative fuel for the comparisons following.

The first of these comes with the comparison of Jesus as a gate in 10:7–10 as the encounter expands on the original saying. Rather than directly identifying with the shepherd here, Jesus instead draws a linkage with the gate of the sheep pen (10:7). While this connection brings a rather odd anthropomorphism, the direct comparison lies with the subsequent contrast with the role of those who came before, who are again castigated as “thieves and robbers” (10:8) (Skinner 2018, 105). This contrast of construed identities reinforces the social category constructions and

draws the referent of 10:1 as a strong out-group for the audience (Lincoln 2013, 295). The group distinctions drawn here between Jesus as the gate protecting the sheep are further highlighted through the subsequent actions attached to each group. While Jesus is pictured positively as saving those who enter through the gate and providing them with pasture (10:9), the thieves provide a parallel negative assessment: coming to “steal, and kill, and destroy” (10:10). Where the social category constructions in the earlier *paroemia* were oblique in their referent, this comparison draws them in firmer terms.

This is then followed by the second comparison of Jesus personified as the shepherd himself in 10:11–18. In a similar fashion to the previous comparison, there is a positive assessment of Jesus’s role as the shepherd who “lays down his life for the sheep” (10:11), and a corresponding negative evaluation of the hired hand who flees at the threat presented by the wolf (10:12). Here the comparison expands on the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep and sets up the shepherd as a prototypical leader for the collective sheep in the pen (10:14). In contrast to this relationship, the hired hand has no relationship with the sheep and subsequently the wolf scatters the flock (10:12). It is entangled in this context that we find the contested saying of “sheep not of this pen” (10:16), where it depends on the surrounding narrative for its referential engagement.

Finally, this agricultural scene is rounded out by a response which highlights the division of the *Ioudaioi* within the context of the conflict narrative (Sheridan 2012, 208). Tying these three structures together we find the linked metaphor of the sheep as a collective imagery for the believers whose social identity is predicated by the once-blind-man of John 9 (Reinhartz 2018, 34).

### 3. Rhetorical Context of the *Paroemia*

The rhetorical engagement of the story here presents an interesting conundrum for readers of the Fourth Gospel. John 10 comes as a narrative placed immediately after the engagement with the Pharisees over the question raised by the healing of the once-blind-man in John 9 and foreshadows the following narrative of the feast associated with the temple and its rededication in Hanukkah. As the pericope contains no significant relocation or introduction, the contextual salience of the interaction with the Pharisees remains for the gospel audience. Yet, there is a shift in audience within the narrative as the focus turns back to the *Ioudaioi* who are divided by the *paroemia* (10:19). Indeed, as Lee (2020, 82) highlights, this pericope forms a bridge between the two final signs of Jesus’s public ministry: the giving of sight and the raising of Lazarus from the dead, which “embody dramatically the core motifs of life and light that emerged first in the prologue.”

This rhetorical context drives the narrative that occurs within the entire section and highlights the symbolic meaning that “enables the reader to enter the story, identify with the characters, and experience the imagery at an affective level, firing the imagination in the cause of Johannine faith” (Lee 2020, 93). However, this imagery extends past merely identification and imagination, but drives a choice for the audience. In this narrative, the sheep and shepherd metaphor acts as a key (i.e., a significant cognitive memory prime) and serves to unlock various memorialized intertexts as background for the narrative at hand. This pattern of intertextual assessment and integration is common within the Fourth Gospel, despite the apparent paucity of direct citations (Chennattu 2016, 170). Rather, as Hays (2016, 284) describes, “John’s manner of alluding does not depend on the citation of chains of words and phrases; instead it relies upon evoking *images* and *figures* from Israel’s Scripture.” These images and invocations

are subsequently marshalled in fulfilment and completion narratives to highlight the identity formative end goal of the Fourth Gospel (Sheridan 2012, 241). In turn, these narrative invocations encourage the listeners to make internal assessments as to the characters in the narrative with whom to identify (Boomershine 2013, 111). Will they identify with the sheep within the pen, or with those who are not entering appropriately? Or perhaps with the sheep from another fold? To assess this, we will turn to the primary intertexts unlocked by the sheep and shepherd metaphor.

