

## ● God Reveals Himself in Names – El Shaddai

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Today I want to return to our study of the names of God and look specifically at one of the lesser used, but well-known, names of God.
  - A. That name is **El Shaddai**, which is translated **God Almighty**, a compound name connecting El (shortened form of *Elohim*) and Shaddai (“Almighty”).
    - i. This name’s revealing shows God to be the one who created and maintains the universe, who **has all power**, but who by context also **initiates and maintains covenants** with His people.
    - ii. It is believed that until the time of Moses, when *Yahweh* was revealed, the patriarchs considered **El Shaddai** the covenant name of God.
  - B. As El Shaddai, this name only appears 7 times in the Old Testament, yet God as **Shaddai**, the **Almighty**, is found another 41 times.
2. It is important to know God as **El Shaddai** because it means we know Him as the God for whom nothing is impossible and, therefore, can do as He has promised, do as he has covenanted.
3. To know God better through this name, we will...
  - A. Look at the context of God being revealed as El Shaddai
  - B. Look at the revelation of this name and its significance in our lives.

### BODY:

- **I. The context of God revealed as El Shaddai:**
  - A. God made a very special covenant with the 75-year-old Abram, later Abraham, that was to change not only Abram’s life, but the world forever (Gen. 12:1-4 – “Now the LORD said to Abram, “**Go forth** from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, **to the land which I will show you;** <sup>2</sup> **And I will make you a great nation**, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so **you shall be a blessing;** <sup>3</sup> and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And **in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.** <sup>4</sup> **So Abram went forth** as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.”).
    1. Abram, who was old and childless, was promised to become a “great nation.”
    2. And more importantly, through him the whole world, including us, would be **blessed**.
    3. Abraham *had enough faith in God to obey*, gathering up all their stuff, leaving Haran and his family, and going to live as wanderers wherever God would lead them.
  - B. As time passed Abram, it seems, came to question God’s promise because he remained childless (Gen. 15:1-6 – “After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; **Your reward shall be very great.**” <sup>2</sup> Abram said, “O Lord God, **what will You give me, since I am childless**, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” <sup>3</sup> And Abram said, “Since **You have given no offspring to me**, one born in my house is my heir.” <sup>4</sup> Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “This man will not be your heir; but **one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.**” <sup>5</sup> And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” <sup>6</sup> Then he **believed** in the Lord; and **He reckoned it to him as righteousness.**”).
    1. Somewhere around 10 years had passed since Genesis 12, causing Abram to question God as to how this promised reward could be *great*, as in becoming “a *great nation*,” seeing he was still childless (15:1-3).
      - a. He assumed God would fulfill this promise by one *born in his house*, not born of him.
      - b. Thought: Like Abram, it is easy for **time** and **circumstance** to cause us to question and lose our zeal concerning God’s promises.

