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Israel and Judah:

5. David Desires to Build a Temple

by David Sielaff, December 2014

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Israel and Judah: 5

David
Desires to
Build a Temple

This installment will cover one chapter of Second Samuel and one chapter of First Chronicles. Portions of Psalms give other information about these events. All these passages center on King David's desire to construct a permanent structure, a Temple, to contain the Ark of the Covenant, designating the presence of God, and to embellish the place where YHWH has placed His name, Jerusalem. God's response was very unexpected and in fact, He warned David he should prepare to die, because God would take David's life. David replied quickly and with great fear.^a

King David is powerful enough compared to neighboring kingdoms, secure enough on his throne, and devoted enough (with God's favor) to assume that YHWH would agree to his moving to construct a permanent structure for the Ark of the Covenant. Israel could then perform the rituals begun by Moses so God's covenant with Israel can continue, renew, and operate. A major source of analysis for this article is Lyle Eslinger's *House of God or House of David: The Rhetoric of 2 Samuel 7*.^b Eslinger asks three questions:

1. Why does David want to build a Temple?
2. Why does God try to stop him?
3. How does God try to stop him?^c

^a King David's response reflects Hebrews 10:30–31 (King James Version):

"For we know him that has said, 'Vengeance belongs unto me, I will recompense,' said the Lord. And again, 'The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'"

David understood this clearly, which is why he replied to God as he did in 2 Samuel chapter 7 and 1 Chronicles chapter 17. Remember also, we are told that David performed his great deeds through faith (Hebrews 11:32–33).

^b Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994. See my article "[The Location and Future Discovery of King David's Tomb](#)" where I engage Prof. Eslinger's work regarding the present location of King David's body near the Gihon Spring.

^c Eslinger, *House of God or House of David*, p. 9. Eslinger wrote a previous work on the Book of Second Samuel, then continuing his research he wrote a book on just Second Samuel chapter 7.

Why Build the Temple?

The answers to these questions are in 2 Samuel chapter 7 and 1 Chronicles chapter 17. The scene is set with this situation. Here is one reason why David wanted to build the Temple:

“The rivals are out of the way, the people have acclaimed David as king, and the ark of God has been brought to the city of David (2 Sam 6.12). The installation of the ark in a temple built by the king will be the keystone for David’s monarchy.”

• ***Eslinger, House of God or House of David, p. 13***

David was a successful king. He was anointed of God to succeed an unworthy King of Israel who disqualified himself from rule. David consolidated power over the tribes of Israel, selected a capital, and brought the important religious shrine, the Ark of the Covenant, to the central location of the kingdom. David was doing what God anointed him to do, which was to help Israel become **“a great nation.”** Read again what Abram was told that YHWH would do to recognize Abram’s faithfulness.

“I shall make you into a great nation, And I shall bless you; I shall indeed make your name great,^d And you will indeed be a blessing; I shall indeed bless those blessing you, And I shall curse the one maledicting you. In you all the families of the ground will be blessed.”

• ***Genesis 12:2–3***

David saw himself as God’s chosen and anointed agent (which he was) to help accomplish what YHWH wanted done — guiding Abram’s children to become that great nation. Remember that Mount Moriah was the place Abraham^e was told by God to sacrifice Isaac as a test of faithfulness.

“Then He [God] said: ‘Take now your son, your only one, whom you love, Isaac, and go by yourself to the land of Moriah and offer him up there as an ascent offering on one of the mountains which I shall indicate to you.’”

• ***Genesis 22:2***

After David’s death, Solomon gives us additional information where Mount Moriah is located:

“Then Solomon started to build the House of Yahweh in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah where He had appeared to his father David, at the place which David had prepared on the threshing site of Ornan the Jebusite.”

• ***2 Chronicles 3:1***

Some commentators feel that full control of the Kingdom of Israel was not enough for David. His desire to build a Temple to YHWH showed that as king, he wanted more. Temple building was an important feature of Near East rulers in the world and time David lived. Temple building did not merely give rulers prestige as builders. It showed their people and neighboring kingdoms that the rule over their subjects was sanctioned by their god(s). Building a Temple also gave the ruler control over the cult, the activities, calendar, and rituals, and perhaps the King thought he had some control over the deity. While David certainly controlled the cult and its operations, I doubt he felt he controlled YHWH in any way.^f

God’s rejection of David’s desire was twofold: (1) David wanted to build it for the wrong reason, and (2) David was, as we learn later, a man of war, a man of blood (and perhaps even complicit in murder).

