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# King David's Tomb

## 4. Its Location

by David Sielaff, 2004, June 2024

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



The location of the Tomb complex of King David, his immediate family, and successor “good” kings of Judah can be learned easily once the proper site of the Temples of God is acknowledged. Only then will the clues of Scripture and historical sources make sense. Of course, a means to precisely locate the chambers is needed. What is inside the Tombs could change millions of lives. The world will learn that God can preserve His Word, and reveal Himself when He chooses. Millions would worship God and accept Christ Jesus as their Messiah and Savior starting from Jerusalem.

In his book [The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot](#), Dr. Ernest L. Martin explains in a few words the location of the Tombs of King David:

**“Particularly notice that at the time of Nehemiah the sepulchers of David (and many other early kings of Judah) were located at the base of the stairs that went down into the Kedron Valley from the City of David.<sup>1</sup> They were positioned alongside a pool that was fed by the waters of a conduit from the Gihon Spring. ...**

**These sepulchers in Nehemiah’s time were positioned not far south of the Gihon Spring over which the Temple then stood. In the earlier period from David to Nehemiah it was common to place the tombs of distinguished persons (especially kings) *outside* the Temple, but not far away. They were certainly not buried far to the north near the Dome of the Rock.”**

• [Martin, The Temples Jerusalem Forgot, 336](#)

Dr. Martin was correct in this assessment. Later, in chapter 24 of his book, Dr. Martin shows that in the time of Simon the Hasmonean the buildings on the top of Mount Zion, including the Zerubbabel Temple, were demolished and their function temporarily transferred to various locations. The hill of Zion was cut down to bedrock and an enlarged Temple was built at the original site, expanding to the north and to the west.

Dr. Martin goes on to say that Simon’s transfer of structures included the sepulchers of David. He thought the tombs of David was an above-ground structure.<sup>2</sup> While this may be true for a structure at the entrance to

<sup>1</sup> Referencing Nehemiah 3:15–16.

<sup>2</sup> Martin, *Temples Jerusalem Forgot*, p. 343–344.

the sepulchers, it was not the case for the underground sepulchers of David were transferred. While sepulchers of other kings of Judah were indeed moved, the sepulchers of David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and others were not transferred. They remained at their original location, but are presently inaccessible.

Substantial biblical and historical evidence can show a more precise location of the unopened Tombs of King David and his immediate family in relation to one unchanged foundational wall of the Temple sanctuary, above and west of the Gihon Springs. The destruction of Herod's Temple eliminated evidence of that wall.

The southern wall had the same north-south position throughout the various Temple reconstructions after the original Solomonic Temple was destroyed. This wall was used in the reconstruction of the Temple by Zerubbabel after the return of the people from Babylon. The same wall was used again in the later enlargement during the time of Simon the Hasmonean. The wall position was used for a final enlargement of the Temple by King Herod. Each time the Temple was rebuilt or enlarged; the position of the southern wall remained unchanged. Enlargements of the Temple did not expand to the south, but only to the west and north.

- The research by Dr. Martin provides an important framework for additional evidence leading directly to the location of the Tombs of King David of Israel.
- In turn, discovery of the Tombs of King David will validate Dr. Martin's evidence of the Temple being located above and west of the Gihon Springs which flows into Hezekiah's Tunnel.
- The tombs will provide evidence of God's providence to preserve His written word as being accurate (as Scripture says), as well as preserving the Tombs of the historical King David and Kings of Judah buried near David's body.<sup>3</sup>

When opened, the bodies should be in the tombs, just as the apostle Peter says in Acts 2:29. Also, along with astonishing artifacts, the most important of all — even above the bodies of the kings, are written documents. It is my belief these documents, along with other artifacts, will initiate a rediscovery and presentation of the truths of God in Scripture to the world, beginning the prophesied time of **“the restitution of all things”** (Acts 3:21, King James Version).<sup>4</sup>

The discovery of the writings and artifacts contained within the Tomb chambers are presented in my three earlier articles. You will be amazed! Keep this point in mind, it is pure speculation at present what items might be within the Tombs, although the theory is informed by intriguing historical references, as you shall see. I shall describe one possible method by which the sepulchers can be located even more precisely so an archaeological excavation can be conducted, and the sepulchers entered without damaging the precious writings and artifacts within, so they can be properly preserved.

### ***King David's Unusual Burial***

First, let me give some background regarding King David's burial. A comprehensive 1948 article by S. Yeivin, “The Sepulchers of the Kings of the House of David”<sup>5</sup> provides an excellent survey of the subject matter. Yeivin points out, in ancient times one important desire was to be buried with one's ancestors:

**“Moreover, several verses in the Bible not only voice the express desire to be buried in a family tomb but consider it a special privilege, while failure to be buried with one's ancestors is regarded as a curse and a disaster.”**

• Yeivin, “*Sepulchers of the Kings*,” p. 30

Genesis 47:29–30; Judges 8:32; and 2 Samuel 19:37–38 are three examples of this ancient desire of Israelites

<sup>3</sup> The information about what might be in the complex of Tombs are found in Acts 2:29–36. See my earlier revised articles, “[King David's Tomb 1. What Is Inside?](#)” and “[King David's Tomb 2. Best Discoveries.](#)”

<sup>4</sup> See Dr. Martin's article “[The Coming Revolution in Knowledge](#),” and two articles by me, “[The Restitution of All Things, What to Expect](#)” and “[Changes and the Knowledge Revolution](#).”

<sup>5</sup> In *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 7:30 (Jan–Oct): 30–45. See also Nadav Na'aman's article, “[Death Formulae and the Burial Place of the Kings of the House of David](#)” (click to advance the pages) in *Biblica*, Vol. 85 (2004), pp. 245–254.

to be buried with their ancestors. Failure to do so was seen as a great evil.<sup>6</sup> King David was not buried with his fathers, although David helped others fulfill their burial customs (2 Samuel 2:32, 3:31–32, 17:23), even reburying the bones of King Saul and his son Jonathan in a more honored grave site (2 Samuel 21:11–14).

**“Yet this same David, who was so loyal to traditional customs, was not buried in his ancestral tomb at Bethlehem, but in a new grave: ‘So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David.’”**

[Yeivin’s footnote #12:] **I Kings 2:10. It is unthinkable that this was done against David’s will or that he left no instructions concerning his burial place. ... David, who remembered to give Solomon final instructions with regard to all his enemies, surely cannot have forgotten directions concerning the place of his own burial.”**

• **Yeivin, “Sepulchers,” pp. 30–31**

David did make provision for his burial. To be more precise, God made the provision for David’s burial and David complied with God’s desire. See [“King David’s Tomb 3. House of David.”](#)

### ***The Burials of David and His Successors***

David was buried in his capital city called “the City of David”: **“So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David”** (1 Kings 2:10). This changed David’s tradition of being buried with HIS ancestral tombs in or near Bethlehem, south of Jerusalem. Remember, YHWH “made” the sepulcher for David (2 Samuel 7:11).

