

Christian readers understand the fulfilment of Zechariah's hope to be found in Jesus, for whom the seven descriptions of Shoot are true: he is the man of prophetic expectation (Matt. 11:3–6; Mark 8:27–30; John 19:5); a descendant of David (Matt. 1:1; Rom. 1:3; Rev. 5:5); the one who is building the eschatological temple, the church (Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:16–17; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:17–22; Heb. 3:3; 1 Peter 2:5); who bears majesty (Matt. 25:31; Acts 2:34–36; Heb. 1:3; 2:9; Rev. 19:12); who as king is seated at the right hand of God (Matt. 26:64; Acts 2:33; 5:31; Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1); who as a priest has sat down at the right hand of God's throne (Heb. 1:3; 5:10; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22); and whose rule with his Father has brought peace (Eph. 2:14–18).

All the synoptic Gospels record that after Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem (cf. Zech. 9:9), he went to the temple (Matt. 21:1–17; Mark 11:1–19; Luke 19:28–48). While it is not explicit in any of the Gospels, I wonder whether, against the backdrop of Zechariah, he went to the temple to receive Zechariah's crown? Instead of being crowned, he finds the temple defiled, so he cleanses it and the religious leaders look to kill him (Mark 11:18; Luke 11:47). The outcome is that instead of being given Zechariah's crown, he is given a crown of thorns and crucified as the king of the Jews. This connects with the 'humility' entailed in Shoot imagery (see 'Comment' on 3:8) and the description of the king of 9:9 as 'afflicted'. But his crucifixion was the priestly sacrifice that 'takes away the sin of the world' (John 1:29). As the risen King of kings and Lord of lords he now wears many crowns (Rev. 19:12). From humble beginnings, something magnificent has grown.

This passage also connects well with Eph. 2, which talks about the temple the Messiah Jesus is building (v. 21). Those who were

far away (Gentiles) have been brought near through Jesus' blood (v. 13). His work on the cross now issues in peace (v. 17).¹

'Those who are far away will come and build the temple of the Lord' (6:15). Here is good news again. This temple is not just for Jews but for Gentiles as well, and they will help in the building up of 'the temple'.

Now stop for a moment and try to place yourself in the position of these returned exiles. They had had enough of the Gentiles. They had suffered at their hands and they were now thrilled to be a nation of pure Jews again. They had rebuffed the offer of help from the people who were already in the land (Ezra 4:3) and they were going to do all they could to maintain their separateness. The temple was too holy to allow people from other races to help with its construction. Whatever then, does Zechariah mean by saying, 'Many nations will be joined with the Lord in that day and will become my people'? (2:11). And why will **'those who are far away'** come and build the temple of the Lord?

The eleven who received the Great Commission from Jesus himself must also have been puzzled, for similar reasons, when he instructed them to 'go and make disciples *of all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (Matthew 28:19). 'In the Jewish context, these "nations" are the "outsiders"—tribes and peoples at a distance from the social and religious life of Israel. They are the people who are "far away" ... They are also the "enemies", a political, military, and religious threat to the integrity of Israel.'²

1 Anthony R. Petterson, [*Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*](#), ed. David W. Baker and Gordon J. Wenham, vol. 25, *Apollos Old Testament Commentary* (Nottingham, England; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2015), 190–191.

2 C. John Miller, *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1986, pp. 61–2.

It is no wonder that Jonah was appalled at God's call for him to go to heathen Nineveh and preach repentance to its people. How then, can proud Judah and the heathen nations ever be brought together? Paul tells us the answer: 'But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made [Jew and Gentile] one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility' (Ephesians 2:13–14).³

³ Michael Bentley, [*Building for God's Glory: Haggai and Zechariah Simply Explained*](#), Welwyn Commentary Series (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 1989), 153–154.