^d YHWH says Abram’s name shall be made great. YHWH says the same thing to David in 2 Samuel 7:9.

^e Abram’s new name given to him by God (Genesis 17:5; 1 Chronicles 1:27; Nehemiah 9:7).

^f However, David did try to influence YHWH by argument after YHWH’s refusal much as Abraham argued with God in Genesis 18:16–33. This refusal also brought David some disturbing news. David’s argument was about saving his own life and he accepted whatever YHWH wished regarding the Temple.

Professor Eslinger points out that in ancient times palaces and temples regularly were joined in one architectural complex. This gave the king direct and even daily influence on the operation of the cult.^g This was certainly the case with David's palace, which was very close to the location that YHWH later chose for His Temple. David set up the operations of the Temple: the workers, the music, established the daily and festival activities according to the calendar. All these were expanded from the tabernacle operations described in the Law of Moses. The practice of the cult would be permanent and central to the nation established in the land promised to God's people. It was another example of God's blessing for His people that He would dwell among them on a more permanent basis. The entire nation would participate in the various religious festivals and activities.

Consulting closely with the prophet Nathan and Levitical, tribal, and military officials, David's plans were followed by Solomon once the Temple was completed, and they lasted for most of the independent Kingdom of Judah. The Davidic format was largely followed even after the people of Israel returned from Babylon in the days of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah.^h

Remember, Samuel-Kings is the base text. The text of Chronicles contains later narratives that comment on, clarify, and update the text of Samuel-Kings, often with a different focus. Here is an outline of Second Samuel chapter 7:

- Narration about the state of the Kingdom of Israel under David (verse 1).
- David's first short speech, **"I dwell in a palace of cedar, YHWH dwells in a tent"** (verse 2).
- Nathan's positive reply (verse 3).
 - Narration that YHWH enters the discussion (verse 4).
- YHWH speaks (verses 5–16). Verse 11, the second part, is the pivot of YHWH's message.
 - Narration that Nathan accurately transmits God's message to David (verse 17–18a).
- David second speech replies to God (verses 18b–29).ⁱ

In a sense, David could claim he fulfilled YHWH's covenant requirement for Israel to worship where God chooses for them to do so, but there is no specific text stating that is the case until after the Temple is built. Does this mean perhaps David lied about where YHWH wanted the Temple built? No. Look at what Moses wrote:

"... until now you [Israel] have not come to the resting place and to the allotment that Yahweh your Elohim is giving to you. When you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land that Yahweh your Elohim is giving to you as an allotment, and He gives rest to you from all your enemies from round about, so that you may dwell in serenity, then it will come to be:

The place where Yahweh your Elohim shall choose to tabernacle His Name [in the Promised Land], there shall you bring all that I am instructing you, your ascent offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offering of your hand and all your choice vow offerings which you shall vow to Yahweh. You will rejoice before Yahweh your Elohim, you, your sons and your daughters, your manservants, your maidservants and the Levite who is within your gates, for he has no portion or allotment among you."

• Deuteronomy 12:9–12

David understood this to mean that once the people were settled and unified again, God would designate a place for the Temple to be built. In the time of David, God chose that place to be Jerusalem as a place for His name. He acted according to God's word and will, even if his motives may have been self-serving.

^g Eslinger, *House of God or House of David*, pp. 15–16.

^h Of course, there were modifications throughout this time, but the model was established by Moses and expanded by David.

ⁱ Eslinger, *House of God or House of David*, p. 10.

Whether self-serving or modest, King David was correct.

We find out later that God did indeed choose the place for the Temple. Jesus confirmed the authenticity of Solomon's Temple, Zerubbabel's reconstruction, Simon the Hasmonean's reconstruction, and Herod's reconstruction. Jesus did so when He proclaimed it to be **"My Father's House"** (John 2:16). The location and the Temple were both legitimate.

The books of Samuel-Kings and Chronicles were not written to answer every question we may ask, nor were they written to give us all the information we want to know. They were written to impart to us what God wants us to know, a little here, a little there, with the information given to us in the order He determines.

There is no specific indication where David wanted to build the Temple, although it must be near a source of water, which, in the City of David, could only be the Gihon Spring. Nor are the readers or audience told where YHWH chose the Temple to be built. Only later in 2 Samuel 24:18–25 and 1 Chronicles 21:18–22:1 is the exact site revealed.

