

Sepulchre of David: The Location and Future Discovery of King David's Tomb

 sightedmoon.com/our-fathers-name-yahovah-and-the-sepulchre-of-david/

By Joseph F. Dumond

November 26, 2010

(This study on King David and his Sepulchre was originally contained within Newsletter 5846-042.)

<http://www.askelm.com/temple/t061001.htm>

The Location and Future Discovery of King David's Tomb

By David Sielaff, October 2006

Read the accompanying Newsletter for October 2006

The location of the Tombs of King David and his family can be easily understood once the proper site of the Temples of God is taken into account. If the biblical and historical evidence is correctly understood (and I believe it is), then what those Tombs could contain would change the world and lead millions to accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah, starting from Jerusalem.

In his book *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot*, 1 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 sepulchres 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. 2 They were positioned alongside a pool that was fed by the waters of a conduit from the Gihon Spring. ...

These sepulchres 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, *Temples Jerusalem Forgot*, p. 336

He was exactly 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 transferred to different locations. The hill was cut down to bedrock and an enlarged Temple was reconstructed on the original site, expanding to the north and to the west.

Dr. Martin goes on to state that Simon's transfer of structures included the sepulchers of David. He thought that the sepulchers of David comprised an above ground structure. 3 While this may be true for some sort of structure at the entrance to the sepulchers, it was not the case that the underground structures of the sepulchers of David were transferred. While

sepulchers of other kings of Judah were indeed moved, the sepulchers of David, Solomon, and others were not transferred. They remained in their original location but inaccessible to the world.

Substantial biblical and historical evidence can now show a more precise location of the unopened Tombs of King David and his immediate family in relationship to one unchanged foundational wall of the Temple sanctuary, above and west of the Gihon Springs. This same wall did not change position throughout the various Temple reconstructions after the destruction of the original Solomonic Temple. 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 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, the discovery of the Tombs of King David will totally validate Dr. Martin's evidence beyond question. The bodies are likely still in those tombs waiting to be discovered, along with astonishing artifacts, and most important of all — written documents. It is my understanding and belief that these written documents, along with the other artifacts, may initiate a period of rediscovery and presentation of the truths of Scripture to the world, leading to the restitution of all things (Acts 3:21). 4

Toward the end of this article I describe the writings and artifacts that could be contained within the Tombs. You will be amazed! Keep in mind, that at present it is pure speculation what items might be within the Tombs, although the speculation is informed by intriguing historical references, as you shall see. Then I shall describe one possible method by which the sepulchers can be located even more precisely so that 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, some background regarding King David's burial. A comprehensive 1948 article by S. Yeivin, "The Sepulchers of the Kings of the House of David" 5 provides an excellent survey of the subject matter. Yeivin points out that 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," p. 30

Genesis 47:29–30; Judges 8:32; 2 Samuel 19:38 are three examples of this ancient desire of Israelites to be buried with their ancestors. Failure to do so was seen as a curse and disaster. 6 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 proper grave (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:] 1 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 in fact make provision for his burial. To be more precise, God made that provision for David’s burial and David acceded to God’s desire.

King David’s “House”?

King David was the second king of Israel chosen by God after King Saul (2 Samuel 6:21; 1 Kings 8:16, 11:34; Psalm 78:70). After capturing Jerusalem, David ruled the 12 tribes of Israel from that capital city for the next 33 years, naming it the “City of David.” David came up with an idea to build a Temple to honor God within which would be placed the Ark of the Covenant and other items from the Tabernacle of Moses. 7 The prophet Nathan thought it was a good idea. He was sure that God would approve (2 Samuel 7:3). God thought otherwise and stated bluntly to King David through Nathan:

“Go and tell my servant David, Thus says the Lord, Shall you build me an house for me to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.”

- 2 Samuel 7:5–6

God reviewed for David all that He had done for Israel and for David. God concluded: “Also the Lord tells you that he [the Lord] will make you [David] an house. And when your days be fulfilled, and you shall sleep with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, which shall proceed out of your bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever [olam, for the age]. ...

And your house and your kingdom shall be established for ever [olam, for the age] before you [before God]: your throne shall be established for ever [olam, for the age]. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.”

- 2 Samuel 7:11–13, 16–17

(cf. 1 Chronicles 17:10–12, 14–15)

God states explicitly that He shall make David a House (7:11). What does that mean? This does not mean a dynasty, contrary to what most all commentators believe. In fact the term “house” in 2 Samuel chapter 7 — in all 15 instances — always refers to a physical structure. A dynasty of David’s descendants is separately promised to David when God states “I will set up

your seed after you, which shall proceed out of your bowels” (7:12), after David’s death. The mistake is conflating the “house” with the “seed” in this passage. 8

In my article, “The House of David,” I explain there is an intentional and precise distinction made in this passage between the “house” of David and the “seed” of David. Professor Lyle Eslinger is one commentator who understands this distinction correctly. 9

The fact that God will make a house for David tells us that this “house” is a physical structure. It will not be a building above ground like the Temple, but it will be a structure such as a cave or series of caves common to sepulchers of kings in ancient times. 10 As Professor Eslinger puts it:

“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 David, p. 43

In other words the “house” structure built by God will be a tomb or sepulcher structure that shall remain for a long time: “And your house and your kingdom shall be established for ever [olam, for the age] before you” (7:16). Both David’s house and his kingdom shall be established for the age. 11

Although God did not allow David to build the Temple, he was allowed to gather everything necessary for its construction. The “pattern” for the Temple, the plan for its construction, was given directly from God Himself in God’s own handwriting! 12 When David died everything was prepared for Solomon to build the Temple of God exactly as God indicated. While David received plans for the Temple directly from God, no plans were necessary for the “house” that God “made” for David (2 Samuel 7:11).

As you read through David’s response to God, try to understand the mental turmoil David was going through: First, David desired to build God a Temple. His request was refused by God, but then God tells David that He “made” a house, a structure specially intended as David’s burial place. At the same time God tells David that a son of his shall build a Temple. Sometime later David receives the plans for the Temple from God’s own handwriting.

David’s Response to God

When God rejected David’s desire to build a Temple for His name (2 Samuel 7:5–16), David went before God and prayed about the house God was building for him. He was upset, frightened, and at first he did not understand what God was doing. David questions God in a complaint: Why did God bring him all this way through David’s life, protecting him, promoting him, assisting him in every trouble, raising him to be King over Israel, bringing Israel to peace and greatness, and then to tell David that God would build a “house” — a Tomb — for David? 13

God was pronouncing a death sentence upon David. David naturally asks, “Oh God, why?” During his prayer to God, David answers his own questions, and then concludes with the confession that whatever God has in store for him, David will accept from God in obedience.

Read David's entire response to God in 2 Samuel 7:18–29, keeping in mind that when David refers to his house he is referring to the tomb or sepulcher that God made for him (not the proposed Temple, the house for God). In fact, David did not fully understand what God had in mind. After all, David just received news from God that he was going to die!

David's prayer to God is a model for us whenever we are presented with a major situation in life that we do not like or understand, when circumstances before us seem totally opposed to what we thought was God's will. David challenges God with questions about what God really wants. The mention of the "house," meaning the Tomb that God has prepared for him, has David questioning God's intention.

"Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, 'Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that you have brought me hitherto [brought me so far]? And this was yet a small thing in your sight, O Lord God; but you have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?

And what can David say more unto you? for you, Lord God, know your servant. For your word's sake, and according to your own heart, have you done all these great things, to make your servant know them.'"

• 2 Samuel 7:18–21

What God says in an off-hand manner, as David refers to it: "a small thing in your sight," is to David a death sentence! David complains that he has been brought so far in life, apparently to be given a sentence of death by God Himself at the pinnacle of God's accomplishment using David as his servant for the good of God's people. David does not understand. Like the apostle Paul (Ephesians 1:11), David realizes that God does everything according to His own heart and as He has spoken ("for your word's sake," verse 7:21).