#### **4. Ezekiel 34—The Most Common Connection**

In the majority of secondary literature, Ezekiel 34 is commonly linked as the source material for the shepherd imagery that is found within the John 10 narrative (Klink 2016, 464; Keener 2003, 812). Indeed, there are good reasons for this. Here, the rhetorical pattern of Ezekiel 34 functions as a two-part oracle of judgement and salvation which bears a similar pattern to that of John 10. This narrative begins with a strong indictment of the shepherds of Judah, likely originally targeted at the final kings of Judah: Jehoiakim and Zedekiah (Allen 2016, 161). In this context the shepherd imagery evokes the royal requirement for justice and welfare within the land (Ps 72) and the condemnation by Jeremiah of the unjust practices of the monarchy (e.g., Jer 34:8). In Ezekiel's reckoning, these injustices have led to the deportations and scattering of the flock as part and parcel of the failure of the shepherds (Wright 2001, 274). Therefore, the judgement against the monarchy is brought to bear in 34:10 as YHWH declares antagonism towards the shepherds. Indeed, this strongly coheres with the rhetorical context found in Ezekiel 33 which indicates the plundering of Jerusalem as being the existential reference for this indictment of the false shepherds of 34:1–5 (Duguid 1994, 39).

This oracle then turns to its salvific component, where Ezekiel pictures YHWH taking over as the shepherd for the flock, drawing a strong contrast with the unjust actions of the false shepherds (Obinwa 2012, 265). Here YHWH—enacting the shepherd metaphor—will go out and search for the sheep who were scattered by the earlier judgement on the monarchy (34:11–12). As such, the shepherd metaphor takes on a notably positive tone, as YHWH fulfils the aspirations of the Davidic Psalm 23, whose kingship interacts dissonantly with the failures of the late Judahite monarchy of the judgement oracle. This personal commitment to the flock is emphasized with repeated first-person verbs throughout the section (Cooper 1994, 301). It is this personal involvement that drives a further reading of this passage as echoing the Day of the Lord motif found throughout the prophets, and the attendant ingathering of the flock at that time (Ezek 20:34).

Overall, this two-part judgement and salvation oracle parallels the rhetorical and thematic structure of John 10 and provides a cognitive bridge between the two passages. This linkage is often taken as a rationale for the description of the Pharisees collectively as “a thief and a robber” in John 10:1, which is made explicit by the memorialized *paroemia* invocation of 10:6. Indeed, the cognitive linking of the Pharisees and the false shepherds memorialization creates a strong comparative fit for the audience and highlights the non-understanding Pharisees as a distinct out-group to the identity structure of the sheep in Israel. In this reading, just as the late Judahite monarchy is arraigned as false shepherds (Ezek 34:2–4), so too the Pharisees are indicted as “a thief and a robber” (John 10:1).

Furthermore, in the post-70 CE context, the ingathering described in Ezekiel 34:11–16 would raise the aspirations of an anticipated return from exile and likely cohere with the drawing in of “sheep that do not belong to this fold” (John 10:16). This connection would be especially salient for the audience with the historical memory of the series of failed attempts at

Davidic and Maccabean self-governance along with the attendant context of the temple destruction under Titus (Hays 2016, 320). Together with the injunction against the bad shepherds of Ezekiel 34:10, this generates a distinction between the audience of the Fourth Gospel as the notional “sheep [who] listen to his voice” and those which enter like a thief or robber.

However, to link this *paroemia* tightly with the Ezekiel intertextuality also introduces some problems. The first of these comes with the context of the shepherds themselves. While in Ezekiel 34:1–6 the distinct out-group described is categorized as false shepherds, this same categorization is absent within the Johannine narrative (*pace* Hays 2016, 320). Instead of being described as “the shepherds of Israel” (Ezek 34:1), the Johannine narrative characterizes them as “a thief and a bandit” (John 10:1). While it may be inferred that an audience should link the Pharisees—taking the antagonists of John 9 as the rhetorical referent of 10:1—this cannot be guaranteed. Instead, the shepherd invocation here only unlocks the identity of the shepherd of 10:2 as tied to that of Ezekiel 34:11–16.

