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Telephone: 503 292 4352

• Internet: www.askelm.com •

E-Mail: askoffice@askelm.com

King David's Tomb

3. House of David

by David Sielaff, 2004, April 2024

Read the "[April 2024 Newsletter](#)"



The phrase **“House of David”** is most often thought to mean the family or descendants of David. It denotes the kingly line of Judah and all those who had David as their physical forefather. David was the forefather of Jesus and He was in line to occupy the Throne of David.¹ Clearly it means this in a majority of occurrences. However, the phrase **“the House of David”** can also mean something else. It identifies a physical place, a location, which has immense importance if understood correctly in context. This second meaning is the subject of this article. (I use the Concordant Literal Version throughout.)

The phrase **“House of David”** is used some 26 times in the Hebrew Old Testament and at other times with additional qualifying terms.² Most often the phrase means the family or clan or descendants of David, as in the following verses where **“the house of Saul”** is counterposed to **“the house of David”**:

“Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; but David was growing stronger while the house of Saul was growing weaker.

... It came to be, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner was strengthening his hold on the house of Saul.

... To transfer the kingship from the house of Saul and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah from Dan unto Beer-sheba.”

• 2 Samuel 3:1, 6, 10

This is the same usage and sense as when the phrases **“house of Israel”** or **“house of Judah”** are used.

However, other instances of **“house of David”** clearly means something different, such as when the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon in Jerusalem:

¹ See Dr. Martin's article "[Is David's Throne in Existence Today?](#)"

² **“House of David”** occurs in: 1 Samuel 20:16; 2 Samuel 3:1, 6; 1 Kings 12:19f, 26, 13:2, 14:8; 2 Kings 17:21; 1 Chronicles 17:24; 2 Chronicles 8:11, 10:19, 21:7; Nehemiah 12:37; Psalms 30:1, 122:5; Isaiah 7:2, 13, 22:22; Jeremiah 21:12; Zechariah 12:7f, 10, 12, 13:1. I include the phrase **“House of My servant David”** which occurs twice: 2 Samuel 7:26 and in Luke 1:27.

“Solomon led up Pharaoh’s daughter from the city of David to the house that he had built for her; for he said, ‘Though a wife of mine, she should not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, since they are holy to which the coffer [the ark] of Yahweh has come.’”

• 2 Chronicles 8:11

Another example is when Nehemiah took a night tour around Jerusalem:

“At the Spring [Fountain] Gate, in front of them, they went up the stairs of the city of David on the ascent to the wall ABOVE the house of David and unto the Water Gate toward the east.”

• Nehemiah 12:37

In the two passages above, the phrase “house of David” indicates a place or a structure, and not a group of people. While the simple Hebrew term *beth* is consistently translated “house,” the meaning and usage of “house” can vary. However, all the various meanings of house reduce to two categories, either:

- (1) a group of people related from one ancestor or
- (2) a place, a structure of some kind where people live, and those people have some relationship to one person or ancestor.

All instances of “house” fit one of those two general meanings. I will now examine usage of the second meaning of “house” as a place or structure. The results are surprising.

A House For God, A House For David

King David struck upon the idea that God should have a Temple rather than just a Tabernacle or tent as His dwelling place on earth. The complete story is found in Second Samuel chapter 7 and paralleled closely in 1 Chronicles 17:1–27. After first being told by the prophet Nathan that God would approve and help fulfill David’s desire, God did not, give any such permission. God approved of the Temple, but David would not be the one to build it. David was told that a son of his (at that time unborn) would build the House for God’s Name.³ God replied to Nathan about one other thing He wanted David to understand:

“But it was in that same night that the word of Yahweh came to Nathan the prophet, saying,

‘Go and say to My servant David, Thus said Yahweh: Should you build Me a house for Me to dwell in? 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. 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? And now, thus shall you say to My servant David,

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

... Moreover [1] **YAHWEH** tells you [David] that [2] **YAHWEH** shall establish a [royal]⁴ house **FOR YOU ...**”

• 2 Samuel 7:4–9, 11 [almost identical in 1 Chronicles 17:3–8, 10]

Let me point out something that will make that sentence of verse 11 clearer. Almost as an aside God adds the last statement. The Hebrew word YAHWEH is repeated. The Hebrew therefore reads: “**Moreover YHWH tells**

³ One of the names of the Jerusalem Temple was *beth shem* or “House of the Name,” meaning the House of God’s name. See my article, “[A Name for the Temple of God](#).”

⁴ The word “royal” does not occur in the Hebrew text. It is inserted into the Concordant translation for clarity. That is a mistake. In this instance the King James Version is correct over the Concordant Literal Version.

you [David] **that YHWH will make you** [David] **a house.**”⁵ This is an important statement.

Why is the name YAHWEH repeated? It is repeated for emphasis. That is the personal and proper name of the God of Israel (Exodus 3:15, 6:3, 15:3, etc.). At that time, the people were allowed to pray to God by name. God makes a point that David (and the reader) should note. YHWH is speaking directly to David, just as He spoke to Moses — not through a prophet or through an angel. Let me say again:

This was **a direct and personal communication from YHWH to David**: that YHWH Himself would **“make”** a house for David.⁶

David was not allowed to build a house for God, but God was to build a house for David. The house for God was to be built by a son of David.

“... Moreover Yahweh tells you that Yahweh shall establish a [royal] house FOR YOU [David]: When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers [you die], then I will raise up your seed after you that shall come forth from your internal parts; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for the eon.”

• **2 Samuel 7:11–13**

This passage in 2 Samuel chapter 7 is an important milestone of time. God repeats and reinforces His Covenant with Israel through David, but it has messianic implications as well.⁷ God’s promise was to provide to David (future to that moment) a son who would build the Temple. God provided the plan for the Temple, David gathered the materials for the construction.⁸ God promised three things to David:

- (1) to make or build David a “house,”
- (2) to set up seed after him, and
- (3) to establish David’s kingdom.

All three are contingent on David’s descendants being loyal, obedient, and faithful to YHWH. Most readers of Scripture, and most scholars, equate the second promise as a restatement of the first, that God building a house for David is the same as setting up his “seed.” David’s response in 2 Samuel 7:18–29 and Psalm 89 are seen as reinforcing that understanding.⁹ However, all three promises are distinct, each promising different rewards. It is important that they be kept separate and distinct from each other.¹⁰

⁵ The CLV, the Concordant Literal Version, consistently uses “Yahweh” to spell this personal and proper name of God. In my writing I prefer to use the consonants YHWH to express that name. I do this because there are no vowels in Hebrew, even though those who read the text aloud knew what the vowel sounds were. Remember, all ancient writing was written to be read aloud.