David’s son Solomon was buried there also: **“And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father.”** (1 Kings 11:43). Note what was written about some of David’s successor kings, their tombs, and how they were buried<sup>7</sup>:

**“Then Asa lay down with his fathers; he died in the year forty-one of his reign, and they entombed him in his grand tombs [Hebrew, plural] that he had dug out for himself in the city of David. They laid him in the bed that was filled with aromatics, all sorts of ointments elaborately compounded. And they burned for him an exceedingly great funeral-fire.”**

• **2 Chronicles 16:13–14 (cf. 1 Kings 15:24), CLV**

King Asa prepared sepulchers for himself and others in the city of David. It is unknown how close to the sepulchers of David they were. He may have prepared a different series of chambers. One successor to Asa was Jehoram (Joram). He was buried **“in the city of David but not in the sepulchers [plural] of the kings”** (2 Chronicles 21:20). King Azariah (named Uzziah in Chronicles) was buried in the city of David (2 Kings 15:7) but with added detail in 2 Chronicles 26:23: **“they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings.”** Because he suffered from leprosy, Uzziah was buried in the field, not in the sepulchers.

Evil King Ahaz also has interesting details added:

**“Then Ahaz lay down with his fathers, and they entombed him in the city, in Jerusalem, for they did NOT bring him to the tombs of the kings of Israel; his son Hezekiah reigned in his stead.”**

• **2 Chronicles 28:27**

<sup>6</sup> Yeivin cites Jeremiah 8:1ff and 22:18ff. It was also important in ancient times that burial sites be maintained. This is made clear when Nehemiah approached the King of Persia with a special request **“the place of my fathers’ sepulchers, lies waste, ... send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers’ sepulchers, THAT I MAY BUILD IT”** (Nehemiah 2:3, 5, Yeivin’s translation).

<sup>7</sup> A list of burial texts of David’s successors through Hezekiah: **Solomon:** 1 Kings 11:43; 2 Chronicles 9:31. **Rehoboam:** 1 Kings 14:31; 2 Chronicles 12:16 (buried in the **“sepulchers of the kings,”** Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 8.264). **Abijah (Abijah):** 1 Kings 15:8; 2 Chronicles 14:1. **Asa:** 1 Kings 15:24; 2 Chronicles 16:13–14. **Jehoshaphat:** 1 Kings 22:50; 2 Chronicles 21:1. **Jehoram (Joram):** 2 Kings 8:24; 2 Chronicles 21:20. **Ahaziah:** 2 Kings 9:28; 2 Chronicles 22:9. **Jehoash (Joash):** 2 Kings 12:21; 2 Chronicles 24:25, CLV (**“they entombed him in the city of David; yet they did NOT entomb him in the tombs of the kings”**); **Amaziah:** 2 Kings 14:20; 2 Chronicles 25:28. **Azariah (Uzziah):** 2 Kings 15:7; 2 Chronicles 26:23. **Jotham:** 2 Kings 15:38; 2 Chronicles 27:9. **Ahaz:** 2 Kings 16:20; 2 Chronicles 28:27. **Hezekiah:** 2 Kings 20:21; 2 Chronicles 32:33.

The writer of this portion of 2 Chronicles says the sepulchers of the descendants of King David were **“the sepulchers of the kings of Israel.”** King Hezekiah’s epitaph says where he was buried:

**“Then Hezekiah lay down with his fathers; they entombed him in the ascent of THE TOMBS OF THE SONS OF DAVID ...”**

• 2 Chronicles 32:33, CLV

The King James Version has a different phrasing in this verse:

**“Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest<sup>8</sup> of the sepulchers of the sons of David ...”**

• 2 Chronicles 32:33, KJV

Note that several **“sepulchers”** or **“tombs [plural] of the sons of David”** are mentioned. They were the sepulchers of the kings of Judah at the time of Hezekiah’s death. Hezekiah was not buried in David’s specific tomb room or chamber. Of the first 12 immediate heirs of David, all are said to be buried in **“the City of David.”** It seems Hezekiah was the last King of Judah to be buried within David’s Tomb complex. No royal successors to Hezekiah were buried there.

### ***The Carcasses of Evil Kings: Ezekiel 43:7–9***

We come now to Scriptures that tell about a “wall” giving other clues to locate the underground Tombs of King David. Ezekiel chapters 40–48 is one single prophecy given in a vision to Ezekiel. The vision dates to the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the first group exiled, which is the 14<sup>th</sup> year after the final capture and destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (Ezekiel 40:1–2). Most of the vision is about the future.

In chapter 43 the prophet Ezekiel is taken in vision to view the city of Jerusalem from the east, specifically from the Mount of Olives. Then Ezekiel is taken into the Temple sanctuary. Most of the vision relates to the future (Ezekiel 40:1–42:20 and 43:13–48:35).

However, a portion of the vision, Ezekiel 43:1–12, shows events “cut-out” from the rest of the future vision. It shows the past to Ezekiel, at least 14 years before he saw the vision. This was done because Ezekiel was taken and exiled to Babylon before the events he was shown happened in history. The “vision” showed the Temple to Ezekiel just before King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed it. The **“glory of YHWH”** brought Ezekiel to the east gate (verse 1), later taking him through the east gate of the Temple:

**“Then the spirit lifted me and brought me to the inner court. And behold, the glory of Yahweh filled the house [the Holy Place in the Temple]. And I heard one speaking to me from the house while the man was standing beside me.”**

• Ezekiel 43:5–6, CLV

Valuable information is given regarding the tombs of the evil Kings of Judah in relation to God’s presence.

**“He said to me: ‘Son of humanity, SEE [1] the place of My throne and [2] the place of the soles of My feet, [3] where I shall tabernacle in the midst of the sons of Israel for the eon [*olam*, for the age]. No longer shall the house of Israel [4] defile My holy Name, they and their kings with their prostitutions [worship of other gods] and with the corpses of their kings in their sepulchers.’”**

• Ezekiel 43:7, CLV

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<sup>8</sup> The **“chiefest”** is rendered in several translations by “highest” or “in the ascent” of the sepulchers of the son of David. After Hezekiah none of the kings of Judah were buried in the City of David. See Yeivin, “Sepulchers of the Kings,” p. 33. Nadav Na’aman in his article “Death Formulae,” p. 245 writes: **“The death formula changes in the histories of the kings from Hezekiah onward. The words ‘(was buried) with his ancestors in the City of David’ disappear.”**

The phrase **“sons of David”** may refer to Davidic kings, or it may mean that Hezekiah was buried near or inside the chambers containing literal sons borne to David’s wives and concubines, including those who rebelled against David. A list of the sons of David is given in 1 Chronicles 3:1–9.



