



## Women's Bible Study

Read Genesis chapters 17 and 18.

### God Reaffirms the Covenant When Abram is 99 Years Old.

Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran ([Genesis 12:4](#)). He was 86 years old when the son Ishmael was born of Hagar, the servant girl ([Genesis 16:15-16](#)). **He had waited some 25 years for the fulfilment of God's promise** to give a son through Sarai. It had been some 13 years since his last recorded word from God.

Abram was becoming a great man of faith, but this did not happen overnight. It takes years of God's work in us, years of almost mundane trusting in God, perhaps interrupted with a few spectacular encounters with the LORD.

#### Notes:

**The Lord appeared to Abram:** Other passages note Yahweh appearing visibly (Gen 12:7) —even embodied—to Abram (ch. 18). The appearance to Abram marks the continuation of an overarching motif in both Testaments—that God or an angelic figure often visibly appears to those chosen to be His representatives and specifically prophets (20:7).

**I am Almighty God:** God's first words to Abram made an introduction and a declaration of His being. By this name *El Shaddai* (God Almighty), God revealed His Person and character to Abram. However, there is some debate as to what exactly the name *El Shaddai* means.

- i. Kidner: "A traditional analysis of the name is 'God (*el*) who (*sa*) is sufficient (*day*).'"
- ii. Clarke: "*El shaddai*, I am God all-sufficient; from *shadah*, to *shed*, to *pour out*. I am that God who *pours out blessings*, who gives them *richly, abundantly, continually*."
- iii. Donald Barnhouse took the approach that the Hebrew word *shad* means "chest" or "breast." It may have in mind the strength of a man's chest (God Almighty) or the comfort and nourishment of a woman's breast (God of Tender Care).
- iv. Leupold explained that *Shaddai* comes from the root *shadad*, which means "to display power."
- v. The Septuagint — a translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek before the time of Jesus — translates **Almighty** with the Greek word *pantokrator*, the "One who has His hand on everything."

**Observation:**

1. What are the differences between God's declaration of His covenant in chapter 12 verses chapter 17, what is the sign of the covenant?
2. In chapter 17:23-27, what do you notice about Abraham's actions, was there any hesitation? Is he learning the lessons God has taken him through?
3. In chapter 18:16-33, what lessons do you think Abraham has learned that compelled him to be so bold, and does this look like intercessory prayer?

**Interpretation:**

1. Abram means (father of many), when God changed his name to Abraham (father of many nations), Why do you think God did this?

*God gives us many names in faith (saint, righteous, chosen, royal priesthood, sons of God, and so forth), and He knows He will accomplish the meaning of the name in us — even if it seems somewhat crazy.*

[Rev 2:17 KJV](#) - 17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

4. There is only a subtle difference between **Sarai** and **Sarah**, but it is an important difference. **Sarah** indicates a higher standing and status than **Sarai**. *Sarai* signifies *my lady*, or *my princess*, which confines her dominion to one family; but *Sarah* signifies either a *lady* or *princess*, simply and absolutely without restriction, or *the princess of a multitude*." (Poole). Sarah is the only woman renamed by God in the Bible.

Thinking about Sarah's reaction to God's proclamation in 17:9-15. why do you think God changed her name?

5. Thinking about the covenant between Abraham and God, what did the sign of the covenant symbolize, why would God command such a thing? *Use bible commentaries to form your answer.*

6. Why did God wait so long to fulfil his promise of a son to Abraham and Sarah?

7. What attributes of God do you see in chapters 17 and 18?

**Application:**

8. How are we to view the covenant of circumcision today? (Colossians 2:11-12, Romans 9:8, Galatians 5:1-15)

9. Thinking about Abraham's growth in faith and trust in God over time, do you now consider God to be all sufficient, one who pours out blessings, richly, abundantly and continually? Do you trust Him enough to obey him without hesitation?

10. Thinking about how long Abraham had to wait for the promised blessings of God, has it changed the way you think about seemingly unanswered prayers or the promises of God that are yet to be fulfilled?