⁶ The entire section about God’s covenant with David from 2 Samuel 7:1–17 is repeated in 1 Chronicles 17:1–15. Repetitions also indicate importance. Note that in 1 Chronicles 17:10 the word used is not *’asah*, “to make” as in 2 Samuel 7:11, but is *banah*, “to build” as in construction. Such distinctions of words also have significance; each usage conveys a different concept, and both are correct. David uses *banah*, “build” in 2 Samuel 7:27. The house God said He would build for David was not the house of cedar that David built for his palace. King Hiram of Tyre provided materials and skilled workers for David to use (1 Chronicles 14:1). That house (David’s palace) was completed (2 Samuel 5:11, 7:2, 1 Chronicles 17:1). For a side-by-side comparison of 2 Samuel chapter 7 and 1 Chronicles chapter 17 see [“Israel and Judah: 5. David Desires to Build a Temple.”](#) It will be interesting.

⁷ Peter identifies Christ as the ultimate result of this “seed” in Acts 2:30, when Peter called David a Prophet.

⁸ See my article [“The Pattern of the Temple”](#) which explains that the Temple “pattern” came from God. God established David in His Kingdom; then God chose the location, the design, and a son of David to build His Temple. The Temple was, as much as possible, prefabricated, with most of the materials gathered by the time of David’s death.

⁹ Dr. Martin’s article, [“Is David’s Throne in Existence Today?”](#) shows that the prophet Jeremiah wrote Psalm 89. He reviews the covenant and the promises YHWH made with King David, and the Kings descended from David. Almost all the Kings of Judah dishonored and violated that covenant. God exiled the people from Judah and ended Davidic rule until David’s greater son, until Jesus Christ came in the flesh. He was born, lived, died, resurrected, and ascended to heaven. He will return and take His place as King of Israel. David will serve under Christ to rule the 12 tribes of Israel.

¹⁰ King Solomon repeats the three elements of the promise when Joab is judged with death in 1 Kings 2:33. The “seed” and the

David's reaction and response to God's announcement in 2 Samuel 7:18–28 shows confusion at first, then anger (beyond his disappointment of not being allowed to build a Temple to God). He then expresses shock and fear. Perhaps he felt cursed by God. In fact, David was judged and sentenced to death by God!

His reaction to a death sentence shows (1) first dismay, (2) then questioning God's decision, and (3) finally resignation and acceptance of his fate. David wondered, why was YHWH doing this?

House As A Tomb — Tomb As A House

The house that God was to build for David was to be a tomb, not a place for David to live in while alive. I state this without doubt. It is easy to show that a tomb can be designated as a house:

“When man goes to his eonian home [*beth*, the common Hebrew term for “house”], **And those wailing** [mourners] **turn about in the roadway; ... And the soil returns to the earth just as it was, And the spirit, it returns to the One, Elohim, Who gave it. ...”**

• *Ecclesiastes 12:5, 7*

“All the kings of the nations, all of them, they lie in state, Each man in his own HOUSE [again *both*, house]. **Yet you were flung from your tomb like an abhorrent abortion, Like clothing of those who are killed, Who are pierced through with a sword, Who go down to the stones of the crypt like a trampled corpse; You shall not unite with them** [the kings] **in the tomb ...”**

• *Isaiah 14:18–20, speaking to the King of Babylon, likely the future antichrist*

“And [Nehemiah] said unto the king, ‘Then I said to the king: May the king himself live for the eon! For what reason should my face not look troubled when the city, the HOUSE of my patriarchal TOMBS, lies waste, and its gates have been devoured by fire.’”

• *Nehemiah 2:3*

The word “house” indicates a location (not a people group), and “house” can and does mean sepulcher or tomb in these passages. The word “house” also means sepulcher in 2 Samuel 7:11, referring to the sepulcher of David in that verse, and in other occurrences of the phrase **“house of David.”** For YHWH to build a house for David meant that God Himself created or constructed a natural structure, a cave, for David's burial.

2 Samuel 7:11 Explained

After I formed my own understanding of several uses of **“House of David”** I was gratified to learn that a scholar had the same understanding, but years before I did. He wrote an entire book on just chapter 7 of Second Samuel, about God's message to and conversation with David, as well as David's feelings and response. Professor Lyle Eslinger in his book *House of God or House of David: The Rhetoric of 2 Samuel 7*, fully explains what the text means:

“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. 43¹¹ – underlining mine*

In correspondence with Prof. Eslinger, he said I correctly understand his arguments. Here are his reasons:

“Yahweh's choice of phrasing, to anyone familiar with Israel's best known traditions is double damnation: ‘for (*kī*) when your days have been filled and you lie down with your fathers ...’ Such

“house” are separate there also.

“May the guilt for their blood return on the head of Joab and on the head of his seed for the eon. Yet for [1] David and [2] his seed, for [3] his house and [4] his throne, may there be peace unto the eon from Yahweh.”

¹¹ Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 42–43. This was Professor Eslinger's 3rd book for Sheffield, a major scholarly press. He also wrote *Kingship of God in Crisis. A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1–12* (Sheffield and Decatur, GA: Almond Press, 1985).

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*¹²

This is remarkable. Moses and David have a notable connection here.¹³ The great lawgiver and the great king are the only two men (to that point) to have a sentence of death from God Himself! Eslinger continues:

“These are the only places in the Bible in which God pronounces the death of a man ... But the allusion goes further: ... Yahweh’s dying David is a second Moses who to his grave must go before the promised land is gotten.”

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

This being the case, consider David’s situation. He is at the height of his power as leader over Israel and Judah. He is great among men and has world-wide power in the ancient world. He knows he had God’s blessing throughout his life, as God reminded him.¹⁴ He had just brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem and placed it at the Gihon Spring (2 Samuel chapter 6). Nathan thought God would approve of David’s proposal. Then God made His sudden and unexpected Covenant promise to David of posterity and kingdom, but He also makes the announcement about David’s gravesite and death. David is greatly shocked and upset.

