

# God Almighty

1. Etymology: *God Almighty* here is two words, the first being 'êl (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *ale*], a word with four or five entirely different meanings and several sub-usages within those categories of meanings. One usage has to do with strength and might, and in this regard, can refer to any deity; i.e., the God of the Universe or pagan gods (Isa. 43:10 44:10, 15, 17). It is rarely used alone and can refer to *mighty ones* (a reference to *men* or to *angels*—Ex. 31:11 Isa. 9:6 29:1 89:7) as well as to God (Gen. 31:13 35:1, 3). The second word in this title is *shadday* (שַׁדַּי) [pronounced *shad-dah'-ee*] and it means (*self-*) *sufficient, almighty, many-breasted*<sup>1</sup> and here it would be best translated *All-Sufficient*. At least one author, Gibson, did not believe that we even have a definition for this particular term.<sup>2</sup> When *el* and *shadday* are used together, we have two nouns and what is technically known as antimereia [pronounced *an'-ti-me'-rei-a*]: the use of a noun as another part of speech. When two nouns are placed in regimen, often one of them can be translated as an adjective. The literal translation of this title would be *God—the All-Sufficient [or, Omniscient] One*, or the idiomatic translation would be *the All-Sufficient God*. Very few translations show any consistency one way or the other when rendering antimereias (although particular antimereias might receive a consistent translation..
2. The *first* use of the title *God Almighty* is found in Gen. 17:1. We do not know if God uses it first of Himself here or whether it was a title for our Lord just not put into Scripture until now. This designation for our Lord is found 31 times in Job, which is coterminous with this narrative. That is why I italicized *first* because Job very likely predates Abram or the book of Job predates this portion of Scripture. In this verse, God renews His covenant with Abram, both for possession of the land of Canaan and for the multitude of Abram's descendants. Abram is 99 and sexually dead; his wife has been infertile for at least the entirety of their marriage. This is the most apropos place to introduce God as the *All-Sufficient God*. God has several components to His character; He is Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Love, Perfection, Truth, etc. Here, He is presented as Omnipotent, or all-powerful; God with the ability to do anything, to accomplish anything. He is a God Whose strength and abilities transcend the laws of the universe, which universe He Himself created, which universe He holds together with the power of His Word, and which laws He predetermined.
3. However, the actual chronological first use of the term *Almighty* is very likely Job 5:17. The author has already spoken of God using the terms Elohim (Job 1:1) and Yahweh (Job 1:12). *Almighty* is associated with punishment for wrongdoing, of which Eliphaz believed Job to be guilty. *Almighty* is also associated with discipline in Job 6:4 21:20 Ruth 1:20, 21
4. Job associates fear (awe and respect) with God as [the]<sup>3</sup> *Almighty* in Job 6:14
5. *Almighty* can be used as just a synonym for *God* in poetical or prose usage as a way to prevent monotony as in Job 8:3, 5 11:7 13:3 15:25 Psalm 68:14 91:1 etc.
6. *Shadday* is associated with service and obedience (which would be related to our reverence of Him (Job 21:15 22:23)
7. Our insignificance is contrasted with His omnipotence with the use of *Almighty* as in Job 22:3
8. We find our defense and protection in the *Almighty* (Job 22:25 29:5)
9. *Almighty* is used with omniscience in Job 24:1 (although I am struggling with the translation of that verse)

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<sup>1</sup>This rendering comes from Thieme and it may find its basis in Gen. 49:25 and the similarity of the words

<sup>2</sup>Davidson's *Introductory Hebrew Grammar~Syntax*, p. 25

<sup>3</sup>Proper names and certain appellatives (i.e., a descriptive title), such as divine titles, do not require a definite article to carry the English sense of a definite article

10. Job becomes particularly bold at the end of his discourse and demands to speak to the Almighty directly in Job 31:35
11. One aspect of God's omnipotence is His creation of the spirit within us, and *Almighty* is related to this in Job 32:8 (*spark of life* is mistranslated *inspiration* in the KJV) 33:4.
12. Elihu associates the *Almighty* with God's power, justice and righteousness in Job 37:23.
13. Isaac uses the title *God Almighty* in relationship to blessing of Jacob (Gen. 28:3). God uses the same term of Himself in a similar fashion in Gen. 35:11. See also Gen. 48:3 49:25
14. Jacob associates mercy and provision with *God the All-Sufficient One* in Gen. 43:14.
15. One of the difficult verses of Scripture is Ex. 6:3, wherein God is speaking to Moses, saying, "*I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as God Almighty; but by my name Yahweh, I did not make myself known to them.*" The JEP's quote this verse as one of their *proof* texts that the Pentateuch was assembled from several manuscripts, all written centuries after the events which occurred in the Pentateuch. As we understand *make known* this makes little sense as Abram knew God as Yahweh in Gen. 15:8 17: 18:1; Isaac knew God as Yahweh (Gen. 25:21 26:24, 28–29 27:27); and so did Jacob (Gen. 28:13, 16 49:18). The word *name* in Ex. 6:3 more often means *reputation, character, and essence* rather than our simple way of designating a person; this means that there are aspects of God's character which are tied to His Essence in relationship to His name Yahweh which Moses would become aware of and which Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were not aware. This is likely the very personal nature of God and His specific righteousness (which would be revealed in the Law). Furthermore, the verb *to know* connotes more in Hebrew than it does in English; a more intimate relationship could be implied than one of blessing if you're good and discipline when you're not and a much more specific Law and nation would come to pass, an exclusive, everlasting relationship between God and Israel. See the conclusion below.
16. Ezekiel associates God's voice with *Almighty* in Ezek. 1:24 10:5
17. The day of the Lord is associated with the vengeance of the *Almighty* in Isa. 13:6 and Joel 1:15
18. **Conclusion:** God as the *Almighty* or as the *Omniscient, All-Sufficient One* is a basic understanding of His essence. He is all-powerful exacting justice, so He is therefore to be revered and feared. In this regard, He executes judgement and is associated with discipline. Also, as the Almighty God, He is associated with provision for the needs of those related to Him. It is in this capacity that God blesses and curses. To know God this way is to apprehend His most basic essence without any true detail. We do not see the full extent of His expectations, His justice, His law nor do we have a full comprehension of His personal character of love and mercy.

An issue of no small importance, related to this study, is the use of these titles of God as it relates to the authorship of the various books in the Bible. I enter into this subject with some fear and trepidation because other scholars with great previous predispositions have also entered into this same realm and have come up with some theories and conclusions which are totally fallacious (the JEP proponents). However, we note that in Job, we have the continued use of the title *Almighty* (as well as Elohim and Yahweh) with a frequency not found anywhere else in the pages of Scripture. This would indicate that (1) the author of the book of Job was not an author of any other book of the Bible and/or (2) the time frame during which *Job* was written the *Almighty* was one of the most common titles for God (I believe that it is used by all those who speak in the book of Job). The title *God Almighty* is found 5 times at the end of Genesis and then **only** in two more passages (Ex. 6:3—which is a direct quote from God; and Ezek. 10:5). Again this would indicate that (1) the author(s) of the book of the last portion of *Genesis* was not an author of any other book of the Bible and/or (2) the time frame during which that portion of God's Word was written was a time during which the title *God Almighty* (or, God the All-Sufficient One) was in common usage which ended with Ex. 6:3.