

## **KEY TEXT**

### **Genesis 17:1-2 (ESV)**

**Verse 1 – When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless,**

**Verse 2- that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.”**

## **INTRODUCTION**

- 1. Importance of names***
- 2. The Revelation of God’s character through His name***
- 3. God has a name for our every situation***

## ***4. Background of our Key Text***

## ***5. Title***

**‘EL- SHADDAI, OUR ALMIGHTY GOD’.**

### **OUTLINE:**

- The three appearances of God to Abram
- The Meaning of the name, “El-Shaddai”
- Why the revelation of El-Shaddai?
- Our Responsibility and God’s Responsibility

### **MAIN POINTS**

#### **(I) THE THREE APPEARANCES OF GOD TO ABRAM**

In our key text, God appears to Abram when he is now 99 years of age, and he and Sarai are past the age for having children.

**This is not the first time God has appeared to Abram.**

### ***God's First Appearance(Genesis 12)***

### ***God's Second Appearance (Genesis 15)***

**Genesis 15:5 -“And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”**

**Application:**Sometimes just like God did with Abram, God has to encourage us not to give up or give in if the vision or dream in our hearts has not yet come to pass.

### ***God's Third Appearance(Genesis 17)***

Between God's first appearance to Abram in **Genesis 12** and His third appearance in **Genesis 17**, twenty-nine years have passed.

And still no Isaac had been born.

## **(II) THE MEANING OF 'EL-SHADDAI'**

**"El"** sets forth **GOD'S ALMIGHTINESS**.

**"Shaddai"** points to God's **EXHAUSTLESS BOUNTY**.

The compound name, **"El-Shaddai"** stresses **THE ALL-BOUNTIFUL ONE**.

**Application:** During our seasons of lack, in times like our present COVID pandemic and the Russian-Ukraine war, when so many resources that people are depending are drying up, what a **stimulus to our faith** to

**know that we worship and serve a God who is all-sufficient, and who is strong enough to overpower, overcome all obstacles and equal to the challenge of every occasion.**

**El-Shaddai identifies our Heavenly Father as the All-Sufficient God- the God who is totally adequate to provide **ALL** we need according to His riches in mercy.**

**The word “EL” signified the **STRENGTH AND POWER OF THE GREAT CREATOR ‘ELOHIM’****

**The word, “Shaddai”, speaks of **TENDER NOURISHMENT, GENTLE REASSURANCE AND THE PROVISION OF STRENGTH** that a tiny baby derives from the comforting breast of his mother.**

### **(III) WHY THE REVELATION OF EL-SHADDAI?**

There are many names and titles given to God in the Bible.

Why the name, El-Shaddai?

#### ***BECAUSE OF THE IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION***

Abram had been promised the **SEED** through whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed.

His advancing years appear to **CONTRADICT** God's former Word.

It seemed **IMPOSSIBLE** that the 90-year-old Sarah and her 100-year-old husband could parent a child, as God had promised some time before.

Yet, in this gracious encounter, God reveals Himself to Abram in a new and wonderful way – as **‘GOD ALMIGHTY’- ‘EL-SHADDA’- THE ALL-SUFFICIENT GOD’**.

He gently admonished His doubting child, while giving Abram ample reassurance that His Word is true and would be fulfilled in His time and His way.

This was the first time that He revealed Himself as **“THE ALMIGHTY”**.

There is **NONE** but **ONE** who possessed **ALL POWER** who could meet Abram’s need at this time.

Ninety-nine of age, his body was dead; Sarah was barren and long past the age of child-bearing – how could they hope to have a son?

But with God **ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE.**

Why?

Because He is **EL-SHADDAI, the ALL-SUFFICIENT ONE, the ALMIGHTY.**

It is a title which strikes terror into the hearts of the wicked, but to the righteous, it is a **HAVEN OF REST.**

**“The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runs into it, and is safe” (Proverbs 18:10).**

**Application:** The All-Sufficiency of God enriches, empowers and provides for all of God’s children.



The **PRECIOUS PROMISE OF GOD'S ALL-EMBRACING SUFFICIENCY** is equally relevant today.