David carefully chooses his words in his response to God’s pronouncement. I insert the word “tomb” in brackets where the word “house” occurs. [Note: David refers to himself in the third person];

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

‘Who am I, my Lord Yahweh, and what is my HOUSE [tomb] that You have brought me as far as hither? While this may be still small in Your eyes, my Lord Yahweh, yet You are speaking also about Your servant’s HOUSE [tomb] FOR THE FAR FUTURE; and this is the law for humanity, my Lord Yahweh.

What more could David add in speaking to You? For You Yourself know Your servant, my Lord Yahweh. 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. 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.’”

• *2 Samuel 7:18–22*

David is shocked and asks: **“Who am I? ... and what is my house [tomb] that You have brought me as far as hither?”** ... to this point in my life through so much toil and trouble for Israel? Now you send me to my grave? Was all this a trifling matter to you, O God?

¹² Note the parallel between the following passages. The first two were addressed to Moses in Deuteronomy 31:14, 16:

“Then Yahweh said to Moses: ‘Behold, near are your days to die. Call Joshua and station yourselves in the tent of appointment, that I may instruct him. So Moses and Joshua went and stationed themselves in the tent of appointment ...”

“Yahweh said to Moses: ‘Behold, you are about to lie with your fathers. Yet this people will rise and prostitute after the elohim of the foreigners of the land ...”

Compare those verses with the passage to David in 2 Samuel 7:12:

“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 For an interesting list of comparisons of Moses and David, see Appendix 7 of Arvidson’s *King David’s Lost Tomb & Treasure*, pp. 375–379. Moses received a “pattern” of the Tabernacle, just as David received a “pattern” (same Hebrew word) of the Temple in God’s own handwriting, to be built by one of David’s sons. See **“The Pattern of the Temple.”** See note 8 above.

¹⁴ **“I was with you wheresoever you went, and have cut off all your enemies out of your sight, and have made you a great name”** (2 Samuel 7:9). David apparently had hegemony over the seas and rivers according to God’s statement in Psalm 89:25.

Yet he knows God (through David) did **“all these great things”** for the sake of His own word. After questioning God, David reviews Israel’s past (following God’s example), and David expresses his realization that God’s will must be done, and he resigns himself to do as God wants, whatever the future may bring. David notes that Israel shall be a people **“for the age,”** just as David’s house (his tomb) also shall be **“for the age.”** Note how God’s words are said back to Him. David begins to understand that he will not, and **carefully** responds:

“You have established Your people Israel for Yourself as Your people for the eon; and You Yourself, O Yahweh, have become their Elohim. And now, my Lord Yahweh, confirm for the eon the word that You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his HOUSE [tomb]; do just as You have spoken. May Your Name be magnified for the eon, saying, ‘Yahweh of hosts is Elohim over Israel; and the HOUSE [tomb] of Your servant David, may it become established before You.’”

• 2 Samuel 7:24–26

David acknowledges the fact that while God’s word for Israel was true, surely God will establish David and his Tomb **“for the age”** just as He says (also in 1 Chronicles 17:24). David continues his heartfelt prayer:

“For You, O Yahweh of hosts, Elohim of Israel, You have revealed to the ear of Your servant, saying, ‘I shall build a HOUSE [tomb] for you;’ therefore Your servant has found courage in his heart to pray to You with this prayer. 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. Be disposed now and bless the HOUSE [tomb] 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 [tomb] of Your servant be blessed for the eon.”

• 2 Samuel 7:27–29

What God gave to David was a totally new revelation. God revealed that He would build David a **“HOUSE.”** What is special and unique about **“the House of David”**? I presented what might be in that tomb in **“King David’s Tomb 1. What Is Inside?”** and **“King David’s Tomb 2. Best Discoveries.”** In spite of David’s initial reaction, he **“found courage in his heart to pray,”** that David acknowledged and accepted what God had said about the **“HOUSE.”**

By the end of his prayer, David accepts his coming death God told him about. David’s fear was that his death was coming soon. He was given a reprieve to prepare and “finish” the tomb structure. It was moments like these in his relationship with God, that David proves he was a man after God’s own heart (1 Samuel 13:14; 1 Kings 15:3, 5; and Acts 13:22). Ezekiel 33:11–21 shows the attitude God demands from His servants. David is a model for that attitude.

Psalm 30 and the House of David

The 30th Psalm is very interesting. It has a direct reference to the House of David, as given in the title.¹⁵ The purpose of Psalm 30 is to dedicate **“the house of David”** that God built. No doubt David finished out the interior, perhaps with cedar, with belongings, artifacts and mementos of David and his reign.¹⁶ The subject of Psalm 30 is David’s praise of God for deliverance and asking others to join him in that praise (vv. 1–5). Undue confidence in his own God-given abilities brought on his problems, but fervent prayer brought his deliverance from death (vv. 6–10). Praise is renewed as a conclusion (vv. 11–12). The concept of death permeates all 12

¹⁵ It is disputed whether the titles of the Psalms are part of the original texts, or added by copyists. However, there is no question from the context in the title of Psalm 30 that the phrase **“house of David”** does not refer to a group of people or David’s descendants. Nor does it refer to David’s palace, elsewhere called **“a house of cedar”** (2 Samuel 5:1, 7:2), which was not dedicated to YHWH. The Temple could not be meant because it was completed years after David’s death.

¹⁶ Such is the evidence from Josephus in *Antiquities* 7.391–392, who wrote about David’s immense wealth. David even had furniture buried with him, as did King Tutankhamun. See my April 2016 Commentary, **“King Tut and King David”** and an external article, **“A ... new look at the burial of Egypt’s most famous pharaoh.”**

verses of Psalm 30, exactly as God threatened, and as David responded to in 2 Samuel chapter 7.

Read Psalm 30 in light of 2 Samuel chapter 7 where David is refused permission to build the Temple. Then God announces He will build a house for David, a house to be a tomb. David prayed to God in confusion and then acceptance. Psalm 30 was written by David to dedicate the house or tomb that God built for David.

“I am exalting You,

O Yahweh, For **YOU HAVE drawn me out** [kept me alive], **And You have not let my enemies rejoice over me.**

O Yahweh my Elohim, I implored to You, And **YOU HEALED ME.**

O Yahweh, **YOU HAVE brought my soul up** from the unseen [*Shaol*];
YOU HAVE preserved me alive from descending to the crypt.

Make melody to Yahweh, His benign ones [saints], And give acclamation to His holy Name.

For there is only a moment under His anger But a lifetime under His benevolence.