The numbers [1] through [4] in verse 7 all refer to the Temple, the sanctuary of God, the place for His “**holy Name**” from which “**the glory of Yahweh**” spoke. The “**corpses of their kings**” were too close to God’s presence, His glory, and His throne.<sup>9</sup> The above-ground tombs defiled God’s holiness by their placement so close to God’s sanctuary. YHWH continues speaking to Ezekiel:

**“When they put [1] their threshold<sup>10</sup> [singular, one for each sepulcher] by My threshold and [2] their doorjamb beside My doorjamb with [3] only a SIDEWALL between Me and them, they defiled My holy Name with their abhorrences [abominations] which they did, and I consumed them in My anger.”**

**NOW let them put their prostitutions and the corpses of their kings FAR FROM ME, and I will tabernacle in their midst [of Judah] for the eon [olam, for the age].”**

• *Ezekiel 43:8–9, CLV*

YHWH already had punished His people and destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, His servant (Jeremiah 25:9, 27:6; and 43:10). God wanted the corpses and tombs of the evil kings moved “**far from Me**” (Ezekiel 43:9). When Ezekiel viewed this part of the prophetic vision, the Temple did not exist. Therefore, YHWH’s command could not be fulfilled until another Temple was built.

YHWH’s command to move the corpses of the evil Kings was not fulfilled until much later, during the reign of Simon the Hasmonean. He moved the remnants of the sepulchers of the evil kings of Judah, around 145 BC. (See the later chapters of Dr. Martin’s book *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot.*)

How close were “**the sepulchers**” of evil kings to God’s sanctuary? I read verse 43:8 to mean the “**thresholds,**” “**doorjams,**” and “**sidewalls**” separated “**the corpses of their kings**” from the Temple. This indicates the sepulchers were free-standing structures, above ground, but attached to an outer wall of the Temple used as an inexpensive support wall for one of four walls of the small above-ground sepulchers.

These burial structures were different from the underground sepulchers God made for David (2 Samuel 7:11 and 1 Chronicles 17:10). No evil kings were buried in King David’s tombs. The tombs of the evil kings were likely highly decorated with idolatrous designs.

Most importantly for our consideration is there was “**only a SIDEWALL between Me and them.**” In my opinion this refers to a “**sidewall**” of the Temple. The tombs containing “**the corpses of their kings**” may have had one of its four walls being a wall of the Temple. Identifying that wall is a major clue to locating the sepulchers of the kings, and particularly to the tombs of the good kings of the House of David.

### ***Evil Kings Defiled the Sanctuary, Not Good Kings***

It was not only the carcasses of evil kings whose proximity to the sanctuary was defiling to God (verse 43:7), but also the actions of the people in Jerusalem who did gross evil of a sexual and ritual nature to pagan gods, where the carcasses were buried. This is what Yahweh was referring to:

**“... they defiled My holy Name with their abhorrences** [abominations] **which they did, and I consumed them in My anger. Now let them put their prostitutions and the corpses of their kings FAR FROM ME, and I will tabernacle in their midst [of Judah] for the eon [olam, for the age].”**

• *Ezekiel 43:8–9, CLV*

The evil kings and others in Jerusalem were consumed by God’s anger over the years during their reigns. God’s anger was finalized by the invasion of the Babylonian army in successive attacks, mass killing in Jerusalem, and exile for the surviving thousands. God had no grievance with the good and righteous kings of

<sup>9</sup> This reference to the dead being in “**high places**” (Ezekiel 43:7) is like King Hezekiah’s court official Shebna who had a sepulcher for himself carved in bedrock (Isaiah 22:16). Placement of dead bodies (“carcasses”) in “**high places**” was common in pagan ritual idolatry done by Israel in the wilderness (Leviticus 26:30).

<sup>10</sup> The Hebrew word is often translated “door” rather than “threshold,” although the latter term is properly descriptive. “Posts” is the most often used translation in the King James Version and most other translations.

Judah. Once the carcasses of the evil kings were removed from His presence, away from His sanctuary, God says He will **“dwell in the midst of them”** for the age, meaning to the end of the present eon, or age.

David, Solomon, and their families were (and still are) buried underground in chambers “made” for David by God close to the Temple sanctuary. The evil kings of Judah were buried in above ground structures.

These **“carcasses”** of the evil kings and their sepulchers were finally moved as God commanded hundreds of years before in Ezekiel 43:9. The sepulchers of David deep in bedrock were not moved. Why move them? When Simon the Hasmonean cut down Zion and the Temple to fulfill Isaiah chapters 25 to 35, he moved **“the carcasses of their [evil] kings.”**

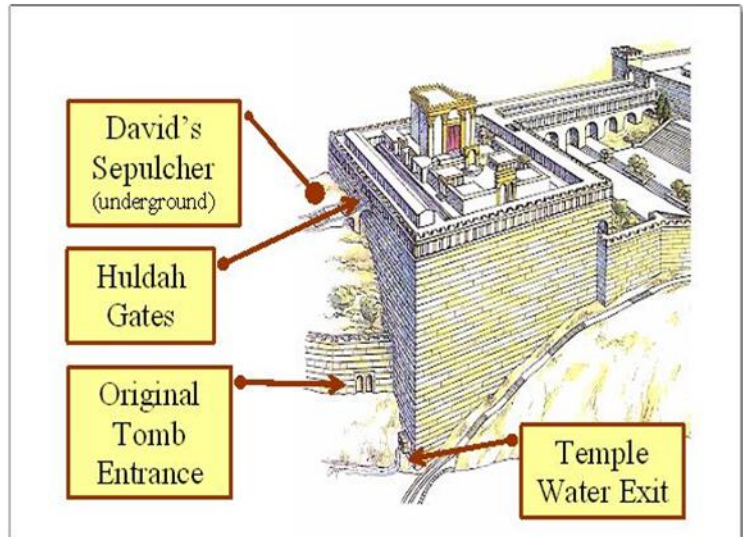
Perhaps the great earthquake that occurred decades before (Isaiah 29:2–6), damaged the Temple and Jerusalem, as Dr. Martin believed. This may have led Simon the Hasmonean to decide (with support of the religious leaders, and the people), to cut down the remains of Mt. Zion down to bedrock. This acknowledged the defilement which led YHWH to finally destroy Jerusalem, the Temple, and to exile the people of Judah.<sup>11</sup>