David prepares to come to terms with whatever God will give him in life. Then David reviews what God has done for Israel and for him personally. While doing this, David realizes that God must have a plan to somehow glorify Himself, even with the death sentence He gave to David (verses 7:22–24). David then speaks to God directly about the "house" that God would "make" for him:

"And now, O Lord God, the word that you have spoken concerning your servant, and concerning his house,

[1] establish it for ever [confirm it for the age, olam], and

[2] do as you have said.

[3] And let your name be magnified for ever [olam, for the age], saying, 'The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel': and

[4] let the house of your servant David be established before you [close to God].

For you, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed to your servant, saying, 'I will build you an house': therefore has your servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto you."

• 2 Samuel 7:25–27

Note the numbered points in the passage. David completely and totally accepts what God presents to him. It was not easy for him. He had to search his heart to accept the difficult thing God proposed. David finally “found in his heart to pray this prayer.” He will no longer struggle with God about this matter. David was truly a man after God’s own heart, willing to fulfill God’s will (Acts 13:22, with Paul citing 1 Kings 15:5).

He asks God to “establish it,” meaning his “house,” his Tomb, and asks that God’s name “be magnified” for the age (verse 7:26) by His action. YHWH of Hosts is the God over Israel (and over David) and that the house (Tomb) of God’s servant David will be built with acquiescence and without complaint. David states directly “do as you have said” (verse 7:25), which equivalent to saying “thy will be done.”

“And now, O Lord God, you are that God, and your words be true, and you have promised this goodness unto your servant: Therefore now let it please you to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue for ever [olam, for the age] before you: for you, O Lord God, have spoken it: and with your blessing let the house of your servant be blessed for ever [olam, for the age].”

• 2 Samuel 7:28–29

David understands that God intends good for him regarding the Tomb. David accepts God’s pronouncement and asks that God will bless the house.

Contrary to his expectation at the time, David lived decades more. In fact the exchange of 2 Samuel chapter 7 occurred soon after the Ark was brought to Jerusalem, before David even saw Bathsheba and they married. Solomon was born from that union and he would build the Temple as God intended.

It may seem incredible to put forth that “house” means Tomb in this context, but the usage of “house” meaning “tomb” is borne out in several passages, particularly where the phrase “House of David” has that meaning. (See footnote #8 above.) To clarify the situation I substitute the word “tomb” for “house,” in these passages because that is what it means in context, and it will clarify your understanding:

“Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, ‘Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my TOMB, that you have brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in your sight, O Lord God; but you have spoken also of your servant’s TOMB for a great while to come. ...

And now, O Lord God, the word that you have spoken concerning your servant, and concerning his TOMB, establish it for ever [olam, for the age], and do as you have said. And let your name be magnified for ever [olam, for the age], saying, The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the TOMB of your servant David be established before you. For you, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed to your servant, saying, I will build you a TOMB: therefore has your servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto you.

And now, O Lord God, you are that God, and your words be true, and you have promised this goodness unto your servant: Therefore now let it please you to bless the TOMB of your

servant, that it may continue for ever [olam, for the age] before you: for you, O Lord God, have spoken it: and with your blessing let the TOMB of your servant be blessed for ever [olam, for the age].”

• 2 Samuel 7:18–19, 28–29

Now substitute the word “dynasty” where “house” is in the original, where I have “tomb,” and note that the passages do not make near as much sense. David always desired and intended to have a dynasty. It is the goal of every ancient ruler. Why would David complain when God makes it so? Would David question God for creating a dynasty from him, as he questions God in verses 7:18–19? Would David ask for God’s blessing for something already so positive?

No. In his response to God in 2 Samuel chapter 7 David is not initially expressing thanks and praise. He expresses shock about an evil situation, his death sentence. David was partially accepting because a dynasty and kingdom were announced in 2 Samuel 7:12–16 with the words “seed,” “kingdom,” and “throne,” all of which indicate the establishment of a dynasty from David. Indeed, the dynasty was to be established for the age, although the duration of that age would be shorter than the “age” for the duration the “house.” David came to understand that he would have the best of both worlds. He would not die immediately as he initially feared. He would have his dynasty and he would have a “house” or Tomb built for him by God. 14

I analyzed 2 Samuel chapter 7 in detail to show that the Tombs of David are not ordinary sepulchers. They were made by God Himself for a special purpose, and that purpose will last “for the age.” That age has not yet seen its completion, even to our day.

Psalm 30 and David’s Last Words

David finished and furnished the interior of that “house,” those Tombs, in preparation before his death. 15 We can know this for a fact because Psalm 30 is written specifically to commemorate “the dedication of the House of David” (Psalm 30:1). This Psalm is not talking about a dynasty or David dedicating his personal house and home (his palace if you will) to God. That “house” or palace was built by Hiram king of Tyre, not by God. It was already completed when David conceived his idea to build a Temple for God (2 Samuel 5:11, 7:1–2; 1 Chronicles 14:1, 17:1). Psalm 30 must refer to the “house” that God made for David. 16 When David spoke his last words (2 Samuel 23:1–7), he states that he was a prophet and that God spoke through him (verse 23:2). David then spoke about the “house,” which makes no sense in the King James Version, but is made clear by the New

American Standard translation:

“Truly is not my house so with God? For He has made an everlasting covenant [a covenant for the age, olam] with me, Ordered in all things, and secured; For all my salvation and all my desire, Will He not indeed make it grow?

• 2 Samuel 23:5 (NAS)

David talks about his house as a place of security for his salvation and fulfillment of God’s covenant to him. As he nears death, David desires his salvation. He likens his situation to a

seed planted to grow. He even refers to thorns, undesirable elements burned in fire (verses 23:6–7). David’s body was being preserved until the resurrection, unto his salvation and desire (verse 23:5). The apostle Paul may be referring to this passage when he tells about the resurrection body:

“But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? You fool, that which you sow is not quickened, except it die: And that which you sow, you sow not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God gives it a body as it has pleased him, and to every seed his own body.”

• 1 Corinthians 15:35–38

David came to understand, as expressed in Psalm 132 (and several other Psalms of David), that just as God desires Zion to be His habitation, Zion also becomes a desired place of rest for David:

“For the Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.”

• Psalm 132:13–14

“House” as Grave

Some may still question the understanding that “house” occasionally means grave. A definitive example is in Isaiah chapter 14. Here the context of verses 18–20 demands that “house” means tomb or a grave:

“All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie [dead] in glory, every one in his own house. But you are cast out of your grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under feet. You shall not be joined with them in burial ...”

• Isaiah 14:18–20

The Tomb that God built for David is indicated in several contexts of Scripture by the phrase “House of David.” While that phrase certainly is often used to denote David’s kingly descendants, it is important to distinguish by the usage, in context, when “House of David” refers to the Tombs of David. In my article “The House of David” the term “house” often means “tomb” if the context indicates. 17 Two other definitive passages that indicate that “house” can mean tomb or sepulcher are Ecclesiastes 12:5, 7 and Nehemiah 2:3.

“House of David” in Isaiah

Another example of “house” meaning a structure takes place during the reign of King Hezekiah. Again, I must give the background because it shows relevance to burial and tombs. There was an important man in Hezekiah’s court by the name of Shebna who was a high official of the kingdom, perhaps the most powerful man after King Hezekiah himself. Shebna carved out a sepulcher himself for himself just like the kings of Judah. His sepulcher was “on high.” Shebna thought that his status was so great in the society of Judah that he intended to be buried with honors like a king, buried in the best and highest positions in the city: “Thus says the Lord God of hosts, ‘Go, get you unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, 18 which is over the house, and say, What have you here? and whom have you here, that you have hewn

you out a sepulchre here, as he that hews him out a sepulchre on high, and that graveth [carves] an habitation [Hebrew: tabernacle] for himself in a rock?"

• Isaiah 22:15–16

Three facts come out from Isaiah chapter 14 passage above, and the Isaiah 22:20–22 passage below: (1) "house" can mean grave and sepulcher, (2) many sepulchers were carved out of rock hillsides, and (3) the most desirable locations were high on the hillside, befitting exalted status. Shebna's successor is discussed later in Isaiah chapter 22, leading to the important verse 22:22:

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah 19: And I will clothe him with your [Shebna's] robe, and strengthen him with your girdle, and I will commit your government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

And the key of the House of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open."

