

How many children did King David have?

David had eight named wives, others unnamed, and an unknown number of concubines. From these unions, the Bible names nineteen sons and one daughter, Tamar (1 Chronicles 3:1-9). If we count the son who died in infancy after having been conceived through David's adulterous relationship with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:16-23), David had at least twenty-one children by his wives, plus an unknown number by his many concubines.

These are the named children, plus a little information about each of them:

- 1) Amnon. David's firstborn by his wife Ahinoam was a man of low character and driven by lust. He became obsessed with his half-sister Tamar (daughter of Maakah) and lured her to his room on false pretenses so he could rape her. He was later murdered in revenge by Tamar's full brother, Absalom (2 Samuel 13)
- 2) Daniel. Nothing is known of David's second son, born to his wife Abigail.
- 3) Absalom. Third in line, Absalom is one of David's most notorious sons. A son of David's wife Maakah, Absalom was hot-tempered and power-hungry. He planned out the murder of his half-brother Amnon to avenge the rape of his sister, and then he plotted to steal his father's throne. He drew a following in Jerusalem, and David was forced to flee the city. To help complete his coup, Absalom had sex with David's concubines in view of everyone. He died in battle when Joab, commander of David's army, killed him. See 2 Samuel 13-19.
- 4) Adonijah. David's fourth son, by his wife Haggith, was handsome and undisciplined (1 Kings 1:6). He is known for a failed attempt to become king of Israel after his father

died (1 Kings 1:9). Adonijah was eventually executed by his half-brother Solomon, the rightful king, for continued insurrection and attempts to steal the throne (1 Kings 2:23-25).

5) Shephatiah. Nothing is known of David's fifth son, born to his wife Abital.

6) Ithream. Nothing is known of this son by David's wife Eglah.

7) Shimea (Shammua). A son of Bathsheba, David's seventh son was born in Jerusalem, but nothing else is known about him.

8) Shobab. Another son of Bathsheba; nothing else is known about him.

9) Nathan. David's eighth son was also Bathsheba's, and nothing else is known of him. We can surmise that Nathan was named after the prophet Nathan, who had a long-term association with David.

10) Solomon (also called Jedidiah). David's most famous son was also by Bathsheba. God chose Solomon to become the next king of Israel. God offered to grant Solomon anything he asked for. Solomon asked for wisdom to rule the people well (1 Kings 3:4-15). God was so pleased with Solomon's request that He granted the wisdom and also gave him unmatched wealth and a long life. Solomon was the author of most of the Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, and the book of Ecclesiastes.

David's remaining children were born in Jerusalem, but we don't know much else about them:

- 11) Ibhar
- 12) Elishama
- 13) Eliphelet
- 14) Nogah
- 15) Nepheg
- 16) Japhia
- 17) another Elishama
- 18) Eliada
- 19) another Eliphelet
- 20) Tamar. We do not know Tamar's position in the birth order, but do know she was the daughter of Maakah. We are told of her rape at the hands of her half-brother Amnon and that afterwards she lived in isolation at her brother Absalom's house (2 Samuel 13:20).

David had a son named Jerimoth, who is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 11:18. It's not clear whether he is one of the sons mentioned above (using another name) or if he was one of David's sons by a concubine.

It is likely that David had many more sons and daughters who are not recorded in Scripture, as he had more wives and concubines than the ones who are identified (1 Chronicles 3:9).