

HOW TO BE BLESSED

SERIES ON THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM

IF GOD NAMES IT, DON'T DOUBT IT (Week 5)

OPENING: Share briefly what your name means. Is there a story why your parents chose to give you that name?

DIG DEEPER:

Names are important and naming is prophetic. An ancient Jewish rabbi wrote: For at the beginning of life we are given a name, and at the end of life it is what others remember, and it is that name that we take to eternity. This section in Abram's life, we find the great importance of names and what role they play in the fulfillment of God's promises to him.

God introduces Himself with the name "El-Shaddai" (Genesis 17:1-2).

In the previous chapters, God is always referred to simply as the LORD. This is the first time God declares His name—"I am God Almighty." That name by which God introduces Himself is the very foundation of everything we believe in and everything we could ever hope for; every promise and all of its fulfillment come from that name! All that we are comes from that name and all that we will be depends on that name—El Shaddai!

- The answer to every prayer request we speak out loud or keep in our hearts springs forth from that name. What is your biggest prayer item this week?
- El Shaddai is a name of God that points to His ultimate power over all (Job 42:2). When we pray and present our requests to God, we say "amen" at the end as a declaration of faith. We also close our prayers with the phrase, "in Jesus' name" because He commanded us to (John 14:13-14).
- When God revealed Himself with that name, verse 3 tells us that *Abram fell face down* in reverence and confidence in that name. God's name is holy and we are commanded to honor God's name and not misuse it (Exodus 20:7). How do we use the name of God in a meaningless way? Some Bible scholars say that we take God's name in vain when we say "Oh my God" or "Jesus" or the English expression, "Jeez" or the Filipino expression "Sus" (which are both derivatives of Jesus) merely as an expression or a swear word. In the Lord's Prayer (Our Father), Jesus taught us to "hallow" God's name, that means to make it "holy" and honored in our lives (Matthew 6:9).
- Read Psalm 8. God's name is majestic and holy, we should not mock or insult His name. That name is the source of life, joy, love, peace, grace and hope. Use God's name as it is—a name of ultimate power that you could speak over life.

God gives them names that fit their new status (Genesis 17:5-6, 15-17).

From Abram (which means 'exalted father') to Abraham (the father of many), from Sarai (my princess) to Sarah (princess of multitudes). By doing this God is elevating Abraham and Sarah by prophetically giving them new names that fit their destiny. We learned that God wants to elevate people! He wants to raise us to the level of His calling! All throughout the Bible we find people being given new names that fit their new status; their elevation to God's higher purpose and calling!

- God changed Jacob's name (Genesis 32:28) to reflect his victory.
- God changed Simon's name (John 1:42) to fit his new calling as God's man to lead the church.
- People change their names for various reasons, but for most people who do, they change their names mainly because they don't like the names they've been given. Do you like your name and its meaning?
- Are you prophetically living up to the meaning of your name?

God gives an outward sign of the covenant (Genesis 17:7-14).

God chose circumcision as the sign of agreement because by its nature, deals with the very core of what it means to be a man. For every Jewish boy, circumcision is meant to be a reminder that he is a Son of the Covenant, that he belonged to the family of Abraham and that ultimately he belonged to God. God chose a physical reminder so that every man born into Abraham's family will know that ultimately, they are answerable to God for the spiritual direction of the family. So in the Jewish tradition, a boy only receives his name on the day of his circumcision, following the experience of Abraham. In the New Testament, it is no longer a requirement to be circumcised to become part of the Covenant family (Read 1 Corinthians 7:19-20, Galatians 5:6).

God names a son yet to be born (Read Genesis 17:17-19 and Genesis 18:9-13).

The name God chose for the Covenant son was, Isaac (which means laughter). Both his parents laughed at the prospect of his birth; but ultimately, Isaac's prophetic name speaks of the laughter or joy his presence brings to his parents and as a constant reminder that El-Shaddai kept His promise! The rhetorical question in 12:14, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Is an echo of God's name—If God is Almighty, then nothing is too difficult for Him (Read Mark 10:27)

Application

By El-Shaddai's grace and authority, we are given *naming rights*. We now have this prophetic role of declaring the truth of God's Word and promises over our lives and our future in Christ. Read and memorize, 2 Corinthians 1:20, *For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.*

- What are you believing God for?
- What promises of God are you claiming for your future?

ANNOUNCEMENT: DreamTeam Convergence – AUGUST 28 (Right after Sunday worship.)

This gathering is for all who serve as a volunteer in any ministry at Mosaic.