

Growing Together Discussion Questions from Sunday's Sermon

(For Personal Study, Review, Meditation and Mid-Week Group Discussion)

April 28, 2013

El Shaddai ("God Almighty")

1. Have you ever had someone promise you something but never follow through with their promise? What was it? How did you respond? How might that experience affect the way you respond to a promise in the future?
2. God said to Abram, "Leave your land, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you" (Gen. 12:1). If someone asked you to pack up your things and move to another state or country, what types of unknown variables might cause large amounts of stress for you and your family?
3. How did Abram respond to God's call (Gen. 12:4-5)? Why is his response admirable?
4. God also said to Abram, "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing...You will be the father of many nations (Gen. 12:2; 17:4). What would have made this promise so difficult for Abram to believe?
5. In Genesis 17:1, 5, 15-16 there are three name changes. What are they? (Hint: 17:1 counts as a name change for God because it's the first time we see this name for God in Scripture) Why do you think the name changes are important at this point in the narrative?
6. El Shaddai finally does the impossible, and at the age of 100 Abraham has a son with his wife, Sarah (Gen. 21:1-3). The birth of Isaac shows us that God Almighty accomplishes his purposes in his own way and in his own timing. In what ways can we apply this to our own lives? How might we distort the meaning of El Shaddai, the God who does the impossible, so that our own purposes are fulfilled instead of his?

El Elyon ("God Most High")

1. One of the 53 occurrences of this name is in Isaiah 14:14, where an evil king of Babylon believes he is powerful enough to usurp the throne of El Elyon ("God Most High"). A standard interpretation of this text is that Isaiah saw something deeper than the fall of a human empire. In the fall of the king of Babylon, Isaiah also saw the defeat of Satan. Do you agree with this interpretation? Why or why not? What does this text reveal about El Elyon?
2. Read Daniel 4:28-37. What happened to king Nebuchadnezzar? Why did it happen? What does this text reveal about El Elyon?
3. The Psalmist writes, "Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain" (Ps. 127:1). How does this verse relate to El Elyon? What are some practical implications of this verse?
4. Read Philippians 2:9-11. What do these verses have to do with El Elyon? Who is he? How should this affect our perspective on our life?
5. Read Psalm 8 and Matthew 10:29-31. How does El Elyon relate to lowly creatures like us? What type of attitude should this generate in us?