In the evening, lamentation may lodge, But in the morning there is jubilant song.

Yet I, I have said in my ease, ‘I shall not slip at all for the eon.’

O Yahweh, in Your benevolence, You have made my mountain to stand in strength. If You conceal Your face, I become flustered; 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 [after death]?
Does soil ACCLAIM You? Does it tell Your faithfulness? Hear,

O Yahweh, and be gracious to me;

O Yahweh, be my Help!

You have turned my wailing into fluting for me.

You have unloosed my sackcloth And

[You] are belting me with rejoicing,

So that one may make melody to You, my Glory, And may not be still.

O Yahweh my Elohim, for the eon shall I acclaim You.

Permanent A Davidic Psalm

• *Psalm 30:1–12*

David made the occasion of “**the dedication of the house of David**” into a written memorial and a remembrance of God’s holiness. No ordinary house would fill that requirement. While it is still unclear to David what God would accomplish by this remembrance, he accepted and praised God for it. He also praised God for keeping him alive and continuing His protection long after God’s pronouncement of 2 Samuel chapter 7.

The “**GAIN**” and “**ACCLAIM**” mentioned in Psalm 30:9 began after David’s death, when the apostle Peter in Acts chapter 2 at Pentecost, compared David to Jesus, whose resurrection occurred weeks before. Other acclaim will occur in another manner when prophecies in the Book of Zechariah begin to occur.

The Key Of The House Of David

King David died: “**So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David**” (1 Kings 2:10). In fact, all of the good kings of Judah were buried in Jerusalem. “**Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father**” (1 Kings 11:43; 2 Chronicles 9:31).

Note particularly what is said about King Hezekiah’s burial: “**And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest** [or highest or on the ascent] **of the sepulchers of the sons of David**” (2 Chronicles

32:33). There were several family tombs of David in the City of David.¹⁷ Note:

- Hezekiah was not buried inside the sepulchers **of David**, but
- Hezekiah was buried inside the **sepulchers** [plural] of the **SONS** of David, with other kings.

According to Josephus, King David had immense wealth buried with him in his Tomb (*Antiquities* 7.391). The next mention in the Bible where the context of the phrase **“house of David”** means a place or a location in the time of Hezekiah when the Assyrians threatened Judah. This passage begins with YHWH completing His judgment of one of Hezekiah’s evil officials, and putting a trusted official in his place. Note what some of Eliakim’s responsibilities are:

“And it will come to be in that day, I will call to My servant, to Eliakim son of Hilkiah. I will clothe him with your tunic, and your sash shall I fasten on him, and your rule shall I give into his hand. He will become a father to the dweller of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

And I will place **THE KEY of the HOUSE OF DAVID on HIS SHOULDER; he will open and none shall lock, and he will lock and none shall open.”**

• *Isaiah 22:20–22*

In the time of Isaiah and King Hezekiah **“the house of David”** was a place, a physical location, that was locked with a key held by a trusted person. Eliakim, an official of King Hezekiah’s court, was commissioned to replace a man named Shebna¹⁸ who sought to carve **“a sepulcher on high”** for himself like a king of Judah, Isaiah 22:15–17. Eliakim was given the authority formerly held by Shebna. One mark of his authority was a special robe and girdle mentioned in verse 21.

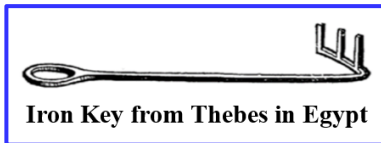
Eliakim was further given the responsibility to hold the key that opened the **“house of David.”**¹⁹ As God says through Isaiah, that the key will be placed **“on his shoulder.”**

It is reasonable to think that this **“key of the house of David”** opened the locked door to the Tombs of David. Those Tombs were accessible in Isaiah’s time. Note that the passage of Isaiah 22:22 is directly referenced in a message to the *ekklesia* in the Greek city of Philadelphia in Asia Minor (modern Turkey today):

“And to the messenger of the ecclesia in Philadelphia write: ‘Now this is saying the True, the Holy One, **Who has THE KEY OF DAVID, and Who is opening and no one shall be locking, and locking and no one shall be opening.’ I am aware of your acts. Lo! Before you have I granted an open door, which no one is able to lock, for you have a little power, and you keep My word and**



A Greek woman carrying a key ON HER SHOULDER



Iron Key from Thebes in Egypt

locked with a key held by a trusted person. Eliakim, an official of King Hezekiah’s court, was commissioned to replace a man named Shebna¹⁸ who sought to carve **“a sepulcher on high”** for himself like a king of Judah, Isaiah 22:15–17. Eliakim was given the authority formerly held by Shebna. One mark of his authority was a special robe and girdle mentioned in verse 21.

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¹⁷ This may include the Tomb of Solomon, but no one can be sure. All three, and others, were buried **“in the city of David.”** Most of the kings of Judah were buried in the city of David through the reign of Hezekiah. After him, no other Kings of Judah were buried in the City of David. While none of the northern kings of Israel descended from David, God gave a similar promise to Jeroboam, that he would be king over the 10 tribes of Israel, conditional upon his obedience to YHWH (1 Kings 11:38):

“It will come to be, if you shall hearken to all that I instruct you, and you will walk in My ways and do what is upright in My eyes so as to keep [1] My statutes and [2] My instructions just as David My servant did, then I will be with you. I will build for you a sure house, just as I have built for David, and I will give you Israel.”

¹⁸ The Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 26a also mentions Shebna:

“[Later, when] Shebna went to hew out for himself a sepulcher **AMONG the sepulchers of the house of David, the Prophet came and said to him: ‘What hast thou here and whom hast thou here that thou hast hewn here a sepulcher? Behold, the Lord will hurl thee down as a man is hurled’ (quoting Isaiah 22:16).”**

¹⁹ In the Bible keys were large enough to be carried on one’s shoulders. Later they became smaller. Note other uses of keys are in Judges 3:25 and 1 Chronicles 9:27 (where the term “opening” can also be “key” in Hebrew). The word “key” (singular or plural), is used in Matthew 16:18–19; Luke 11:52; and Revelation 1:18, 9:1, and 21:1. See my April 2018 commentary, **“The Importance of Keys.”**

you do not disown My name.”