• Isaiah 22:20–22

In this context "House of David" is a physical structure and does not refer to the descendants of David, even though the earlier phrase "house of Judah" refers to the people of the kingdom. This is clearly the case because of the reference to the key, and to opening and shutting. Keys do not open and close people. A key is used to open and close doors and enclosures, locking and unlocking them. In this case the door is to the "House of David," a real physical structure and place. There is likely a direct connection to the Temple or the palace of the king. And yes, keys in ancient times were so large that they were put on the shoulder.

The name "Eliakim" means "God raises" or "God sets up." This and other factors show that Isaiah 22:22 has a direct messianic reference as used in Revelation 3:7, almost a direct quote with one important change, in the message to the ekklesia of Philadelphia where it refers specifically to Christ.

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; 'These things says he that is holy, he that is true, he that has the key of David, he that opens, and no man shuts; and shuts, and no man opens; I know your works: behold, I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a little strength, and have kept my word, and have not denied my name.'"

• Revelation 3:7–8

The difference between the two passages is that Isaiah 22:22 has the long phrase "key of the house of David," and Revelation 3:7 reduces it to "key of David." The phrase "house of" in Isaiah is missing in Revelation, yet the reference to Isaiah in Revelation is obvious. 20 The "key of the house of David" refers to the sepulchers of David. We shall know in the future whether the sepulchers of David are part of the door opened by Christ.

The Burials of David and His Successors

David was buried in his capital city called at that time the City of David: "So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David" (1 Kings 2:10), and not in his ancestral tombs,

because God “made” the sepulcher for David. 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 burial practices 21:

“And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign. And they buried him in his own sepulchres [plural], which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and diverse kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries’ art: and they made a very great burning for him.”

• 2 Chronicles 16:13–14, cf. 1 Kings 15:24

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. One successor to Asa was Jehoram (Joram). He was buried “in the city of David but not in the sepulchres [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 was a leper Uzziah was buried in the field, not in the sepulchers. King Ahaz also has interesting details added:

“Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem: but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel: and Hezekiah his son reigned ...”

• 2 Chronicles 28:27

It is clear from these passages in 2 Chronicles that the author considered the sepulchers of the descendants of King David (Ahaz’s fathers) to be “the sepulchres of the kings of Israel.” King Hezekiah died:

“Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David.” • 2 Chronicles 32:33

This verse indicates that there were several “sepulchres [plural] of the sons of David” in the City of David. They comprised the sepulchers of the kings of Judah up to the time Hezekiah was buried. Was Hezekiah buried with David? Perhaps. This may be what is meant by “chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David.” 22 Of the first 12 immediate heirs of David all are said to be buried in the City of David. The successors to Hezekiah were not buried there.

The Carcasses of the Kings: Ezekiel 43:7–9

We come now to a verse that discusses the “wall” that gives us a major clue to a more precise location of the Tombs of David. It is to be found in Ezekiel chapter 43.

The vision of Ezekiel chapters 40–48 is a single prophecy given to the prophet Ezekiel and precisely dated to the 25th year of captivity, the 14th year after the destruction of Jerusalem (and the Temple, Ezekiel 40:1–2). In this vision Ezekiel was taken to view Jerusalem from the east (from the Mount of Olives) and then he 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, Ezekiel 43:1–12 is a historical parenthesis, obviously looking to the past, at least 14 years. The text describes the Temple before it was destroyed by king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The Glory of the Lord brought Ezekiel to the east gate (verse 1), then through the east gate of the Temple: “So the

spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house [the Holy Place in the Temple]. And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me.”

• Ezekiel 43:5–6

Important information is then given regarding the sepulchers of the Kings of Judah in direct relation to God’s presence.

“And he said unto me, ‘Son of man, [1] the place of my throne, and [2] the place of the soles of my feet, [3] where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever [olam, for the age], and [4] [the place I put] my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places.’” • Ezekiel 43:7

There can be no doubt that the phrases [1] through [4] listed above all refer to the Temple, the sanctuary of God, and the place for His name, from which the Glory of the Lord was speaking. The carcasses of their kings were close to where God had His throne, placed His feet, and had His glory. 23 They were defiling His holiness by their presence so close to God’s sanctuary 24: “In their setting of their threshold [singular, but implying one threshold per king’s sepulcher] by my thresholds [plural], and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger. Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever [olam, for the age].”

• Ezekiel 43:8–9

God took action and consumed the evildoers. Now God wants the carcasses and their sepulchers removed: “let them put away ... far from me” (verse 9). This was done in the time of Simon the Hasmonean.

How close were the sepulchers of the kings to God’s sanctuary? Verse 8 indicates that “thresholds” and “posts” separated the sanctuary from “the carcasses of their kings.” It appears that these sepulchers were above ground, unlike the sepulchers of David that God made. The text does not say they were in graves underground. Reference to “thresholds” and “posts” indicate buildings. For the Sanctuary the “thresholds” were doorways in the outer wall, while the “posts” were likely upright beams that supported the lintels of the doorway. 25 Those were often highly carved and likely had idolatrous designs.

Most importantly for our consideration here is that there was only “the wall between me and them.” The sepulchers containing “the carcasses of their kings” may have been along side the wall of the sanctuary so that the separation of just one wall was the distance of the sepulchers of the kings to God’s sanctuary. If we can identify that wall, it will give us a major clue as to the location of the sepulchers of the kings, and most particularly the House of David.

Evil Kings Defile 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 people who did evil at the carcasses. This is explicitly stated by God:

“... they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger. Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever [olam, for the age].” • Ezekiel 43:8–9

The evil kings and others in Jerusalem were consumed by God’s anger. This was done by the invasion of the Babylonian army in successive attacks, mass death in Jerusalem, and exile for thousands in the city. God had no grievance with the good and righteous kings of Judah. Once the carcasses of the evil kings were removed from His presence, away from His sanctuary, God says He shall “dwell in the midst of them” for the age, meaning to the end of the age.

David, Solomon and their families were buried underground in the chambers “made” for David by God close to the Temple sanctuary. The evil kings of Judah were buried in above ground structures. It was the “carcasses” of the evil kings and their sepulchers that were removed in response to God’s command (Ezekiel 43:9) not the sepulchers of David that were deep in bedrock. When Simon the Hasmonean cut down Zion and the Temple in fulfillment of Isaiah chapters 25 to 35, he also moved “the carcasses of their kings.” Perhaps the earthquake that occurred (Isaiah 29:2–6) that destroyed a portion of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem, as Dr. Martin believed, caused Simon to decide, with support of the religious leaders and the people, to cut the remains of Zion down to bedrock. 26 The earthquake might have prevented Simon from entering and moving David’s sepulcher, although Simon’s son, John Hyrcanus, was able to enter the Tomb and remove treasure (as we shall see below).

These structures were turned into “high places” where the most foul evils was committed and had some sort of defiling abominations that were done and performed involving carcasses and whoredom. 27 Idolatry and whoredom (ritual sexuality) have always been part of pagan religious practice. Human depravity being what it is, and given God’s extremely strong reaction to these structures, it is not outrageous to suppose that these sepulchers had some ritual sexuality performed that involved the dead (“abominations that they have committed ... their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings”). While it is unpleasant to think about such things, God’s reaction in Ezekiel 43:7–9 has these things in mind. Read all of Jeremiah 19:1–15. The same kind of activity spoken against in Ezekiel is found there:

“And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, shall be defiled as the place of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink offerings unto other gods.”

• Jeremiah 19:13

There was only one king of Judah at any one time. In prior days they did their defilements in the valley of Tophet, now they do it openly in Jerusalem on the rooftops of houses and on the rooftops of “the houses of the kings of Judah.” This is referring to the houses or sepulchers of the kings where the people of Jerusalem committed their evils — in the cemetery of the kings.

Those acts include human sacrifice (Jeremiah 19:4–5, God’s punishment, verse 9). These above ground sepulchers were moved during the time of Simon the Hasmonean when he demolished and moved all the buildings above bedrock.