To paraphrase God's invoking of his name **EL-SHADDAI** to Abram:

*"I am able to fulfill the awesome hopes that I have set before you of a PEOPLE and a LAND. There is no need to let go of the PROMISE because of your old age. There is no need to succumb to PASSIVE DESPERATION. There is no need to SCALE DOWN THE PROMISE to match your puny thoughts – no need to resort to FLESHLY EXPEDIENCE – no need of trying to fulfill the promise in ANY SECOND-RATE WAY. EVERYTHING – ALL YOUR LIFE, ALL YOUR FUTURE – LIES IN THIS: I AM GOD ALMIGHTY!"*

**Application:** The way we live is determined by what we think of God.

If our God is **EL-SHADDAI**, the awesome, mighty God of this account, then our lives will live out the **FULLNESS OF GOD'S PROMISES** to us.

What you truly believe about God is the most important thing in your life.

Any thoughts of a God less potent than the God of Abram will shrink your soul and neutralize your faith.

The same Lord nourishes, multiplies and makes abundantly fruitful, the seed of faith that is planted in the heart of each of His children.

***BECAUSE OF THE LONG DELAY AND LONG WAIT***

Our **WAIT** may seem like a lifetime, yet **EL-SHADDAI** is **SUPREME** over all things.

Sometimes, we wonder, *“Is my ship ever going to come in?”*

But God is faithful in showing up to reveal to us just as He did to Abram, that He is El-Shaddai. The Lord God Almighty. The All-Sufficient One.

If you’ve ever thought when was God going to make good on a **DEEP SEEDED DESIRE** in your heart, just consider that was **29 years** between the **INITIAL PROMISE OF A SON** in **Genesis 12** and God reaffirming His promise in **Genesis 17**.

- Some are still waiting for their healing

- Some are still waiting for that deliverance from a habit derrfthey realize they are too weak to master.
- Some are still waiting for that day to pay off their student loan or house loan
- Some are still waiting for that long prayer for reconciliation between a family member or friend.
- Some are still waiting for the right man or woman for their life
- Some are still waiting for the conversion of their loved ones.

**DELAYS.....**Why had Abram to wait all this while before the LORD appeared to him again?

**God has a reason for His delays.**

**Not until man comes to the end of himself will God put forth His power.**

Not until man's **EXTREMITY** is reached does God's **OPPORTUNITY** arrive.

Not until our own powers are **“dead”** will God act in **GRACE**.

Often God's delay is to test the faith of His children, to develop their patience, to bring them to the **end of themselves**.

His delays are in order that when He does act, His delivering power may be more plainly evident, that what He does may be more deeply appreciated and consequently He may be more illustriously glorified.

**Application:** If God has placed a **SEED** in your heart, never doubt that He is All-sufficient to carry it through to its final delivery, even

though the waiting period is long and arduous.

He who started a good work in you has promised to bring it to completion, by transforming you into the likeness of the **INDWELLING SEED – THE LOVELY LORD JESUS, IN WHOM WE TRUST.**

### ***BECAUSE OF FUTILE SELF-EFFORT***

The opening verse of **Genesis 17** needs to be read in the light of God's ongoing promise to Abram to give him a **"seed"** and the attempt made by Abram to obtain fulfilment **by his own efforts.**

What Abram needed to be reminded of was **GOD'S ALMIGHTINESS.**

**This was to put a check to Abram's recourse to crooked ways.**

**It was to teach Abram – never employ unlawful means in seeking to promote the cause of God.**

**Therefore, the effective cure for all impatient anxiety is to reckon on ONE WHO IS ALL-GRACIOUS, ALL-POWERFUL, ALL-SUFFICIENT.**

**It is when we are at our "wit's end", when all our own devices and plans have failed and all our own human self-effort have come to naught that we "cry unto the Lord in our trouble" and "then" He brings us out of our distresses.**

**2 Corinthians 6:17-18, “Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the LORD ALMIGHTY.”**

**Application:** It is because our God and Father is the “ALMIGHTY” that .....

- He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to through Him – Christ (Hebrews 7:25)
- He is able to help those who are being tempted (Hebrews 2:18)
- He does not allow anything or anyone to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:39)
- He is able to transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power



that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself (**Philippians 3:21**)

- He is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us (**Ephesians 3:20**)
- He is able to keep us from stumbling and to present us blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy (**Jude 24**)

#### **(IV) OUR RESPONSIBILITY AND GOD'S RESPONSIBILITY**

In revealing to Abram that He is El-Shaddai, God enters into a **covenant** with Abram.