These sepulchers were used as **“high places”** where the worst sins were committed, gross abominations were done, involving carcasses, sexual rituals (called “whoredoms”).<sup>12</sup> Such acts have always been part of pagan religious practice. Human depravity being what it is, and given God’s strong reaction to these structures, the term “abominations” is used to describe the acts done at the sepulchers, involving dead bodies (Ezekiel 43:8: **“abhorrences [abominations] which they did, and I consumed them in My anger ... their prostitutions and the corpses of their kings”**). While it is unpleasant to think about, God’s reaction in Ezekiel 43:7–9 has all of these things in mind. Read all of Jeremiah 19:1–15. The same sins deplored by Ezekiel are criticized by his older contemporary, the prophet Jeremiah:

**“The houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah will become unclean like the place Topheth, even all the houses upon whose housetops they have fumed incense to all the host of the heavens, and libated [poured ritual] libations to other elohim.”**

• *Jeremiah 19:13, CLV*

There was only one king at a time in Judah. In earlier times they did their defilements and abominations in the valley of Topheth, to the south of the City of David. In the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel they committed such sins openly in Jerusalem on the rooftops of houses and even on the rooftops of **“the houses of the kings of Judah.”** This refers to the tops of the above-ground sepulchers of the kings where the people of Jerusalem committed their evils — at the cemetery. Those acts include human sacrifice, **“the blood of innocents”** (Jeremiah 19:4–5, 9) causing God to severely judge His people.<sup>13</sup> These above-ground sepulchers were destroyed, and the bodies moved to fresh graves by Simon the Hasmonean when he demolished and scraped all vestiges of the Temple above bedrock to prepare a ritually “clean” foundation to rebuild the Temple.



<sup>11</sup> Martin, *Temples Jerusalem Forgot*, pp. 348–355. The cleansing of the Temple celebrated at Hannukah was not sufficient to properly cleanse the Temple.

<sup>12</sup> God’s punishments always fit the crimes. Read Leviticus 26:14–46, particularly verses 29–30. See [“The Laws of the Bible.”](#)

<sup>13</sup> The judgment and punishment by YHWH upon the people of Jerusalem was horrific (Jeremiah 19:9, CLV):

**“I will feed them the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and each one shall eat the flesh of his associate, in the siege and in the constraint [siege] which their enemies and those seeking their soul shall inflict upon them.”**

## Which Temple Wall Was Connected to the Above Ground Tombs of Judah's Evil Kings?

Which wall separated the Sanctuary of the Temple from the Tombs (“the carcasses”) of the kings of Judah in Ezekiel? It was the southern wall of the Temple Sanctuary. How can we know? We can know by historical evidence. Sepulchers and graves were not allowed under the greater Temple. Simon and later Herod took great care to ensure the Temple Sanctuary was not placed over graves. This is clear from the Mishnah:

**“Beneath both the Temple Mount and the courts of the Temple was a hollowed space for fear of any grave down in the depths.”**

• *Mishnah, Parah 3.3, Danby Translation*

The Temple of Solomon was 150 feet wide (north to south) and 500 feet long (from east to west) (Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.198). Simon doubled the dimensions by expanding the Sanctuary to the north and to the west, and he added a covered porch. Herod doubled again the area of the Sanctuary (Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 1.401), again expanding to the north and to the west resulting in a square platform 600 feet by 600 feet.<sup>14</sup>

The southern wall was not moved but it was lengthened. The eastern wall did not move either; it was already extending “into” the Kedron Valley and could go no further. The placement of the southern wall did not change because the Tombs of David were south of that wall, deep in bedrock.

## Nehemiah and the Sepulchers of David

At the beginning of this article I related Dr. Martin’s understanding of the Tombs of David based on indications from Nehemiah 3:15–16, but there are also indications from Nehemiah 12:37 which the same information of the 3:15–16 passage from a different perspective.<sup>15</sup> Putting these verses together shows the “house of David” is the site of the “graves of David” in these two passages written 12 years apart. The same area is being described from two different perspectives on reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem:

Nehemiah 3:15–16, CLV	Nehemiah 12:37 (12 years later), CLV
<p>“It was the Spring Gate that Shallun ... repaired; ... as far as <u>the stairs descending</u> [going down] FROM <u>the city of David</u>. After him Nehemiah ..., repaired as far as in front of <u>the tomb of David</u> and as far as the reservoir [of water] that had been made ...”</p>	<p>“At the Spring Gate, in front of them, they <u>went up the stairs</u> [going up] of <u>the city of David</u> on <u>the ascent</u> to the wall ABOVE <u>the house of David</u> and unto the Water Gate toward the east.”</p>

In these Nehemiah passages, the “tomb of David” is the “house of David.” A house is usually filled with family. So also, are the “Graves of David.” This fits with Zechariah chapters 12–14, which contrasts David with “him who they have pierced” who was Jesus (Zechariah 12:10, John 19:37).

## “House of David” in Zechariah

The last 6 chapters of Zechariah were prophecies given and written by Jeremiah, even though it is found in the Book of Zechariah.<sup>16</sup> Zechariah chapters 12–14 is a single continuous prophecy. Chapter 12 tells Israel’s future victory over its enemies and their mourning over the one who was pierced or stabbed. Chapter 13 tells how idolatry shall end in Israel and how the shepherd is struck, and the flock scattered. Chapter 14 tells about future war and ultimate victory.

<sup>14</sup> Martin, *Temples Jerusalem Forgot*, in “Chapter 30, Rebuilding the Temple,” pp. 402–405.

<sup>15</sup> I presented this in my “House of David” article.

<sup>16</sup> Matthew 27:9 and see “The Land of Israel in Prophecy.”

In these three chapters of Zechariah there is a recurring phrase, **“in that day.”** It occurs 19 times like a drumbeat throughout the prophecy. Another important phrase, **“house of David”** occurs five times between Zechariah 12:7 and 13:1. The reference is not to the royal descendants of David. Every instance of those five occurrences of **“house of David”** refers to a physical structure, and indicates the sepulchers of David.