Which Wall?

It is obvious to ask the question, which wall separated the Sanctuary of the Temple from the Tombs (“carcasses”) of the kings of Judah referred to by 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 Sanctuary. Great care was taken to ensure that 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 3.2

The Temple of Solomon was 150 feet wide (north to south) and 500 feet long (east to west) (Josephus, Against Apion 1.198). Simon doubled the dimensions by expanding the Sanctuary to the north and to the west, and added a porch. Herod doubled 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. 28

The wall that was not moved but merely lengthened was the southern wall. The eastern wall did not move either; it was already “into” the Kedron Valley and could go no further. The placement of that wall was not changed because the Tombs of David were located on the other side 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 is a mirror image of the 3:15–16 passage. 29 Putting these verses together shows there is no doubt that the “house of David” equates with the “graves of David” in these two passages written 12 years apart. The same scene is being described from two different perspectives (Young’s Literal Translation): Nehemiah 3:15–16 Nehemiah 12:37 (12 yrs later)

“The gate of the fountain has Shallum ..., strengthened: ... and unto the steps that are going down from the city of David. After him has Nehemiah ..., strengthened, unto over-against the graves of David.” “... by the gate of the fountain, ... they have gone up by the steps of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, beyond

the house of David, and unto the water gate eastward.”

“Graves of David” = “house of David.” This fits with Zechariah chapter 12 above which contrasts David with “him who they have pierced” which was Jesus (Zechariah 12:10, John 19:37).

House of David in Zechariah?

The last 6 chapters of Zechariah were prophecies given by Jeremiah, even though it is found in the Book of Zechariah. 30 Zechariah chapters 12–14 is a single continuous prophecy. Chapter 12 tells Israel's future victory over its enemies and then mourning over the one pierced. Chapter 13 tells about 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. In these three chapters of Zechariah there is a recurring phrase, "in that day" that 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 find that Jerusalem shall become a problem to "all the people round about" so that 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 does:

"The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah."

• Zechariah 12:7

First notice that the tents of Judah will be saved first, then the "house of David" is counterposed, again, with the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Most commentaries tell you that 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 that house of David:

"In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."

• Zechariah 12:8–9

In the future the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be defended (somehow) by God who will make even the weakest will seem like King David at the height of his power, that is, almost invincible. The next sentence about the "house of David" seems to inflate that power of that "house" to outrageous proportions. Yet it all makes sense if the "house of David" is a physical structure having something inside it so wondrous that people will think God Himself is communicating with them, as if God's personal messenger has come to them, 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). Something about the "house of David" will be involved to make the "inhabitants of Jerusalem" be protected and have God 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 19:34, 27 and Revelation 1:7:

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they [the inhabitants] shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.”

• Zechariah 12:10–11

In the following verse it is impossible to claim that “house of David” refers to anything but a group of people just like the other groups. However, the grouping is peculiar ...

“And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart;

All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.”

• Zechariah 12:12–14

Some facts must be explained at this point. 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. Shimei was a common name among those descended from Levi, but the closest is a grandson. If these four groups would be buried in the Tombs, different chambers for each family group, this obscure verse would make a great deal of sense. The next verse:

“In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.”

• Zechariah 13:1–2

Do groups of people have fountains or springs opened to them? Do structures have fountains opened 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 are healing. To ignore them is a great evil. (Remember that Jeremiah also wrote the Zechariah passages we just considered):

“For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”

• Jeremiah 2:13

Sepulchers of David in Josephus

Josephus tells of an event that took place during the reign of John Hyrcanus, King of Judah, son and heir of Simon the Hasmonean. Hyrcanus “opened one room of David’s sepulchre, and took out three thousand talents” (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 7:393). Josephus indicates there are more rooms than the one room Hyrcanus entered and took treasure from. Elsewhere Josephus gives a bit more information: “But Hyrcanus opened the sepulchre 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 that there were probably more riches in other rooms of David's sepulcher, and indeed that was the case. The location of the sepulcher of David was known to John Hyrcanus, and also 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 sepulchre, 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 sepulchre 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 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 sepulchre, 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 no money. Josephus specifically says that Hyrcanus and Herod were both unsuccessful getting to the bodies of David and Solomon, but implies that the bodies were there. Indeed we shall see below that David's body was indeed in the Tomb. Josephus has 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 of the Jews 7:394

The Greek word "money" in these two passages frequently means simply possessions or wealth. In Antiquities 16:180 it says Herod found no money, and 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 so far as we know. 31 Although the bodies (plural) of David and Solomon and others were unattainable to both Hyrcanus and Herod, they expected to find the bodies. Remember 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 sepulchre, and that at great expense also.”

• Antiquities of the Jews 16:182

The “propitiatory monument” that Herod constructed would not have been placed at a newly moved tomb, but it makes sense that the monument would be at “the mouth of the sepulchre” of a cave-like structure.

I propose 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.

David and Jesus

King David and Jesus were associated by the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost after Jesus ascension. Speaking from Jerusalem Peter writes.

“I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. ...

For David ascended not into the heavens: but he [David] said himself, ‘The Lord said unto my Lord, “Sit you on my right hand, till I make your enemies the footstool of your feet”’.

• Acts 2:29, 34–35

(quoting from Psalm 110)

Reading the text of Acts 2:29 critically, Peter knew where David’s tomb was, it seems 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. That phrase “his tomb is still with us unto this day” is meaningful if one remembers that many of the tombs of the kings of Judah were moved by Simon the Hasmonean. Peter is saying that David’s tomb was not put 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:

“And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, ‘I will give you the sure mercies of David [Psalm 55:3].’ Wherefore he says also in another psalm, ‘You shall not suffer your Holy One to see corruption [Psalm 16:16].’ For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.” • Acts 13:34–37

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 that prophecy was fulfilled by Jesus at His crucifixion (John 19:37).

Rabbi Akiba (b.40 C.E. 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 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

First notice what Rabbi Akiba was told. He was told about “the sepulchers of the house of David.” It is easy to see how “house of David” could come to mean the “sepulchers of David.” Second, note that there was a tunnel of uncleanness close to the sepulchres 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 two sepulchers. That means that according to this author, who wrote after the destruction of the Temple, the expectation was that the bodies of David’s family and Huldah the prophetess should still be inside intact sepulchers. This means that the Romans did not enter the sepulchers, even though Josephus, a friend to Rome, apparently knew where the sepulchers were. That means that the Romans, with all the time and resources in the world after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., were not able to access those sepulchers.

Chain of Evidence

Remember from Ezekiel 43:8–9 that the carcasses of the kings had just a wall of separation between them and the sanctuary of the Temple. I showed that was the south wall of the sanctuary. Most all of the sepulchers were moved by Simon the Hasmonean as per Rabbi Akiba. Two groups of sepulchers were not moved. Those were the sepulchers of the house of David and the sepulchers 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 significant location was the sepulcher of Huldah, just where it should be located.

“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 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’ [Zechariah 13:1].”

• Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 77b–78a 32

Ezekiel 43:7–9 gave the final key to the location of the sepulchers of David, the “house of David.” Everything fit into place with that piece of the puzzle. After all, who would have the closest, best location for their sepulcher? David would have. After all, God “made” David’s sepulcher for him and probably all of the chambers for David’s family, which David then had craftsmen “finish.” David’s tomb would have been the best location, chosen by God, decades before the Temple was constructed and even before Solomon was born. It is not by chance that, with God facing east from the Temple, if David’s sepulcher was to the south, then David would be at God’s right hand, awaiting the resurrection from the dead (Psalm 110:1, Matthew 22:42; Acts 2:34–35).

- 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 are up high on the hill (Isaiah 22:22, Ezekiel 43:7–9), but in the bedrock.
- There are several chambers in the sepulchers (2 Chronicles and Josephus).
- They are on the other side 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 C.E. (apostle Peter) and soon after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. (R. Akiba).
- 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).

Speculations: What Could Be in the Tombs?