Secondly, the further context of separation in Ezekiel 34:17ff draws further dissonance, as YHWH says: “I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats” (34:17) (cf. Keener 2003, 806; Duguid 1994, 47). While this is a tempting intertextuality that serves to harmonize the Fourth Gospel with the Matthean separating of sheep and goats (Matt 25:31–46), it is rather dissonant within this passage. For within the context of the Fourth Gospel *paroemia*, we find not a separation within the pen, but rather an attempt from outside of the pen to extricate sheep from safety. Rather than an invisible intra-mural division, we find a strongly visible division at hand.

## 5. Zechariah 10 and 11—A Post-Exilic Context

Therefore, we will turn to deuterio-Zechariah to see if this illuminates the shepherding intertext of John 10 any further; and we must do so with some degree of trepidation, as many have ventured into deuterio-Zechariah and have not returned. Nevertheless, as we look at deuterio-Zechariah, we find striking intertextual similarities amongst the apocalyptic imagery; and we may be confident that the Evangelist would have some knowledge of Zechariah given the explicit intertextual engagement with Zechariah in John 12:20, 16:32, and 19:37 (Bynum 2015, 47; Beutler 2017, 278; *pace* Coloe 2013).

The primary place in Zechariah where we discover overlapping material is in the false-shepherds narrative of chapters 10 and 11. The initial engagement comes in a pair of verses set within a poetic prophetic sequence. Here there is the observation that “the people wander like sheep” due to the lack of a shepherd (Zech 10:2). This observation is realized as YHWH’s anger burns against the shepherds and leaders (10:3) before his enactment of direct care for the flock—which are explicitly identified as the “people of Judah” (10:3). Just as in John, this snippet of agrarian imagery is further expanded in the following prose as there is a strong indictment against the bad shepherds of Israel in Zechariah 11:4–17. This initially comes with judgements against the shepherds of Israel, who have not spared the flock, but handed them over for slaughter (11:5). Contextually, this “flock marked for slaughter” presents a strong resonance with an exilic context, as the flock is “give[n] into the hands of their neighbors and their king” who will “devastate the land” (11:6). Under the rule of Titus this resonance would be particularly salient with the ongoing presentation from the classical texts “criticis[ing] Roman rulers as bad shepherds” (Carter 2020, 191). It is in this context that Zechariah is called to enact a further shepherding metaphor involving the two crooks of “Favor” and “Union”—reminiscent

of the staff of Aaron in Numbers 17:8, or the two sticks of Ezekiel 37:15–23—indicating the appropriateness of Zechariah as representing YHWH as shepherd.

However, in this extension of the shepherding metaphor we find a distinctly dissonant tone to the earlier indictments. In Zechariah we find not only judgement being passed on the shepherds, but also on the flock themselves. For in 11:8 we find that it is not only the rulers in rebellion, but the flock detests the shepherd as well. In response, it is the flock who are apparently abandoned here, as the staff called “Favor” is broken—a revocation of the covenant with the peoples (11:10; Foster 2007, 749). This judgement against the flock is further exacerbated by the enigmatic payment of thirty pieces of silver, and the subsequent breaking of the staff called “Union,” here explicitly described as the familial bond between Judah and Israel. Finally, the picture of judgement is rounded out with a woe to the worthless shepherd who does not care for the lost, young, injured, or even the healthy, but rather deserts the flock in their time of need (11:17). Although this may be construed as the events of the Babylonian exile, the historical context between Zechariah 1–8 and 9–14 points towards a different setting for this agrarian metaphor. Rather, as Gonzalez (2013, 5) notes, the “reconstruction of the temple is presupposed” in Zechariah 11:13, and therefore this looks forward to a new judgement in a post-exilic period.

