

## El Shaddai: Genesis 17:1

---

1. Names
  - a. Why did your parents name you with your specific name?
    - i. Evan is a popular Welsh name that means “the Lord is gracious.”
    - ii. Evan has Hebrew origins and means “rock.”
    - iii. Evan is a shortened version of the Greek name Evangelos, meaning “good messenger.”
    - iv. We had a specific naming system for our children.
  - b. God calls Himself several different names.
    - i. We have talked a lot about I AM.
      1. We first read about I AM in [Exodus 3:13-14](#).
      2. God calls Himself YAHWEH in [Exodus 3:15](#).
    - ii. We have also learned about YAHWEH.
      1. Moses calls God YAHWEH from the very first chapter of Genesis.
      2. It is the being verb in the Hebrew meaning “to be.”
      3. Moses uses YAHWEH as God introduces Himself in [Genesis 17:1](#), “The LORD appeared to Abram...”
    - iii. We have not talked much about EL SHADDAI.
      1. It is translated as God Almighty.
      2. God introduces Himself to Abram as EL SHADDAI in [Genesis 17:1](#) “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,”
      3. It is significant that God changes Abram’s name to Abraham in this same text, from ‘Exalted Father’ to ‘Father of Many (nations).’
      4. [Genesis 17:1–5](#) “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, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.” Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. 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.”
      5. It is also significant that God gives us another one of His names, God Almighty.
  - c. El Shaddai or Shaddai is used 48 times in the Old Testament.
    - i. God names Himself El Shaddai or Shaddai 4 times.
    - ii. The author of Job uses the name 31 times in his book.
2. God Almighty Sees.
  - a. “To the outcast on her knees You were the God who really sees.”
  - b. [Genesis 16](#) starts the events surrounding Abram and Hagar (not to be confused with [Genesis 21](#) after Isaac is weaned).
    - i. [Genesis 16:1–3](#) “Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, “Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.” And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram’s wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife.”

- ii. Hagar is still Sarai's servant, but now also Abram's wife.
- iii. God promises Abram a child in [Genesis 15](#).
- iv. [Genesis 15:1-4](#) "After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.""
- v. "Be fruitful and multiply" God commanded Adam in the garden so it would be no secret that Abram and Sarai desired children but could not have any. After 10 years of waiting, it seemed that Sarai was a bit impatient, so she gave Abram her servant to be his wife as well.
- vi. "That barrenness was grounds for a divorce after a ten-year period is a rabbinic explanation for Sarai's actions" (Mathews, K. A. [Genesis 11:27-50:26](#). Vol. 1B. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005).
- vii. Abram is somewhere around 85 years old so Sarai is around 75 (well past child bearing age).
- viii. Abram's union with Hagar is fruitful and she becomes pregnant.
  - 1. She is still considered a slave to Sarai, just with a bit more status.
  - 2. Just like Rachel and Leah presented their handmaids to Jacob for wives.
- ix. [Genesis 16:4-5](#) "And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the Lord judge between you and me!"
  - 1. Literally, "grew small in her eyes."
  - 2. "Hagar viewed her conception as evidence of divine blessing, and by extension a curse against Sarai. Hagar thought she had gained greater status in Abram's household" (John D. Barry et al., Faithlife Study Bible (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), [Ge 16:4](#)).
- x. Sarai reacts to that and complains to Abram who tells her to do what is best for Hagar (not to do as she pleases).
  - 1. [Genesis 16:6](#) "But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her."
  - 2. "Dealt harshly" can easily be translated as "mistreated."
  - 3. By describing Hagar "in your [Abram's] arms," which literally is "in your [Abram's] midst/lap/breast", Sarai pictures the intimacy ("embrace," NRSV) they enjoyed at her expense. Abram plays on the complaint of Sarai by his retort, "Your servant [Hagar] is in your hands;" putting Hagar "in your [Sarai's] hands" rectifies the charge "in your arms." (K. A. Mathews, [Genesis 11:27-50:26](#), vol. 1B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005), 186.)
  - 4. Hagar saw escape as her only relief from Sarai's oppression.

- xi. [Genesis 16:7–8](#) “The angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. And he said, “Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?” She said, “I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai.””
  - 1. Hagar admits her status to the Angel (God), “fleeing MY MISTRESS Sarai.”
  - 2. The Angel (God) told her to return to Sarai.
    - a. The Angel (God) instructs Hagar to return to her oppressive life!
    - b. He follows that with a promise.
    - c. [Genesis 16:9–10](#) “The angel of the Lord said to her, “Return to your mistress and submit to her.” The angel of the Lord also said to her, “I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude.””
  - xii. In response, Hagar calls the LORD “a God who sees.”
- c. As this narrative winds down, chapter 17 begins, and we are introduced to El Shaddai.
- 3. God Almighty Sees Us.
  - a. Just as El Shaddai saw Hagar in her affliction, He sees us in our affliction.
  - b. “Though your word contained the plan they just could not understand. Your most awesome work was done through the frailty of your Son.
  - c. God’s Son is in response to humanity’s suffering.
  - d. Throughout the Bible God sees suffering and relieves it.
    - i. God knew the suffering of the Israelites under Egypt and raised Moses to free them.
      - 1. [Exodus 2:23–25](#) “During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.”
      - 2. God knew! God knows your suffering just like he knew of the Israelites under Egyptian bondage.
    - ii. God knew the suffering under the oppression of the Philistines, Midian, and others and raised the judges to free them.
      - 1. [Judges 2:18](#) “Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them.”
      - 2. The context of [Judges 2:18](#) is that of Israel running after false gods and worshiping them, yet God saved them from their oppression.
    - iii. God sends them off into captivity in Babylon, only to have Darius release them and return them to Canaan.
    - iv. God uses Rome to end the nation Israel, but not before the Messiah comes and frees all humanity once and for all.
  - e. The Messiah is the final redemption of humanity
    - i. [Ephesians 1:7–8](#) “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight”
    - ii. This redemption is final because nothing else is needed; His blood cleanses us of our sins and the Spirit guarantees our entrance into our final rest with God Almighty, El Shaddai.

- iii. This is a spiritual redemption (God is spirit).
- iv. We are not given much information about Stephen.
  - 1. In Acts chapter six he is chosen as a deacon to oversee the daily distribution of food to the widows.
  - 2. [Acts 6:8–9](#) “And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen.”
    - a. Stephen gives a great history lesson about Abraham, Joseph, and Moses with a few verses about Joshua, David, and Solomon.
    - b. [Acts 7:51–53](#) ““You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.””
  - 3. This ‘dispute’ ended with Stephen’s death.
    - a. As they were listening to Stephen, he made this statement.
    - b. [Acts 7:55–56](#) “But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.””
    - c. God sees Stephen trying to tell the religious leaders about the hardness of their hearts.
    - d. God sees Stephen under the oppression of the synagogue of the Freedmen as they are stoning him.
    - e. God sees Stephen as he intercedes for their sinful behavior.
    - f. God sees Stephen he dies from his wounds.
  - f. God sees us, He sees our suffering, He gives us His Son and His Spirit.
- 4. El Shaddai.
  - a. Truly, God is Almighty!
  - b. The God who sees our suffering.
  - c. The God who redeems the fallen.