Josephus mentions silver, other money or valuables, gilded furniture, and “precious goods” (Antiquities 16:181) in the sepulcher of David, along with the bodies. There is good reason to believe there might be other valuable items inside as well. Let us examine these and other possibilities of what might be in the Tombs. The possibilities are fascinating but keep in mind that they are speculative.

Gold and Silver?

The raw materials that David gathered as King of Israel and Judah for the Temple are discussed in 1 Chronicles 29:2. David contributed a substantial quantity of his own personal wealth to the project (verses 29:3–5). He then challenged the leaders of Israel to contribute materials for the Temple, and they responded generously (verses 29:5–8). Finally the people gave an unspecified amount (verse 29:9). According to the Jewish historian Josephus, King David collected for God's Temple as much as 10,000 talents of gold and 100,000 talents of silver (Antiquities of the Jews 7.340), and that is at a conservative understanding of 48 pounds per talent. Solomon did not use all that gold and silver. A great deal of it was buried with David, as Josephus relates:

“He [David] also left behind him greater wealth than any other king, either of the Hebrews or of other nations, ever did. ... moreover he [David] had great and immense wealth buried with him, the vastness of which may be easily conjectured at by what I shall now say; for a 1,300 years afterward, Hyrcanus the High Priest, when he was besieged by Antiochus, ... opened one room of David's sepulchre, and took out 3,000 talents, and gave part of that sum to Antiochus.”

- Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 7:391–392

David was buried with more wealth than any other king in history, up to that time. Hyrcanus took out 3,000 talents of silver (again, at 48 pounds per talent). Herod the Great also took “treasure” from the Tomb of David, although he did not reach the chamber with the bodies (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 7:394). There was much more still in the Tomb. Analysis done by Gary Arvidson shows there should be a considerable amount of gold and silver remaining in the Tomb of David, perhaps billions of dollars worth. ³³ Everyone should understand, however, that the gold and silver is YHWH's, given through David, and it would be the property of the government of Israel. However, there would be no possibility or concern about the tomb being raided by poachers. Hyrcanus and Herod both failed to reach the bodies, and they had the resources of their empires at their disposal.

The Tabernacle of David?

David constructed a Tabernacle to house the Ark of the Covenant (brought from the town of Baale, 2 Samuel 6:2, 17) until the Temple would be built. The Tabernacle was constructed in Zion, the City of David (2 Chronicles 5:2), down by the Gihon Springs (1 Kings 1:33–45). Services and sacrifices were conducted there by David and the Levites. There is a messianic prophecy about this tabernacle and the throne in the Book of Isaiah:

“And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.”

- Isaiah 16:5

All are present: Zion, a throne, the Tabernacle of David, judgment and righteous. A contemporary, the prophet Amos, also prophesied during the time of King Uzziah of Judah about the Tabernacle of David:

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old [during David’s time]. That they may possess the remnant of Edom [adam, mankind], 34 and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, says the Lord that does this.”

- Amos 9:11–12

“In that day” refers to the time before the Second Coming of Christ. This is what James, the brother of Jesus, believed when he quoted Amos 9:11–12 in the Book of Acts. This prophetic verse came to James’ mind when the council met in Jerusalem about requirements for Gentile believers from Paul’s missions to present the Gospel (under New Covenant authority) to the Gentiles, James quoted Amos 9:11–12:

“After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men [anthropos] might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, says the Lord, who does all these things.”

- Acts 15:16–17

It is not said that the Tabernacle of Moses would be reconstructed, but that the tabernacle of David would be raised again. The Tabernacle of David was constructed before the Temple was built, and lasted until the Temple was completed and dedicated by Solomon. Note also that the result of this rebuilding of the Tabernacle, rebuilding of the ruins, and the setting up all occurs, the Gentiles will seek after YHWH.

The question arises, after the Temple was built, what happened to the physical Tabernacle of David? It was taken down, certainly, but how can it be rebuilt? Is the Tabernacle of David folded up and placed within David’s Tomb? If so, it seems impossible, under normal circumstances, that it would be usable again, but the prophecies seem to say that something called the Tabernacle of David will be built again. 35

Physical “Throne of David”?

David’s son Solomon sat on the throne of David: “Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly” (1 Kings 2:12). There is no doubt he did this literally (1 Kings 2:19). Solomon performed this act to show his physical occupation of the

chair, the throne, but also to show that Solomon ruled in place of David. Later Solomon had his own physical throne constructed. He used it instead of David's throne. The throne is described in detail:

"Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold. The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind: and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays. And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom."

• 1 Kings 10:18–20

Solomon put his throne in his palace and built a raised porch to put the throne upon (1 Kings 7:1–7). The question must be asked: if Solomon had a new physical throne built for himself, with great glory and splendor, what then was done with David's physical throne? Would it have been destroyed? Would it have been thrown in the trash? Would it have been used like any other chair? No. David's physical throne likely would have been put in David's "house," his Tomb. A psalm of David included into the Book of Psalms by Hezekiah, Psalm 122, specifically states that there are multiple "thrones" of the house of David.

"I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.' ... For there are set thrones [plural] of judgment, the thrones [plural] of the house of David."

• Psalm 122:1, 5

That throne is in the House of David. It is within the sepulcher of David.

Read all of Psalm 122 where there is an interconnection of "the House of the Lord" (verses 1, 9); the "gates" (verse 2), "walls" (verse 7), and "palaces" (verse 7) of the City of Jerusalem (verses 3, 6); and "the thrones of the House of David" which are "thrones of judgment" (verse 5). All are physical structures. All are contained within the city of Jerusalem "as a city that is compact together" (verse 3). While "thrones" is plural in both occurrences of the word, the usage may be a plural of majesty, indicating the one seated on that throne has many dominions. There is also the intriguing verse:

"And king Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the Lord for ever [olam, for the age]."

• 1 Kings 2:45

Christ shall sit on that throne of David as prophesied in Isaiah, just as the angel told Mary: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: ... Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever [olam, for the age]." • Isaiah 9:6–7

"And, behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever [aion, for the age]; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

• Luke 1:31–33

The Bodies of David, Bathsheba, Solomon, et al.?

If the body of King David was present within the Tomb, forensic scientists could show the world, using computer modeling, a very close approximation of what King David of Israel looked like. We would be able to put a face to the bones in the Tombs. (Of course, you and I will meet David face to face soon in the resurrection.)

It might be possible to obtain DNA samples from David's body. If the bodies of David, Bathsheba, and Solomon are present (or other family of David), then it is possible that the entire DNA structure of the Davidic kingly line could be determined. That would mean that any Jewish male could test his DNA to see if he were directly descended from King David. If so, that person (or persons) may in fact be heir to the throne of Judah.

In addition, David and Solomon are two of the last twelve prophets of Islam. Such a find would be considered by Muslims as highly significant and miraculous. Many would feel compelled to read everything that David and Solomon wrote. More importantly, they would inevitably make the associations between David and Jesus throughout the New Testament. This could lead to many accepting Jesus as their Messiah and Savior, especially to those in Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:10–11):

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.”

• Zechariah 12:10–11

“For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, ‘A bone of him shall not be broken.’ And again another scripture says, ‘They shall look on him whom they pierced.’” • John 19:36–37, citing Zechariah 12:10

Writings?

The discovery of written documents, whether on tablets or more perishable material, is the greatest aspiration of every archaeologist. Any find of written documents from the time of King David contained within the Tombs would be a discovery of the highest order. Very few written documents of any size from ancient Palestine exist anywhere, outside of those preserved in the Holy Scriptures. A major find of documents would increase considerably our vocabulary of ancient Hebrew. There are a surprising number of Hebrew words in Scripture that occur only once. When that is the case, translators of the Old Testament simply have insufficient context to determine the true meaning of those once-used words. This is because the meaning of a word is determined by the words around it. The more words occur, the more context there is to determine the precise meaning of a word. Those translations of once-used words are speculative at best, and may be completely wrong, even when hints and suggestions that can be gleaned from later Jewish writings and the Greek Old Testament (the LXX). These hints were themselves written sometimes a thousand years after the original was written. Job and the Song of Songs have the largest number of words used only once in Scripture. This means that portions of the texts of those books may be misinterpreted.