Zechariah 12:1 introduces the theme which is the burden of Israel. In verses 2 and 3 we learn Jerusalem will become a problem to **“all the people round about.”** Eventually all nations will gather against the city. Jerusalem shall be a problem to all the peoples and nations of the earth. God shall intervene. The people shall depend upon God to save them, and He will do so:

**“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.”**

• *Zechariah 12:7, CLV*

Notice, the tents of Judah will be saved first, then the **“house of David”** is counterposed with the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Most commentaries say they both refer to people, the inhabitants of the city and the descendants of David. This is incorrect. The house of David refers to the sepulchers of David. The next verse says something remarkable about **“the house of David”**:

**“In that day Yahweh shall be a protection about the dwellers of Jerusalem, And the unsteady one among them, in that day, will become like David, And the HOUSE OF DAVID like Elohim [God], Like the messenger [angel] of Yahweh before them. And it will come to be in that day, I shall seek to exterminate all the nations coming against Jerusalem.”**

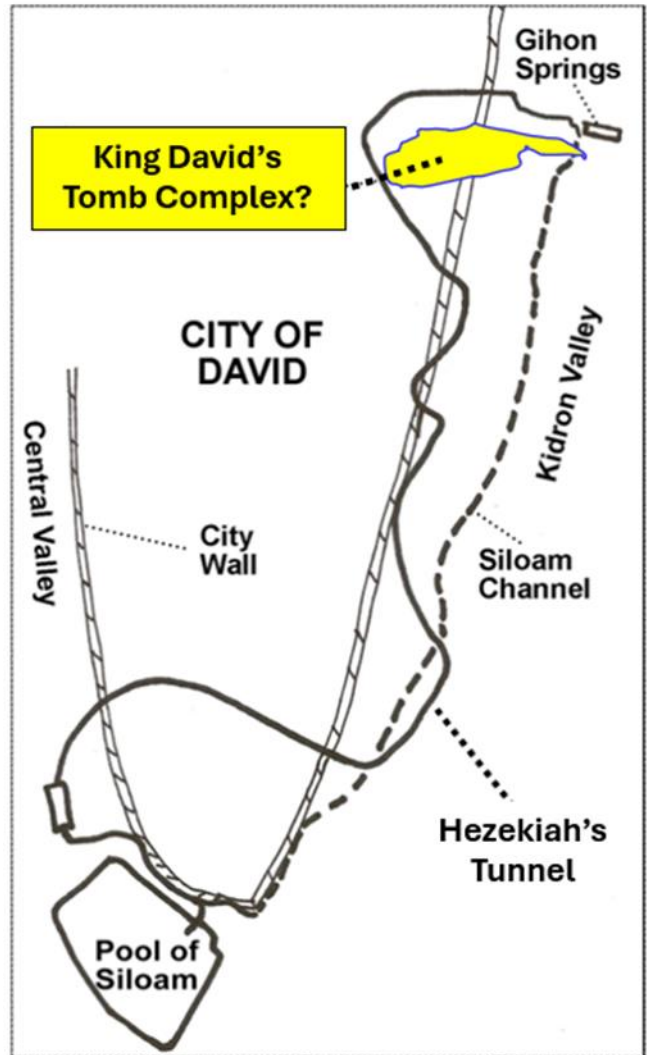
• *Zechariah 12:8–9, CLV*

In the future the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be defended by God’s supernatural power that will make even the weakest seem like King David at the height of his power. They will seem almost invincible. The next sentence about the **“house of David”** seems to inflate the power of the “house” to immense proportions. Yet it all makes sense if the **“house of David”** is a physical structure having something inside so wondrous that people will think God Himself is communicating with them, as if God’s personal messenger has come to them, as the **“angel of the Lord before them.”**

This is not a hyperbolic poetic comparison about the power of the **“inhabitants of Jerusalem”** vis-à-vis the descendants of King David. God will defend the inhabitants (verse 8) and destroy the attackers (verse 9). But there is something about the **“house of David”** that causes the **“inhabitants of Jerusalem”** to be protected. God will intervene to destroy the attackers.

Something about the **“house of David”** shall lead the **“inhabitants of Jerusalem”** to recognize Jesus as their Messiah as understood in John 19:37 and Revelation 1:7:

**“Yet I will pour out on the house of David, And on the dwellers of Jerusalem, A spirit of grace**



King David's Tomb Complex, Suggested Location



and supplications; And they [the inhabitants] will look to Him Whom they stabbed, And 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. In that day the wailing shall be great in Jerusalem, Like the wailing of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddon [har-Megiddo, when Pharaoh Necho killed King Josiah of Judah].”

• *Zechariah 12:10–11, CLV*

Reading the next verse, it seems ridiculous to deny “**the house of David**” refers to a group of people just like the other groups. However, the phrasing is peculiar ...

“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;
The family of the house of Levi	alone,	and their wives	alone;
The family of Shimei	alone,	and their wives	alone;
All the families that remain family by family	alone,	and their wives	alone.”

• *Zechariah 12:12–14, CLV*

Some facts must be explained here. Nathan was a son of David (2 Samuel 5:14; 1 Chronicles 3:5, 14:4), a direct ancestor of Jesus (Luke 3:31). Nathan was an older brother of Solomon, yet Solomon was chosen by God to succeed David to the throne and build God’s Temple. Shimei was a common name among those descended from Levi, but the closest is a grandson. If these four groups were buried in the Tombs, different chambers for each family group, this obscure verse would make a great deal of sense. Note the next verse:

“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.”

• *Zechariah 13:1, CLV*

Do people or groups of people have fountains or springs open to them? No. Do structures have fountains open to them? Yes, if they are located near a spring such as the Gihon, which is the location of the House of David, the tombs of David. God is the fountain of living waters (Jeremiah 17:13). His living waters can heal. The healing indicated here is to cleanse sin and spiritual impurity. To ignore these living waters is a great evil. (Remember, Jeremiah also wrote the Zechariah passages we read earlier):

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

• *Jeremiah 2:13, CLV*

### *Sepulchers of David in Josephus*

The Jewish historian Josephus tells of an event which occurs during the reign of John Hyrcanus, King of Judah, son, and heir of Simon the Hasmonean. Hyrcanus entered the David’s Tomb complex and “**opened one room of David’s sepulcher, and took out three thousand talents**” (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 7:393).

Josephus indicates there were more rooms than the one room Hyrcanus entered and took treasure from. Later Josephus gives more information: “**But Hyrcanus opened the sepulcher of David, who excelled all other kings in riches, and took out of it three thousand talents**” (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 13:249). This passage tells us there were more riches in other rooms of David’s sepulcher, which is true.