• Revelation 3:7–8

Christ Jesus currently possesses the key of Isaiah 22:22, with one difference. Revelation 3:7 refers to “**the key of David**” NOT the “**key of the house of David.**” The phrase from Isaiah 22:22: “**the house of**” is missing. “**The house of David**” is a tomb; but Revelation 3:7 makes no reference to a tomb. Why? Perhaps it is because the Tomb has already been opened to the world. Or, perhaps it is because in Revelation chapter 3 resurrection is in view in the context of Christ’s return to earth. Christ will have no connection to a tomb at that time.

Nehemiah’s Two Tours of the Walls of Jerusalem

When the people of Judah (and the tribe of Benjamin and the Levites) were allowed to return from captivity in Babylon, Nehemiah was appointed by the King of Persia as governor over the people of Judah. Nehemiah made two inspection tours around the city of Jerusalem 12 years apart. The first is told about in Nehemiah chapter 3, discussing repairs to the walls of Jerusalem. Note them carefully:

“It was the Spring Gate that Shallun son of Col-hozeh, chief of the Mizpah tract, repaired; he himself rebuilt it, roofed it and installed its doors, its latches and its bars; and he rebuilt the wall of the Shelah RESERVOIR of the king’s garden and as far as the stairs descending from the city of David.

After him Nehemiah son of Azbuk, chief of half the Beth-zur tract, repaired as far as in FRONT of THE TOMB OF DAVID, and as far as THE RESERVOIR that had been made, and as far as THE HOUSE of the masters of war.”

• Nehemiah 3:15–16

The Tomb of David is the House of David. Nehemiah chapter 12 tells about a second tour of the walls by Nehemiah — done 12 years later:

“At the Spring Gate, in front of them, they went up the stairs of the city of David ON THE ASCENT to the wall above THE HOUSE OF DAVID and unto the Water Gate toward the east.”

• Nehemiah 12:37

The perspective described by Nehemiah in chapter 3 is from the top looking down. The perspective of Nehemiah chapter 12 is from the bottom looking up. Four identifications can be made about these passages:

- (1) “**the Spring Gate**” corresponds to “**the Spring Gate.**”
- (2) “**the stairs ... from the city of David**” corresponds to “**stairs of the city of David.**”
- (3) “**THE TOMB OF DAVID**” corresponds to “**THE HOUSE OF DAVID.**”
- (4) “**THE RESERVOIR that had been made**” corresponds to “**the Water Gate toward the east**” which opened to the water source. The relationships become clearer when put side by side in chart form:

<p style="text-align: center;">Nehemiah 3:15–16 <i>Movement from <u>Top to Bottom</u></i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Nehemiah 12:37 (12 years later) <i>Movement from <u>Bottom to Top</u></i></p>
<p>“It was <u>the Spring Gate</u> that Shallun son of Col-hozeh, chief of the Mizpah tract, repaired; he himself rebuilt it, roofed it and installed its doors, its latches and its bars; and he rebuilt the wall of the Shelah reservoir of the king’s garden and as far as THE STAIRS DESCENDING FROM <u>the city of David</u>. After him Nehemiah son of Azbuk, chief of half the Beth-zur tract, repaired as far as <u>in front of</u></p>	<p>“At <u>the Spring Gate</u>, in front of them, they WENT UP THE STAIRS of <u>the city of David</u> on the ASCENT TO the wall above</p>

THE TOMB OF DAVID, and as far as the reservoir [of water] that had been made, and as far as the house of the masters of war.”

THE HOUSE OF DAVID and unto the Water Gate toward the east.”

The sepulchers of David are identified with the House of David in these passages. Nehemiah made these identifications, not me. I merely point them out. The same scene is being described from two different perspectives, separated by a dozen years.

Intrusions Into David’s Tomb

About 300 years after Nehemiah, the Maccabean King John Hyrcanus entered the Tomb of David and took out 3,000 talents of silver (*Antiquities* 7.393 and 13.249). Josephus tells us that some 80 years after Hyrcanus, King Herod tried to enter the Tomb of David again to plunder its treasure (*Antiquities* 7.394 and 16.179–182). Herod entered some of the outer chambers, and removed furniture and other items, but he failed to enter where the bodies were located. After his failure, King Herod constructed a monument at the entrance to the Tomb of David (*Antiquities* 16.182). I will analyze these events in “King David’s Tomb, 4.”

These events indicate, according to the Bible and the record of Josephus, that the location of the sepulchers of David, identified in Scripture as the **“house of David,”** was known in the time of Isaiah and Hezekiah, the time of John Hyrcanus, and the time of Herod. The location of David’s Tomb, the house of David, was also well known in the time of Peter.

Again, Peter’s Sermon at Pentecost

The location of the Tomb of David was also known at Pentecost in 30 AD when Peter spoke to the people of Jerusalem who responded to tumult resulting from the Holy Spirit coming upon the apostles. As spokesman of the apostles Peter addressed the crowd and came to the subject of King David. He began by quoting Psalm 16:8–11:

“For David is saying to Him [to and about Jesus],

‘I saw the Lord before me continually, Seeing that He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore gladdened was my heart, And exultant my tongue. Now, still my flesh also shall be tenting [resting] in expectation [hope], For Thou wilt not be forsaking my soul in the unseen, Nor wilt Thou be giving Thy Benign One to be acquainted with decay. Thou makest known to me the paths of life. Thou wilt be filling me with gladness with Thy face.’

“Men! Brethren! Allow me to say to you with boldness concerning the patriarch David, that he deceases also and was entombed, and HIS TOMB IS AMONG US until this day. Being, then, inherently, a prophet, and having perceived that God swears to him with an oath, out of the fruit of his loins to seat One on his throne, I perceive this before, he speaks concerning the resurrection of the Christ [Messiah], that He was neither forsaken in the unseen, nor was His flesh acquainted with decay. This Jesus God raises, of Whom we all are witnesses. Being, then, to the right hand of God exalted, besides obtaining the promise of the holy spirit from the Father, He pours out this which you are observing and hearing.

For David did not ascend into the heavens, yet he [David] is saying,

‘Said the Lord [YHWH] to my Lord [David], “Sit at My right Till I should be placing Thine enemies for a footstool for Thy feet.”’

Let all the house of Israel know certainly, then, that God makes Him Lord as well as Christ [Messiah] — this Jesus WHOM YOU CRUCIFY! For David speaks concerning him [Jesus].”

• ***Acts 2:25–36***

The focus and object of Peter’s speech was Christ Jesus raised from the dead, not King David or his Tomb.