Throughout this pictured judgement, the “flock” metaphor found within the prophetic utterance “represent[s] the nation, men and women who suffer daily under the heavy oppression to which their false ‘shepherds’ subject them” (Klein 2008, 234). While the grasping at riches of the “pitiless” (11:5) shepherds in view highlights their attitude towards those who suffer under their inflicted injustices. As such, the indictment here coheres with the concern for the subsequently threatened sheep in

Zechariah 11:4 and 11:7 (Beutler 2017, 277). Indeed, this assessment of the poor and worthless shepherds in chapters 10 and 11 coheres strongly with the rhetorical context of the discourse with the Pharisees in chapter 9 and their subsequent confusion in 10:6 and generates a similarly strong out-group from the Pharisees. However, the flock of Zechariah is not pictured as an entirely innocent party within the prophetic enactment. Rather, as we have seen, the flock itself also detests the true shepherd (11:8) and is subsequently abandoned, a context that would resonate strongly with the Johannine audience in the face of the post-70 CE environment.

It is here that both intertexts need to be placed in the invoked memorial context that is generated by the gospel. The narrative thrust of John 10 serves as a pivot to lead the audience from an engagement with the Pharisees and the once-blind-man, through to the next engagement at the temple and the Festival of Dedication. In the social context of the audience of the Fourth Gospel, this is a significantly dissonant perspective. For them the temple has been razed to the ground under Titus in 70 CE, and the Festival of Dedication is an ironic event that remembers a temple for which there is little-to-no possibility of restoration, let alone a re-dedication (Hoskins 2006, 174; Chanikuzhy 2012, 389).

## **6. Social Context of Reading the *Paroemia***

Indeed, as the temple-less dissonance occurs within the rhetorical context of the passage, it can only be further emphasized within the social context of the gospel audience. For we find in the social context of the first century a context which drives a reading of this portion of the gospel in significant conflict. One of the predominant conflict readings— from J. L. Martyn and others—derives the Fourth Gospel conflict through the lens of Jewish-Christian conflict inherent within the ἀποσυνάγωγος passages. In this view, Martyn argues that the conflict is related to “a formal agreement or *decision*

reached by some *authoritative Jewish group* ... at some time *prior* to John's writing." (Martyn 2003, 47 *emph. orig.*) Here the *Birkat Haminim*—the Jewish Benediction Against Heretics—serves as the codification of the formal agreement stemming from the Jamnia Council towards the end of the first century CE (Martyn 2003, 67). However, centering the conflict around this expulsion narrative has been significantly challenged across the past two decades of scholarship (see De Boer 2020). While there are many angles and approaches to this challenge, perhaps the most pertinent for this research is the strong charge of the *Birkat Haminim* being anachronistically applied to the Johannine context (Bernier 2013; Klink 2008, 2007). Indeed, as Klink argues, "Although a shift [between Christians and Jews] eventually occurred, it was not until long after the first century." Leveraging Boyarin, "it follows that in the later part of the first century the notion of heresy had not yet entered (pre)-rabbinic Judaism, and that the term *min*—only attested ... in the late second-century sources—is in fact a later development in Jewish religious discourses" (Klink 2008, 108; *quot.* Boyarin 2001, 439).

In response, others such as Reinhartz (2018, 137–138) have suggested that this conflict was inspired by the incorporation of Gentiles into the early church, and that this *paroemia* was the very precedent for such an incorporation. Yet, the Fourth Gospel itself displays a high degree of Jewish sociolect and discourse, rather than sectarian or separatist language (Lamb 2014). As Klink (2008, 115) representatively observes, this type of language and discourse "portrays intra-Jewish dialogue and a development of self-identity." Drawing from these social observations, Hakola (2015, 56) extends the construal of the Fourth Gospel as a development of identity by postulating that the gospel functions as a hypothetical community construction device. Thus he writes, "I suggest that we can detect in the early Christian sources portraits of symbolic, imagined communities that construct social reality rather than reflect it" (Hakola 2016, 216). However,

this approach often presents dissonance with historical artefacts, and Hakola only minimally considers the experiential impetus for the construction of social reality. Nevertheless, this approach highlights the significant intramural engagement in the identity development inherent within the Fourth Gospel.