The location of the sepulchers of David was known to Hyrcanus, and also to others. Josephus later tells a fascinating story of when King Herod the Great tried to enter David’s sepulcher:

“As for Herod, he had spent vast sums on the cities, both outside and inside his own kingdom; and because he had before heard that Hyrcanus, who had been king before him, had opened David’s sepulcher, and taken out of it three thousand talents of silver, and that there was a much greater number left behind, and, indeed, enough to suffice all his wants [i.e., great wealth

remained in the sepulcher], **he had a great while an intention to make the attempt; and at this time he opened that sepulcher by night, and went into it, and endeavored that it should not be at all known in the city, but took only his most faithful friends with him.**

**As for any money, he found none, as Hyrcanus had done, but that furniture of gold, and those precious goods that were laid up there; all which he took away.**

**However, he had a great desire to make a more diligent search, and to go farther in, even as far as the very bodies of David and Solomon, where two of his guards were slain, by a flame that burst out upon those who went in, as the report was. So he [Herod] was terribly frightened, and went out, and built a propitiatory monument of that fright he had been in; and this of white stone, **AT THE MOUTH OF THE SEPULCHER**, and that at great expense also.”**

• *Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 16:179–182*

Herod’s episode gives us more useful information. Herod’s suspicions were correct, and he knew the precise location of David’s sepulcher, but entering it was the problem. He expected more treasure to be in the tomb than what Hyrcanus had already taken away, and he was correct. He took furniture of gold (gold leaf on wood), and other valuable objects, but he found no money, no gold or silver.

Josephus specifically says neither Hyrcanus nor Herod succeeded in reaching the bodies of David or Solomon. But Josephus does imply the bodies were in there.

As we shall read below, David’s body was indeed in the Tomb. Josephus gives more information.

**“Herod, the king opened another room, and took away a great deal of money, and yet neither of them came at the coffins of the kings themselves, for their bodies were buried under the earth so artfully, that they did not appear to even those who entered into their monuments; but so much shall suffice us to have said concerning these matters.”**

• *Josephus, Antiquities 7:394*

The Greek word “money” in these two passages often means possessions or wealth. In *Antiquities* 16:180 it says Herod found no money, but in *Antiquities* 7:394 it says he did. This cannot be reconciled. In any case Josephus relates that Herod became frightened because of fire killing his fellow grave robbers and he never entered the Tombs again as far as we know.<sup>17</sup> Although the bodies (plural) of David and Solomon and others were not reached by either Hyrcanus or Herod, they expected to find the bodies. Remember what is written in Isaiah 22:22 about the opening and shutting, shutting and opening.

**“So he [Herod] was terribly frightened, and went out, and built a propitiatory monument of that fright he had been in; and this of white stone, at the mouth of the sepulcher, and that at great expense also.”**

• *Josephus, Antiquities 16:182*

The “**propitiatory monument**” Herod built was a public structure. It was not placed at a new tomb, but it makes sense that the monument would be “**at the mouth of the sepulcher**” of a cave-like structure. I submit that the sepulchers of David and Solomon were **not moved** by Simon the Hasmonean for two reasons:

- (1) they contained the bodies of righteous kings whose Tombs did not defile the sanctuary (Ezekiel 43:7–9), and more importantly
- (2) their sepulchers were far underground in bedrock. Simon reduced the hill where the Temple was located down to bedrock; he did not carve into the bedrock. The sources Dr. Martin cites in his book *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot*, p. 343, make this abundantly clear.

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<sup>17</sup> Josephus further records that Herod’s family troubles were the result of his evil act of trying to enter David’s Tomb (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 16:188). In fact, after relating Herod’s family troubles the very next subject is Herod’s sudden desire to expand the Temple. One wonders if his night attempt to enter the sepulcher of David prompted guilt and fear in Herod and in an attempt to do penance to God, he decided to add glory God’s Temple.

## David and Jesus

King David and Jesus were associated with each other by the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost weeks after the ascension of Jesus to heaven. Speaking from Jerusalem, Peter continues.

**“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. ...**

**For David did not ascend into the heavens, yet he [David] is saying, ‘Said the Lord to my Lord, Sit at My right till I should be placing Your enemies for a footstool for Your feet.’”**

• Acts 2:29, 34–35 (quoting Psalm 110), CLV

Reading Acts 2:29 critically, Peter knew where David’s tomb was, it seemed to be visible to Peter and his audience, almost as if Peter was gesturing to it while he was speaking. Peter understood David’s body to be in the Tomb. If David is dead, buried, and his tomb is still with us, then the body should be there also. The phrase **“his tomb is still with us unto this day”** is meaningful if one remembers that some of the tombs of the evil kings of Judah above ground were moved by Simon the Hasmonean. Peter is saying David’s tomb was not moved elsewhere, but that the body of David is in the original tomb. David’s sepulchre would be south of the Temple, at God’s right hand, just as Psalm 110 states (Acts 2:35).

The apostle Paul later spoke (as Peter did) about King David and transitioned to talk about David’s seed, Jesus, (Acts 13:22–23) who he identifies as the Savior of Israel. Then Paul told of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead and contrasted David with Jesus. David saw corruption in the grave, while Jesus did not:

**“Now, seeing that He raises Him from among the dead, by no means longer about to return to decay, He has thus declared that, I shall be giving you ‘the faithful benignities [mercies] of David’ [Psalm 55:3]. Wherefore, in a different place also, He is saying, ‘You will not be giving Your Benign One to be acquainted with decay’ [Psalm 16:16].**

**For David, indeed, subserving his own generation by God’s counsel, was put to repose, and was added to his fathers, and was acquainted with decay; yet He Whom God rouses [Jesus] was NOT acquainted with decay.”**

• Acts 13:34–37, CLV

Note how Peter and Paul both begin talking about David and then transition to talking about Jesus? This is intentional in both instances. The same thing was done in Zechariah chapter 12. That prophecy relates to the House of David and then changes to talk about him **“whom they have pierced”** (Zechariah 12:10). The apostle John states the prophecy was specifically fulfilled at the crucifixion of Jesus (John 19:37).

Rabbi Akiba (b. 40 AD and d.135) wrote this intriguing item after the destruction of the Temple about the burials and tombs within the city of David. He refers to the clearing away of the sepulchers, likely meaning the sepulchers of the kings of Judah discussed above.