However, the factual information that Peter gave indicates several key points about David and his Tomb.

- (1) King David was dead at that moment, and he is still dead now. He was not alive in some altered or disembodied state. He ceased to exist. That condition will continue until David is resurrected from the dead.
- (2) David's body was buried. The body had not been disturbed in any way in spite of the intrusions into the Tomb by John Hyrcanus and King Herod the Great.²⁰
- (3) The location of the Tomb of David was known at the time Peter was speaking at Pentecost in 30 AD. Peter's audience knew that fact. From the text it seems to me that Peter was gesturing to a location that was visible from where he spoke.
- (4) David has not ascended into heaven, nor did David's resurrection occur at the time of the resurrection of Jesus.
- (5) David in his Tomb was figuratively "seated" at God's right hand, in fulfillment of Psalm 110:1–7, written by David, first applied to himself. A MUCH greater fulfillment was through Christ Jesus. As I pointed out in "[King David's Tomb 1. What Is Inside?](#)" (page 9), it is likely that David's own physical throne might be in the Tomb chamber.

Jewish Reburial and the House of David

As Ernest Martin noted from biblical and Jewish sources, the Jews began a process of moving the bones of some kings of Judah from their original location in the City of David, to positions on the slope of the Mount of Olives. This process began about 36 BC, and continued through the time of Jesus. In *Secrets of Golgotha* Martin shows a photograph from the Israel Museum of a well-known tomb slab from the tomb of Uzziah, the leper king of Jerusalem. The inscription reads, "**Hither were brought the bones of Uzziah, King of Judah — do not open.**" Jesus refers to the process of placing the bones of the kings of Jerusalem into an ossuary or stone box and then moving the bones, in Matthew 23:27–29 and Luke 11:47–48.²¹

Not all the kings were moved. King David and his immediate family (perhaps including Solomon) were not moved or reburied. In addition, the tomb of the Huldah the Prophetess was not moved. The Jewish sage Rabbi Akiba (born 40 AD and died 135) notes this in the Tosefta, Baba Bathra 1:11–12. It is important to realize that R. Akiba wrote this after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD. The situation described by Rabbi Akiba existed from the last mention of the Tomb of David by the apostle Peter in 30 AD, through the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, up to the time of Rabbi Akiba.²²

Akiba addresses the issue of a grave encompassed by an expanding town. Akiba then gives his judgment and the responses of others are given:

"All sepulchers should be cleared away, except the sepulcher of a king and the sepulcher of a prophet. Rabbi Akiba says:

'Even the sepulcher of a king and the sepulcher of a prophet should be cleared away.' He was told, 'But there were at Jerusalem the sepulchers of the House of David and the sepulcher of Huldah the prophetess and nobody ever touched them': to which he [R. Akiba] replied: 'Do you adduce these as evidence? There was a tunnel in them through which the uncleanness went forth to the Valley of Kidron.'"

²⁰ Josephus specifically states that Herod did not reach the bodies although he sought to do so (*Antiquities* 16.181–182).

²¹ See Ernest Martin, *Secrets of Golgotha*, chapter 20, "[Burial Grounds in Jerusalem](#)," pp. 274–287. The new sepulchers of the kings were whitened (whitewashed) so that visitors to Jerusalem for the feasts would not touch a new tomb at night and become ritually impure for ceremonies the next day. Regarding the King Uzziah of Judah inscription see J.A. Thompson, *The Bible and Archaeology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 336. Uzziah was not buried with the other kings of Judah in the City of David, but outside the city walls. However, his bones also needed to be moved "**outside the camp.**" (Martin, *Secrets*, p. 277).

²² This passage is from the Tosefta (a secondary Jewish compilation of the oral law of the Jews, compiled after the Talmud).

• *Tosefta, Baba Bathra, 1.11–12*

Note that the plural is used in reference to the “**sepulchers of the House of David.**” None of those sepulchers were moved. The Tosefta passage specifically states that the sepulchers had not been touched, just as Peter earlier indicated. This means the Romans did not pillage the sepulchers. There was a tunnel close to the sepulchers, “**where the uncleanness went forth.**” This uncleanness was a reference to the offal and blood from the butchered animals of the Temple.²³ The sepulchers of David and Huldah are close to the Temple wastewater. It may also mean the wastewater from Temple purifications of the priests and people. In any case there was a tunnel nearby to the Temple, through which the uncleanness of the Temple flowed.²⁴

This understanding about the Tombs of David was reiterated by the Jewish sage Maimonides in the late 12th century. In a discussion about geographical holiness in the city of Jerusalem proceeding by degree to the most holy place, the Holy of Holies, Maimonides writes:

“All graves might be removed except that of a prophet or a king ... graves might not be kept therein, except the graves of THE HOUSE OF DAVID and the graves of Hulda (the prophetess), which were there from the days of the early prophets.”

• *Maimonides, Book of Temple Service, p. 32*²⁵

Strong Jewish tradition continued to show that bodies in the House of David were not moved — just as Peter said about David — when the other kings of Israel were disinterred, moved, and reburied.

It is interesting to note that the Mishna says: “**There were five gates to the Temple enclosure: the two gates of Huldah from the south, which served for entrance and for exit**” (Middoth 1.3, Danby Translation). It would not be surprising if the gates of Huldah lead to and point in the direction toward the graves of Huldah and the sepulchers of David.

Prophecies In Zechariah, Hosea, and Isaiah

Zechariah chapters 12, 13 and 14 are one continuous prophecy, often called the little apocalypse. It shows a sequence of events leading to the Day of the Lord (Zechariah 14:1) when Christ returns to the Mount of Olives. Before that moment, many other events must occur, some of which involve the “**house of David.**” The phrase “**house of David**” occurs five times in the prophecy of Zechariah 12:7–13:2 given below.²⁶ (I italicized occurrences of “**in that day**” which occur like a drumbeat repeated throughout this passage. In fact, the phrase “**in that day**” marks natural breaks of thought in the passage.

“Yahweh will save the tents of Judah first So that the beauty of THE HOUSE OF DAVID And the beauty of the dwellers of Jerusalem may not be magnified over Judah.

