

El Shaddai

אל שדי

Hymn 83

I'd like to begin with one of my favorite Scriptures - Genesis 17:1:

“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am **the Almighty God**; walk before me, and be thou perfect.”

I've always loved this Scripture. It's such a beautifully clear and direct statement from God of His omnipotence and that we should strive for perfection, before Him, simply because He is our **Almighty God**. But, now I have a greater appreciation of this Scripture, because I understand it better and I hope after this talk, you will also have a greater appreciation of it and the other Scriptures that relate to our subject.

For the serious Bible Student, it might have been better had the Bible translators handled God's names differently. Many Bible translations have obscured our understanding of God's attributes because of their generic renderings of God's names. Each of God's names tells us something different about His magnificent character and being. So today we're going to get better acquainted with God by examining the meanings of some of His many Bible names.

The basic form for the Hebrew name of God is spelled 'E' – 'L' for "El". The word "El" comes from a root word meaning "might, strength, power".

In Scripture, the primary translations of this root are "god" – lower case "g" for pagan or false gods, and, "God"- upper case "G" - the true God of Israel.

Sometimes "El" is translated - "the mighty" - referring to men or angels. When used of the true God of Israel, "El" is almost always qualified by additional names that further define the qualities that distinguish our true God from false gods. I'll give a few examples:

El Elyon: "The Most High God" – Psalm 9:2:

"I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, **O thou most High.**"

El Olam: "The Everlasting God" - Isaiah 26:4:

“Trust ye in Jehovah for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is **everlasting strength.**”

El Chaiya (El hai-yai'): “The God of my life” - Psalm 42:8

“Yet Jehovah will command his lovingkindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the **God of my life.**”

These are just a few of the “El” ‘plus’ qualifier names of God in the Old Testament. We won't have the time to cover all of God's names in depth because today I want to particularly focus on God's name of **El Shaddai**.

But first I want to make clear that in focusing on God's name, “**El Shaddai**,” I'm not trying to diminish Our Heavenly Father's name – “**Jehovah**” in any way. I'm not saying we should start referring to God as **El Shaddai** all the time. The idea is to understand **Jehovah** better by understanding **El Shaddai** better.

We know Jehovah is the “**Self Existing One**”, “**The Eternal One**”, and this will always be God's **primary** name.

“**Jehovah**”, is the name that God gave to himself in Exodus 3: 13 – 15:

“And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, what is his name? What shall I say unto them?”

And God said unto Moses, **I AM THAT I AM:** (the self-existent one – Jehovah) and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM (Jehovah) hath sent me unto you.

And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.”

Isaiah 42:8

“I am Jehovah; this is my name, and my glory will I not give to another.....”

Psalm 83:18

“That men may know that thou whose name alone is Jehovah, art El Elyon, the Most High over all the earth.”

God's name **Jehovah** is what is known as the Tetragrammaton, the name traditionally translated in many English language bibles as "The LORD" - in all upper case letters. The Greek word "Tetragrammaton" literally means "four-letters", because "**Jehovah**" comes from the four letters "**JHWH**" transliterated from the four equivalent Hebrew characters.

Incidentally, some Bible translations **do** render the Tetragrammaton as Jehovah, which is very helpful. For instance, The American Standard Version, 1901 edition, consistently renders the Tetragrammaton as Jehovah in all 6,823 places where it occurs in the Old Testament.

In *The Emphatic Diaglott*, the name 'Jehovah' is translated properly 18 times.

So with this background, we can begin to discuss our primary theme and answer our primary questions:

We know that Jehovah is God's primary name, but what does God's name, El Shaddai, tell us about our Heavenly Father? In becoming more familiar with God's name, El Shaddai, what can we learn about God's being and character? And how can we translate that knowledge into a closer walk with God?

Now, let's reread Genesis 17:1, substituting the proper names of God.

"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, **Jehovah** appeared to Abram and said unto him, I am **El Shaddai**; walk before me, and be thou perfect."

Genesis 17:1 is the first occurrence in the Bible of God's name, **El Shaddai**.

After reading this verse with El Shaddai's proper name, it occurred to me: Why does God all of a sudden have a new name in this Bible verse?