According to the sequence of the texts, this was not made known until David was old and near the end of his life. It is possible that YHWH did not designate the exact site for the Temple until decades after the events of 2 Samuel chapter 7 and 1 Chronicles chapter 17, even though everyone knew the site must be in proximity to "living water."

David made preparations for the materials of the Temple. (Gary Arvidson analyzes King David's preparations for the Temple's construction in his book, *In Search of King David's Lost Tomb & Treasure*, 2nd edition (Kings Mountain, NC: 2001). God gave David the details in writing about how the Temple should be built (1 Chronicles chapter 28, especially verse 19), and God allowed David to prepare the foundation of the Temple, so the erection of the Temple could be done after David's death.

However, construction of the Temple did not begin until after Solomon consolidated his power over his subjects and enemies. Solomon began building in the fourth year of his reign (1 Kings 6:1; 2 Chronicles 3:1–2). In spite of David's preparation, construction of the Temple took time, being completed in the eleventh year of Solomon's reign.

TEXT: *David Announces His Desire to Build a Temple for God*

2 Samuel 7:1–3

¹ It came to be *when the king* was settled in his palace,
and Yahweh Himself had granted him rest from all his enemies round about,

² *that the king* said to Nathan the prophet,
"See now, I am dwelling in a palace of cedars, while the coffer [Ark] of the One, Elohim, is dwelling inside a sheet-tent."

³ Nathan replied to *the king*, **"Go ahead, do all that is in your heart, for Yahweh is with you."**

1 Chronicles 17:1–2

¹ It came to be *as soon as David* was settled in his palace,

David said to Nathan the prophet,
"Behold, I am dwelling in the palace of cedars while the coffer [Ark] of the covenant of Yahweh is beneath a sheet-tent."

² Nathan replied to *David*, **"Do all that is in your heart, for the One, Elohim, is with you."**

[end text]

Why did the text of 1 Chronicles 17:1 not contain the information of David being granted **"rest from his all enemies"**? First Chronicles was written from historical documents hundreds of years after Second Samuel. Perhaps the author of Chronicles felt his audience already knew that fact. The words of 2 Samuel 7:1 gives the audience more complete information the writer felt they needed to know.

There is no doubt we are reading the barest expression of David's statement in 2 Samuel 7:2 and 1 Chronicles 17:1. We know this because Nathan seemed to understand exactly what David was saying,

what he wanted to do, and what was in David's heart. Nathan agreed with his king, and said **"Go ahead ..."**, and **"do all that is in your heart."** God's response was very different from what David thought it would be, especially after Nathan's initial approval. There is no indication that either David or Nathan asked God directly. David was going to move forward with "his" project without asking God directly or getting His approval. This was a mistake — and for David it was almost a grave mistake.

God speaks for Himself. No one presumes to speak for God, not the king of Israel or God's prophet, unless God commands him or her to do so. Only those permitted can speak for Him. God's response follows:

TEXT: YHWH Rejects David's Proposal

2 Samuel 7:4–7

⁴ But it was **in that same night** that the word of *Yahweh* came to Nathan the prophet, saying, ⁵ **"Go and say to My servant David,**

'Thus said Yahweh: Should you build Me a house for Me to dwell in? ⁶ For I have not dwelt in a house from the day that I brought the sons of Israel up from Egypt until this day, but I have been moving about in Tent and Tabernacle.

⁷ **Wherever I moved about among all the sons of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to one of Israel's judges whom I commissioned to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built **for Me a house of cedars?**'"**

1 Chronicles 17:3–6

³ But it was **in that same night** that the word of *Elohim* came to Nathan the prophet, saying, ⁴ **"Go and say to David My servant,**

'Thus said Yahweh: Not you should build for Me the house to dwell in. ⁵ For I have not dwelt in a house from the day that I brought up Israel until this day, but I have been moving about from tent to tent, in a tabernacle.

⁶ **Wherever I moved about among all of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to one of Israel's judges whom I commissioned to shepherd My people, saying, 'Why have you not built **for Me a house of cedars?**'"** [end text]

Nathan, a prophet of YHWH and a man of God, felt he knew God's mind. He gave his opinion, not his knowledge, and certainly not knowledge from God. Nathan was wrong, but we are not told if God punished him. Nathan told David it was a great idea, YHWH would approve, and **"do all that is in your heart, for Yahweh is with you."** But YHWH was not with David in this matter. Just the opposite was the case.

Then, **"in that same night"** God came to Nathan to tell David what God really thought about the idea. God acted quickly. This indicates God's great displeasure in this matter.