A **COVENANT** is a partnership between God and man where God makes His promises while man maintains his commitment to God.

This covenant made here is **conditional** while the covenant in **Genesis 15** is unconditional.

## OUR RESPONSIBILITY

**Verse 1 – When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless,**

**“Walk before me” is suggestive of a child running ahead and playing in the presence of his father, conscious of his perfect **SECURITY** because **HE IS JUST BEHIND.****

**Application:** We are to walk before God, conscious that our Father Almighty God is just behind us and therefore we can walk **securely without fear.**

**“Be blameless” means “to be upright”, “sincere”.**

The Hebrew word is *“tamin”* which means **PERFECTION** as is used to describe the perfect laws of the Lord (**Psalms 19:7**).

Simply put, to **“be blameless”** is to **“be perfect”**.

How could God say anything less?

What lower standard than that of **PERFECTION** can the **PERFECT ONE** say before us as His creatures?

We murmur when we hear such command from the LORD and we exclaim, *“It’s an impossible standard!”*

Then remember that it was El-Shaddai who gave it.

Who dare to talk about the impossibilities when the **ALMIGHTY** is our God and Father?

Has He not said, “**My grace is sufficient for thee?**”

Then do not accuse God with setting before us an unattainable standard.

Rather let us charge ourselves with the failure to rest upon His Almighty arms and confess with shame that the blame is ours through **not appropriating** His all-sufficient grace.

## **GOD’S RESPONSIBILITY**

In connection with the revelation of Himself as the **ALMIGHTY GOD**, the LORD God made

Abram a **composite promise** in which 7 times, He said, **“I will”**:

- I will make you exceedingly fruitful
- I will make nations of you and kings shall come forth from you
- I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you
- I will give to you, and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession
- I will be their God...And God said, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac

- I will establish my covenant with him (Isaac) as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him
- I will establish my covenant with Isaac

The relationship between the compound-promise and the title of the Deity used on the occasion of its utterance is the **PLEDGE OF ITS FULFILMENT**.

It is because all power is at His disposal; it is because He is sufficient in Himself, that the performing of all He has said is **SURE**.

What God says, He will do.

So sure is the fulfilment that in **verse 5**, the LORD says, **“for I HAVE MADE you the father of a multitude of nations”** (not “I will make you”).

To further exercise His sovereignty and lordship, God changes Abram's name to **ABRAHAM** and Sarai's name to **Sarah**(Verse 5).

This is a great exercise of God's power.

God's **RENAMING** of Abram and Sarai was nothing less than a **blessed reassertion of divine sovereignty over their lives.**

Abram's name meant **"exalted father"** and referred not to the patriarch but to God as exalted Father.

But when Abram's name was changed to Abraham, it referred to the man himself as **"father of a multitude"**.

The effect was that every time people called him *“Abraham”*, they reiterated God’s promise that he would be a father of a multitude.

In addition, Abraham’s astonishing name (*“father of a multitude”*) was matched by another astonishing revelation – *“and kings shall come forth from you”* (verse 6b).

It was beyond tent-dwelling Abraham’s dreams that such a thing could be!

But one thousand years later the founding of a line of kings in the Davidic dynasty began the fulfilment of this promise, which was ultimately fulfilled another thousand years later in the *advent of Jesus Christ, the king of the Jews.*



**So, every time Abraham and Sarah heard their new names, they would be reminded of God's promise and encouraged by His faithfulness.**

**This covenant, everlasting it may be from God's perspective, required a **RESPONSE** from Abraham and his seeds.**

**God also provided a **SYMBOL** of this human response.**

**Verse 9-11- And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep between me and you and your descendants after you: EVERY MALE AMONG YOU SHALL BE CIRCUMCISED. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and**

it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.”