Who is El Shaddai, and what can we learn about him?

In researching the answers to all of these questions, I did a search and found only two references in Brother Russell's writings where **El Shaddai** is even mentioned, and these (Reprints 988 and 1410), while excellent, don't really shed much light on the actual meaning of the name. In the Fifth Volume, Br. Russell covers the other names for God, especially His primary name, **Jehovah**, but for whatever reason, **El Shaddai**, is not covered.

So we have to use sanctified comment sense while using other sources to research the meaning of **El Shaddai**.

If we try to find **EI Shaddai** in Strong's Concordance, He isn't found under the English words "God" or "Lord". I believe this is one reason EI Shaddai has been somewhat obscure.

EI Shaddai is found in Strong's under the English word "**Almighty**" -- Strong's number 7706. Strong's renders the meaning of **EI Shaddai** as simply "Almighty" and this is an instance where Strong's is not as elaborate as we might like.

I did find other fascinating information in other reference materials and one of the best is from the Schofield Reference Bible. I've edited the Schofield Bible comments on Genesis 17:1 to make them more relevant to our study:

"**EI Shaddai** is the name of God characteristically used by the patriarchs prior to the giving of the law at Sinai. The name **Jehovah** largely replaces it from Exodus Chapter Six onward, where attention is centered more particularly on Israel as God's covenant people.

EI Shaddai, is the name of God which sets Him forth primarily as the strengthener and satisfier of His people.

The etymological signification of **EI Shaddai** is both interesting and touching. God (EI) signifies the "Strong One". The qualifying word Shaddai is formed from the Hebrew word "shad," the breast..... Shaddai therefore means primarily "the breasted." God is "Shaddai," because He is the Nourisher, the Strength-giver, and so, in a secondary sense, the Satisfier, who pours himself into believing lives.

As a fretful, unsatisfied babe is not only strengthened and nourished from the mother's breast, but also is quieted, rested, and satisfied, **EI Shaddai** is that name of God which sets Him forth as the Strength-giver and Satisfier of His people.

It is on every account to be regretted that "Shaddai" was translated "Almighty." The primary name EI or Elohim sufficiently signifies almightiness.

"All-sufficient" would far better express both the Hebrew meaning and the characteristic use of the name in Scripture.

EI Shaddai not only enriches, but also makes fruitful. This is nowhere better illustrated than in the first occurrence of the name in Genesis 17:1. To a man ninety-nine years of age, and "as good as dead" (Hebrews 11:12), He said: "I Am EI Shaddai ... I will . . . multiply thee exceedingly."

As the Giver of fruitfulness, El Shaddai chastens His people. For the moral connection of chastening with fruit bearing, see John 15:2, Hebrews 12:10, and Ruth 1:20. Hence, El Shaddai is the characteristic name of God in the Book of Job, occurring thirty-one times in that book. The hand of El Shaddai falls upon Job, the best man of his time, not in judgment, but in purifying unto greater fruitfulness.”

Professor Adam Clarke’s amplified rendition of El Shaddai from Genesis 17:1 confirms Schofield’s comments:

“I am God **all-sufficient**; from the Hebrew *Shadah*, to shed, to pour out. I am that God who pours out blessings, who gives them richly, abundantly, continually.”

So we can better understand this beautiful aspect of God’s character when he is referred to as **El Shaddai**. We can combine these two named attributes of His Being into our **All-Powerful** and **All-Sufficient God – El Shaddai**. He is able to meet our every need and protect us from any danger to our spiritual lives. There isn’t any circumstance that can arise that He’s not able to meet and overcome for us. We may have temporal difficulties, but our faith and trust in El Shaddai will turn any temporal difficulty into a spiritual blessing for our eternal interests.

Our responsibility is to manifest complete faith and trust in Him. Then, we can have perfect peace of mind in His all-sufficient grace. We must supply our best effort, which will always be too weak and insufficient to overcome all of our imperfections, but **El Shaddai** will supply whatever is needed to make up for our shortcomings.

