

Elements of the Paragraph

The cornerstone

Out of Judah will come ‘the cornerstone’. This building metaphor is often used in Scripture. It was very appropriate for the Jews of Zechariah’s time who were busy rebuilding the temple.

If God’s people want to build for God’s glory then they must build upon a solid and lasting foundation and properly tie in all the parts of the building they are erecting. A cornerstone is what holds all of the building together. It is part of the foundation and therefore supports the whole building and, being placed at the corner of two major walls, it determines the shape and strength of the building. All of the other stones must adjust themselves to this cornerstone. Hendriksen helps us understand the spiritual meaning of Christ being the cornerstone of the church: ‘In addition to resting in Christ, the spiritual house is determined as to its character by him. It is he who settles the question as to what this house is to be in the sight of God, and to what is its function in God’s universe.’¹

The tent peg

From Judah will come the Messiah, the tent peg. All those who have been camping will know the importance of having a strong tent peg which has been securely fixed into the ground. The pegs hold the guy ropes taut and these in turn hold up the tent so that it does not collapse. It is interesting to note that the tent pegs which held up the tabernacle in the wilderness were made of bronze (Exodus 27:19).

¹ W. Hendriksen, *Galatians and Ephesians*, Banner of Truth Trust, p. 143.

But some scholars say that the Hebrew word translated ‘tent peg’ refers to the nail which was driven into the wall on which clothes were hung to keep them neat. In Isaiah 22:23–24 we read of Eliakim, of whom the Lord says he will ‘drive him like a peg into a firm place ... All the glory of his family will hang on him; its offspring and offshoots—all its lesser vessels, from the bowls to all the jars.’

Whatever the word really means, it certainly speaks of something which is utterly dependable and trustworthy, and which holds everything together. The coming Messiah will be strong, reliable and a unifying force so that God’s people will be strengthened in their work and witness for him and his glory.

The battle-bow

This seems to refer back to 9:13, where the Lord says he will ‘bend Judah as I bend my bow’. Judah had been small, weak and timid, but God says, ‘I will care for this flock and make them like a proud horse in battle’ (10:3). Verse 4 apparently is saying that the Messiah will have many different facets to his character. He is not only like ‘a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain’ (Revelation 5:6), but he is also strong, powerful and fearless in battle, ‘the Lion of the tribe of Judah’ who ‘has triumphed’ (Revelation 5:5).

If only Judah will follow the right leader they will gain the victory and will no longer be oppressed. **‘Together they will be like mighty men tramping the muddy streets in battle. Because the Lord is with them, they will fight and overthrow the horsemen’ (10:5).²**

² Michael Bentley, [*Building for God’s Glory: Haggai and Zechariah Simply Explained*](#), Welwyn Commentary Series (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 1989), 182–184.