Why Does God Try to Stop David?

David never asked God if he could build the Temple for Him. Reread what David said in 2 Samuel 7:2 and 1 Chronicles 17:1. He merely makes a statement about the present relative condition of David's house and God's dwelling beneath a tent-sheet.

God asks David a question in 2 Samuel 7:5, **"Should you build Me a house for Me to dwell in?"** In 2 Chronicles 17:4, YHWH is presented as making a declarative statement: **"Not you should build for Me the house to dwell in."** God does not need a permanent house. He never asked for one. YHWH is not the responder. He is the initiator, particularly with regard to when and where He will establish His presence at any given moment.

YHWH's question and statement are answered 6 verses later in 2 Samuel 7:11 and 1 Chronicles 17:10 respectively when God directly states what He wants and what He will do. Later David Himself gives YHWH's specific reason for refusing David his desire, in 1 Chronicles 22:8:

“But the word of Yahweh came against me, saying: ‘Much blood have you shed, and great wars have you waged. Not you shall build the House for My Name, for much blood have you shed on the earth before Me.’”

Still later in 1 Chronicles 28:3:

“But the One, Elohim, He said to me, ‘Not you shall build the House for My Name, for you are a man of wars, and you have shed blood.’”

YHWH will not allow David to build Him a house. Instead, God will build David a house. What kind of a house will that be? God addresses David personally, through Nathan (who has already been shown to be wrong):

TEXT: YHWH Rejects David’s Proposal

2 Samuel 7:8–13

⁸ And **now**, thus shall you say to My servant David,

“Thus speaks Yahweh of hosts: I Myself took you from the homestead, from following the flock, to become governor over My people, over Israel.

⁹ I shall be with you wherever you go, and I shall cut off all your enemies from before you. I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones who are on the earth.

¹⁰ And I will provide a place for My people Israel; I will plant them so that they can tabernacle by themselves and shall no longer be disturbed; the sons of iniquity shall not continue to humiliate them just as at the first, ¹¹ ever since the day when I commissioned judges over My people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies.

Moreover Yahweh tells you that Yahweh shall establish a royal house for you:

[When will YHWH do that?]

¹² **When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, then I will raise up your seed after you that shall come forth from your internal parts; and I will establish his kingdom.”**

1 Chronicles 17:7–11

⁷ And **now**, thus shall you say to My servant David,

“Thus speaks Yahweh of hosts: I Myself took you from the homestead, from following the flock, to become governor over My people Israel.

⁸ I shall be with you wherever you go, and I shall cut off all your enemies from before you. I will make for you a name, like the name of the great ones who are on the earth.

⁹ And I will provide a place for My people Israel; I will plant them so that they can tabernacle by themselves and shall no longer be disturbed; the sons of iniquity shall not continue to harass them just as at the first, ¹⁰ ever since the days when I commissioned judges over My people Israel. And I will make submissive all your enemies.

I am telling you that Yahweh shall build a royal house for you:

[When will YHWH do that?]

¹¹ **It will come to pass when your days are fulfilled to go and lie down with your fathers, then I will raise up your seed after you that shall come to be one of your own sons; and I will establish his kingdom.”**

[end text]

First, Nathan was to speak to David now, not when convenient for Nathan to do so. Then note 2 Samuel 7:11 and 1 Chronicles 17:10 where it says, “**YHWH shall establish** (“**build**”) **a house for you,**” David. What does this mean? YHWH will not build a house of cedar for David.^j

^j I crossed out the phrase “~~royal house,~~” because the word “royal” does not occur in Hebrew (or in Greek Old Testament). There is no technical reason why the Concordant Literal Version includes the word “royal” to modify “house.” This appears to be a theological assumption of what the Concordant translators thought the text should say.

Then God describes how He has taken care and provided for David throughout his life. He lifted David up to govern His people Israel. He made David great and his name great. Why? It was so God through David could fulfill His promise to Abram to make a great nation from him, bless Abram, make Abram's name great, and make Israel a great blessing for all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:2–3). David intruded upon God's former blessing to Abram.

Why does God try to stop David? He did so because David was presumptuous (as was Nathan) in his thoughts, words, and future intentions. Therefore, YHWH says He will build a "house" for David.

How Does God Try to Stop David?

