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## MOTHERS OF THE BIBLE

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Our mothers hold a treasured part of our hearts. Some of the world's greatest honors and dedications have been given to mothers. We even designate a special day each year in their honor. The Bible teaches us to honor our father and mother (Eph. 6:2). Mothers are to be respected – Adam named his wife, Eve (meaning “life”) “because she was the mother of all living” (Gen. 3:20). Jesus, while on the cross, committed the care of His mother, Mary, to His disciple, John (Jn. 19:25-27). The Bible gives us more examples of mothers, both good and bad.

### BAD MOTHERS

Could there be such a thing as a bad mother? Unfortunately, yes. Consider the following examples:

**ATHALIAH** was the mother of Ahaziah, king of Judah during the period of the Divided Kingdom. Athaliah was from the house of Omri, king of Israel, from which came extremely wicked people such as Ahab and his family. Athaliah was just as wicked and used her influence for evil. The Bible tells of her son Ahaziah, that “he also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother counseled him to do wickedly” (2 Chron. 22:3). If a mother is evil, she will undoubtedly influence her children to act the same way. We naturally imitate much of the lifestyle of our parents. This is a very important fact for both mothers and fathers to realize. They are molding an individual by their counsel and actions. Because Ahaziah followed the wicked counsel of his mother, he only reigned one year before he was killed (v. 9). His wicked mother assumed the throne of Judah for seven years after trying to murder all the other heirs (vv. 10-12). She eventually was murdered (23:12-15). What an ugly chapter in Israelite history initiated by an evil mother.

Perhaps we do not think of **REBEKAH** as being a bad mother. Wasn't she the wife of Isaac and mother of Jacob and Esau? Yes, but her two boys had problems getting along and Rebekah, along with Isaac, contributed to this by playing favorites. The Bible says that “the boys grew. And Esau was a hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob” (Gen. 25:27-28). Both parents were at fault for picking their “favorite” son, but Rebekah made it even worse when she helped Jacob trick his father into giving him the birthright blessing (Gen. 27). This caused a rift in the family so bad that Jacob had to leave the country. Rebekah thought it would be only for “a few days” (27:44), but it turned out to be twenty years (31:41). In fact, there is no mention of Rebekah when Jacob returns, so it would appear that she never saw her favorite son again on this earth. What sad consequences! As parents we must be careful not to be the cause of jealousy and strife within our families. Our love and attention should be equally distributed among all. Do not pick favorites! All our children should be special to us.

### GOOD MOTHERS

As you might expect, examples of good mothers abound in the scriptures. Consider some examples:

Consider **JOCHABED**, mother of Moses, who was determined to protect her son from the massacre of male children that Pharaoh had commanded. She put him in an ark of bulrushes and laid it in the reeds by the river's bank. After he was found by Pharaoh's daughter, Jochebed was asked to nurse him (Ex. 2:1-10). What a wonderful reward for her faith and diligence, and what a wonderful leader God would make of her little boy.

What a wonderful mother we have in the example of **HANNAH**, who could not have children because she was barren. The Bible tells us that she made a vow and said, “O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your maidservant and remember me, and not forget your maidservant, but will give your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life” (1 Sam. 1:11). The Lord granted her petition, and she gave her child, Samuel, to the Lord (vv. 19-28). If only more mothers would be of the same attitude to “dedicate” their children to the Lord. Raising a young man to be a preacher or elder is the farthest thing from the minds of many mothers. We need mothers who will encourage their children to work in spiritual service.

Let us not overlook a great mother-in-law, **NAOMI**, whom Ruth loved so much that even when Ruth's husband died and Naomi was no longer "family," Ruth wanted to stay with Naomi. Ruth pleaded, "Entreat me not to leave you or turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God" (Ruth 1:16). Naomi then introduced Ruth to Boaz, and from this lineage would come King David and Jesus. How wonderful it is when a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law can love one another as family.

How could we not mention **LOIS** and **EUNICE**, the grandmother and mother of Timothy? It was because of their godly influence and teaching that Timothy was a faithful young man. Paul wrote him saying, "When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also" (2 Tim. 1:5). This is why Paul could tell Timothy "that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (3:15). Godly mothers make sure that their children know the truth so that they will be faithful throughout their lives.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Let us be warned by the examples of bad mothers and imitate the good mothers of the Bible. A good mother will always be recognized because her children will "rise up and called her blessed" (Prov. 31:28).