I particularly like that God’s name, **El Shaddai**, describes not only what God **is**, but also what He **does** for us. It’s extremely important to know what God is, but isn’t it also important to know what God does? Of course it is, and God’s name El Shaddai helps us to know this. El Shaddai sustains us, nourishes us, comforts us, and provides for us everything we need. This should make us more grateful, more peaceful; and should make us feel our complete dependence upon Him. Knowing God as El Shaddai, should help us to more readily praise Jehovah, our Heavenly Father, in all of life’s experiences.

The next Scripture we want to examine is Exodus 6: 2 & 3. I’ll read the Scripture, including God’s proper names:

“And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am **Jehovah**; And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of **El Shaddai**, (“**The All Mighty, All Sufficient God**”) but by my name **JEHOVAH** (“**The Self Existing, Eternal One**”), was I not known to them.”

In this Scripture, **EI Shaddai**, is contrasted with Jehovah: But, is it true that the patriarchs only knew God by the name, **EI Shaddai** and not by the name **Jehovah**? What does this Scripture really mean?

Dr. Adam Clarke

“But by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.” This passage has been a sort of *crux criticorum* (*meaning a puzzle, a stumbling block*), and has been variously explained. It is certain that the name Jehovah **was** in use long before the days of Abraham, see Genesis 2:4, where the words Jehovah Elohim occur, as they do frequently afterwards; and see Genesis 15:2, where Abraham expressly addresses him by the name Adonai JEHOVAH; and see Genesis 15:7, where God reveals himself to Abraham by this very name: “And he said unto him, I am **JEHOVAH**, that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees.”

“I believe the simple meaning is this, that though from the beginning the name JEHOVAH was known as one of the names of the Supreme Being, yet what it **really** implied they did not know. EI-Shaddai, God All-sufficient, they knew well by the continual provision he made for them, and the constant protection he afforded them: but the name JEHOVAH refers particularly to the accomplishment of promises already made; to giving them a being, and thus bringing them into existence, which could **not** have been done in the order of his providence sooner than here specified: this name therefore in its **power and significance** was **not** known unto them; nor **fully** known unto their descendants till the deliverance from Egypt and the settlement in the promised land.

It is surely possible for a man to bear the name of a certain office or dignity before he fulfills any of its functions. King, mayor, alderman, magistrate, constable, may be borne by the several persons to whom they legally belong, before any of the acts peculiar to those offices are performed. The KING, acknowledged as such on his coronation, is known to be such by his legislative acts; the civil magistrate, by his distribution of justice, and issuing warrants for the apprehending of culprits; and the constable, by executing those warrants. All these were known to have their respective names, but the exercise of their powers alone shows what is implied in being king, magistrate, and constable.”

So, from this it seems clear that the Patriarchs, and even Adam, knew God by both names – **Jehovah and EI Shaddai**. This is confirmed when we read Genesis 4:25 & 26:

“And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: **then** began men to call upon the **name of Jehovah.**”

Since Adam lived seven hundred years after Seth begat Enos, he would have been one of those that knew Jehovah by name.

The Patriarchs frequently used God's name of **EI Shaddai**, but then its usage became infrequent after the Law Covenant was established. **EI Shaddai** is used in the Scriptures 42 times, during the time of the Abrahamic Covenant and only six times after the Law Covenant was added. God's name, EI Shaddai, is used most often in the Book of Job. Since Job lived in Patriarchal times, we see that the Book of Job would have been written before the Book of Exodus was written. This fits very well with my view that EI Shaddai was **primarily** a patriarchal name for God.

Why did the patriarchs know God as **EI Shaddai**?

I appreciated this from Vines Expository Dictionary:

"EI Shaddai served as the patriarch's covenant name for "God" and continued as such until the time of Moses, when a further revelation took place. (I believe Vines is saying that Exodus 6:3 was the turning point in the **Biblical** usage of **EI Shaddai**.)

Continuing with Vines, and I want to **really emphasize these thoughts**:

"The Abrahamic covenant was marked by a degree of **closeness** between God and the human participants that was distinctive in Hebrew history. EI Shaddai revealed Himself as a powerful deity who was able to perform whatever He asserted. But the degree of intimacy between EI Shaddai and the patriarchs at various stages shows that the covenant involved God's **care and love** for this growing family that He had chosen, protected, and prospered. He led the covenant family from place to place, being **obviously** present with them at all times." Unquote.