Writings found within the Tomb of David would increase and perhaps multiply our understanding of ancient Hebrew, and ultimately the meaning of important Scriptures, particularly prophetic Scriptures. God communicates to His people through His word and it is important — especially in the decades before Christ returns — that we understand His words and His message. Let us inquire about the possible writings that may be in the Tombs of King David.

Psalms of David?

The Psalms of David were important to the life of Israel and to the Temple. David himself composed much of the prose of the Psalms. Many of the Psalms were set to music that he may have written, and he established the procedures for the music for the Temple rituals, particularly for the feast days when Israel would gather. These were followed by Solomon.

Would the original compositions of those Psalms and procedures be discarded? Perhaps they were kept in the Temple, but just maybe they were buried with the composer and writer. We know that music was very important to David. There may be instruments and documents that give clues help us understand the music of the ancient Israelite kingdom, information that could be useful in the Temple to be constructed before Christ's return.

Songs of Solomon?

If Solomon is buried with David as Josephus indicates, and if there are written documents in with the Tombs of David, then there likely will be writings of Solomon also.

“And he spoke three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springs out of the wall: he spoke also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.”

• 1 Kings 4:32–33

Of Solomon's 3,000 proverbs, not all are contained in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Of the 1,005 songs he is reported to have written, we have only one (Song of Songs 1:1). Solomon's proverbs, songs, and writings of natural observation, that today we call science, might also be in the Tombs with Solomon.

The “Pattern” of the Temple?

David was given a pattern of the Temple by God Himself. That pattern was given in writing. Again, refer to my article “The Pattern of the Temple” at <http://www.askelm.com/temple/t031102.htm>.

“All this,’ said David, ‘the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.’”

• 1 Chronicles 28:19

That writing was the pattern of the Temple as described in 1 Chronicles 28:11–19. What happened to that pattern after the Temple was constructed by Solomon? What would you do with an object given to Israel by God Himself, in His own handwriting?

Such a document similar in importance to the tables of stone given to Moses. They also were written by the hand of God (Exodus 24:12, 31:18, 32:15–16; Deuteronomy 5:22; Hebrews 8:5),

and placed within the Ark of the Covenant. Is it reasonable to think that the “pattern” of the Temple would have been buried with the man who received it, after its usefulness was done?

The impact of this discovery of the pattern of the Temple (whatever that “pattern” might be), would be incredible, even for those who would not believe it was written by God Himself. It would give to scholars and all believers in God important details — in writing — about the Temple and the Israelite kingdom.

Court Histories and Records?

In King David’s court detailed records were kept by officials of David’s kingdom (Solomon’s also 36). The existence of those detailed records is recorded for us in Scripture. The books are named with titles and the subjects within them are indicated. I have set out the verse in an outline manner for clarity:

“Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book [history] of Samuel the seer, and in the book [history] of Nathan the prophet, and in the book [history] of Gad the seer, With all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries.”

• 1 Chronicles 29:29–30

The Hebrew term *dabar* in Hebrew means “word,” but it also can mean “book” and even “history,” and it is translated that way in many versions. Certainly a compiled set of records could be called by either of the latter terms. The books by the three authors contain information about David’s acts during his 40 years reign as king. They also tell about the great deeds, (“his might”) that he did whether personally or as the leader of Israel and Judah, probably during his entire life. For example, the song about Saul and David may be contained in those writings (1 Samuel 18:6–7).

The books also relate about what happened when (“the time that went”) in history. This likely means that the accounts in the books give the events in sequence and how those events relate to other kingdoms, nations, and peoples. This means that chronologies of ancient history up to the death of King David could be understood with precision. This is important because little is known outside of Scripture about the world outside Israel and Judah during this period of the United Kingdom. This has implications for the kingdoms of Hatti (the Hittites), Assyria, and even Babylon which were not yet powerful.

Egyptian history could be coordinated with the Bible. That is not the case at present. As Dr. Martin wrote in his 1981 article “The Importance of Egyptian History”:

“The way to come to a proper knowledge of the history of Egypt, in my view, is to first of all to be certain that we understand what was happening in Palestine, in the land of Canaan from the time of the flood of Noah right on through until historical times come along which we can be pretty well assured of. If you can understand the history of central Palestine, and Isaiah said Israel is placed in the middle of everything, then we should be able to understand what is happening on the flanks of Israel.” 37

The mention in such documents of the Hebrew name of just one pharaoh (and there should be several mentioned) that could be identified from the Egyptian dynastic lists would revolutionize

Egyptian and all of ancient history. At present there is a 400 to 600 year mismatch between biblical history and Egyptian history that has evaded any attempts to reconcile the two, according to accepted traditional scholarship. It is my belief that “suddenly” the misunderstood Egyptian chronology and history would coordinate positively to the biblical record. Ancient history would suddenly “make sense” to scholars around the world. Events in one kingdom could be understood as having an impact upon another kingdom. A drought in one place would have an impact upon another place.

Finding these books within the Tomb of David would be a major breakthrough in understanding what the events in Palestine at that period of history. Even more important, as we approach the end times, it is vital that we have an accurate grasp of ancient history, to better understand the prophecies in the Bible in the time of David. Such knowledge would be informative for the great and sweeping prophecies that come after David. Such a discovery would show that the Bible is the basis for history of the ancient world, and that it is the standard to which all historical writings of the ancient world must compare. The Bible is accurate.

David’s Book of the Law

Finally, we come to the most amazing possible discovery of all. A passage in Deuteronomy chapter 17 talks about the Torah being copied (written down) by each new king:

“When he [a new king] sits upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law [torah] in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: ... to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, 38 he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.”

- Deuteronomy 17:18–20

This means the first five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. It is conjecture whether this unbelievably valuable writing is even in the Tomb of David, but there is reason for the speculation: If each new king was instructed to write out a copy of the law, can we expect that such a command would be followed by the righteous kings of Judah? Yes. Would David have followed this command of Deuteronomy? Again the answer is yes. David took the Law of the Lord very seriously 39 :

“Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law does he meditate day and night.”

- Psalm 1:1–2

“The law [torah] of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.”

- Psalm 19:7–8

I ask the question: If David did copy the Law given to him by “the priests, the Levites” (cf. Deuteronomy 31:9, 25–26), what happened to that copy after David died? Would it have been thrown in the trash? Or, just maybe, would that copy of the Law that David loved, written by David himself, be placed with his body in the “house” made by God — waiting — within the Tomb of David to be discovered?

The Mishnah (the book of Jewish oral tradition and ritual, written down post-70 C.E.) states that no Scriptures can be thrown away or burned, they must be stored or hidden (Mishnah Shabbath 9.6, 16.1). Does this tradition date far back to David’s time, or did it even originate with David? We cannot know. However, burial of the king’s personal copy of the Law would be an excellent solution.

The Importance of this Discovery

If David’s personal copy of the Law would be in the Tomb of David, it would be the single most remarkable historical event this side of the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Can you imagine the impact on the world? The discovery of a genuine copy of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy all written in the old Hebrew text. 40 And the words would be written in King David’s own hand.

I would think such a document would be “self authenticating,” although this too is speculation. David would be proud of his work and like anyone he would, in some manner, “sign” or identify his book to indicate that it was his copy of the Torah.

Keep in mind that such a document would have been written some 200 years before Elijah the Prophet was born, and even longer before Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and all of the Minor Prophets appeared on the scene. It might have been written before Solomon was born. The world would recognize and pay attention to the fact that the Law would be coming forth “out of Zion” (Isaiah 2:3, Micah 4:2). Most all Jews, Christians, and Muslims would rejoice at such a discovery! It could lead directly to the prophesied conversion of Israel beginning at Jerusalem (Zechariah chapters 12–14).

The Law out of Zion

We can now begin to understand this Zechariah passage:

“In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.”

• Zechariah 12:8–9

A discovery of a “genuine” Book of the Law would have a tremendous emotional impact upon the entire world, but particularly for those in Jerusalem, and the entire discovery would be due to God’s sovereign act!

“And many people shall go and say, ‘Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.’”