⁸ ***In that day* Yahweh shall be a protection about the dwellers of Jerusalem, *in that day*, will become like David, And THE HOUSE OF DAVID like Elohim, Like the messenger of Yahweh before them.**

⁹ **And it will come to be *in that day*, I shall seek to exterminate all the nations coming against Jerusalem. ¹⁰ Yet I will pour out on THE HOUSE OF DAVID, And on the dwellers of Jerusalem, A spirit OF GRACE AND SUPPLICATIONS; And they will look to Him Whom they stabbed, And**

²³ It was necessary for that offal and blood to be sent away from the holiness of the Temple, both for the sake of ritual purity, but also for the sake of hygiene and potential disease from unburned animal waste.

²⁴ The Temple is not on or near the Haram esh-Sharif. But if it were, then wastewater from the Temple would flow nearby and over the source of water for the entire city of Jerusalem, the Gihon Spring. This is unlikely. However, with the Temple located above and west of the Gihon Spring (as discovered by Dr. Martin), it makes perfectly good sense that the uncleanness R. Akiba refers to exits from the Temple to the south of and below the Gihon Spring. Akiba’s tunnel must have been south of the starting point for Hezekiah’s Tunnel. Does that tunnel still exist today? Perhaps not. It is possible earthquakes have closed that tunnel.

²⁵ *The Code of Maimonides, Book 8, The Book of Temple Service*, trans. by Mendell Lewittes (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press: 1957). Note that Maimonides uses the plural for both graves. He is likely quoting the Akiba passage from the Tosefta.

²⁶ The last six chapters of Zechariah were written by Jeremiah, see Dr. Martin’s article, “[The Land of Israel in Prophecy.](#)”

they will wail over Him as the wailing for an only son, And they will grieve bitterly over Him as one grieving bitterly over a firstborn.

¹¹ *In that day* the wailing shall be great in Jerusalem, Like the wailing of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddon. ¹² And the land will bewail, family by family alone: The family of **THE HOUSE OF DAVID** alone, and their wives alone; The family of the house of Nathan alone, and their wives alone; ¹³ The family of the house of Levi alone, and their wives alone; The family of Shimei alone, and their wives alone; ¹⁴ All the families that remain family by family alone, and their wives alone

^{13:1} *In that day* there shall come to be a fountain opened for **THE HOUSE OF DAVID**, and for the dwellers of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity. ² And it will come to be *in that day*, averring is Yahweh of hosts, I shall cut off the names of fetishes [idols] from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. And, moreover, I shall cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass from the land.”

• *Zechariah 12:7–13:2*

The “house of David” plays a significant role in this prophecy, a role not normally considered because it is assumed the phrase always refers to David’s descendants. Carefully reread the passage where “HOUSE OF DAVID” occurs, but insert the thought of TOMB instead of people where the word “house” occurs. It is important to distinguish things as presented. They are there for a reason. The “inhabitants of Jerusalem” must be distinguished from “house of David” in this immediate context.

In verse 8, “the dwellers of Jerusalem” are “as David,” in other words, they will be dynamic, and powerful. The “house of David” is compared to God, and as a messenger from God. This refers to the Tomb of David.

The “house of David” shall go before “the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (verse 8). How could that be? How could the descendants of David be “as Elohim, as an angel of YHWH before them” to the people of Jerusalem?

The answer is simple if the “house of David” was a location, a sealed Tomb, or series of Tomb chambers, that contain artifacts and writings that confirm the Word of God to “the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” It would be as if YHWH were communicating to Israel and the world, that God will preserve and save His people.

The comparison of the “house of David” to Elohim and to an angel of YHWH is not a comparison of power and might, but of knowledge and understanding. The fountain that shall be “opened to the house of David” (close to the living water of the Gihon Spring) will be a fountain of knowledge about God: “For with you is the fountain of life: in your light shall we see light.” (Psalm 36:9). It will result in a proper fear of God.:

“In the fear of Yahweh lies a stronghold of trust, And it shall become a refuge for his sons. The fear of Yahweh IS A FOUNTAIN OF LIFE to keep one away from the traps of death.”

• *Proverbs 14:26–27*

“For My people have committed two evils: [1] ME they have forsaken, the Fountain of living waters, [2] To hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot contain water.”

• *Jeremiah 2:13*

“O Expectation [hope] of Israel, O Yahweh, May all who forsake You be ashamed. May those who withdraw from Me be written in the earth; For they have forsaken the Fountain of living waters, even Yahweh. Heal me, O Yahweh, that I may be healed; Save me, that I may be saved; For You are my Praise.”

• *Jeremiah 17:13–14*

An angel of God is a messenger, an entity who communicates knowledge about God. The house of David shall be like an angel of God. It will communicate. The inhabitants of Jerusalem will not have great power in themselves. Only by submitting to God and looking to Him will they witness God’s power as He destroys nations that come against Jerusalem (verse 9). God will defend them, but not by their power (verse 8). They will see physical salvation from God only when they accept Him “whom they have pierced.”

I cannot go into detail here regarding the mourning in verses 10–14, except to say that the “house” mentioned may also be tombs, and that “the spirit of grace and supplications” (Zechariah 12:10) to be poured out will be the direct cause of the mourning. The shock and bitterness to the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be as

powerful as was news of the death of King Josiah (2 Kings 23:28–30 and 2 Chronicles 35:20–27).

I have written elsewhere about Hosea 3:4–5,²⁷ but the passage has relevance here to show the condition of the children of Israel at present, and what they shall do in the latter days. They shall seek David their king:

“For many days shall the sons of Israel dwell without king and without chief official, And without sacrifice and without altar, And without ephod or Urim and Thummim. Afterward the sons of Israel shall return, And they will seek [1] Yahweh their Elohim, [2] and David their king; They will come in awe to Yahweh and to His goodness in the latter days.”

• *Hosea 3:4–5*

The children of Israel will seek David their king **after** many days, **after** the children of Israel return, and **in** the latter days. This seeking has **not** happened in history, is **not** happening now; it **will happen** in the future.

The present situation of the children of Israel has continued for **“many days”** since the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.²⁸ Some time **“afterward”** they will honestly seek **“the Lord their God”** and **“David their King”** in the latter days. They will be successful! Israel will learn to fear the Lord. They will have awe and wonder of Him and His goodness. This is the scenario **“of grace and supplication”** expressed in Zechariah 12:10 above.