So we see that the Patriarchs were extremely close to **EI Shaddai**, our Heavenly Father. They depended on Him for everything in everyday life. They were a pastoral people. They depended on their crops and herds for food. If there was a severe drought, or a disease in their herds, they could starve to death. They didn't have unemployment benefits, retirement plans, 401ks, or Social Security to fall back on when times got rough. They had EI Shaddai, and that was all they needed.

So, this brings us to the next primary focus of our talk today - relating this **closeness** that the patriarchs felt to **EI Shaddai** to the closeness we should feel to our Heavenly Father today.

Hopefully, each of us feels the closeness of God's Almighty power and His All-Sufficient grace. Hopefully, we're growing day-by-day in our faith and simple trust in His overruling Providence.

In this regard, I found these inspiring thoughts from a devotional book. We can take them to our hearts and apply them to our lives:

"The circumstances of her life she could not alter, but she took them to the Lord, and handed them over into his **management**; and then she **believed** that He took it, and she left all the responsibility and the worry and anxiety with Him. As often as the anxieties returned she took them back; and the result was that, although the circumstances remained unchanged, her soul was kept in perfect peace in the midst of them. And the secret she found so effectual in her outward affairs, she found to be still more effectual in her inward ones, which were in truth even more utterly unmanageable.

She abandoned her whole self to the Lord, with all that she was and all that she had; and, believing that He took that which she had committed to Him, she ceased to fret and worry, and her life became all sunshine in the gladness of belonging to Him."

Now, let's look at some other Scriptures where EI Shaddai is used and see if this might help us to get even closer to our All-Sufficient, Covenant-Keeping God.

We find that when the patriarchs wanted to give the strongest assurance to those that were going on a dangerous mission, they used the Divine name EI Shaddai.

Genesis 28:1 – 4

"And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother.

And EI Shaddai bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;

And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham."

Here Isaac blessed Jacob in his journey to find Rachel. Just as Abraham had sent Eliezer to find a covenant-wife for Isaac, now Isaac sent Jacob to find a covenant-wife. Both were charged to find wives, not from the Canaanites, but from Abraham's extended family.

The patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all under the Abrahamic Covenant – a Covenant of Grace. Brethren, we as consecrated Christians, are also under a Grace Covenant and we, like Jacob, **who here typified the New Creation**, have been sent on a journey and blessed by the antitypical Isaac, our Lord Jesus Christ. So, we can repeat this blessing transferring the thought from the type to the antitype as coming from our Lord Jesus to us:

“May El Shaddai bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;

And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.”

Now, that helps me to reinforce the thought that, antitypically, our Savior assures us in this blessing that El Shaddai, the **Almighty, All sufficient One** will be with us all the way in our dangerous journey through life. He is always near, always sufficient for any contingency that might arise in our Walk. In the Promised Land, the Patriarchs had complete trust in El Shaddai. If we can completely trust Him now, then we can rest in full assurance of faith in our spiritual inheritance in the Promised Land.

The next Scripture where El Shaddai is used is also interesting. Again, the patriarchs invoke the name of El Shaddai when a special blessing is needed. It's usually linked to a confirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant or in the case of some dire circumstance where God's Almighty power and All Sufficient grace is required to surmount the difficulty.

In Genesis 35: 9 – 12, God confirms the Covenant to Jacob and changes Jacob's name to Israel.

“And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but **Israel** shall be thy name: and he called his name **Israel**. And God said unto him, **I am El Shaddai**: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.”

After this confirmation, Jacob journeyed to Bethlehem where his wife, Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin. Then Jacob traveled to Hebron where his father, Isaac, also died. So we see that this revelation to Jacob of El Shaddai as his All Mighty, All Sufficient, God, was a specially needed blessing. It was a great reassurance to Jacob to have the covenant confirmed to him and to have the special assurance that El Shaddai would be with him throughout his covenant walk.

Subsequently, Jacob's beloved son, Joseph, was sold into Egypt, and Jacob was deceived by his other sons into thinking that Joseph was dead.

Genesis 37:35:

“And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.”