- Isaiah 2:3 and Micah 4:2

Did you catch that? The Law will go forth “out of Zion,” while the Word of the Lord comes from Jerusalem. Isaiah and Micah were contemporaries and this was a prophecy for a time future to them. As Christians we understand that this prophecy was fulfilled through Christ, who was the Word of God and the fulfillment of God’s law. But look at verses that say similar things, keeping in mind that Isaiah 2:3 and Micah 4:2 and these other verses deal with Israel and not Gentiles: Deuteronomy 6:1; Isaiah 51:4; Jeremiah 31:6, 50:4–5; Zechariah 8:20–23, Psalm 25:8–9; Luke 24:27.

Most people read the phrase “the house of David shall be as God,” and “as the angel of the Lord before them” and believe it refers to a situation similar to Joshua 23:10 where it is promised that if Israel is faithful to God, He shall assist them in their battles and “one of you shall chase a thousand.” However, Zechariah 12:8–9 specifically states that God “will seek to destroy all the nations,” not the House of David or the inhabitants of Jerusalem or the people of Israel.

“In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel [a messenger] of the Lord before them [the inhabitants].”

- Zechariah 12:8

If we understand the House of David to be a physical structure, the sepulchers of David, and if the sepulchers can be located, and if the Torah would be within the sepulchers, then it is easy to understand how “the House of David shall be as God, as the angel [a messenger] of the Lord before them.”

Many would consider the amazing discovery of the Tombs of David as a miraculous act of God, and they would be correct! Many would feel that God was sending them a message to change their lives, that He will soon be active in the world, and that God is revealing His Word to them after 3,000 years, starting with the Law of Moses. The contents of the House of David might contain such wondrous things (primarily writings confirming Scripture) that the world would suddenly seek God and a no-nonsense, truthful Gospel preached about Him. No one would doubt the authenticity of artifacts within the Tomb. Those most in awe would be the archaeologists, scientists, and scholars themselves! An original copy of the Law of Moses buried for 3,000 years waiting to be discovered intact with David’s body, which would be preserved but with corruption (Acts 13:36).

A Torah in the ancient Hebrew letters could be easily compared to the current text of the Torah that the Jews use today. The world will be able to judge whether the Jews, as keepers of the oracles of God (Deuteronomy 4:8; Acts 7:38; Romans 3:2), have faithfully carried out that commission. What interesting discussions those would be! Imagine Scripture being discussed seriously over every major media! Thousands of textual and biblical scholars (Jew and Gentile) would leap to the task of analysis.

Problems with this Discovery

Of course, discipline would 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 that may be in the Tombs must not supersede in our minds the canonical Scripture as we have today. Even though such a discovery would be seen as a miracle from God, such works would be for historical purposes and not to be considered Scripture. Most likely the Mystery would be diminished and discarded by most people in preference to following the Torah, forgetting that Christ has fulfilled all of those requirements.

The Gospel at the Time of the End

Often the small things are misplaced. It is interesting that one small fact has been forgotten by most students of prophecy. The preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God in the period before Christ’s Second Coming shall follow the same process as it did in the 1st century C.E. The final and future preaching of the Gospel will not begin in America, or England, or continental Europe. It will not begin from the evangelical churches of those nations or churches from East Asia or Africa. The final preaching of the Gospel at the end of the age shall begin where it began in the time of the apostles — from Jerusalem:

“And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the world [aion, the age]?’” ... ?And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

- Matthew 24:3, 14

“Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled? ... And the gospel must first be published among all nations.”

- Mark 13:4, 10

These verses are well understood. But where did it all begin? Where did the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom begin? At the time of the apostles, the preaching of repentance and remission of sins began from Jerusalem, and then expanded to the entire world. This is what Christ told the apostles immediately before His ascension into heaven:

“And said unto them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.’”

- Luke 24:46–48

“But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me both [1] in Jerusalem, and [2] in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and [3] unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

- Acts 1:8

It makes sense, of course, because Jerusalem is where the preaching should begin. That is where the apostles were located. They were instructed to remain in Jerusalem to receive the

Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49–53; Acts 1:4–5), and they did so. The preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God began from Jerusalem after the grace of God’s Holy Spirit fell upon the apostles and many, many of the people.

The final preaching of repentance and remission of sins shall also begin from Jerusalem. Remember that the law shall proceed from Jerusalem: “... for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Micah 4:2), and “for out of [from] Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3), exactly from where the apostles began their ministry after that most important Pentecost of 30 C.E.

Here is an accurate description from Hosea of Israel’s situation at our present moment: “For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim [this describes Israel today]:

Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and [seek] David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.”

- Hosea 3:4–5

The Gospel that will be preached shall proceed from Jerusalem shall be accomplished mostly by Jews who will accept Jesus as their Messiah, the Christ.

- The children of Israel shall return.
- The children of Israel shall seek the Lord their God.
- The children of Israel shall seek David their king.
- But through God’s grace, the children of Israel shall find Jesus their Messiah!

Our job will be to ensure that they understand and have available to them the biblical knowledge of the reconciliation of all to the Father and Christ, and most importantly that they understand the Mystery of God as revealed to Paul and others in 63 C.E. This will be the toughest part because remember, most all believers in the 1st century rejected the Mystery, and even rejected the apostle Paul himself (2 Timothy 1:15).

Although I would like to participate in the process of discovery (as we all would), ego aside, in the end it does not matter who “discovers” what God has hidden to be revealed at the proper time (Isaiah 22:22). As Solomon wrote (Proverbs 25:1):

“It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter.”

- Proverbs 25:2

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

- Deuteronomy 29:29

David Sielaff, October 2006

1 Portland, OR: ASK Publications, 2000.

2 Referencing Nehemiah 3:15–16.

3 Martin, Temples Jerusalem Forgot, p. 343–344.

4 See Dr. Martin’s article “The Coming Revolution in Knowledge” at

<http://www.askelm.com/prophecy/p060301.htm>, and two articles by me “The Restitution of All Things, What to Expect” at <http://www.askelm.com/news/n030621.htm> and “Changes and the Knowledge Revolution” at <http://www.askelm.com/news/n060301.htm>.

5 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” in *Biblica*, Vol. 85 (2004), pp. 245–254. This entire article is available online at <http://www.bsw.org/project/biblica/bibl85/Ani08.html>.

6 Yeivin cites Jeremiah 8:1ff and 22:18ff. It was also important in ancient times the burial sites be maintained. This is made clear when Nehemiah approached the King of Persia with a special request “the place of my fathers’ sepulchres, lies waste, . . . send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers’ sepulchres, that I may build it” (Nehemiah 2:3, 5).

7 See my article “A Name for the Temple of God” at

<http://www.askelm.com/news/n020921.htm>. The Temple was where God placed His name. In Psalm 132 the Psalmist (apparently not David), records David’s thinking about his desire to build a Temple.

8 Outside of 2 Samuel chapter 7 the phrase “House of David” does often refer to David’s descendants. See my article “House of David” at

<http://www.askelm.com/temple/t040801.htm>. Context determines how and where “House of David” is used, whether to mean a structure or descendants.

9 See my article “House of David,” and Lyle Eslinger, *House of David or House of God:*

Rhetoric of 2 Samuel 7, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series 164 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994). In communication with Professor Eslinger, he says that I have understood and used his analysis correctly, although in a surprising manner beyond what he foresaw when he wrote his technical analysis book on the single chapter of 2 Samuel 7. Professor Eslinger did not foresee that the “house” that God built for David might be a structure to last for the age of undetermined length. Even though David was a man after God’s own heart (1 Kings 11:38, 15:5; Acts 13:22), Eslinger puts forth the idea that David’s desire to build a Temple to YHWH was in part self serving and was intended to consolidate his rule, centralizing all aspects of power in Israel under David’s personal control.

Eslinger concludes this was God’s reason for rejecting David as builder of the Temple.

10 The Jewish historian Josephus tells us that there were “sepulchral caverns of the kings”(Jewish Wars 5.147). It is unclear which kings Josephus is referring to; they were likely some of the later Hasmonean kings.