God stops David through a direct, effective, and immediate threat. What was that house God was going to make for David? That house was a tomb, designed to be a constant reminder to David about his particularly tenuous thread of life that was in God's hand. YHWH says in effect, "I will build you a house which will be your grave. Prepare to die — soon — although I will continue your dynasty." YHWH's talk about David's death made clear His intent. Lisle Eslinger makes this clear:

"Having revealed to David that God would be the one to make a 'house' for his covenant partner and not vice versa, Yahweh proceeds to talk about time after David. This house will be a house for the dead!"

• ***Eslinger, House of God or House of David, p. 43.***

Here is Eslinger's evidence for his claim:

"Yahweh's choice of phrasing, to anyone familiar with Israel's best known traditions is double damnation: 'for (*ki*) when your days have been filled and you lie down with your fathers ...' Such words were spoken only once before (by God or anyone else). When Moses overstepped his bounds he was refused the pleasure of the view of the promised land from within the bounds of that most desired place (Num 20.8–13, 27.12–14; Deut 4.22). In Deut 31:14, on the eve of the entrance into the land, God says to Moses, 'Your time to die has drawn nigh.' Then, in v. 16 we hear the same phrase 'You are lying down with your fathers. ...'"

• ***Eslinger, House of God or House of David, p. 44***

It is little known that a document exists giving David's words of dedication for the Tomb or "House" built for David. The dedication was made when preparations were completed for David's Tomb, originally a "gift" by God to David. The title that accompanies Psalm 30 is "**Dedication of the House of David.**"^k When you read this psalm, note that it does not contain celebratory language about the dedication of the Temple (built by Solomon, not David), nor even celebration about the dedication of David's palace of cedar. It celebrates the completion of the Tomb of David which will last as long as the kingdom does, for the eon.

^k See my article "[The Tomb of David and Psalm 30](#)" which gives us a great deal of information about the "house" that God built for King David. It is uncertain if the title is part of the biblical text, or was added by later scribes. Nevertheless, scholars most always attribute Psalm 30 to refer to the dedication of either the Temple, or to David's house of cedar. They give this assessment although the subject of Psalm 30 is God's rescue of David from "premature" death and God's love for him. Specifically God rescued David from: (1) danger Psalm 30:1; (2) disease (30:2), and (3) death (30:3). YHWH kept David from each category of danger several times, and David was very thankful to God for each rescue. David cries out to God in verses 7–10 of Psalm 30:

"Yet I, I have said in my ease, I shall not slip at all for the eon [David was wrong].

O Yahweh, in Your benevolence, You have made my mountain to stand in strength.

If You conceal Your face, I become flustered [troubled];

To You, O Yahweh, am I calling, And to my Lord am I supplicating.

What gain is there in my blood poured out, In my descending to the pit [grave]?

Does soil acclaim You? Does it tell Your faithfulness?

Hear, O Yahweh, and be gracious to me; O Yahweh, be my Help!"

TEXT: YHWH Will Build David a House

2 Samuel 7:11–17

^{11c} *“Moreover Yahweh tells you that Yahweh shall **establish a royal house** for you:*

¹² *When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, then I will raise up your seed after you that shall come forth from your internal parts; and I will establish his kingdom.*

¹³ *He shall build **a House** for My Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for the eon.*

¹⁴ *I Myself shall become for him like a father; and he shall become for Me like a son.*

When he sins out of depravity, then I will correct him with the club of men and with the contagions of the sons of humanity.

¹⁵ *As for My benignity, it shall not withdraw from him as I withdrew it from Saul whom I took away from before you.*

¹⁶ ***Your house** and your kingship will be authenticated before Me for the eon; your throne, it shall become established for the eon.”*

¹⁷ *According to all these words and according to **all this vision**, so did Nathan speak to David.*

1 Chronicles 17:10–15

^{10c} *“I am telling you that Yahweh shall **build a royal house** for you: ¹¹ It will come to pass when your days are fulfilled to go and lie down with your fathers, then I will raise up your seed after you that shall come to be one of your own sons; and I will establish his kingdom.*

¹² *He shall build **a House** for Me, and I will establish his throne for the eon.*

¹³ *I Myself shall become for him like a father; and he shall become for Me like a son.*

As for My benignity, I shall not withdraw it from him as I withdrew it from him who was before you.

¹⁴ ***I will install him in My House** and in My kingdom for the eon; his throne, it shall become established for the eon.”*

¹⁵ *According to all these words and according to **all this vision**, so did Nathan speak to David.*

[end text]

I repeat the last portion of verse 11 of 2 Samuel 7:11–12, and verse 10 of 1 Chronicles 17:10–11. I do this because these are key verses in these passages and the emphasis is necessary.