Even though Rachel, Isaac, and Joseph - the three people that Jacob loved the most were gone, and no one on earth could comfort him, **El Shaddai** comforted him and there was nothing that he and **El Shaddai** could not handle together.

Later, Judah promised Jacob that he would go back to Egypt as surety for Benjamin. But before sending Judah back to Joseph, Jacob asked the blessing of El Shaddai upon him in Genesis 43:14:

“And **El Shaddai** give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.”

Years later, the time came when Jacob was on his death bed, and Joseph brought his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim to be blessed in Genesis 48:3 & 4:

“And Jacob said unto Joseph, **El Shaddai** appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.”

Then in Genesis 49:25 Jacob gave his final blessing to all of his sons just before he passed away:

“Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by **El Shaddai**, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb.”

Now, beginning with the usage of **EI Shaddai** in the Book of Ruth and the Book of Job we can begin to understand an additional aspect of what our God does for His people. He wounds to heal. He permits short-term pain for long-term blessings. God's people don't always fully understand his Grace when they're in the midst of a painful experience, but we must fully trust our All-Powerful, All-Sufficient, God. EI Shaddai, only allows experiences that bless us, if we take them in the right way.

As told in the Book of Ruth, Naomi, her husband Elimelech, and their two sons left Bethlehem-Judah because of a famine and traveled to Moab. Within ten years of entering Moab, Naomi's husband and two sons died.

Naomi was downcast and confused. If her God was All-Mighty, All-Sufficient, why would he allow her husband and her sons to die so quickly?

To answer this, we have to look at the big picture - the long-term picture. EI Shaddai looks at the big picture. He takes the long view, so to speak.

Should Elimelech have taken Naomi and his sons and left Bethlehem to go to Moab in the first place? No, since EI Shaddai is All-Sufficient, He would have taken care of them in the Promised Land. To leave the Promised Land was to leave God's Promises, to leave God's Covenant Land and People and God never blesses that. Had Elimelech had a stronger faith, he would have kept his family in Judah and waited for EI Shaddai to bless his faithfulness.

EI Shaddai's general rule is that short-term satisfaction of fleshly desires will not bring long-term happiness. Let's remember that when we make our day-to-day decisions.

When we make choices that separate us from God and His people, God does the best thing He can do for us. He allows afflictions so we will return to Him. That's what He did for Naomi. He took away what was keeping her from Him. She would have stayed in Moab, if her husband and sons were allowed to live.

So EI Shaddai took them away; and Naomi gave her daughter-in-laws the choice of staying in Moab or going with her back to the Promised Land. One of the two returned to Moab. But Ruth chose to stay with Naomi, and I believe it was at least partly because Ruth had respect for what Naomi had told her about EI Shaddai.

Ruth gave us this beautiful word picture of consecration to El Shaddai in her reply to Naomi in Ruth 1:16 & 17:

"Entreat me not to leave thee, And to return from following after thee;
For whither thou goest, I will go; And where thou lodgest, I will lodge;
Thy people shall be my people, And thy God, my God;
Where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried.
The Lord do so to me, and more also, If aught but death part thee and me."

When Naomi and Ruth returned, the people of Bethlehem said, "Is this Naomi?" (Naomi means "loveable", "pleasant" or the "pleasure of Jehovah".) Naomi responded in Ruth 1:20 & 21:

"And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara ("bitter"):
for **El Shaddai** hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and Jehovah hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing Jehovah hath testified against me, and **El Shaddai** hath afflicted me?"

After Naomi and Ruth returned to the Promised Land, what was the long-term result?

Well, if Naomi had stayed in Moab and never returned to Judah, we never would have heard of Naomi or Ruth. There wouldn't be a Book of Ruth in the Bible. It was the return to **El Shaddai** that allowed **El Shaddai** to bless Naomi and Ruth.

One of the guiding principles of this lesson is stated in James 4:8:

"Draw near to God and he will draw near to you."

Because Naomi and Ruth returned to the Promised Land, Ruth married Boaz and as King David's grandmother, became identified through the line of Mary, with David's greatest Son and Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ. Because Ruth chose to draw near to God in consecration, she received **eternal** blessings.

Now, let's examine the usage of El Shaddai in the Book of Job.

