

Zechariah 12:10

Read the following quote, then answer the following question.

If this passage is read in isolation, it is not clear who is meant and a myriad of suggestions have been made (Petterson 2009: 227–231). Yet if this passage is read in the light of the unfolding themes of the book, not just chs. 9–14 as Redditt (2012: 108–109) does, then the interplay of the themes of the coming Shoot, king and shepherd strongly suggest that the one who is pierced is to be associated with the coming Davidic king, especially given the focus on the house of David in the immediate context. Ch. 3 established that with the coming of Shoot, the iniquity of the land would be removed in a single day (3:8–9). The same cleansing from sin is envisaged here in connection with the one pierced (13:1). Ch. 6 identified Shoot as a priest who would rebuild the temple and thereby re-establish Yahweh’s rule in Jerusalem (6:13). Here the salvation and restoration of Jerusalem along with the people’s forgiveness are key parallel themes that connect with the pierced one. In 9:9 and 10:4, the future Davidic king is central to the salvation of Jerusalem, Judah and Ephraim. Similarly, the salvation of Judah, Jerusalem and Israel is connected with the pierced one in ch. 12. Perhaps the strongest line of identification comes from 13:7, where the shepherd, who will be shown to be the coming Davidic king, is struck by the sword. This naturally connects back with the pierced one in this passage. The death of the royal figure in 13:7 has tragic consequences for the flock, and this seems an appropriate cause for the intense mourning of 12:10–14, particularly if the description is patterned on the death of the Davidic king Josiah (see below). The great irony is that the death of the king comes at the

hands of his own people ('whom they pierced'). But this in itself is not surprising given the history of the people in rejecting Yahweh as their shepherd, as enacted in 11:4–14.

Furthermore, the association of the pierced one with the future Davidic king provides a reasonable explanation for the abrupt shift in v. 10 from the first to third person in reference to the pierced one. Kingship in Israel, rightly understood, saw the king as Yahweh's agent on earth (e.g. Ps. 72). Given this representative function, to pierce the king is also to pierce Yahweh (Bruce 1969: 112).¹

Is this passage really so difficult that it is unclear who is meant as having been pierced?

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), 263–264.