11 Both the house and the kingdom (seed) will continue “unto the age” (2 Samuel 7:11–12). There is no reason to believe that the length of the “age” will be the same for both the house and the kingdom. Indeed we know that the kingdom ended with the Babylonian exile. The “house” of David continues to the present day as we shall see from additional and later Scripture. In fact, one could make an excellent case that three separate predictions “unto the age” are made in 2 Samuel chapter 7:

1. The house that God would build for David, verse 7:11. This structure would be the Tombs of David.

2. The seed of David’s descendents, verse 7:12. These would be the Kings of Judah (cf.

Psalm 132:11–12).

3. "... the throne of his kingdom," verse 7:13. This throne is occupied by the resurrected Christ today (Luke 1:32, citing Isaiah 9:7). It also refers to David's descendants who also occupied the "throne of David" between the time of David and Christ, as in Psalm 132:11–12; Jeremiah 17:25, 22:2–4, 30, 29:16, 33:17, 21, 36:30.

12 See 1 Chronicles 28:11–19 and my article "The Pattern of the Temple" at <http://www.askelm.com/temple/t031102.htm> regarding additional biblical evidence.

13 2 Samuel 7:18–29. David goes before God at the tabernacle that held the Ark of the Covenant. This was not the tabernacle of Moses, which was still at Gibeon (2 Chronicles 1:13). This was the tabernacle of David (2 Samuel 6:17; Isaiah 16:5; Amos 9:11–12; and Acts 15:16–17).

14 In 2 Samuel 7:11 God will "make" (asah, to do or make) a house for David. In 1 Chronicles 17:10 God will "build" (banah, to build) a house for David. God fulfilled His purpose. Compare 2 Samuel chapter 7 is 1 Chronicles 17:10–27 side by side.

15 An example of "finishing" a tomb would be King Tut's tomb, which was richly adorned with art and implements, including furniture. This is exactly what the Jewish historian Josephus tells us was inside David's Tomb.

16 An analysis of Psalm 30 is my article "The House of David" at <http://www.askelm.com/temple/t040801.htm>. Some think that "house" in Psalm 30 refers to the Temple and that this Psalm is David's posthumous dedication to it. This is not possible. The topics of Psalm 30 are death, burial, the pit, the grave, glory and implied resurrection, very unlikely topics for a joyous dedication of a Temple. However, those topics they fit perfectly if the "house" is a sepulcher.

17 Basically the Hebrew word "house" (bayeth or beyt) means one of two things. First, it can indicate a structure, a physical construction of some kind. A tomb or sepulcher would fit within this meaning of "house." Second, it can mean descendants, such as the House of Jacob referring to Jacob's descendants. "House of David" is used to convey both meanings in different contexts.

18 Shebna held a high position in the court of King Hezekiah of Judah. He was treasurer (or steward) in charge of the king's household. He was to be punished for his pride and crimes (Isaiah 22:17–19, which likely caused the situation described earlier in Isaiah 22:1–14).

Shebna was arrogantly constructing for himself a sepulcher worthy of a king.

19 Eliakim assumed all Shebna's authority and accouterments that accompany that role, administering the government for Hezekiah, much like Joseph administered Egypt for Pharaoh. Eliakim was to be beneficent, like a father to those who live in Jerusalem and Judah.

The name "Eliakim" means "God raises" or "God sets up." This and other factors show that Isaiah 22:22 has a direct messianic reference as used in Revelation 3:7 where verse 22:22 is almost directly quoted, with an important modification, in the message to the ekklesia of Philadelphia where it refers specifically to Christ.

20 Why is the phrase "house of" missing? Perhaps because the "house of" portion may no longer be relevant when the prophecy of Revelation 3:7 is fulfilled. At that time the words,

“the house of” David may already have been discovered. The “key of David” refers to the work of Christ to open and close a door for salvation (Revelation 3:7–8).

21 Here is a list of burials 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 “sepulchres of the kings,” Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 8.264). Abijam (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 (“buried in the king’s sepulchres at Jerusalem,” Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 9.166);. 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.

22 In fact, the “chiefest” is rendered by several translations by “highest” or “in the ascent” of the sepulchres of the son of David. After Hezekiah none of the kings of Judah were buried in the City of David. See Yeivin, “Sepulchres of the Kings,” p. 33 and Na’aman, “Death Formulae,” p. 245: “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 complete list of the sons of David is in 1 Chronicles 3:1–9.

23 Here again we have reference to the place of the dead being in “high places” (Ezekiel 43:7) just like Shebna sought to construct for himself in Isaiah 22:16. Carcasses associated with high places are also referred to in Leviticus 26:30, indicating idolatry.

24 Some might wonder about the use of the phrases “children of Israel” and “house of Israel” in verse 7 regarding God’s throne and presence. The kingdom of Israel ceased to exist and was exiled from their land over 120+ years before Ezekiel had this vision. The reference is not to the northern Kingdom of Israel. God never placed His presence in the northern kingdom or with the kings of Israel, who were buried in Samaria. However, God is speaking in this vision as ruler of greater Israel, meaning all of the 12 tribes. Most of the vision of Ezekiel chapters 40–48 refers to a time future to Ezekiel; only this small portion of Ezekiel 43:1–12 looks to the past. The exiles in Babylon represented all Israel.

25 The Hebrew word in this verse is most often translated “door” rather than “threshold,” although the latter term is properly descriptive. “Posts” is always translated thus in the King James Version and most other translations.

26 Martin, Temples Jerusalem Forgot, pp. 348–355.

27 God’s punishments fit the crimes. Read Leviticus 26:29–29. See particularly verses 29–30.

28 Martin, Temples Jerusalem Forgot, pp. 402–405.

29 I presented this in my “House of David” article, see note 8 above.³⁰ Matthew 27:9 and see “The Land of Israel in Prophecy” at <http://www.askelm.com/prophecy/p911201.htm>.

31 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 in Herod and in an attempt to do penance to God, he decided to glory God's Temple.

32 Cited in "Water Management in Herod's Temple"
at <http://www.askelm.com/temple/t0111113.htm>.

33 Gary Arvidson, *In Search of King David's Lost Tomb & Treasure*, 2nd edition (Kings Mountain, NC: Gary Arvidson, 2001).

34 This should actually not be translated Edom, but it should be translated adam, or mankind. We know this not only because the Greek Old Testament, the LXX, translates it so, but because James translates it as adam in Acts 15:17.

35 Could the Ark of the Covenant be within the Tombs of David? It seems unlikely because Jeremiah states that the Ark shall not be spoken of, come to mind, remembered, visited, or done with anymore. The people shall appeal to the throne of God (Jeremiah 3:16–17). See also the generally reliable history of 2 Maccabees 2:1–19 which states that Jeremiah buried the Ark.

36 Solomon had the same documentation prepared by his court officials: "And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?" (1 Kings 11:41). If Solomon is buried in the tombs of David, it is possible Solomon's records would be available also. After Solomon most every king, whether of Judah or Israel, has a formulaic statement like this: "Now the rest of the acts of [X], and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of [Judah or Israel]?"

37 At <http://www.askelm.com/prophecy/p030701.htm>.

38 During repairs made to the Temple during the reign of Josiah, King of Judah, a book of the law, a Torah, is discovered in the House of YHWH, the Temple, as told in 2 Kings 22:1–23:24. This discovery caused a repentance and a turn to righteousness in the kingdom of Judah by the people, the leaders, and the king. As a result God delayed His punishment upon Judah until the death of Josiah. By the nations and his repentance King Josiah did indeed "prolong his days in his kingdom." They would have been prolonged even more if Josiah had obeyed God more carefully.

39 We know David wrote a very private letter himself in 2 Samuel 11:14. We also know that David instructed the priests to "minister before the Ark continually" (1 Chronicles 16:37) in accordance with "all that is written in the law of the Lord" (1 Chronicles 16:40) after the Ark of the Covenant was moved to Jerusalem.

40 Remember that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet were changed by Ezra the priest upon the return of the Jews from Babylon. The Hebrew letters today are different from the ancient Hebrew letters that David would have written.