- i. This is when we must be reminded of who God is, how He does not forget His promises, His people, or their labors, and how He always comes through.
    - ii. Despite how some will lose faith and give up, we are encouraged and exhorted to do better to receive the promises (Heb. 6:9-12 – “But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way. <sup>10</sup> For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. <sup>11</sup> And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, <sup>12</sup> so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”).
  2. So, God reminded Abram that because the promise was to “make **you** a great nation,” the *heir* of promise would be **his son** (15:4-6).
    - a. In other words, God’s blessings in their fullness would come **to him**, just as God said.
    - b. Not only would Abram have **a son**, but he would also be blessed with **innumerable descendants** like the stars of the sky!
    - c. When and because Abraham **believed**, God accounted his faith as **righteous** (15:6).
      - i. Is it not amazing that because one believes God, He will account them righteous?
      - ii. For, who is more reasonable to believe than God the Almighty Creator, sustainer of life, and the loving and sacrificial Savior of the world?
- C. Lesson: Abram and Sarai had to learn that true faith means being willing to allow God’s things to be done in God’s way.
  - 1. Because things were happening slowly, instead of trusting God to **fulfill His plan** as He **said**, Sarai convinced Abram that they should provide their own solution to help God out (Gen. 16:1-4 – “Now Sarai, Abram’s wife **had borne him no children**, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar. <sup>2</sup> So Sarai said to Abram, “Now behold, **the Lord has prevented me from bearing children**. Please go in to my maid; **perhaps I will obtain children through her**.” And Abram **listened to the voice of Sarai**. <sup>3</sup> After Abram **had lived ten years** in the land of Canaan, Abram’s wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife. <sup>4</sup> He went in to Hagar, and she **conceived**; and when she saw that she had conceived, **her mistress was despised in her sight**.”).
    - a. Because Sarai forgot who God is she blamed Him for her inability to have a child and decided to do things her way.
    - b. People do this all the time while claiming they trust God. You see it in...
      - i. “I know God’s word says that, but...” or “...He wants me to be happy, so...”
      - ii. People claiming to believe God calls sinners by the gospel (2 Thess. 2:14), but then say, “we need to be ‘relevant’” (i.e., call them by giving them what they *want*).
  - 2. If you’re familiar with Israel’s history, you know that this decision had devastating results.
    - a. It caused problems in Abraham’s immediate family.
    - b. And the Arabs that came through Hagar’s son Ishmael caused significant problems for the nation of Israel that would come through Isaac, Sarah’s son of promise.
  3. We must remember that despite how we might feel about our situation, we are not capable of doing better than God and must trust Him to do as He has promised.
- **II. El Shaddai revealed (Gen. 17):**
  - A. God’s revealed His name to Abram (Gen. 17:1 – “Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “**I am God Almighty [El Shaddai]**; Walk before Me, and be blameless.”).
    - 1. God appears to Abram when he is 99 years old, meaning this happened 24 years after the “great nation” promise of Genesis 12, and 14 or so years since its renewal in Gen. 15!

- a. By this point Abram and Sarai were likely weary and wondering if God had abandoned His promise.
- b. **We can relate**, maybe feeling God is taking too long to meet our needs, or to help us find or fix a relationship, solidify a career, overcome an obstacle, etc.
- 2. To help Abram, God introduced Himself as *El Shaddai*, or **God Almighty**.
  - a. For, Abram needed to know that God has **all** the **might**, that God is **not hindered** by weakness or frailty as are those of flesh and blood, to **help him believe**.
  - b. Based on God being **El Shaddai, God Almighty**, Abram is reminded to **continue to walk blameless**, to **faithfully persevere** in order to receive the promise.
    - i. For, as we must also remember, no matter how out of line God’s promises may seem with our lives at the time, we serve El Shaddai—God Almighty—who can and will do as He says!
    - ii. That is reason to **praise Him**, even when we are struggling, so that we might be encouraged in being reminded that the **Almighty** does as He has promised.
- B. **El Shaddai** is introduced in the context of a **covenant**, which is no small thing (17:2-4 – “I will establish **My covenant** between Me and you, and I **will multiply you exceedingly**.<sup>3</sup> Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, <sup>4</sup> “As for Me, behold, **My covenant** is with **you**, And **you** will be the **father of a multitude of nations**.”).
  - 1. This means God takes his covenants *seriously* and *has the power* to fulfill them! (17:2).
    - a. Despite all that Abram thought he knew and felt, **El Shaddai** had made a covenant with **him**, and had to power to back it up!
    - b. So, his hope in the promises was to remain strong, as is ours (Heb. 10:23 – “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, **for He who promised is faithful**”).
  - 2. Abram’s faithfulness to **El Shaddai** meant that God would *give*, or *establish*, this covenant of great blessings between them.
    - a. This was a “if you do this/then I, God, will do this” covenant, as is expressed more clearly in the ASV, ESV, NET, and NIV.
    - b. Note that God’s covenant blessings **for the faithful** were to be beyond all expectations—that God would **multiply** Abram **exceedingly**, making him the “father of a **multitude of nations**.”
      - i. This covenant and its blessing were infinitely bigger than Abram, affecting “all nations” as Gen. 12:1-3 said, bringing blessings upon **all** peoples **through Abraham**.
      - ii. Thought: When God blesses us, we should not think of this only in terms of ourselves, but about how we might use them to bless others to bring God glory.
    - c. This covenant was **given** to Abram, which is a proper meaning of “establish.” For that is what God did. He **gave** His covenant to Abram. It was about God’s **grace**—a **gift**.
      - i. Though Abram had to be faithful, nothing required of Abram, nothing that he had faithfully done or would do, could **earn** him the right to this covenant of blessings! It was a gift.
      - ii. The same is true of the New Covenant of Christ today, being one offering hope, forgiveness, and eternal life to **sinners** who **deserve death**, but who can receive it because we choose to **live faithfully** to God. It is a gift of grace.
- C. As a result of this covenant Abram and Sarai received new names
  - 1. Abram (Gen. 17:5-6 – “No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be **Abraham**; For I have made you the father of a **multitude of nations**.<sup>6</sup> I will **make you exceedingly fruitful**, and I will **make nations of you**, and kings will come forth from you.”).
    - a. His new name was connected to God’s covenant of great blessings with him. He would be Abraham, or **the father of a multitude of nations**!