Indeed, while several of these social contexts would provide a salient resonance for the identity conflict found within this passage, there is a likely stimulus closer in historical context than either the *Birkat* or any Gentile inclusion in the Fourth Gospel. Given that the rhetorical context of the Fourth Gospel is strikingly Jewish in its origin, focusing as it does around the cultic temple apparatus and Jewish festivals, it was likely penned for a Jewish audience (Bynum 2012, 15). Although it was later appropriated for Gentile use, the Fourth Gospel's decidedly Jewish focus fits well with a conflicted social identity of its audience (Myers and Schuchard 2015, 11). Therefore, I contend that this identity conflict is more likely stimulated by the destruction of the temple in 70 CE under Titus and Vespasian, which, underscored by the 73 CE destruction of Leontopolis, placed the gospel audience in an environment where Jewish temples are in rather short supply. In this context there is a significant negotiation occurring amongst the Jewish community regarding the means of cultic worship in a post-temple environment (Porter 2021b). The destruction of the temple triggers a decoupling of cultic worship from the physical entity and demands a reassessment of the traditional means and mechanisms for worship. Simultaneously, this negative trigger provides the stimulus for novel reappraisals of community identity formation without access to the cultic apparatus. Indeed, we find similar parallels to this pattern occurring within the Qumran and Oniad communities excluded from Jerusalem temple worship (Lawrence 2005; Martinez and Popovic 2007; Porter 2021a).

The context of this pericope, sandwiched between the Synagoga context of 9:1–41 and the Temple Dedication context of 10:22–42, highlights this negotiation for the audience. Indeed, the broader context of the Fourth Gospel strongly leverages the dissonance between the Jerusalem temple and festal contexts invoked within the narrative and the audience’s salient memory of the temple destruction (as examined by Coloe 2001; Barker 2014; Wheaton 2015). From the initial temple clearing scene of John 2, the persistent memorial prime throughout the Book of Signs is that of the temple. Into this context, the Fourth Gospel positions Jesus’s function as a temple fulfillment mechanism front and center as a primary theme of the work (Chanikuzhy 2012; Hoskins 2006).

While the synagogue would eventually ascend as the primary location of majority Jewish interaction, the loss of the temple would still be keenly felt, especially within the nascent Jewish Christian communities. Furthermore, given the destruction of Jerusalem and the high animosity of the local environment within Judea, it is quite likely that the social identity of the audience of the Fourth Gospel reflects an exilic context rather than a context within the *eretz*. As such, within this social context we must ask what would be the salient memorializations that the audience may access within this exilic “temple-removed” context?

## 7. A Conflict of Social Identities

Before we consider how this social environment of the reading event may impact on the audience, it is important to consider a framework for how individuals and groups construe their own engagement with others in a social context. Social Identity Theory, formally introduced by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1978, describes how individuals construe their own self-concept in relationship to the social groups within which they find significance (Tajfel 1982, 2). This process begins with considering how

individuals perceive their world in terms of the groups—social categories—that they interact with. The first mechanism involves how people cognitively categorize their interactions via perceived interactions: is this interaction friend or foe? And further, what sort of contextual information do I have about this engagement? As these perceptions are contextually embedded, so too is the salience of the categories that are determined through the process (Haslam 2004, 24). The second element comes in the form of identification with the salient social group, and how this normative fit with a group impacts on external stimuli. Effectively, this is a self-categorization process that describes how people interpret inputs as part of groups (Turner 1987). Finally, the third component comes through comparisons with other social groups and understanding the difference between social groups. This allows for individuals and groups to determine who is in and who is out of various groups and reinforces their own self-categorization in that group<sup>1</sup>. Through this framework, the narrative presented in John 10 drives all three of these processes as it describes inter-group interaction between the shepherd, sheep, the thieves, and robbers, hired hand, and even the wolf. So too this emphasizes the audience interaction with the social world of the text and acts to prime the salience of the intertexts that would be accessible to the audience as they process the narrative.

