

Chardon Christian Fellowship
Home Fellowship Lessons
Names of God
Lesson 6: Adonai
STUDY 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 Philippians 2:9-11 Luke 10:1

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

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 Exodus 4:10 Exodus 4:12-13

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 Psalm 136:3

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

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 Genesis 15:1-2 Exodus 23:17

Deuteronomy 3:24

Deuteronomy 9:26

Joshua 7:7

Nehemiah 10:28-30

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

Joshua 3:13

Zechariah 4:14

Zechariah 6:5

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 1 King 1:43

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

Romans 6:16-18 Galatians 1:10

Philippians 1:1

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

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

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

Romans 6:20-23

Sources:

New American Standard Bible, NASB, Lochmann Foundation

www.BlueLetterBible.org

www.BibleGateWay.com

www.Bible.org

Love Worth Finding, www.lwf.org

www.hebrews4christians.com

lexiconconcordance.com

www.QBible.com

www.LifeHopeandTruth.com

www.NewCreations.org

www.AllAboutGod.com

www.patheos.com

Miriam-Webster dictionary