I highlighted the word “**house**” and its modifiers in the above section so you can distinguish which house and whose house is being meant in each instance. Two different kinds of houses are indicated here. There is the house built by YHWH for David. Then there is the **House** of YHWH, the Temple. Both of these houses and kingship or kingdom of David shall last for an eon (2 Samuel 7:13, 16; 1 Chronicles 17:12, 14).¹ Elsewhere in these passages, we will be told of the usual meaning of “house,” which is a reference to the dynasty of David. There is a distinction between

- (1) David’s house (his Tomb),
- (2) God’s house (to be built by Solomon), and
- (3) the kingdom (David’s dynasty)

The phrase “**House of David**” has two meanings in the Old Testament. One meaning with the majority of occurrences indicates the dynasty or descendants of David. The other meaning refers to the Tomb of David.^m

¹ The length of the eon for each “house” may be different, and indeed they are so. Remember, “eon” does not mean eternity, it simply means in Hebrew, a long period of varying duration, depending on circumstances as God designates.

^m See “[The House of David](#)” for a list of all instances of “House of David.” My article, “[The Location and Future Discovery of King David’s Tomb](#)” describes where David’s Tomb is located today. Strong evidence suggests that the body of King David is still in that Tomb at this moment. To see that a “house” can be a grave, compare Isaiah 14:18-20 with Isaiah 22:22.

YHWH gave to David honor, glory, wealth, power, rule over His people Israel, and he allowed David to participate in God's blessing of Israel. David and Israel were both at rest from their enemies, yet suddenly God says the house he will build for David could occur any time **"when your days are fulfilled."** David took this statement as a direct threat from Almighty God. Who will God replace David with? YHWH comforts David and tells him one of his sons. God is not specific. David's heir will not be raised up until after David's death. In the last verses of this section Nathan is mentioned again. The words of YHWH were given to him in a vision so there would be no ambiguity about God's words to David. Nathan did not just hear words, but Nathan also saw what God was to David in a vision.

TEXT: *David Answers (Argues?) with God*

2 Samuel 7:18–25

¹⁸ Then king David came and sat before Yahweh; he said:

"Who am I, my Lord Yahweh, and what is my house that You have brought me as far as hither?

¹⁹ While this may be still small in Your eyes, my Lord Yahweh, yet You are speaking also about Your servant's house for the far future; and this is the law for humanity, my Lord Yahweh.

²⁰ What more could David add in speaking to You?

For You Yourself know Your servant, my Lord Yahweh. ²¹ For the sake of Your word and according to Your own heart You have done all this greatness, and made it known to Your servant.

²² Therefore You are great, my Lord Yahweh, for there is no one like You, and there is no Elohim except You among all of whom we have heard with our ears.

²³ And who is like Your people, like Israel, the only nation on the earth that Elohim went to ransom for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a Name and to do for them great and fear inspiring deeds: to drive out nations and their elohim before Your people that You ransomed for Yourself from Egypt?

²⁴ You have established Your people Israel for Yourself as Your people for the eon; and You Yourself, O Yahweh, have become their Elohim.

²⁵ And now, my Lord Yahweh, confirm for the eon the word that You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house; do just as You have spoken."

1 Chronicles 17:16–15

¹⁶ Then king David came and sat before Yahweh; he said:

"Who am I, O Yahweh Elohim, and what is my house that You have brought me as far as hither?

¹⁷ While this may be still small in Your eyes, O Elohim, yet You are speaking also about Your servant's house for the far future; and You have me in Your view according to the law for humanity in ascendancy, O Yahweh Elohim.

¹⁸ What more could David add to You for the glory granted to Your servant?

For You Yourself know Your servant.

¹⁹ O Yahweh, for the sake of Your servant and according to Your own heart You have done all this greatness by making known all the great achievements.

²⁰ O Yahweh, there is no one like You, and there is no Elohim except You among all of whom we have heard with our ears.

²¹ And who is like Your people, like Israel, the only nation on the earth that the One, Elohim, went to ransom for Himself as a people, to make for You a Name for great achievements and fear-inspiring deeds: to drive out nations before Your people that You ransomed from Egypt?

²² You have established Your people Israel for Yourself as Your people for the eon; and You Yourself, O Yahweh, have become their Elohim.

