

Names of God from the Bible

2 – El-shaddai (El-sadday)

Every name of God is an eternal Name. God Almighty – God of the impossible.

Reading: Genesis 17:1-22

The word could be translated “mountain”. In other words, God who is higher than any human being and thus able to do anything.

The first mention of God as El-shaddai is here in our reading, where Abram had another encounter with God. Abram had experienced a long-standing relationship with God already. God had called Abram out of Ur; Abram had interceded for Lot and Sodom; God had visited Abram and promised him a son. However, Abram and Sarah contrived to assist God by using Hagar, and it resulted in the birth of Ishmael.

Here, Abram was ninety-nine years old, thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael. Abram was well passed child-fathering age, even for those times. Despite Abram’s lack of faith and ‘disobedience’ in fathering Ishmael, God came again to Abram with the intent to re-establish His promise and covenant with Abram.

God began by introducing Himself as El-shaddai. What an amazing greeting. He established from the very first instant that He is God far above any others, far above any imagination that Abram could invent or envisage, and on top of all that – He is God of the impossible. How I would have loved to have been there then (and to have been Abram).

The Almighty Creator God came to where Abram was and declared in effect – Abram, I’m on your side and I am going to do something which will completely blow your mind. You may think that you are as good as dead but have I got news for you. I am going to change your circumstances so dramatically that you would never come up with any concept close to it in a million years. However, you need to understand first – I am all powerful and I specialise in the impossible.

Having given Abram the correct perspective of who God was, God went on to confirm His earlier covenant to bless him beyond words and to establish a dynasty through him. There was one condition – *walk before Me and be blameless.*

God went on to expand on the outworking of His promise. God changed Abram’s name to Abraham – meaning the father of many nations. God also promised that Abraham’s descendants would receive Canaan as a perpetual homeland for all subsequent generations.

God also instituted the covenant of circumcision. Abraham would have to be circumcised along with every male born into their household (as well as any slave or foreigner considered part of their household) when they were eight days old.

God also changed Sarai’s name from ‘princess’ to Sarah, ‘mother of nations’, and confirmed that Abraham and Sarah would have their own child, Isaac, who would be born in about a year’s time. Isaac would be the one through whom the covenant would be established, rather than Ishmael who was born to Sarah’s slave, Hagar.

Two people, Abraham and Sarah, well passed their use-by date for child-bearing would have a miracle baby, and Isaac who would become the forerunner of multitudes of people and many

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nations. Furthermore, God would bless the entire world through them. Very possible for the God of the impossible.

What does that name mean for us today

Our God is still the God of the impossible, the God of miracles. Whatever your need, whatever promise God has given you, hold onto it for He is still able to perform what He has promised for you.

Prayer

Father, I am so overwhelmed by the thought that You are still the God of miracles and that nothing is impossible for You. Please will You fulfil the promises You have given in Your Word. Thank You, I believe You will accomplish them. Amen.

Additional Readings

- 2 Kings 20:1-11
- Jeremiah 32:17-27
- Luke 1:26-38
- Ephesians 3:20-21

Questions

1. What miracles have you experienced in your life? What were the circumstances?
2. What miracles do you still need God to deliver for you?
3. How does Jesus fulfil that name?