

HOUSE  
OF DAVID  
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GREG LAURIE

HOUSE  
— OF —  
DAVID

*A Devotional*

30 DAYS WITH THE MAN  
AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART



FOREWORD BY JON ERWIN

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GREG LAURIE

*with Larry Libby*

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DAVID  COOK®

*transforming lives together*

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*To my friend Jon Erwin:*

*Thanks for telling my life story and the story of the last great spiritual awakening, the Jesus Movement, in the film Jesus Revolution.*

*Thank you for envisioning this new series on the life of Israel's greatest king—David—and introducing him to a whole new generation that has only at best heard his name in passing.*

*Thank you for your vision to bring the highest-quality cinematic expressions of the greatest stories ever told found in the pages of Scripture.*

*May God bless you mightily in the years to come.*



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# — FOREWORD —

Life is made up of defining moments. I'm a filmmaker and storyteller by trade, so one defining moment for me, as for any filmmaker, is when I was given my first camera. It was an XL-2, and my dad bought it for me with money he didn't have. I was sixteen years old, and to this day it's the best gift I've ever received.

Two days after I unboxed the camera, we flew to Israel to make a documentary called *In the Steps of Jesus*. The Bible sprang to life for me for the first time. I could feel the history. I could see the stories. We stayed in the old city of Jerusalem and visited the tomb of David. It wasn't just the historical significance that struck me but the profound sense of connection to this character who embodied the original "hero's journey"—a warrior poet, a king, and an underdog; a man of profound contradictions, extraordinary accomplishments, and extraordinary mistakes. In the end, he was called a man after God's own heart.

The themes of the story instantly came alive: a young shepherd defeats a giant, becomes the second and most famous king of Israel, unites a kingdom, and pens songs that still echo centuries later. His story, full of great victories and personal struggles, deeply inspired me. For the last two decades, while making films like *American Underdog* and *Jesus Revolution*, I've dreamed of bringing his story to life.

Another defining moment in my life occurred on a beach in California called Pirates Cove. Barely five months after the theatrical release of *Jesus Revolution*, a true story based on a *Time* magazine cover article, I watched my friend and spiritual mentor, Pastor Greg Laurie, stand in the same waters he had fifty years before and baptize more than forty-five hundred new believers as another twenty thousand stood on the beach with me. We witnessed life imitating art in the same way that art had imitated life.

Most people were there because they had seen the movie and wanted to experience it for themselves. They wanted to live out an iconic scene in the film where people were baptized, which we filmed to closely match the iconic photography from the article. In that moment, standing on the beach, I saw with my own eyes the true purpose of my work: to inspire hope and restore faith in things worth believing in.

Pastor Greg is truly one of my favorite people. I'm deeply inspired by his teaching and writing. After fifty years of obedience in ministry, Pastor Greg has undoubtedly taught the life of David more than anyone, so I was excited to learn that he wanted to create a devotional inspired by the series *House of David*. Reading through this book made me feel like a biblical archeologist as he uncovers profound insights into these ancient texts, illuminating not just the psalms of David, written three thousand years ago, but also the spirit in which they were written—a spirit of unwavering faith amid life's trials. If David was a man after God's own heart, then Greg's devotional made me understand the heart of David.

David's psalms are profoundly personal prayers of lament, songs of praise, and declarations of trust from David to his God, each echoing the struggles and triumphs we all face. Somehow, Greg's ability to unpack these themes with clarity and compassion makes this book not just a study of Scripture but a guide for navigating our own spiritual journeys.

I think we are drawn to David's story because we all yearn for a “hero's journey” of our own. We all want to step into our destiny. We all want to play a role in a grand design beyond ourselves. So I hope that as you read this devotional and watch our series, you'll be inspired to choose a life of adventure instead of ease and step into a calling beyond yourself, just like David did when he slew the giant.

In these pages, written through decades of study and teaching, you will find not just commentary but an invitation to engage with the sacred text on a personal level, encouraging you to bring your own heart's cries to the Lord in the personal way David did. Thank you, Greg, for sharing your insights and for leading us into this deeper exploration. May this book be a beacon of hope and a catalyst for spiritual growth for all who read it.