Since El Shaddai is used 31 times in the Book of Job, we'll only have time to discuss the first and last occurrences.

When we read the Book of Job, we have to remember that we're reading Hebrew poetry. The Hebrew poetry in the Book of Job compares the context of the first phrase with the next phrase. Hebrew poetry matches thoughts, not rhyme or meter.

Beginning with Job 5:17 & 18, we read the words of Eliphaz to Job:

“Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.”

In this, as in many of the occurrences in the Book of Job, the All sufficient, El Shaddai is compared with God – El-oah. So, if we transfer the meaning of the names to the respective poetic comparison phrases, then we have this translation.

“Behold, happy is the man whom El-oah (“the Majestic God”) correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of El Shaddai (the “All Sufficient God”): For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.”

The last usage of El Shaddai in the Book of Job is in Chapter 40, reading verses 1 & 2, with God’s names rendered from Hebrew.

“Moreover Jehovah (the Eternal One) answered Job, and said, Shall he that contendeth with El Shaddai (the All-Mighty, All-Sufficient One) instruct him? he that reproveth El-oah (the Majestic God), let him answer it.”

Now a heathen might read these verses and say, “Why, there are three names for God here. There must be at least three Gods. But, of course, that is not at all what God is trying to tell us with His multiple names. If God only wanted to have one descriptive name for himself, He certainly could have had the Bible written that way. God’s descriptive names are used by the Bible writers to describe God and they are used by God in the Bible to describe Himself. The fact that God has used many different Bible names to describe Himself tells us that **one** name was not enough to describe Him in any human language.

So, we see that these readings from the Book of Job are particularly descriptive of our God’s character and being. God is Eternal. He is Majestic. He is All-Mighty and All-Sufficient. It would be unfortunate, if we were to **always** read these very descriptive names generically as “God” or ‘Lord’. When possible, we should dig deeper to translate and really understand God’s descriptive names.

God’s name, El Shaddai, was also invoked by the prophets. It occurs once in the book of Isaiah, twice in Ezekiel, and its last occurrence in the Old Testament is in Joel.

In Isaiah 13:6, Isaiah foretold the doom of Christendom.

“Howl ye; for the day of Jehovah is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from El Shaddai.”

It was necessary for Christendom to be taken away as part of the preparation for the incoming Kingdom of Christ and El Shaddai, the Almighty God, was All-Sufficient for the task.

The prophet Ezekiel’s name ends with ‘e’ and ‘l’, “el” which we know is a name for God. “Ezekiel” means, “*God will strengthen*”.

Interestingly, the two occurrences of El Shaddai in Ezekiel both compare the sound of the “living creature’s” wings and the cherubim’s wings to the voice of El Shaddai.

Ezekiel 1:24

“And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of El Shaddai, the voice of speech, as the noise of a host...”

Now as I read Ezekiel 10:4 & 5, listen for the particular way the prophet uses God’s names. God’s names aren’t used randomly in Scripture. In each case, they’re carefully designed to give descriptive meanings. They give emphasis to particular aspects of Jehovah’s character, or particular actions El Shaddai will perform.

“Then the glory of The Eternal One went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of The Eternal One’s glory.

And the sound of the cherubims’ wings was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of The All-Sufficient One when he speaketh.”

The prophet Joel’s name also ends with ‘e’ and ‘l’, “el”. Joel means “*Jehovah is our God*”.

Joel 1:15

“Alas for the day! for the day of Jehovah is at hand, and as a destruction from El Shaddai shall it come.”

Here, God as the Eternal Jehovah has marked the time for destruction, but God as El Shaddai will carry out the sentence through His All-Mighty and All-Sufficient power.

The generic translations of God's names makes Bible reading more fluid, but taking the time to examine the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek names with their descriptive, amplified meanings can help us better understand the breadth and depth of God's being and character as intended by the Bible writers and by God Himself.

Now when we come to the New Testament, there's a significant change in the way God is referenced in Scripture.

Jesus begins to refer to God as "**Our Father**" when he gives us the model prayer of Matthew 6:9:

"After this manner therefore pray ye: **Our Father** which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."