## 8. A Socio-Cognitive Resonance with Zechariah

Therefore, we find here the nub of the resonance with Zechariah, found within the reading context colored by the social identity of diaspora refugees, struggling with the loss of the temple. Here, they attempt to reconstruct a form of cultic practice that may be invigorated within a temple-removed

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<sup>1</sup> For further examples of how Social Identity Theory has been applied to biblical studies see Porter and Rosner (2021); Tucker and Baker (2014); Tucker and Kuecker (2020).



environment. Throughout Zechariah 11 we see an indictment brought not only against the bad shepherds, but also an apparent revocation of the covenants between Judah and Israel and with the people in the land. Zechariah, acting as YHWH's mouthpiece, enacts the breaking of the "staff called Favor" (11:10) and the "staff called Union" (11:14). This sets the indictments against those who are described as an out-group to an ideal audience. While, in contrast, we also see an explicit drawing back of those outside the *eretz*, and an explicit linking of the House of Judah with the House of Joseph (10:6) as a corporate renewal. This is followed up in Zechariah 10:10 where the diaspora will be "brought back from Egypt and gathered from Assyria" (Redditt 1989, 639). This engagement explicitly keys a diaspora context for the anticipated eschatological reincorporation and, within the intertextuality of John and Zechariah, brings out a salient identity construction of diaspora Judaism and describes a strong in-group for the audience.

This parallel brings a strong political statement before the audience, linking the false shepherds and their judgement in the Old Testament intertexts with the present destruction of Jerusalem and the judgement upon the cultic apparatus. Indeed, just as Jesus's statement to be the "good shepherd" within the gospel is "politically oppositional, against the Jerusalem rulers as thieves, bandits and 'hired hands' of the Roman imperial order," so too this resonance would not be lost on the audience reeling from the ultimate judgement on that political order (Horsley and Thatcher 2013, 180). Rather the audience would be primed to draw categorical comparisons between the two groups on display, and to emphasize the salient identification of the renewed in-group.

Furthermore, this ripples out into the narrative pattern of Zechariah which brings the piercing of the shepherd front and center as the "one who they have pierced," bringing about this restoration for the eschatological

Jerusalem. Indeed, here we find a strong parallel between the actions of the hireling and those of the false shepherds, and their subsequent inversion regarding the striking of the good shepherd in this Christological discourse (10:11). We see this in Zechariah 13 as the narrative intertwines the judgement against the people in the land (Wahlde 2010, 43). Here the striking of the shepherd is prefigured by the "pour[ing] out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication" (Zech 12:10) as a direct consequence of looking upon "the one they have pierced" and "mourn[ing] for him as one mourns for an only child and grieve[ing] bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son" (Zech 12:10). This strongly prefigures the Christological engagement of John 19–20 and memorially invokes the "future memory" of the events of the crucifixion and resurrection within the story level and reminds the audience of those same events as a tangible identity construct within the context of Jewish diaspora Christ-followers (*pace* Beutler 2017, 278).

## 9. Reading the *Paroemia* in a Temple-Removed Context

Therefore, I contend that within this context the destruction of the temple acts as a strong cognitive memory prime to invoke the context of Zechariah 10–13 where the revocation of the covenant with both Judah and Israel is tangibly evidenced for the gospel audience with the successful Roman siege and razing of Jerusalem. As with the prophetic enactment in Zechariah, the worthless shepherds had deserted the flock and left them to be plundered by wolves and neighbors. Collectively, the worthless shepherds and those who plunder are construed as a marauding out-group to be resisted by the in-group of the flock. But this linkage with Zechariah does more than simply illuminate a contextual background to the John 10 *paroemia*, but

rather it provides a strong resource for engaging in the process of contested intra-mural identity formation in a diaspora context rocked by the cultically cataclysmic events of the temple destruction in 70 CE. For in this context there is a strongly eschatological Jerusalem of Zechariah 10:6–12 and 12ff that is memorially invoked, as the city that shall not be destroyed, the city which no enemy may stand against, and will be rebuilt in the face of their enemies. In the social construct of a post-70 CE environment, this invocation stands in stark contrast to the outcome of the physical Jerusalem and Titus’s brutality in ensuring that the Judean upstarts would not present a significant threat for another sixty years. Especially as the “hired hand” had fled from Jerusalem during that conflict (John 10:12–13) and in resonance with Zechariah, had given up their leadership commission (Redditt 1993, 677). In contrast, this provides a diaspora hope for these newly exiled communities, fleeing the cataclysm of the Vespasian siege and Titus’s brutality.