Jon Erwin

# — INTRODUCTION —

Welcome to *House of David*, my friend.

The devotions in this book are thoughts I've had over the years about Israel's greatest king. They are adapted from my many sermons about this man after God's own heart. I hope you will love remembering his life and reading his beautiful and often anguished words and seeing how he always ended up in adoration of the Lord.

I am so thrilled that my friend Jon Erwin (who wrote and directed the film *Jesus Revolution*, which is about my wife, Cathe, and me) is directing a new cinematic series for Prime Video on the life of this amazing man, King David. Jon was able to make this happen through a new independent studio called Wonder Project.

I believe *House of David* will be a game-changer series that will introduce a whole new audience—numbering in the millions—to this paradoxical and powerful leader of the nation of Israel.

As I walked through the incredible sets for this series, including the palace of Saul and the boyhood home of David, I felt as though I had gone back in time.

The book you are holding is my own way of connecting you to the life and writings of David. I hope you will see that there is so much for us all to learn from him today.

David was a true believer. He loved the Lord with all his heart. And even after he sinned, he always turned back to the Lord again—which is what we should do as well. David experienced it all, from the highest highs to the lowest lows. He came from total obscurity, but his fame skyrocketed. A song written about him was such a hit that it even got some airtime in Philistia.

He was a shepherd, an outcast, a warrior, a musician, and a poet, and he became the greatest king Israel ever had.

But even more important than that, he was part of the most exclusive genealogy in all the world—the genealogy of Jesus.

Think of it! When Jesus walked this earth, He identified Himself as the Son of David. He could have said He was the son of Abraham or the son of Judah or even the son of Adam. But He chose to be identified with the youngest son of Jesse, as imperfect as David was. Jesus was referred to by this title sixteen times in the Gospels. When the blind beggar Bartimaeus heard that the Lord was passing by on the road to Jericho, he didn't yell, "Jesus of Nazareth, have mercy on me." No, he cried out to the Son of David, and the Son of David responded. (See Mark 10:46–52.)

David, however, was not only a shepherd, a warrior, and a great king, but he was also an adulterer, a murderer, and a liar. The Bible makes no attempt to airbrush his biography. We see him at the heights, and we hear his broken voice from the depths. But even in his brokenness and sorrow, he ministers to us. He brought us the blessing of Psalms 32 and 51, where he cries out to God for forgiveness and begs Him not to take away His Holy Spirit or withdraw His presence.

As we look at David's story, we see the real message. It's not really about the greatness of David. It's about the greatness and grace and kindness of God, who gave David a second chance to serve Him.

When I think of the house of David, one poignant story comes to mind.

After all the trials of his fugitive years, when David was firmly settled on the throne of Israel, he had a deep desire to build a temple for the Lord. He told Nathan the prophet, "Look,... I am living in a beautiful cedar palace, but the Ark of God is out there in a tent!" (2 Sam. 7:2).

David wanted to show his love and loyalty to God by building a house for Him. But it wasn't to be. Through Nathan, God told David, "Are you the one to build a house for me to live in? I have never lived in a house.... I have always moved from one place to another with a tent and a Tabernacle as my dwelling" (2 Sam. 7:5–6).

So it was a no, but a gentle no. And then something very tender happened. The Lord said in effect to David, "It won't be your job to build Me a house, but I am going to build *you* a house."

The Lord explained, "Furthermore, the LORD declares that he will make a house for you—a dynasty of kings! For when you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong. He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name" (2 Sam. 7:11–13).

I love what happened next. David went to the Lord's tent and "sat before the LORD." Overwhelmed, he said, "Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?" (2 Sam. 7:18).

It was the grace and kindness of God that established the house of David. And it is the same undeserved, unmerited favor that has established my house—and yours, if you belong to Him.

Someday in Heaven, I look forward to meeting David. I'm betting he has written quite a few new songs since he left the planet. But much more than that, I want to go for a walk with the Son of David.

