

Chardon Christian Fellowship
Home Fellowship Lessons
Names of God
Lesson 6: Adonai
LEADER'S GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

*There are discrepancies in several sources regarding the occurrence of the Lord's name being YHWH or Adonai. Rather than 'bounce' between sources, for this lesson and those in the future, the Hebrew Bible will be used from QBible.com which relies on the Masoretic Hebrew text (10th - 11th Century AD) which is considered the most accurate of Hebrew texts of the Old Testament. This compilation is consistent with the Septuagint (Greek translation of Hebrew Bible; 200-150 BC) and the Dead Sea Scrolls (discovered in 1947). If there have been any errors in translation regarding YHWH or Adonai in specific verses, the fault is entirely this authors. For those Bereans who have seen a few errors, I hope you will understand the difficulty and practice **Ephesians 4:32**.*

In this lesson we will focus on the Hebrew name of *Adonai*. This is translated as Lord in most of your bibles. The true meaning of *Adonai* is a strange, anathema, or abhorrent term to most Americans. The true meaning of *Adonai* is master or lord. Americans do not like the idea of a master or lord, or anyone telling them what to do, who to be, or where to go. This rebellion is ever-present in our past, evidenced by the Revolution and a war of April 1775 to September 1783, where we rebelled against a monarchy (England) telling us how to live. We also rebelled against this nation's original sin (slavery; so named by Abraham Lincoln) with a war from April 1861 to May 1865. We rebelled against tyranny in Europe in 1914-1918 and again in 1941-1945. **Is it safe to say that American's rebel at the idea of someone being master or lord over us?**

Yet ... many of us have served in the military and understand that someone is lord or master over you, for there is always someone with a higher rank than you. Even the generals or admirals who have served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines) have had always two civilian 'lords' (Secretary of Defense and The President) over them.

Furthermore ... if you don't think that the pilot is sole master and lord of the aircraft, argue with the pilot or don't follow the flight attendants instructions, and see what happens. You will discover that the pilot is lord over that plane and can set you off the plane at any time and at a place of his or her choosing. The pilot is the master and lord of that craft. The same is true of naval vessels.

While master or lord is not an easy concept for Americans to understand, it is an extremely central concept in the Bible. As we will see, the God of this Universe, The Self Sufficient Eternal Supreme God of all, refers to Himself as our Lord (master). In fact, as the Lord Jesus Christ, He has purchased your soul from eternal damnation, and now is

your master or lord. In New Testament Greek, the word used for Lord is *kyrios*, which means: lord, master, owner, possessor, potentate, sovereign.

Romans 10:8-9 ⁸ But what does it say? *"THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"*—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, ⁹that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

Philippians 2:9-11 ⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Luke 10:1 Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.

In this lesson we focus on the Old Testament Hebrew name of God (*Adonai*) that is defined as Lord or Master.

LESSON

Adonai (Lord, Master)

“Another name used for God in the Old Testament is *Adonai*. It is the plural form of *adon* which means "master" or "lord." It conveys the idea of rule or dominion. When used in the Old Testament of God it is spelled with a capital "L" and then lower case letters (Lord). When used of humans (*adon*) all of the letters are lower case (lord).” (quoted from *Blue Letter Bible .org*)

Adonai אֲדֹנָי (*Adonay, Adonai*) is plural and occurs 434 times in the Old Testament referring to the Lord God (*Adonai YHWH*). When it occurs as *adon*, it is singular and refers to man (lord) and occurs 215 times. We will focus on the uses of *Adonai* as it refers to Jehovah God, The Lord God.

1. Adonai (The Lord)

The first occurrence of *Adonai* is in Genesis in combination with YHWH:

Genesis 15:1-2 ¹After these things the word of the LORD (YHWH) came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.” ²Abram said, “O Lord (*Adonai*) GOD (YHWH), what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”

The word *Adonai* also occurs alone. Every time the word *Adonai* is used, it is conveying the thought of Master, Sovereign, Lord. This is a term of subjugation which is defined as: to bring under control and governance as a subject (e.g. conquer); to make submissive (e.g. subdue).

Look for the submissive position of the person using the name *Adonai* in the verses below.

Genesis 18:2-3 ² When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth, ³ and said, "My Lord (Adonai), if now I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by.

Exodus 4:10 ¹⁰ Then Moses said to the LORD (YHWH), "Please, Lord (Adonai), I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."

Exodus 4:12-13 ¹² Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say." ¹³ But he said, "Please, Lord (Adonai), now send the message by whomever You will."

2. Adonai Adonai (or adonim) (The Lord of lords)

The combination of *Adonai adonai* occurs multiple times and conveys the thought of the Supreme Lord (Master) over any lords or masters.

Deuteronomy 10:17 ¹⁷ For the LORD (YHWH) your God (Elohim) is the God (Elohim) of gods (elohim) and the Lord (Adonai) of lords (Adonai), the great, the mighty, and the awesome God (El) who does not show partiality nor take a bribe.