²³ now, O Yahweh, may it come true for the eon, the word that You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house; do just as You have spoken, ²⁴ and may it come true." [end text]

In Scripture, only kings can sit before YHWH's presence. David does not prostrate himself, in spite of his fear of coming before God at a moment of personal crisis for him. He immediately discusses "**what is my house that You have brought me as far as hither?**" All translations have awkward English with this passage. This is because they do not understand that the "house" is a Tomb and David is pleading for his life. David is asking God: All you have done for me and your people, suddenly you seek my death to put me in a tomb? WHY?" David claims this entire matter is a small thing for YHWH, but then why is God seeming to change his mind about David as His servant. Great things have been done and David's descendants will continue to do other great things, so why take David's life?

David is in the presence of God where "**El is greatly terrifying among the council of the saints, And fear inspiring to all those round about Him**" (Psalm 89:7).

Clearly, David is in a weak position to argue with God. Yet he pleads, bringing up every point he can to change God's mind. David is confused and does not understand, "**You are speaking also about Your servant's house [David's Tomb] for the far future.**" David will remain dead and in his Tomb and not be resurrected for a long time to come. David wonders, what benefit can that be to you, God?

After a rhetorical flourish of more heartfelt praise, David makes the statement that shows he finally understands what God wants. It is not just obedience, but acceptance that God's words will come to pass without opposition as He sees fit. Finally, David is willing to accept what God has given him, even if it means his death will happen soon.

This acceptance of God's will brings to David everything he seeks and wants. His willingness to give up present greatness allowed God to be merciful toward His servant. David acknowledges that God will do as He has spoken, with regard to David's "house" or Tomb, with David's future dynasty, and with God's Temple, all after David has died. David is content. He says in his own words, "**Thy will be done**" just as David's greater Son, Jesus, said in Matthew 6:10; 26:42; and Luke 11:2. Passages like these illustrate why David is beloved by God.

TEXT: David Accepts God's Answer and His Will

2 Samuel 7:26–29

²⁶ "**May Your Name be magnified for the eon, saying, Yahweh of hosts is Elohim over Israel; and the house of Your servant David, may it become established before You.**

²⁷ For You, O Yahweh of hosts, Elohim of Israel, You have revealed to the ear of Your servant, saying, I shall build a house for you [David]; therefore Your servant has found courage in his heart to pray to You with this prayer.

²⁸ And now, my Lord Yahweh, You are He Who is the One, Elohim; as for Your words, they are trustworthy; and You are speaking to Your servant of this goodness. ²⁹ Be disposed now and bless the house of Your servant that it may come to be before You for the eon; for You, my Lord Yahweh, You have spoken. So by Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed for the eon."

1 Chronicles 17:16–15

²⁴ "**May Your Name be magnified for the eon, saying, Yahweh of hosts, Elohim of Israel, is Elohim over Israel; and the house of Your servant David, may it become established before You.**

²⁵ For You, my Elohim, You have revealed to the ear of Your servant, to build a house for him [David]; therefore Your servant has found courage to pray before You.

²⁶ And now O Yahweh, You are He Who is the One, Elohim;

and You are speaking to Your servant of this goodness. ²⁷ Now You are disposed to bless the house of Your servant that it may come to be before You for the eon; for You Yourself, O Yahweh, have blessed and are

blessed for the eon."

[end text]

David continues to accept the “house” that God is building for him. Every instance of “house” in this section refers to David’s Tomb. The more David discusses it, all the more David seems to express enthusiasm about the “house.”

He now understands he will be used by YHWH even after his death. David proclaims, **“as for your words, they are trustworthy.”** David trusts God more than ever. He asks **“My Lord YHWH”** that He **“be disposed NOW and bless the house of your servant.”** David replies to God that **“by Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed for the eon.”** This is a remarkable concession by a man under a sentence of death a few words ago.¹¹

Once David was willing to die, his death was no longer required by God. Psalm 30 mentioned above was written after this incident and commemorated David’s Tomb. While David hoped to proclaim the dedication of God’s Temple, he was content to celebrate “the house that God built” for him personally.

What was the “house” God built for him? It was likely a series of connected cave chambers south of the Gihon Spring in the limestone bedrock, and David was allowed to finish and decorate that underground complex, much like Egyptian tombs in the Valley of the Kings. This may mean the Tomb structure may contain many artifacts, writings, and bodies of David’s relatives.

