NAMES OF GOD

EL SHADDAI

Use in the Bible: In the Old Testament El Shaddai occurs 7 times. El Shaddai is first used in Gen 17:1. “Shaddai” itself occurs 48 times in scripture. The King James Version of the Bible translates “El Shaddai” as “God Almighty”.

Meaning and Derivation: El is another name that is translated as "God" and can be used in conjunction with other words to designate various aspects of God's character. Another word much like Shaddai, and from which many believe it derived, is shad, meaning "breast" in Hebrew. This refers to God completely nourishing, satisfying, and supplying His people with all their needs as a mother would her child. Connected with the word for God, El, this denotes a God who freely gives nourishment and blessing. He is our sustainer.

Further references of the name El Shaddai in the Old Testament: Gen 17:1; Gen 28:3; Gen 35:11; Gen 43:14; Gen 48:3.

1. First time “El Shaddai” is used is found in Genesis 17:1-2, “and when Abram was 90 years old and nine, the LORD (Jehovah) appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am a the Almighty God (El-Shaddai); walk before me, and be perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.”

Sometimes it’s easier to believe in God’s power on a grand scale, creating the universe, sustaining it through time, reigning over the centuries, than it is to believe in his power to keep one simple promise. Abraham was life offers to us a study in God’s promise keeping ability.

What about the promises he makes to us, like the one about helping us in times of temptation? It’s not hard for us to believe in creation, the virgin birth, or the resurrection. But it is hard sometimes to believe that “God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” (1 Corinthians 10:13). How about when you have to deal with a perpetually difficult child? When you have despair because of a life altering illness? Or you’re wondering about having an affair because your marriage seems so lonely?

Often times we have a tendency to turn it to ourselves to solve the problem when turning in faith to an all powerful, all sufficient God is the only way out. Often times we feel tempted beyond our power to resist, at that time call upon the name of El Shaddai.

Abraham was told that he was to have a son by his wife Sarah. The problem was that Abraham was close to 100 years old and his wife was close to 90 years old. We have a tendency to look at this story from the point of view that God is “Almighty” and he can even cause a dead womb to bring forth new life. That being true I also believe that this story has used this term for God “El Shaddai” for a specific reason. Shaddai means a sufficiency, sustenance, blessing, and nourishment. What God was accomplishing by allowing Sarah to become pregnant was that he was sustaining a promise that he had made to Abraham years earlier. Not only did he promise him a son but he promised him also to be the father of a great nation. What God was doing was sustaining and supplying and a nourishing his own nation.
Abraham was impatient. Through the encouragement of his wife, he gave birth to a son by the name of Ishmael using his wife’s servant, Hagar.

We like Abraham are also impatient unwilling sometimes to allow God to work in his own time and in his own way to accomplish the promises that he has made to us.

Stories

There was a single mother who had heard a Biblical financial teacher say, “Quit looking at your job as the source of your income. Look at your job as only one avenue, one channel the Source, El Shaddai, uses to bring finances into your life. Begin to teach your children to look to their heavenly Father as their Source, not the parents.” Her little daughter, one day told her that she wanted a bike, like all the other children. Her mother, at first was about to reply, “Honey, momma does not have extra money,” because this was her typical response. However, she remembered what the teacher said in the seminar, so she told her daughter, ”Let’s ask the Lord for a bike”. They prayed together and thanked God for hearing their prayer. A few days later, the little received a check in the mail, payable to her personally. On the way to town to cash the check, they noticed a man placing a bicycle out by the side of the road. The mother stopped the car and asked the man what he was going to do with that bike. The man replied that his daughter had quickly outgrown the use of it and he was going to sell it. The little asked the man how much he wanted and he replied, “For you, $25.00.” which was exactly the amount of the CHECK the received in the mail!”

The little grew up not remembering a mother who worked hard to buy a bike, but she was very thankful for a mother who taught her about the Heavenly Father, who cared about an eight years old’s need.


“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust!” “Because he has loved me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high because he has no My Name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.”

Praise God because he is a refuge from all storms.

Offer thanks, for God’s sheltering care.

Take time to confess any habit of worry that keeps you from depending on the El Shaddai.

Ask God to increase your trust in him in the days and months to come.

In every life there are times that are very difficult. There are times when it seems that we have pitched our tent in the desert. You may even feel like you’re in a sense of wilderness. The Bible often represents the desert as a place of transition and testing. It was where God’s people were challenged to obey and to trust God to lead them into the land of promise. What does it mean to rest in the shadow of the Almighty? What does it mean to know that God is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust?

Statistics

Topic: Fulfillment in Life
George Barna’s Research Group has conducted several nationwide surveys on this subject. This survey information, taken from telephone interviews with a nationwide random sample of 1002 adults, was conducted in February 2000.

(a) For instance, 9 out of 10 adults describe themselves as being ‘self-sufficient.’ (92%)
(b) And, most people (2 out of 3) admit that they ‘like to be in control of their own lives.’ (66%)

The following terms were used in the survey by those being surveyed who confessed to be born again Christians, in describing themselves:

(a) Stressed Out: 31%
(b) Too Busy: 49%
(c) Needing New Friends: 50%
(d) In Debt: 40%
(e) Dealing with Addiction: 11%
(f) Self-Sufficient: 90%
(g) Searching for purpose: 48%
(h) Skeptical: 55%
(i) Likes to ‘be in control’: 62%

Think back about what you have experienced when it comes to God’s care and protection. Perhaps it was after a bad business deal, a serious illness, a near accident, a troubled relationship, or difficult time of transition. Though you may have not known it then, and now you see how Almighty God (El Shaddai) was a refuge in the midst of your personal desert. He sustained you and fed you. He sheltered you in the wilderness. Thank God (El Shaddai) for his powerful sustaining presence.

3. Let’s reflect on Genesis 40 9:22-26, “Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring; its branches run over AWOL. The archers bitterly attacked him, and shot at him and harassed him; but his bow remained firm, and his arms were agile, from the hands of the mighty one of Jacob (from there is the Shepherd, the capstone of Israel), from the God of your father who helps you and by the Almighty (El Shaddai) who blesses you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors up to the utmost bound of the everlasting Hills; may they be on the head of Joseph and on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers.”

It is God’s nature to bless those who love him. Oh give thanks for the way God has persistently blessed your life. Confess any tendency to believe that God would desert you. And all may we seek God to help us become a blessing for others.

Story of Joseph: He was the second youngest of 12 brothers. His dreams were so vivid that it offended his brothers who were jealous and MBS to the point of getting rid of him.

1. He was kidnapped.
2. He was almost murdered.
3. He was sold into slavery.
4. He was falsely accused of rape.
5. He was thrown into prison.

Despite all these setbacks, Joseph kept rising to the top of the heap. Potiphar put him in charge of his whole household. When jailed the warden gave him the responsibility for running the prison. Finally Pharaoh made him governor of all Egypt. Joseph’s resilience in the face of so many obstacles is compelling evidence of El Shaddai’s power to bless our lives regardless of whom or what stands in the way.

Is the Almighty really on your side? (2 Samuel 5:9-10)
Should you trust in the El Shaddai? (Psalm 84)
If you return to the Almighty, he will return to you (Zachariah 1:2-3).

Do you need God’s blessing, God’s sustaining power, God’s nourishment?

Prayer; Lord, help me to know you as my El Shaddai, the one who is able to sustain and bless me, to fulfill every promise he makes. Increase my awe of you and of your power so that, like Abraham, I may follow you faithfully, always believing you are enough for me.