- b. Thought: God wanted Abraham to know **who he truly was** and be **reminded** whenever his name was spoken that God had made a covenant with him.
- 2. Sarai, who had been barren, also received a new name (Gen. 17:15-18 – “Then God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but **Sarah** shall be her name. <sup>16</sup> I will bless her, and indeed **I will give you a son by her**. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a **mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her**.”).
  - a. Sarai would now be called **princess**, or **noblewoman**, giving birth to nations and kings!
  - b. Both Abraham (17:17-18) and Sarah (18:12) **laughed** at the thought that God could give them, now 99 and 90, respectively, a son!
- 3. Thought: Both Abraham and Sarah believed in God and that Elohim the Creator God was speaking to them. Yet, they laughed at the thought that God could do as He promised.
  - a. Though that seems perplexing, we claim to believe in God the Creator, that He sustains the universe, that He even sent His Son to die on the cross for us, but sometimes still question His personal care and the ultimate fulfillment of His promises in our lives!
  - b. That is because maybe it is easier to believe in God’s power on a *grand scale* than it is to believe in His power on a *personal scale* to keep His promises that affects us.
  - c. Surely, it would be wise for our daily prayers to include a plea to God for help to know Him and stand in awe of Him as **El Shaddai**, our **God Almighty**, the one who is able to sustain us, bless us, and who will fulfill every promise He has made to us.
- 4. As people of God’s covenant in Christ today...
  - a. We have been given a new name—**Christian** (Acts 11:26), reminding us of who we follow and the wonders of His grace making all of this possible.
  - b. Those who faithfully conquer in this life are offered, again, a new name (Rev. 2:17).
- D. I should add that God **did fulfill** His covenant **promises**.
  - 1. Abraham and Sarah **had a son** and named Isaac, and Isaac had children who had children who became the great nation of Israel.
  - 2. And all the earth has been **blessed** as God promised in Gen. 12 with **grace** and **salvation** that came through **Jesus** who was born of Abraham’s lineage, a Jew of Israel.
  - 3. Thought: If you want to increase your faith, try to...
    - a. Think of what the world would be like today without the fulfillment of God’ promises in bringing Jesus into the world?
    - b. Think of the condition and ultimate end of those nations that forget God and do not know He is **El Shaddai**, God Almighty, who fulfills His promises!

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Are you tired, discouraged, doubting? Maybe you have messed up your life along the way?
2. Maybe time/circumstance has caused your faith in God’s ability to work out your life for good to falter, and your “answers” are only making things worse, bringing sin and discouragement?
3. Well, I would remind you...
  - A. That **you are still here** and if you will choose to faithfully serve God, He will fulfill His promises and supply what is needed most in your life.
  - B. God wants you to be a part of His New Covenant of grace, forgiveness, salvation, and hope in Christ and invites you to come today by F-R-C-B-LF in hope.
  - C. What will you do with Jesus and His covenant today?