

# El Shaddai, God Almighty

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## Nourisher, Sustainer, All-Sufficient God

*When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, 'I am God Almighty, walk before me and be blameless.'*" (Genesis 17:1, NIV)

The LORD *Jehovah* gave Abram a revelation of Himself when He introduced Himself with the title, God Almighty, *El Shaddai* [EL-SHA-DYE]. This is a wonderfully encouraging picture of God for us today because *El Shaddai* reveals both the all-powerful and most-tender sides of His nature.

*El* in Hebrew is the shortened form of *Elohim*, our Creator God, and *Shaddai* is Hebrew for Almighty. *El Shaddai* is our all-powerful God who can create something from nothing, who can bring to life that which has no breath; nothing is too difficult for Him. But to understand the full significance of God's character as revealed in this title, it's to help understand that there is a word play between *shaddai* and *shad*, which means *breast*—different Hebrew words that sound alike. This indicates a quality of tenderness in God Almighty, like a mother feeding a baby. *El Shaddai* is our God who nourishes us, sustains us, our all-bountiful God who has an endless supply of whatever we need at the most personal level.

For this reason, *El Shaddai* could be translated as our all-powerful Nourisher or Sustainer, our all-sufficient God, or—our personal favorite (from T.W. Hunt in *Disciple's Prayer Life*)—the Out-Pourer of Blessings. He is All-Powerful and He has unlimited resources to meet our needs and bring His blessing into our lives.

Our God is as faithful as He is powerful, giving Abraham and Sarah their promised son Isaac despite the fact that they were well past child-bearing age. Just as *El Shaddai* brought forth the fruit of life through Abraham and Sarah, so Christ the true Vine continues to bring forth spiritual life and fruit from our lives today. Abraham and Sarah could do nothing on their own; neither can we (John 15:5).

When we are desiring that we and others will grow strong and mature in our faith, abiding in Christ to bear the much fruit of His promise, it is appropriate to focus our worship on *El Shaddai*, our Nourisher and Sustainer, the Out-Pourer of Blessings, and on Jesus as our life-sustaining, life-giving Vine. It clearly acknowledges the side of His character that is all-powerful and completely faithful when we desire to be blessed to be a blessing (Genesis 12:1-2; Romans 4:16-17) for His kingdom and glory.

**Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name....** (Psalm 105:1a, NIV)