As to its function as a sign, Ronald Youngblood explains:

*“As the rainbow is the sign of the Noahic covenant (**Genesis 9:13**), and as the Sabbath is the sign of the Sinaitic covenant (**Exodus 31:16-17**), so circumcision became the sign of the Abrahamic covenant (**Genesis 17:11**). The rainbow and the Sabbath already existed prior to the institution of the covenants they came to signify. So also, circumcision did not originate with Abraham. It was practiced in Egypt and elsewhere centuries before his time, but it received new meaning in **Genesis 17**. Similarly, thousands of people were crucified before the time of Jesus, but the*

*cross took on a vastly new and different meaning when our Lord was crucified.”*

Early on circumcision came to symbolize the **SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT OF ONE’S LIFE TO GOD.**

Moses wrote, “**And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live” (Deut 30:6).**

As a sign, circumcision functioned much as a wedding ring symbolizes **COMMITMENT.**

Circumcision was a **permanent, ineradicable sign.**

Circumcision is the **badge of the covenant.**

The Israelites did **NOT** circumcise themselves in order to become members of the covenant.

God **HAD** already made the covenant with them.

Circumcision occupied the same place that **good works** occupy for the believers today.

You do not perform good works in order to be saved; you perform good works because you have been saved.

Significantly, circumcision involved Abraham's **powers of procreation** – the area of life in which he had resorted to fleshly expediency – and had so failed.

**Man's best plans and strength of will would never bring about the promise.**

**For Abraham, circumcision was an act of repentance and a sign of dependance upon God for the promise.**

**The rite of circumcision itself is a reminder that covenants are solemnized through BLOOD.**

**Circumcision inflicts BLOOD AND PAIN.**

**The Almighty's instruction on circumcision concluded as he stated that it was an ESSENTIAL sign: "Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant" (verse 14).**

There was only **ONE** way – **GOD'S WAY**.

Circumcision was not an institution that could be dismissed.

Here in circumcision, we have an early warning that **there is no way but God's way**.

**Just as there was only one way under the old covenant, so there is only one way under the new, Jesus who made the new covenant with blood, said that he is the only way (John 14:6).**

**Application:** Today we have been circumcised as well – new covenant believers whose hearts have been transformed.

God has given us a new identity in Jesus Christ and two new covenant signs (**water baptism**

**and the Lord's supper)** to help us remember our relationship with him.

There are many people who think that if they join the church and are baptized, they will be saved.

**No!**

You don't do all these things to be saved.

If you are saved, you will do both of them- you will join a church and you will take the step of water baptism but you don't do that to get saved.

**Summary** -In establishing the covenant of circumcision, the LORD had announced his name as El-Shaddai, the Almighty, Omnipotent, Sovereign God, who can do anything. Abram became Abraham, **"father of**

**a multitude.” Sarai became Sarah, “the princess”. Together they would birth a royal dynasty of kings. Their yet-to be-conceived son was named Isaac – “laughter”- a sweet symbol of faith’s struggle.**

**Father Abraham lived out the obedience of faith on that very day.**

**Ninety-nine-year-old Abraham and thirteen-year-old Ishmael and every male in his household were circumcised.**

**It was the birthday of God’s covenant people.**

**Not all were saved that day.**

**But on that day, there was BLOOD AND PAIN, and there was LAUGHTER among the people of God.**



**Kings did come out of Abraham and Sarah.**

## **CONCLUSION**

**What Abraham had begun was completed by his **ULTIMATE SEED, Christ the King.****

**Jesus would say of his life, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him” (John 8:28-29).**

**For many of us who need God to be the God Almighty in our impossibilities, the long delays and our own failure, we know our part is to be perfect and blameless.**

But who can suffice for perfection and obedience?

2000 years ago, Jesus in **perfect obedience** said on the event of his crucifixion, **“This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood” (Luke 22:20).**

There was **PAIN AND BLOOD** that Good Friday as Jesus was nailed to the cross.

And the new covenant was launched.

Jesus underwent the **ULTIMATE CIRCUMCISION** so that we might receive the **ULTIMATE CIRCUMCISION OF THE HEART.**

**Colossians 2:11-14- In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by**

the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

Jesus' body was **CUT AWAY** for our sin.

He was **CUT OFF** from God for our sin and cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46).

And all of this was so that we might be "circumcised with a circumcision made

**without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.”**

**The question is, have you been made a new creation?**

**“Neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation” (Galatians 6:15).**

**The question is, have you believed? Do you have faith in Him?”**

**“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only FAITH working through love” (Galatians 5:6)**

**Message – For in Christ, neither our most conscientious religion nor disregard of religion amounts to anything. What matters is**

**something far more interior: faith expressed  
in love.**

**end**