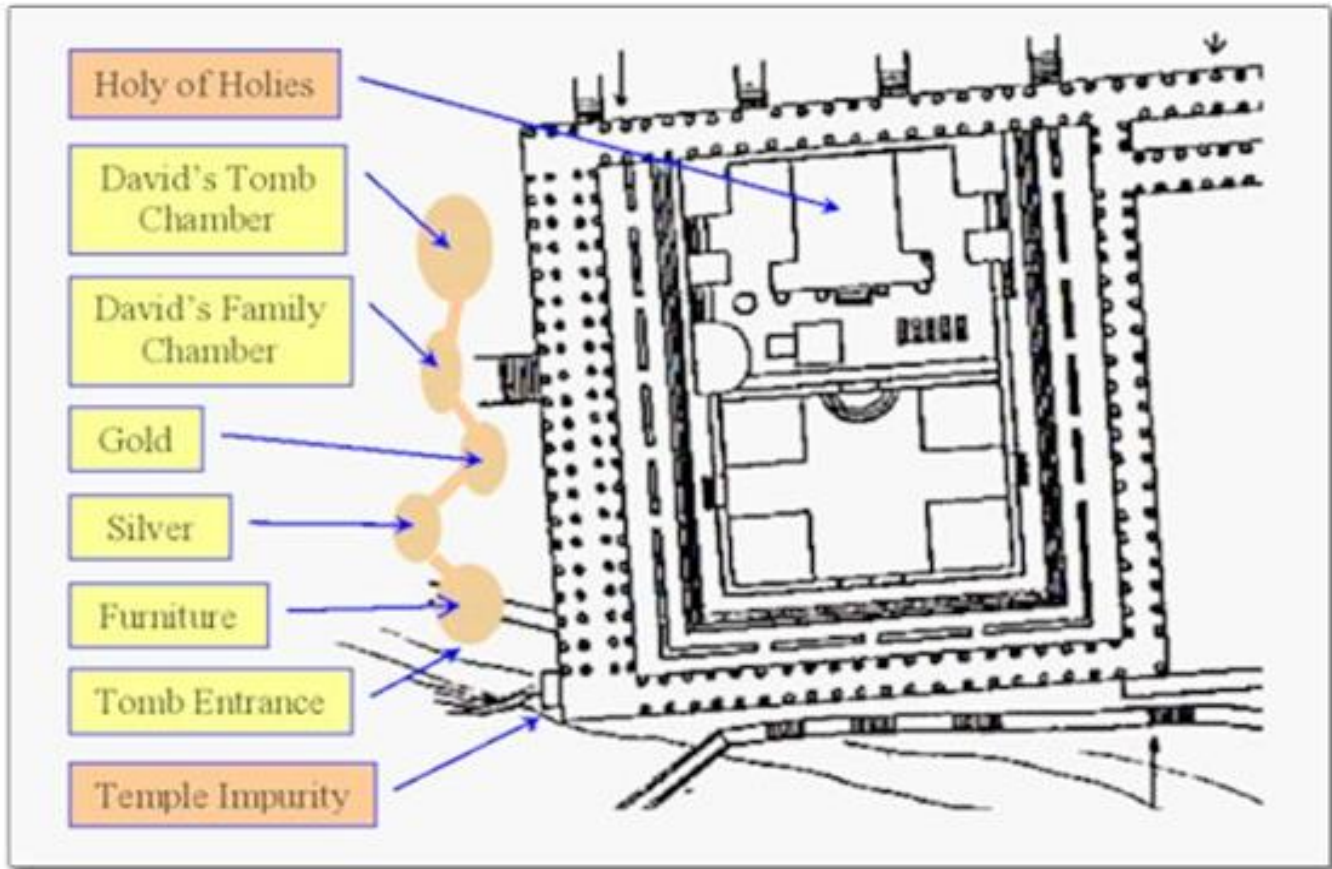
**“In Jerusalem it was not permitted to leave tombs [within the city] with the exception of those of the house of David and that of the prophetess Hulda. ...**

**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 [R. Akiba] was told, ‘But there were at Jerusalem the sepulchers [plural] of the House of David and the sepulcher [singular] 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.’”**

• Tosefta, Baba Bathra 1:2, 11–12



### King David's Tombs: Suggested Chambers and Contents (Not to Scale, Not Complete)

**First**, note what Rabbi Akiba was told. He was told about **“the sepulchers of the house of David.”** There were several sepulchers, not just one. It is easy to see how **“house of David”** could come to mean the **“sepulchers of David.”**

**Second**, there was a tunnel of uncleanness close to the sepulchers of the house of David and the sepulcher of Huldah. The term **“uncleanness”** is a direct reference to Zechariah 13:1–2 above.

**Third**, is a most significant point. Nobody ever touched those sepulchers. That means that according to the writer (quoting Akiba and another person), who wrote after the 70 AD destruction of the Temple, the expectation was that the bodies of David's family and Huldah the prophetess should still be inside the intact sepulchers.

This means the Romans did not enter the sepulchers, even though Josephus, a friend to Rome, with three emperors of Rome as his patrons to the end of his life, apparently knew where the sepulchers were. That means that the Romans, with all the time, resources, and engineering skill in the world available to them after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, for some reason the Romans did not or were unable to access those sepulchers — confirmed a generation later by Akiba and his associates.

### *Summary of Evidence to Locating David's Tomb*

Remember from Ezekiel 43:8–9 that the carcasses of the evil kings of Judah had just a wall of separation between them and the sanctuary of the Temple. That was the south wall of the outer Temple sanctuary. Most all of the sepulchers of the evil kings were moved by Simon the Hasmonean as stated by Rabbi Akiba. Two groups of sepulchers were not moved. Those were the sepulchers of the house of David and the sepulcher of Huldah the prophetess.



**“There were five gates to the Temple enclosure: the two gates of Huldah from the SOUTH, which served for entrance and for exit”**

• *Mishna Middoth 1.3, Danby Translation*

There was only one set of gates in the southern wall of the Temple enclosure. They were named the **“gates of Huldah”** because they pointed to a location in the direction leading from the Temple through that gate. I propose that the most significant location was the sepulcher of Huldah, buried underground, outside of the southern wall of Temple complex. Now note what the Babylonian Talmud says in a well-known passage:

**“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; as it reaches the entrance to the Sanctuary it becomes as the thread of the warp; as it reaches the Ulam, it becomes as the thread of the woof [slightly larger]; as it reaches the entrance to the [Temple] court, 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:’**

**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” (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 gonorrhoea, 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” [quoting Zechariah 13:1].”**

• *Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 77b–78a*

The teachers of this Talmud passage (writing from Babylon) knew that there was an **“ENTRANCE to the House of David”** and they quote Zechariah 13:1 as evidence. That means they understood the House of David was a “place” or a “structure” that had an entrance. They did not think it referred to King David’s descendants.

Also note that the Temple had a fountain and a “Spring” issuing FROM the Holy of Holies.<sup>18</sup> This was “living water” which Jesus told us represented Himself, His teaching, and the Spirit of God (John 7:38–39). The flow from that “spring” in the Temple goes past the “entrance” of the House of David, which are the Tombs of David.

### ***David’s Position in Burial — and After***

Ezekiel 43:7–9 gave the final key to the location of the sepulchers of David, the **“house of David.”** Everything fits into place with that puzzle piece. David would have the best location for his sepulcher. After all, God “made” David’s sepulcher for him and probably all of the chambers for David’s family. David then had craftsmen “finish” the interior, similar to Egyptian tombs. David’s tomb chamber would have been the best location, chosen by God decades before the Temple was built; and even before Solomon was born.