And that will be best of all.

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# THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

*Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I have everything I need!*

Psalm 23:1 (TLB)

## *Inspired by Psalm 23*

We're all living in a crazy, chaotic world right now.

Someone might say, "Yes, but so did our parents, their parents, and *their* parents."

It's true of course. There has always been enough heartache and turmoil to go around on our fallen planet. Sadly, pandemics, toxic politics, and strife have been around from earth's earliest days.

Even so ... I can't help feeling that as the time draws near for our Lord's return, the very foundations of our world are being shaken as never before. Even if you're not a news junkie, you can't avoid feeling an unusual tension in the air. War around the globe, unprecedented violence in our streets, and totally insane, unexpected tears in our social fabric that our grandparents could have never imagined in their wildest nightmares. All this is fueled by digital news and social media—with a device in nearly everyone's hand.

We need some calm in the midst of the storm. We need an oasis in the desert. We need a safe place to retreat to, and I'm not talking about Martha's Vineyard or Cabo San Lucas. Actually, no matter where we live, we can find the refuge we crave in the book of Psalms.

And for many of us, Psalm 23 is the crown jewel. Charles Spurgeon called it the "pearl of psalms." The great British preacher went on to say, "It has charmed more griefs to rest than all the philosophy of the world.... It has sung courage to the army of the disappointed."<sup>1</sup>

Next to the Lord's Prayer, this is probably the best-known passage in all of the Bible—and also the best loved. This particular text has brought hope to millions, possibly billions, of people over the years. It has been read by pastors and chaplains to people in hospital beds and even to people on their deathbeds. For some, these are the final words they hear as they pass into eternity.

And they are very, very good words.

Every believer ought to commit Psalm 23 to memory. I memorized it in the King James Version many years ago, but any translation works well.

Speaking of memorization, I heard about a Sunday school teacher who told her class, "I want you all to memorize Psalm 23, and next week I'm going to have you each recite it." As the next week went on, one little boy was really struggling with it. All too soon the following Sunday arrived, and it was his turn to stand in front of the class.

He said, "The Lord is my shepherd." He paused, then said, "And that's all I need to know." And he sat down.

Well, there's some truth there. If you truly know the Lord as your shepherd, everything changes. This relationship will be the single

most determining factor through all the years you walk on earth, no matter where you are or what happens in your life.

When we hear the word *shepherd*, we might imagine an idyllic scene, painted in soft pastels. There the shepherd is in the green grass among the wildflowers and butterflies, staff in hand, keeping watch over his flock of fluffy, cotton-white sheep. Maybe the sun is setting in the background.

But a shepherd in David's day was not a prop in a pretty picture. In some ways, a shepherd was a warrior as well as a protector and a provider.

Whatever you may be dealing with in your life right now, whatever problems and dilemmas and impossible situations you woke up with this morning, remember this: *The almighty Creator of the universe is your shepherd.*

Let that sink in a moment.

When David wrote the words of Psalm 8, he was probably out with his flock at night, looking up at the stars. (And can you imagine what the heavens looked like before there was a single electric light in the whole world?) He wrote:

When I look up into the night skies and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you have made—I cannot understand how you can bother with mere puny man, to pay any attention to him! (vv. 3–4 TLB).

But God does pay attention. He pays very close attention to every detail of your life.

I love how David said, “The Lord is *my* shepherd.” He could have said, “The Lord is *a* shepherd,” and that would’ve been true. The Lord is indeed a shepherd, but David personalized it and said, “The LORD is *my* shepherd; I shall not want” (Ps. 23:1 NKJV).

Read these next words as if you were seeing them for the first time: *God is interested in you as an individual. He has a plan for your life.* I love the passage in Jeremiah where God says, “I know the thoughts that I think toward you,... thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jer. 29:11 NKJV).

God could have said, “I know the thoughts I think toward humanity.” But He didn’t. He made it personal. He said, “I know the thoughts I think toward *you*.”

Do you know that God thinks about you? Have you ever let that concept really sink in? God cares about you. David himself wrote: “The LORD directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives” (Ps. 37:23).

