

## Does the Bible mention David's mother?

The Bible does not mention King David's mother by name. A Jewish legend has named her Nitzevet, but there is no biblical confirmation of that name. David's father, Jesse, lived in Bethlehem and was from the tribe of Judah. David was the youngest of eight brothers (1 Samuel 17:12-14). David also had at least two sisters: "Their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail" (1 Chronicles 2:16). But we don't have much information on David's mother other than she was a godly woman: in one of David's psalms, he prays, "Save me, because I serve you just as my mother did" (Psalm 86:16).

Some scholars believe David's sisters, Abigail and Zeruiah, may have been his half-sisters and that their father was not Jesse but Nahash. The book of 2 Samuel refers to Abigail as the daughter of Nahash: "Absalom had appointed Amasa over the army in place of Joab. Amasa was the son of a man named Jether, an Israelite who had married Abigail, the daughter of Nahash and sister of Zeruiah the mother of Joab" (2 Samuel 17:25).

Nahash was an Ammonite king (1 Samuel 11:1). Speculation suggests that David's mother had been married to Nahash when she bore the half-sisters and then later became the second wife of Jesse. Further speculation implies that David's mother was not yet married to Jesse when she became pregnant—that perhaps she was still married to Nahash when she conceived David.

In Jewish tradition, David's mother was Nitzevet, the daughter of Adael and the wife of Jesse. The Talmud relates a complicated story concerning Nitzevet: her husband, Jesse, began to doubt the purity of his ancestry, since he was the grandson of Ruth the Moabitess (Ruth 4:17). Due to his doubts, Jesse stopped having marital relations with

Nitzevet after she had borne her seventh son. Instead, Jesse planned to marry his Canaanite servant and have children with her. The maidservant, however, had pity on Nitzevet and offered Nitzevet a plan: on the wedding night, Nitzevet and the maidservant could secretly switch places, and Nitzevet could sleep with Jesse one more time. The switch worked, much as Leah and Rachel's switch had worked on Jacob, and Nitzevet became pregnant with David, her eighth son. Nitzevet never revealed to Jesse what she had done, even when her pregnancy was apparent; therefore, Nitzevet came to be despised as an immoral woman, and her son, David, grew up an outcast in his own family. Again, this is an extrabiblical legend, and there is no way to confirm the accuracy of the tale of Nitzevet.

These theories could explain why David was not accepted by his family: "I am a foreigner to my own family, a stranger to my own mother's children" (Psalm 69:8). David was left to tend the flocks when the prophet Samuel invited all of Jesse's sons to a sacrifice (1 Samuel 16:5). God had told Samuel that He would choose one of the sons to be anointed king, but the family never even considered David as a possibility (1 Samuel 16:11). The theories might also shed some light on Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (ESV).

While David's mother's name is not given in the Bible, one passage mentions David's genuine care and concern for her. First Samuel 22:3-4 relates how David traveled to Moab to request an audience with the king of Moab. David was seeking sanctuary for his parents, a safe place for his "father and mother" to live.

The story of David reveals God's amazing grace and sovereignty. Like Jesus Christ, David was a "stone the builders rejected" (Psalm 118:22; Luke 20:17), and, like Jesus, David

was chosen by God to do great things. David's mother, though nameless to us, has the honor of raising a king of Israel and continuing the line of the Messiah.