It is not by chance that, with God facing east from the Temple, if David’s sepulcher was directly south of the Holy of Holies (outside the sanctuary wall) buried in a bedrock tomb, then David would be at God’s right hand, awaiting his resurrection from the dead, fulfilling Psalm 110:1, Matthew 22:42; and Acts 2:34–35.

All believers will see David after we all rise from the dead, although we will likely be busy with our own wondrous situation of glory, and focusing on Christ. David shall reign at Christ’s right hand over the tribes of Israel under Christ’s authority (Psalm 110: Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekial 34:23).

<sup>18</sup> Dr. Martin’s article, [“Water Management in Herod’s Temple”](#) explains how that “fountain” worked.

## *Review of the Evidence*

- The tombs are an underground structure or series of chambers. (God made them, 2 Samuel 7.)
- They are hidden (Josephus), but locked (Isaiah 22:22); known but inaccessible (Acts 2:29, 34–35, Josephus).
- They go up in elevation high inside the hill (Isaiah 22:22, Ezekiel 43:7–9), in bedrock.
- There are several chambers in the sepulchers (Second Chronicles and Josephus).
- David’s tomb chambers are south of the southern wall of the Temple sanctuary (Ezekiel 43:7–9).
- There was apparently one entrance down near the water outlet from the Temple into the Kedron Valley (Babylonian Talmud).
- Attempts were made to enter the sepulchers by Hyrcanus (Josephus) and Herod (Josephus).
- The body and tomb of David were intact at Pentecost in 30 AD (apostle Peter) and decades after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD (Rabbi Akiba, died 135 AD).
- If David’s sepulchers are immediately south of the southern Temple wall, figuratively David would be at God’s right hand (Acts 2:34–35).

## *Problems with This Discovery*

Discipline will be needed not to turn any of these “artifacts” into idols, whether that would be the bodies of David or Solomon, the “throne of David,” the pattern of the Temple, or other marvelous things that may be in the Tombs (Goliath’s sword and armor perhaps?). Also, the historical writings in the Tombs must not supersede in our minds the canonical Scriptures as we have today. Such writings can inform but should not replace the Scriptures simply because they are momentarily more interesting. Even though such a discovery would be seen as a miracle from God (whose acts would allow and cause the Tombs to be found), such information should be used to “fix” ancient history and chronology, the information should be read as truth, but not equal to Scripture.

Most likely the study of “the Mystery” given to the apostle Paul will be diminished and even discarded by many people in preference to learning the “fire hose flow” of new facts about the ancient world, each more interesting than the last discovery. Science may be surprised also, perhaps by the writings of King Solomon and King Hezekiah (who perhaps had Solomon’s writings available to him). Many will desire to follow the Law of Moses, the Torah, forgetting that Christ fulfilled all of those requirements perfectly, and that such rules and regulations are not for mature believers. And people should understand that in the resurrection (eventually) each of the individuals in the tombs will live again and be approachable and we will speak face to face with each of them. They will want to speak to you.

## *Suggestions to Access the Tombs and Protect the Artifacts*

Although the location of the Tombs can be known biblically and historically, unfortunately the exact position of any of the chambers (and discovery of one will lead to all others) cannot yet be determined. This is due to several factors.

**First**, the tomb chambers are within 75–100 feet of limestone bedrock above and west of the Gihon Springs, just south of the position where the southern Temple wall once stood.

**Second**, the slope of the hillside containing the tomb chambers is about 60°, which makes tasks difficult.

**Third**, there are houses at the top of the hill and across the valley at the town of Silwan which would require a minimum of disturbance for such an endeavor.

**Fourth**, while the proposed area is small geographically, we do not know how to precisely locate any one of the several Tomb chambers.

The problem is one of technology, not evidence. At present the technology does not exist, as far as I can determine. God must intervene, whether through technology (new or old) or through His direct act to reveal exactly where the chambers are located. If we find one chamber we can find all of them, just as in Egyptian archaeology. Certain of the tombs of the Pharaohs are family tombs with several (if not dozens) of interconnected chambers. All the chambers of the David's Tomb complex are connected, or were connected in the past.

If one chamber is precisely located, and acknowledged to be valid by archaeologists, geologists, and other experts; if a “fix” could be made on one chamber, the technique to “look” inside that chamber is easy, using “off the shelf” technology. The Israeli government, through the Israeli Antiquities Authority, would authorize, supervise, and monitor all events in the exploitation of the findings.

Funding would come from any one of several archaeological foundations. Everyone in the field would want to be part of such a project with a very favorable ratio of “minimal risk” to “great reward” — once a sepulcher chamber is located.

### **Why It Matters**

It matters to me that Dr. Martin should receive credit regarding his Temple research, which makes it possible for others to think about King David's Tomb. Gary Arvidson also deserves credit for his important comprehensive information on King David, his death, burial, and realizing the Tomb could be found. His book is *King David's Lost Tomb & Treasure*. My purpose in publishing this update in 2024 is to reintroduce this information so others can more precisely target the true location site of the Tombs, which is based on an understanding of the correct Temple location from Dr. Ernest L. Martin's research.

Although I would love to participate in the details of the discovery of the tomb, what God has hidden will be revealed at the proper time and not before (Isaiah 22:22). Once the “House of David” is opened, it will not be shut. The world will be different; a flood of knowledge will flow from the Tombs. Solomon wrote:

**“It is the glory of Elohim to conceal a matter, And the glory of kings to investigate a matter.”**

• *Proverbs 25:2, CLV*

**“The things being concealed are Yahweh our Elohim's, yet the things being revealed ARE OURS and our sons' until the eon, so that we might keep all the words of this law.”**

• *Deuteronomy 29:29, CLV*

We who are children of God now are much more than kings. David's Tomb will be opened, the Temple can even be built in its original place. In the meantime, the truths of the biblical teaching will go out to the world — to the glory of God the Father. This time the world will listen. Note this accurate description from Hosea, of Israel's situation at our present moment:

**“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 [this describes Israel today]:**

**Afterward the sons of Israel shall return [this HAS occurred!], And they will seek Yahweh their Elohim, and [seek] David their king; They will come in awe to Yahweh and to His goodness [when?] IN THE LATTER DAYS.”**

• *Hosea 3:4–5, CLV*

The job of the Body of Christ will be to help Israel and the world understand the biblical knowledge of the reconciliation of all to God our Father and Christ Jesus, and that they understand the Mystery of God as revealed to Paul and others in 63 AD. This may be a difficult message to present. Most believers in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD rejected the Mystery when it was given, and they even rejected the apostle Paul (2 Timothy 1:15). They may do the same at the end of the age.

David Sielaff, October 2006, 2024