Look at Psalm 132 Again

Toward the end of [“Israel and Judah: 4. The Ark Arrives in Jerusalem”](#) I presented Psalm 132 complete with some analysis. Psalm 132 has several indications it was written by King David, although it is not stated in the psalm. It certainly expresses David’s experiences and thinking about the various houses mentioned in 2 Samuel chapter 7 and 1 Chronicles chapter 17. The first half of Psalm 132 is written in the first person, the second half has YHWH’s words in the first person.

I want to examine again some verses from Psalm 132. David writes in verses 3–5:

- ³ I shall assuredly not come into my tent house,
Assuredly not go up to the cot of my berth,
⁴ Assuredly not give sleep to my eyes,
Or slumber to my eyelids,
⁵ Until I should find a place for Yahweh,
A grand tabernacle for the Sturdy One of Jacob.

Then note verses 7–8:

- ⁷ Let us go to His grand tabernacle;
Let us worship at His footstool.
⁸ Do arise, O Yahweh, to Your resting place,
You and the coffer [Ark] of Your strength.

Responding to David’s words, YHWH also speaks in the first person, verses 11–14:

- “Out of the fruit of your loins Shall I set One on your throne.
¹² If your sons should keep My covenant
And My testimonies that I shall teach them,
Their sons also unto the future,
They shall sit on your throne.**

¹¹ I explain this entire episode further in [“King David’s Near Death Experience”](#) where I relate David’s situation to Job’s trials. Job suffered, David was exalted. Job wished for death, David feared death. Both came to accept God’s will, whatever the cost.

- ¹³ **For Yahweh has chosen Zion;
He yearns for it as His dwelling place**
- ¹⁴ **This is My resting place unto the future;
Here shall I dwell, for I yearn for it.**

Then verse 17:

- ¹⁷ **There shall I make the horn of David sprout;
I will arrange a lamp for My anointed one.**

Psalm 132 discusses the Tabernacle, the Ark, and David's hope for a future Temple all within the time of 2 Samuel chapter 7 and 1 Chronicles chapter 17. David's dynasty is mentioned "**Out of the fruit of your loin**" (verse 11), and it is conditional upon their obedience to God's covenant with Moses and David (verse 12). It talks about the place where YHWH will rest and dwell (verses 8, 13–14). It is messianic ("**my anointed one**" from the "**sprout**" of "**the horn of David**").

This psalm lays out many of the elements of David's aspirations mentioned in the crisis. It presents us with David's resolution in his own mind to God's rejection of his desire to build a Temple for YHWH.^o David came to realize, first in his own mind, to follow and obey YHWH, however He wishes to resolve events. David proposes, God disposes. Once David, the powerful King of Israel, is content to follow YHWH, however He leads, then God makes it clear that David will not die soon, but will live a full life. David's heritage will result in a dynasty leading to a glorious individual, "**My anointed one**" (verse 17). YHWH's anointed one will be unique and distinctive from David's other heirs to his throne.

The "**anointed one**" will be a descendant of David, but he will not be simply a human king.^p This will be a special anointed individual, mentioned separately from the dynastic heirs of David in verses 11–12.

God's Love for Zion

In fact, other occurrences in Davidic psalms show that all Israel knew that Zion was God's chosen dwelling place:

Psalm 2:6: "**I will pour a libation on My King, On Zion, My holy mountain.**"

Psalm 9:11: "**Make melody to Yahweh, the One dwelling in Zion; Tell His activities among the peoples."**

Psalm 20:2: "**May He send to your help from the sanctuary, And from Zion, may He brace you."**

Psalm 50:2: "**From Zion, the consummation of loveliness, Elohim, He shines forth.**"

Psalm 65:1: "**To You behooves praise, O Elohim, in Zion, And to You shall be paid the vow in Jerusalem."**

David's strengths as King were almost his downfall as God's servant. His arrogance nearly led to his death. His faith in God saved David because God was faithful to Abram, to Israel, and to David. All covenants with God are fulfilled.

David Sielaff, December 2014

^o David's motives were also self-serving. He wanted to construct the Temple to further his own political, dynastic, and imperial purposes. YHWH forestalled that line of thinking by requiring that the construction of the Temple be done by an heir of David's. This self-serving aspect of David's thinking will occur again with the incident of the census of the tribes of Israel for the purpose of military expansion (2 Samuel chapter 24 and 1 Chronicles 21:1–27), yet David is still faithful to God.

^p Remember, all kings were anointed, all priests were anointed to their Temple service, and some prophets (maybe all, though this is uncertain) were anointed to their prophetic office.