Jesus is the first person in Scripture to begin referring to God as "**my heavenly Father**", and "**our and your heavenly Father**", and this is just what we would expect given our knowledge of the Divine Plan of the Ages. Jesus only used these terms in the presence of his disciples; they were not applied to others who were not yet prospective sons.

We know that Jesus was the first son of God, and he came to give us the opportunity to also become sons of God as we are told in John 1:14:

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of **the Father,**) full of grace and truth."

And 1 John 3: 1 & 2:

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

We know that prior to Jesus, the most that anyone could hope for was to be a dying, servant of God. But, our Savior's sacrifice changed all that and opened up "the new and **living Way**."

The Greek word translated “Almighty” in the New Testament is from Strong’s 3841 “- *pan-tok-rat’-or* – *the all-ruling*, i.e. *God* (as absolute and universal sovereign): *Almighty, Omnipotent.*” It’s used nine times in the New Testament, eight of which are in Revelation. The term “Almighty” according to the Scriptural contexts in the Book of Revelation sometimes refers to Jehovah and sometimes refers to our Lord Jesus Christ, coming in great power and glory. This is reasonable, and in perfect harmony with the Divine Plan of the Ages. We know that Jehovah made Christ “*Almighty*” at his resurrection as Jesus stated in Matthew 28:18 before his final ascension:

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

Jesus refers to himself as **Almighty** in Revelation 1:8:

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Revelation 15:3, refers to Jehovah as **Almighty**.

“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, **Lord God Almighty**; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.”

Before I close, I want to read a couple of Scriptures that declare the almighty power of our Heavenly Father.

Psalm 77:10 – 15

“And I said, This is **my** infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High (el elyon – The Supreme God). I will remember the works of Jehovah (the Eternal One): surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings. Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God? **Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people.** Thou hast with thine arm (speaking of our Lord Jesus) redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph.”

The last Scripture we want to examine is Psalm 91: 1 - 3, a very powerful Scripture in any translation, but I personally feel it to be even more powerful when we render the Hebrew proper names and meanings. In these verses David represents our Lord Jesus, addressing his Church.

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High (el elyon – The Supreme God) shall abide under the shadow of El Shaddai (the All-Sufficient One). I will say of Jehovah (the Self-Existing One), He is my refuge and my fortress: my (elohiym) Supreme God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.”

Jesus is telling his Church that we, who are in close fellowship with Jehovah, have nothing to fear despite the many dangers that surround us because our God will protect us. To emphasize this, and to more forcefully describe our Heavenly Father, he invokes four of God’s names – Jehovah, el elyon, elohiym, and El Shaddai.

If we abide in the Secret Place of consecration in the antitypical Tabernacle, close to Jehovah, close to El Shaddai, then we’ve nothing to fear, for our God is Immortal, Supreme, All Mighty, and All-Sufficient. He will cover us and protect us from any evil that could possibly harm our spiritual interests. I’m sure you’re all familiar with Reprint 1560, where we have our Pastor’s eloquent description of our All-Sufficient God:

“The Psalmist says, “The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over **all** his works.” This sweeping statement takes in the utmost bounds of the material universe and also the humblest, as well as the most exalted, sentient being. The whole creation is his care. Jehovah, our God, is the great Emperor of the whole universe, and his wisdom, power, goodness and benevolence are abundantly equal to all the responsibilities of so exalted an office. The human mind staggers in its efforts to comprehend the mental resources of a being who is able to assume and to bear such responsibility.

Think for a moment of the memory that never fails; of the judgment that never errs; of the wisdom that plans for eternity without the possibility of failure, and that times that plan with unerring precision for the ages to come; of the power and skill which can harness even every opposing element, animate or inanimate, and make them all work together for the accomplishment of his grand designs; of the tireless vigilance that never ceases, nor seeks relief from the pressing cares of universal dominion--whose eye never sleeps, whose ear is ever open, and who is ever cognizant of all the necessities, and active in all the interests, of his broad domains.”

In closing, I’d like to give a final meaning of our Heavenly Father’s name - “El Shaddai”, which is: “**The Lord Will Provide**” - and we will sing that thought in our closing hymn.

I pray that **El Shaddai, our Heavenly Father**, will add His blessing to each of you today and always.

Hymn 121