The Lord is your shepherd.

I love how Paul personalized the death of Jesus when he wrote: “I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20 NKJV).

Yes, it’s true that Christ died for the whole world. Jesus said it best in John 3:16: “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son.” But again, Paul brings that truth home when he says, “He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*.”

So remember this: When others forget you, God is there as your shepherd. David wrote later in Psalm 27:10, “Even if my father and mother abandon me, the LORD will hold me close.” As a matter of fact, David’s dad, Jesse, didn’t even acknowledge him when the prophet

Samuel showed up to meet the family. In one version of 1 Samuel 16, Jesse refers to David as “the runt ... out tending the sheep” (v. 11 MSG).

But David knew that even if his family disregarded and overlooked him, he had a personal Shepherd who never would.

As the patriarch Jacob was dying in a land far from home, he reflected back on his life and made this statement about the Lord: Jacob called Him “the God who has been my shepherd all my life, to this very day, the Angel who has redeemed me from all harm” and “the Mighty One of Jacob,... the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel” (Gen. 48:15–16; 49:24).

That is what He wants to be for you. He wants to be your shepherd through all of life, to this very day.

I can't think of anything in this world better than that.

## A PAGE TORN FROM DAVID'S JOURNAL

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

He makes me lie down in green pastures,

he leads me beside quiet waters,

he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths

for his name's sake.

Even though I walk

through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.  
Surely your goodness and love will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
forever.

(Ps. 23 NIV)

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# SHEPHERD AND PROTECTOR

*Even when I walk  
through the darkest valley,  
I will not be afraid,  
for you are close beside me.  
Your rod and your staff  
protect and comfort me.*

Psalm 23:4

## *Inspired by Psalms 23 and 91*

God is our shepherd, and we are His sheep.

By the way, that's not much of a compliment. I know sheep are cute little creatures, but they are honestly among the dumbest animals on the face of the earth. Now, if the Lord would have said, "You are My dolphins," that might have been pretty cool. Dolphins are very intelligent. Scientists have determined that dolphins can actually evaluate their surroundings and figure out solutions. Researchers say they can also show complex emotions.<sup>1</sup>

He might have even said, “You are My dogs.” Well, that’s okay. Most people love dogs. After all, dogs can be very intelligent and brave, and they make great companions.

Even cats are more intelligent than sheep. They have survival skills. Cats have an incredible homing instinct, allowing them to use navigational tools like star patterns, the angle of the sun, and even the earth’s magnetic field.<sup>2</sup> There have been instances of cats finding their way home from as far as eighty miles away.

Good luck trying that with sheep. They can’t even find their way to a watering hole. (Remember Psalm 23:2? “He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters” [NIV].)

You’ve heard the expression that cats have nine lives? Not sheep. Sheep can’t even defend themselves. They can’t bite, and they can’t run. They’re basically leg of lamb in the making. They might as well carry mint jelly around with them and say, “Hey, you hungry? Kill me. And this will make me taste even better.”

One writer put it this way:

Sheep are dumb and directionless. They are also *defenseless*. Left to themselves, sheep will not and cannot last very long. Just about any other domesticated animal can be returned to the wild and will stand a fighting chance of survival. But not sheep. Put a sheep in the wild and you’ve just given nature a snack.<sup>3</sup>

The Bible says, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way” (Isa. 53:6 NKJV). I read that in Turkey a single sheep calmly walked off a cliff. That’s not the smartest

thing to do, but a sheep might do that. The animal just walked off a cliff for no particular reason and fell to its death. But here's what is crazier: At least fifteen hundred other sheep followed him. They all walked off the cliff.<sup>4</sup>

That sounds really stupid—but maybe just a little bit familiar? Are we ever affected by peer pressure? Do we ever find ourselves doing things we wouldn't normally do because other people do them and say we should do them as well?

Sheep need help. I mean, *lots* of help. And so do we. We need the help and protection of God. We need the step-by-step wisdom of His Word. We need the calm, guiding voice of the Holy Spirit. Without those things? Well, just look around you. Check out the evening news.

