

Genesis 17:1-27



THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT EXPANDED

Notes on the Reading, Genesis 17



- v. 1 - " I am God Almighty."

“God Almighty,” El Shaddai



- *Shaddai* occurs 48x in the OT and is prefaced by *el* (God) seven times: Gen 17:1; Gen 28:3; Gen 35:11; Gen 43:14; Gen 48:3; Exo 6:3; Ezek 10:5. The remaining 41x *shaddai* stands alone.
- The traditional translation is “Almighty.” The LXX, translated *shaddai* as *pantokrator* “all powerful.” Likewise, the Vulgate, *omnipotens*. The rabbis understood the meaning of word as “the one who is (self-)sufficient.”
- The two main modern suggestions include: 1) *Shaddai* is to be connected with the Hebrew verb *shadad* “to destroy,” hence “my destroyer,” cf. Joel 1:15; 2) The most widely accepted is that *shaddai* is connected with the Akkadian word, *šadu* “mountain.” Thus El Shaddai would translate into English something like “God of the mountain,” i.e. God's abode.
- As El Shaddai God manifested himself to the patriarchs (Exo 6:3): specifically to Abraham, Gen 17:1; to Isaac, Gen 28:3; and to Jacob, Gen 35:11; Gen 43:14; Gen 48:3. The context for most of these references is the covenant, more precisely the command for obedience and faithfulness on the part of the vassal and the promise of progeny by God.
- Source: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*

Names of God in Genesis (so far encountered)



| Hebrew Name | English Equivalent |
|---|--|
| El(ohim) | “God” |
| Yahveh, read “Adonai” | “LORD,” Gen 15:7 |
| Yahveh Elohim, read “Adonai Elohim” | “LORD God,” Gen 2:4 |
| Adonai Yahveh, read “Adonai Elohim” | “Lord GOD,” Gen 15:2,8 |
| El Elyon; Yahveh El Elyon, read “Adonai El Elyon” | “God Most High,” “LORD God Most High,” Gen 14:18 ff. |
| El Roi | “God who sees,” Gen 16:13 |
| El Shaddai | “God Almighty,” Gen 17:1 |

The Covenant Becomes Operative, Gen. 17:2



And I will make [lit., “put/give” but in covenant context may mean “to confirm”] my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

The Expansion of the Covenant, Gen. 17:3-8



³ And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

⁴ As for me, behold,

my covenant is with thee,

and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

⁵ Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, [“exalted father”]

but thy name shall be Abraham; [“father of a multitude”]

for a father of many nations have I made thee.

⁶ And I will make thee exceeding fruitful,

and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

⁷ And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

⁸ And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession;

and I will be their God.

The Sign of the Covenant, Gen. 17:9-14



9 And God said unto Abraham,

And as for thee, thou shalt keep my covenant [sign], thou, and thy seed after thee throughout their generations.

10 This is my covenant [sign], which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee: every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 And ye shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of a covenant betwixt me and you. 12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any foreigner that is not of thy seed. 13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant. (ASV)

The Significance of Circumcision



- Circumcision given as a sign to help identify the coming “seed,” Compare Luke 2:21-22; Matt 3:15; Phil 3:3-5.
- An illustration of the removal of the body of the flesh, Col. 2:9-11; cf., Josh 5.
- A sign of faith-righteousness, Romans 4:9-12.
- A commitment “to the Lord,” Jer. 4:4.
- A commitment to the Lord’s people, Gen. 17:14.

The Covenant Family, Gen. 17:15-21



15 And God said unto Abraham,

As for Sarai thy wife,

thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.

16 And I will bless her, and moreover

I will give thee a son of her:

yea, I will bless her,

and she shall be a mother of nations;

kings of peoples shall be of her.

17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart,

Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old?

and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

18 And Abraham said unto God, Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!

19 And God said, Nay,

but Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son;

and thou shalt call his name Isaac:

and I will establish my covenant with him

for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him.

20 And as for Ishmael,

I have heard thee:

behold, I have blessed him,

and will make him fruitful,

and will multiply him exceedingly;

twelve princes shall he beget,

and I will make him a great nation.

21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. (ASV)

The Obedience of Abraham, Gen. 17:22-27



22 And he left off talking with him,
and God went up from Abraham.

23 And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him.

24 And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 25 And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 26 In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. 27 And all the men of his house, those born in the house, and those bought with money of a foreigner, were circumcised with him. (ASV)