

# The Doctrinal Teaching Available to King David

Taken directly from Psalm 51:13 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

During David's time, we need to examine what sort of teaching took place and how available it was to him. This will give us clues as to how available Bible teaching was to anyone in that day who desired it.

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1. David apparently knew God and trusted God when he was a young man watching the family flocks. We know that he killed a bear and a lion during this time (1Sam. 17:34–37—note that David credits this to God). We suspect that he may have written some psalms during this time. However, we do not know how much David would have learned about God as a young man, unless it was in the home prior to being put out with the flocks and herds. So, it appears as though David had an interest in God early on, and also received teaching early on, but the exact source of this teaching is unknown to us. At first, I would be tempted to guess he learned from his mother, but she is not named or even mentioned in the Bible. The Talmud records her name as *Nitzevet daughter of Adael*. Her name means *to stand* (although I cannot confirm this in my own Gesenius lexicon).<sup>1</sup>
  - a. It is possible that Psalm 118:22 is David's mother's description of David as King of Israel. [The Stone which the builders refused has become the Head of the corner](#). Obviously, this refers ultimately to Jesus Christ; but many prophecies of Jesus are based upon actual event contemporary to the writer of Scripture.
  - b. David's older brothers were soldier-warriors. 1Sam. 17:12–13
  - c. David was despised by his family and mostly left to shepherd the family flocks. Recall that, when Samuel came to anoint one of Jesse's sons, Jesse never considered David as a possible son to anoint. 1Sam. 16:11 17:15, 28 Psalm 69
  - d. We know that, despite whatever derision David received, he took this responsibility seriously. 1Sam. 17:15
  - e. We do not know why David was so despised, but perhaps he was bookish and artsy-fartsy. He did play a musical instrument and he did seem to have a good understanding of God at an early age. 1Sam. 16:16, 23 17:34–37 45–47
  - f. In any case, somewhere, in his young life, David was interested in the Word of God and he received excellent teaching, but we do not know from whom.
2. During David's time, there were individual prophets and groups of prophets who apparently taught Bible doctrine. 1Sam. 3:20 9:9 10:10–13
3. Related to this is, Samuel had a school for prophets. 1Sam. 19:20–24
4. God apparently revealed truth to some kings by dreams, by means of Urim and through prophets. 1Sam. 28:6, 15
5. When David became king, he attempted to move the Ark of God, and he was unsuccessful on the first try. He studied the Bible (which he had access to as king—in fact, he had his own personal copy of the Bible—Deut. 17:18–19). So, he would have learned how the Ark was to be moved, along with a number of other things from the Law of God. 2Sam. 6:2–20 1Chron. 13:2–14 15:1–28 16:1–42
6. There was the Tabernacle of God, which was not too far from Jerusalem, but the Ark of God had been removed from there; and Saul killed almost all of the priests. 1Sam. 21:1–9 22:6–19

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7. David had close associations with two priests, Abiathar and Zadok. They would have been a source of doctrinal teaching. 1Sam. 22:20–23 30:7 2Sam. 8:17 15:24–29 20:25
8. When David brought the Ark to Jerusalem, and placed it in a tent, we do not know if teaching was instituted here or not.
9. When David's infant son died, David went to the *house of Jehovah*. We do not know if this was at the Tabernacle or at the tent which David erected for the Ark of God. However, this suggests that there is a place where David went to commune with God. It does not seem unreasonable that there was some teaching which took place in this *house of Jehovah*. 2Sam. 12:20
10. David had close associations with at least three prophets: Samuel, Nathan and Gad. 1Sam. 16:1–13 19:18 22:5 2Sam. 7:2–8, 17 12:1–15 24:11–15
11. Because David wrote so many psalms, and because he set up quite a group of psalms to be sung when the Ark was moved, David probably organized a choir of sorts among the Levites, by which doctrine was taught. 1Chron. 15:2–28 16:5–42
12. David was divinely inspired to write many of the psalms in the Word of God, as well as most of Proverbs; and possibly, he wrote down some of his own history. Psalm 51:11 Mark 12:26 Acts 4:25

As king, David was in a unique position to receive a lot of teaching, from priests and prophets, and from the Holy Spirit when he studied the Word of God himself. For the average person, less teaching would have been available. In this verse, David says that he would help to turn around those people who, like him, had gone astray. Whether or not David had some sort of a teaching ministry is not revealed (except for an occasional small group situation—2Sam. 12:18–24); but his writings have had an impact on Jews and Christians alike for thousands of years.

<sup>1</sup> From <http://www.hebrewbabynames.com/item.cfm?itemid=42413> accessed September 2, 2011.

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