

## THE KEY OF DAVID

**“These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no-one can shut, and what he shuts no-one can open. (Rev 3:7)**

Everybody knows what a key is. That’s what you use to start the car or get into the house. In this passage, the One Who is Holy and True is said to hold the “key of David”. What does that mean? Why not say the key of Samuel, Saul, or Solomon? What was there about David that is “key” to understanding these words.

Our first step toward understanding this mystery is to recognize that these words in the book of Revelation are found first in the book of Isaiah. Isaiah informs us that Eliakim, son of Hilkiyah, was installed by God as the governor of the palace in Jerusalem. To make clear his absolute authority the Lord said: **“I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no-one can shut, and what he shuts no-one can open” (Isa 22:22)**. The meaning is obvious. Eliakim was in charge. He had the final word on what went on in the palace. When he opened a door it remained open until he decided otherwise, and vice versa.

Now we are getting somewhere. David is distinguished from other kings and prophets by his absolute authority and willingness to take control. He behaved differently, and did things that others would not dare to do. Perhaps it is fair to say that understanding David is itself a key.

Jesus made reference to David when His disciples were criticized for eating grain on the Sabbath. He said: **“Haven’t you read what David did?” (Matt. 12:3)**. As you know, DAVID DID THAT WHICH WAS NOT LAWFUL FOR HIM TO DO! This same story is repeated in Mark. 2, and Luke 6, and in each instance we are reminded that David did something which was not lawful for him to do. David dared to enter into the house of God, and to eat the consecrated bread. This was not lawful for him to do, but only for the priests. He further demonstrated his audacity by bringing the consecrated bread outside and sharing it with his companions.

This is absolutely remarkable! Nadab and Abihu were killed by God for making an offering God that was not lawful (Lev. 10:1 - 2). The men of Beth Shemesh died for looking into the Ark of the Covenant which was not lawful for them to do (1 Sam. 6:19). Uzzah died for daring to touch the Ark which was not lawful for him to do (2 Sam. 6:7). King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death because he did that which not lawful for him to do but only for the priests (2 Chron. 26:18 - 21). BUT DAVID DID THAT WHICH WAS NOT LAWFUL FOR HIM TO DO AND WAS NOT CONDEMNED. Jesus wanted us to consider what David did because David is “key” to understanding Christianity. There is something about “new wine” that is incompatible with “old wine skins”. Our minds need to be stretched in order to comprehend the mystery of Christ.

The audacity of David is also seen in other things that he “did”. Take, for example, the tent that David pitched for the Ark in Jerusalem. Moses specified that the Ark be placed in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle (Ex. 26:34; 40:21). Even though the Tabernacle was at Gibeon (1 Chron. 16:39), David dared to pitch a tent for it in Jerusalem (1 Chron. 15:1; 16:1). Further, he appointed Asaph and a great many of his associates to minister before the Ark on a daily basis (1 Chron. 16:37 - 38; 25:7). It was here that most of the Psalms were composed. From the time that the Tabernacle of David was constructed until the Temple was built by Solomon was approximately 40 years. David’s reign in Jerusalem was 33 years (2 Sam. 5:5), and it took Solomon seven years to complete the Temple (1 Ki. 6:38).

What David “did” in putting the Ark in a tent is made even more remarkable by the fact that Uzzah died because David did something with the Ark not prescribed in the Law of Moses (see 1 Chron. 13:10). David acknowledged his error before the priests (1 Chron. 15:13). Yet, as soon as the Ark arrived in Jerusalem David dared to do something else that was not prescribed in the Law of Moses. The Bible to this point had a lot to say about the Tabernacle of Moses, but nothing about the Tabernacle of David.