We're lost.

So that's the way it is; we who follow Him are His very own sheep. And by the way, He actually loves to take care of us. He loves being our shepherd. Jesus said, "So don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom" (Luke 12:32 TLB).

Sheep are completely dependent on their shepherd, just as you and I are completely dependent on our Good Shepherd.

David also was a good shepherd.

When this young man volunteered to fight Goliath in the Valley of Elah, he gave his credentials as to why he thought he could bring that freakish giant of a man down. He explained to King Saul:

I have been taking care of my father's sheep and goats.... When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, I go after it with a club and rescue

the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. I have done this to both lions and bears, and I'll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God! (1 Sam. 17:34–36)

That's pretty hardcore. He sounds like a ninja out there defending his animals. (How many lions have you grabbed by the jaw recently?)

The son of Jesse could really wield a club, but he was also pretty handy with a sling and a stone.

People who calculate such things have said that a person who is adept with a sling can get that rock flying 100 to 150 miles per hour. Like a guided missile. The Bible tells us that the stone David flung at Goliath *sank into* the giant's forehead. It didn't bounce or ricochet off his hard head; it penetrated like a musket ball. The hulking Philistine never saw it coming. One moment he was laughing and sneering at the upstart shepherd running to meet him, and the next moment it was lights out.

Since October 7, 2023, when twelve hundred innocent Israeli civilians were senselessly slaughtered by Hamas, a terrorist organization fueled by Iran, continued attacks and missiles have been fired at the Jewish state.

But Israel's defense is also strong. One of their defensive systems is called the Iron Dome, but another rocket defense system they use to protect their nation is called David's Sling.

I find that moving. After more than three thousand years, the people of Israel still remember their greatest king as a defender and protector. And that is true of our great shepherd and king as well. The Lord is your protector.

In Psalm 91, the psalmist underlines this wonderful truth:

This I declare about the LORD:  
He alone is my refuge, my place of safety;  
    he is my God, and I trust him.  
For he will rescue you from every trap  
    and protect you from deadly disease.  
He will cover you with his feathers.  
    He will shelter you with his wings.  
    His faithful promises are your armor and  
        protection.  
Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night,  
    nor the arrow that flies in the day.  
Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness,  
    nor the disaster that strikes at midday. (vv. 2–6)

I love how both day and night are covered.

When I first open my eyes in the morning, the Lord is my protector. I can put my life into His hands. When my head hits the pillow at night, the Lord is my defender and shield. So whatever you are facing right now, remember this: *The almighty Creator of the universe is your shepherd.*

Does that mean nothing unpleasant will ever happen to me? Not at all. Even Stephen, one of the Lord's choicest servants, died by stoning outside the city gates (see Acts 7). It wasn't a pleasant way to die. But I don't think this young man would have traded that moment for anything. As he was dying, he "gazed steadily into heaven and saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor at God's

right hand. And he told them, ‘Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God’s right hand!’” (vv. 55–56). What an entrance! His Shepherd was saying, “Come on Home with Me, Stephen. No one will lay a hand on you again.”

David went *mano a mano* with bears and lions to defend his flock. Just a kid with a club, a sling, and a courageous heart. And how many attacks of the Enemy—with an evil army bent on our destruction—has our Shepherd defended us from? Perhaps in the last twenty-four hours? How many times has He shielded us from the fiery arrows flying at us out of darkness and the predators prowling in the night?

We won’t know the answers to those questions until we are safely on the other side with Him. But in the meantime, the apostle Paul gives us this assurance: “The Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one” (2 Thess. 3:3).

You can take that to the bank.

## A PAGE TORN FROM DAVID’S JOURNAL

This I declare about the LORD:  
He alone is my refuge, my place of safety;  
    he is my God, and I trust him.  
For he will rescue you from every trap  
    and protect you from deadly disease.  
He will cover you with his feathers.  
    He will shelter you with his wings.  
His faithful promises are your armor and  
    protection.

(Ps. 91:2–4)