There is an equally intriguing passage in Isaiah. This verse is repeated very closely in Micah 4:2:

“And it will come to pass in the latter days, The Mount of the House of Yahweh shall be established on the summit of the mountains, And it shall be lifted up above the hills, And all the nations will stream unto it. Many peoples will come and say: ‘Come, and let us ascend to the Mount of Yahweh, To the house of the Elohim of Jacob; And He shall direct us out of His ways, So that we may indeed walk in His paths.’ For from Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem.”

• *Isaiah 2:2–3*

This verse is ordinarily thought to take place **after** Christ returns to earth. The context is a future **“house of the God of Jacob”** that is future to us today. However, many elements of this passage could take place **before** Christ’s return. Remember that before the 2nd Coming of Christ. The world will begin to acknowledge that (1) God exists, (2) Christ is their Savior, and (3) Christ will return soon to judge and forgive the world.

After acknowledging these things, the world will be deceived to accept a false Christ and a message that will pervert the laws and Word of God. Before the deception and before the perversion, the elements of Isaiah 2:2–3 will be fulfilled as part of the **“restitution of all things.”**

How could these things possibly occur? They can occur in a way that relates to the mountain of the Lord, the house of the God of Jacob (meaning the Temple), and the teaching from God that will come **“out of Zion”** that will relate to the law, the teaching, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. This relates directly to the passage in Zechariah chapters 12–14. Something about **“the house of David”** would have such an impact on **“the inhabitants of Jerusalem”** that they quickly acknowledge **“him who they have pierced”** as their Messiah.²⁹ The apostle John clearly shows that this is Jesus:

“But one of the soldiers pierces His side with a lance head, and straightway out came blood and water. ... For these things occurred that the scripture may be fulfilled, ‘A bone of it shall not be crushed.’ And again, a different scripture is saying, ‘they shall see Him whom they stab.’”

• *John 19:34–3, (quoting Psalm 34:20 and fulfilling Exodus 12:46), and Zechariah 12:10*

Israel will again recognize their Messiah and their Savior when the Gospel is preached again to them. This will not occur in a vacuum. Something will “occur” that will engage the interest of every person in Israel: Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Perhaps it will be the discovery of the Tomb of David.

²⁷ See my Commentary, [“Some Present Indicators in Prophecy.”](#)

²⁸ Most Christian commentators think the children of Israel are seeking Jesus Christ as their Messiah in Hosea 3:4–5. The ordinary sense of the verse is that Israel will seek to know all they can about David their king because something will cause them to do so. They will discover Jesus is the Messiah, as Peter taught in Acts chapter 2 and as Paul taught in Acts 13.

²⁹ See Dr. Martin’s article, [“Surprising Events for the Near Future.”](#)

After Christianity had been around for 200+ years, Rabbis wrote in the Babylonian Talmud that they understood that the prophecy of Zechariah chapter 13, particularly verse 1 understood that **“the house of David”** was a physical location. They wrote **“the house of David”** had an **entrance** — and they knew where that entrance was. Let me use the same quote that Dr. Martin used in his article **“Water Management in the Temple.”** The description is of a water system of the purest of water and how that water flowed to an exit:³⁰

“R. Phinehas in the name of R. Huna of Sepphoris said: ‘The spring that issues from the Holy of Holies in its beginning resembles the antennae of locusts [water (dew) on very fine filaments like the diameter of spiders’ webs]; as it reaches the entrance to the Sanctuary [“the Place for the Going Down of the Waters” in the western wall] it becomes as the thread of the warp [a slightly larger filament]; as it reaches the Ulam, it becomes as the thread of the woof [slightly larger still]; as it reaches THE ENTRANCE to the court [of the Temple], it [the channel] becomes as large as the mouth of a small flask [other feeder pipes for drainage increased its volume], that is meant by what we learned’:

[Replying ...] **R. Eliezer b. Jacob said:** [Hence] **‘... go forth the waters which will bubble forth from under the threshold of the Sanctuary. From there onwards it becomes bigger, rising higher and higher, until it reaches THE ENTRANCE to THE HOUSE OF DAVID [at the bottom of the Ophel slope where David pitched his “House” or Tabernacle for the Ark at the Gihon Spring]. As soon as it reaches THE ENTRANCE to THE HOUSE OF DAVID [at the Gihon Spring], it becomes even as a swiftly running brook, in which men and women afflicted with gonorrhea, menstruating women, and women after childbirth bathe, as it is said:**

“In that day there shall be a fountain opened to THE HOUSE OF DAVID and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for purification and for sprinkling.””

• **Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 77b–78a**

Yoma 77b–78a quotes Zechariah 13:1. The **“house of David”** was understood as a place, a location, with an entrance, nearby the flow of wastewater (in the Tosefta passage on page 11 above and the next passage below) and the waste from the purification water (Yoma 77b–78a), both coming from the Temple.

The phrase **“the entrance to the house of David”** is repeated twice within a short space for emphasis. There was indeed an entrance to a place called **“the house of David.”** After the first Temple’s destruction, John Hyrcanus entered it, and 80 years later Herod entered again and sealed it up (both to be discussed in **“King David’s Tomb, #4”**). Remember what the Tosefta passage said about the relationship and proximity of the uncleanness and the sepulchers of David?

“... But there were at Jerusalem the SEPULCHERS of THE HOUSE OF DAVID ... There was a tunnel IN THEM through which the uncleanness went forth to the Valley of Kidron.”

• **Tosefta, Baba Bathra, 1.11–12**

Both Talmudic Jewish writings mention **“the house of David.”**

Both say water flowed from the Temple to pass close to the chambers of the House of David.

Both indicate **“THE HOUSE OF DAVID”** was close to the site of the Herodian temple!

Conclusion

There is a direct relationship of the House of David with the Temple. The information I present here makes no sense unless the proper location of the Temple above and west of the Gihon Spring is taken into account and used as a reference point. Any contribution made here is based on the work of Dr. Ernest Martin and Gary Arvidson, who fully accepted Dr. Martin’s Temple location. When that Temple location is considered, everything fits. Dr. Martin’s identification of the Temple site may have consequences far beyond what we can

³⁰ Words in bold brackets are part of the English translation text from Yoma 77b–78a. The unbold bracketed words are Dr. Martin’s comments. I am citing directly from Dr. Martin’s article **“Water Management in Herod’s Temple: An Introduction.”**

imagine, except as reasoned from the Scriptures. The House of David is there. What Peter said in 30 AD is still true: **“he [David] deceases also and was entombed, and his tomb is among us until this day”** (Acts 2:29).

David Sielaff, 2004, 2024