

"El Shaddai"

Genesis 17

Introduction: Tonight, in our study of the names of God we are going to look at a name that will have a great deal of meaning for our personal lives. The name we shall consider tonight is "El Shaddai". The name means "ALL MIGHTY GOD or ALL-POWERFUL GOD". In our study tonight, we are going to look at the very first place this name is used in the Bible and that will be in Genesis 17 and it will be here that the meaning will be revealed in the life of Abraham.

Background

To get the background of the text and the use of the name we must back up about twenty-five years in Abraham's life to when he was called by God.

Notice Genesis 11:28-12:1

Before we get too far into our message I want to give you some information concerning the call of Abraham that we do not see here. When we look at Genesis 12:1 it appears this was the original call of God upon his life. But there was an earlier call. Stephen spoke of this earlier call in his sermon in Acts 7.

Acts 7:2-4

² And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, **before he dwelt in Charran,**

³ And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

⁴ Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

God called Abraham when he was in Ur of the Chaldees. As we read the end of chapter 11 we get the idea that his father took the lead and Abraham followed his father and then it was not until his father died that he was willing to follow God to the land of Canaan.

There is a picture here that is very important for us to see. Abraham was controlled by his father or we could say the "OLD MAN". Here in these verses he is a picture of the believer who is controlled by the SIN NATURE. It was not until Abraham father died that he was then willing to go and experience the blessings which God had for him.

The same is also true for our lives. Until we die to the "OLD MAN"/"SIN NATURE" we are missing out on many blessings which God has for us. In our study of Romans on Wednesday

evenings we have been talking for quite some time about how we have been crucified with Christ and it is not until we reckon upon this Truth and surrender to it that we can get free from the leading of the "OLD MAN". While we are controlled by the OLD MAN/SIN NATURE we are missing out on the blessings of the Lord in our lives. It is the Spirit controlled life that brings blessing and power into the life of the believer.

Now let me get you back to our focus.

Notice Genesis 11:29-30, 12:1-3

God had made a promise to Abram that through his offspring there would be a great nation and it would be through Abram's seed that the promise of the Messiah would fulfilled. But there was a problem and the problem was, Sarai was barren. Abram was seventy-five years old when this promise was made.

Notice Genesis 12:4

Abram was seventy-five and Sarai was sixty-five but at this time their ages were not an issue.

As time went on and Abram followed God to the land of Canaan and years began to slip by Abram became concerned about the promise.

Notice Genesis 15:1-6

God reassured Abram that from his seed he would have an heir. Abram believed God which is amazing. He and Sarai were now older, and she was still barren. Apart from a miracle there would be no heir for Abram.

Application:

I need to just stop here and point out that this is the kind of faith which God desires to see in our lives.

Hebrews 11:6

⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

God desires for you and me to walk in UNCONDITIONAL FAITH and by that, I mean God desires that we walk by faith no matter what the circumstances may look like. No matter how hopeless the situation looks we are to trust God to fulfill His Word. God desires that we are to walk by faith in His Word and not according to circumstances or feelings.

Let me show you an example that rises above many others for an example of living by faith.

Let us notice the words of Job which he spoke in the midst of the trial he was going through.

Job 23:6-10

⁶ *Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me.*

⁷ *There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.*

⁸ *Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him:*

⁹ *On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him:*

¹⁰ *But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*

In the middle of Job's pain and suffering he was able to declare that when his trial was over he would come forth as gold. In other words, Job believed, though there was no evidence, that from the trial he would become stronger and more holy.

It is this kind of faith that must be in our lives if we are going to have peace and rest in the midst of the storms and trials in our lives. If fear replaces faith there will be no rest.

Hebrews 4:1-6

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

² *For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*

³ *For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

⁴ *For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.*

⁵ *And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.*

⁶ *Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:*

When Israel came to Kadesh Barnia they refused to believe the good news which God had given to them and the good news was, He would deliver the inhabitants of the land into their hands. Because of their lack of faith, they did not get into the land of Canaan which was a picture of the rest provided for you and me. So, if we lack faith and we allow the circumstances in our lives to control us we too will miss the rest which God has for us in Jesus Christ.

Notice Genesis 16:1-6

This is a very familiar story. What I want you to see here is that Abram is starting to panic. He has been in the land of Canaan now for 10 years, so he is now eighty-five years old and Sarai is seventy-five years old and there are still no children.

In this text Abram and Sarai decided since God seemed to be doing nothing they would take matters into their hands and they would fulfill the promise of God. But what happened here with Hagar was completely outside the will of God. This was the result of a lack of faith combined with the overwhelming desire of Abram to father a son.

Application:

I don't want to be too critical of Abram here because we have all at one time or another declared our faith in God and then after a while, when we did not see any results, we then took matters into our own hands and went completely against the will of God.

There are always consequences when we step outside the will of God and we see several of them here.

1. Loss of peace. - Notice Genesis 16:5-6

The peace within Abram's family was now overcome with conflict.

2. The lives of others impacted - Notice Genesis 16:11-12

From Ishmael would come the Arab nations.

3. Broken fellowship - Notice Genesis 16:16-17:1

There is thirteen years between these two chapters. That was thirteen years of silence.

II. The Name

Notice Genesis 17:1

Here is the name that we are looking at. Abram is 99 years old and God reminds him that He is *GOD ALMIGHTY* or *THE ALL-POWERFUL GOD*. God then reinforced His promise to Abram.

Notice Genesis 17:1-3, 15-21

The promise would not be fulfilled through a handmaid, but it would be through Sarah at a set time.

Application:

God has a set time for every event on His calendar and He will fulfill His promises in His time.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

² *A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;*

³ *A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;*

⁴ *A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;*

⁵ *A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;*

⁶ *A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;*

⁷ *A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;*

⁸ *A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.*

Our responsibility is to wait upon God's timing and not to attempt to hurry His plan along.

Psalm 37:9

⁹ *For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.*

Isaiah 40:30-31

³⁰ *Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:*

³¹ *But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

Notice Genesis 18:1, 9-15

Sarah was now beyond the childbearing age. Humanly speaking there was no hope in the fulfillment of the promise.

III. The Fulfillment

Notice Genesis 21:1-5

Isaac was born at the set time when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90.

Application:

There are several points of application here:

1. Both Abraham and Sarah's bodies were dead concerning reproduction.

This is a picture of what we have been studying on Wednesday nights in Romans. We cannot fulfill the will of God for our lives in our own strength. We must reckon ourselves to be dead and it is then that God's power works within us. This is exactly what we see in the life of Abraham and Sarah.

2. God is El Shaddai. He is ALL-POWERFUL, and His power is not limited because of our ability or our inability.

Conclusion:

Are you facing something which is out of your control? Is it a challenge which you have no resources to meet?

I encourage you to look up. Our God is El Shaddai and His power is not hindered because of our limited resources.