Psalms 136:3 Give thanks to the Lord (Adonai) of lords (adonai), for His lovingkindness is everlasting.

And let us not forget the description of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Book of Revelation, which erases all doubt regarding His position in Heaven and earth:

Revelation 19:15-16 ¹⁵ From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶ And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Kyrios Kyrios)."

3. Adonai YHWH (Lord God, Lord Jehovah)

We have previously discussed this with combination names of YHWH. However, it is appropriate to review again. When we read this combination, we need to read as "Master, The Sovereign God" with the thought of someone prostrate on their face acknowledging Him as Master.

Genesis 15:7-8 ⁷ And He said to him, "I am the LORD (YHWH) who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it." ⁸ He said, "O Lord (Adonai) GOD (YHWH), how may I know that I will possess it?"

Genesis 15:1-2 ¹After these things the word of the LORD (YHWH) came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great." ²Abram said, "O Lord (Adonai) GOD (YHWH), what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

Exodus 23:17 Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord (Adonai) GOD (YHWH).

Deuteronomy 3:24 ²⁴'O Lord (Adonai) GOD (YHWH), You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as Yours?

Deuteronomy 9:26 I prayed to the LORD (YHWH) and said, 'O Lord (Adonai) GOD (YHWH), do not destroy Your people, even Your inheritance, whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

Joshua 7:7 Joshua said, "Alas, O Lord (Adonai) GOD (YHWH), why did You ever bring this people over the Jordan, only to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? If only we had been willing to dwell beyond the Jordan!

Nehemiah 10:28-30 ²⁸ Now the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants and all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the law of God (Elohim), their wives, their sons and their daughters, all those who had knowledge and understanding, ²⁹ are joining with their kinsmen, their nobles, and are taking on themselves a curse and an oath to walk in God's (Elohim) law, which was given through Moses, God's (Elohim) servant, and to keep and to observe all the commandments of GOD (YHWH) our Lord (Adonai), and His ordinances and His statutes;

4. The Lord (Master) of all the earth (Adonai kol ha'erets)

In case there is any doubt, He states emphatically that He is *Adonai* (Master, Lord) over all (*kol* which means all inclusive, everything, all) the earth (*ha* for the article 'the'; *erets* meaning earth, whole earth, land, ground). This leaves no doubt!

Joshua 3:11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord (Adonai) of all the earth is crossing over ahead of you into the Jordan.

Joshua 3:13 It shall come about when the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD (YHWH), the Lord (Adonai) of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan will be cut off, and the waters which are flowing down from above will stand in one heap.

Zechariah 4:14 Then he said, "These are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord (Adonai) of the whole earth."

Zechariah 6:5 The angel replied to me, "These are the four spirits of heaven, going forth after standing before the Lord (Adonai) of all the earth,

4. A lord (master; regarding someone other than God)

The Hebrew word *adon* is in the singular tense, and is used to acknowledge someone as master or lord over someone else. It is almost always admitting or proclaiming subjugation.

1 Samuel 25:14 ¹⁴ *But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Behold, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master (adon), and he scorned them.*

1 King 1:43 *But Jonathan replied to Adonijah, "No! Our lord (adon) King David has made Solomon king.*

CONCLUSION/APPLICATION

In this lesson, we have examined verses where the God of this universe, the Sovereign and Self Sufficient One proclaims Himself as *Adonai*, that is, Master and Lord.

This begs the question: Do we behave on a day-to-day basis with the attitude that He is Master and Lord over us?

The Apostle Paul understood this relationship between he and Jesus as one of *Adonai* and *Kyrios*. Paul emphatically states that Jesus is the *Kyrios* (Master, Lord) and he, Paul, is the *doulos* (slave, bond-servant).

Romans 1:1 *Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,*

Romans 6:16-18 ¹⁶ *Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*

Galatians 1:10 *For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.*

Philippians 1:1 *Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:*

OBSERVATION: Slaves have no rights before the master. The master says "go here" and the slave must go. The master says "do this" and the slave must do it (**Matthew 8:5-10**). The slave does not argue with the master, or question the master's motive, or disobey the master, for then he would be a rebellious slave and would be put away (**Matthew 18:32**).

APPLICATION: Are there areas in your life where you are not a slave to Lord Jesus? Where He is not the Master? Are there areas where you know He wants you to obey

Him without question, and you strain at the yoke? We cannot serve two masters, we can only have one *Adonai* or *Kyrios*.

Matthew 6:24 *“No one can serve two masters (kyrios); for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth (mammon).*

We need to decide to what or whom will we be a slave? The “gods” of this world (money, power, prestige, etc) or the God of this universe:

Joshua 24:15 *If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD (YHWH), choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods (elohim) which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods (elohim) of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD (YHWH).”*

We are either slaves to sin or slaves to righteousness and we must make a choice:

Romans 6:20-23 ²⁰ *For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.* ²¹ *Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.* ²² *But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.* ²³ *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Kyrios).*

Sources:

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