Rather, for the diaspora audience hearing this *paroemia*, they would be reminded of the one pierced and poured out (Zech 12:10) by the invocation of the “good shepherd laying down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11), a picture that is only reinforced by the tangible corporate memory of the temple “running down with blood” (Josephus, *B.J.*, 6.8.406) as the Romans stamped out the brief rebellion. Furthermore, within the rhetorical context, John interpolates this scene between the temple scenes of Sukkoth and Hanukkah, both of which incorporate ritual cleansing elements. The stark dissonance between the Water Libation and the memory of cleansing Antiochus IV Epiphanes’s pigs’ blood is interpolated here with the “good shepherd” being “pierced and poured out” and the temple destruction of 70 CE.

Instead of an identity structure that calls for a return to the temple, and is centered about these identity structures, the good shepherd narrative

presents a possible future social identity that shifts the locus of temple worship to the figure of Jesus and radically reorients the nature of worship around this nascent community. Just as with other post-temple Jewish groups wrestling with conducting worship in the temple-less void of the post-70 CE environment, the Fourth Gospel is engaging with the same challenges and highlights the new pastures on offer through Jesus (John 10:9). This novel social identity formation draws upon the codified, textualized, and memorialized social structures inherent within the temple and reshapes these for new effect.

## 10. What Then of Our Sheep?

Returning then to our original question, what then can we say about the identity of the “sheep from another fold?” In many readings of the Fourth Gospel, this is associated with a concept of the incorporation of Gentiles into the sheepfold (Porter 2015, 58; Wahlde 2010, 455; Reinhartz 2018, 137; Lincoln 2013, 298), or even reconciliation with other “wayward” Christian groups (Brown 1978, 20). However, as we have seen, neither of our primary intertexts in Ezekiel or Zechariah gives any indication that this is to be interpreted in a Gentile context. Both are distinctly intra-mural prophetic pieces, engaging with the household of God. Furthermore, in Ezekiel there is no sense of anyone being drawn in from another context, as it is presumed that those who return were those who were originally part of Judah. But in Zechariah we see explicit indications that the ingathering to the eschatological Jerusalem will incorporate those drawn back from both Assyria and Egypt along with those taken into exile. This theme is further reinforced by the extended *inclusio* of Zechariah 9:9 and 12:10 bookending the passion narrative (12:15 and 19:37), reinforcing the nature of eschatological renewal envisaged by Zechariah (Bynum 2015, 73). Thus,

in Zechariah we have a strong diaspora-based re-incorporation in view, rather than any notion of a broader centripetal attraction.

Therefore, with the echoes of Zechariah ringing strongly in the ears of the early diaspora audience, I would contend that the intertext of Zechariah would highlight an interpretation of the “sheep of another fold” in John 10:16 as those being reincorporated from the Jewish diaspora rather than the incorporation of Gentiles (contra Klink 2016, 465). This is especially the case as the construed out-group is not in the context of a *Birkat Haminim* inspired homogenized *aposynagogos* by the *Ioudaioi* as displayed in John 9:22. Furthermore, this would also support Coloe’s (2013) contention that the *Hellenes* of John 12:20 are Greek-speaking Jews in Jerusalem for the Passover, rather than Gentiles. As such, I suggest that reading John 10:16 as an intra-Jewish diaspora reincorporation rather than an external incorporation of Gentiles, maintains stronger fidelity to the text, the intertexts, and the socio-cultural context. Therefore, the call of the diaspora—that would eventually be universalized and thrown open to the Gentiles by the early church—is a call to a salient social identity found in the sheep pen with the good shepherd. Just as the sheep that enter through the gate of John 10:9 “will be saved,” so too those who find their identity in “the Lord’s name will live securely” (Zech 10:12).

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