

Adonai

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I. Introduction

A name is more than an identification in the culture of the Bible; it is descriptive of its bearer, often revealing some characteristic or activity of that person. This is the thought behind the words of the Psalmist; "O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth!" (Ps 8:1, 9).

Knowledge of the true God is the highest knowledge any person can have. God made creation to tell us much about who He is, but from the Bible we learn the full facts about God. Specifically we learn about Him through what the Bible says about His character (attributes) and His names.

There are three primary names of God, each of these names emphasizes a different aspect of the nature of God.

Elohim (God), meaning "the Strong One," emphasizes His strength and creative power.

Jehovah or Yahweh (LORD), meaning "the self-existent One," is most often used to express God's self-existence, particularly in relation to humanity.

Adonai (Lord), means "master" and underscores the authority of God.

These three primary names also appear in seven different combinations with other names, in contexts of profound meaning. They are:

Almighty God, or El Shaddai, "Giver of Strength," Gen. 17:1;

most high, or most high God, or El Elyon, "God the highest," Gen. 14:18;

everlasting God, or El Olam, "the eternally existent One," Gen. 21:33;

mighty God, or El Gibbor, "the powerful One," Isa. 9:6;

LORD God, or Jehovah Elohim, "the self-existent strong One," Gen. 2:4;

Lord GOD, or Adonai Jehovah, "the Master who is self-existent," Gen. 15:2;

and the LORD of hosts, or Jehovah Sabaoth, "the self-existent Supreme Commander of all the heavenly forces," 1 Sam. 1:3.

Let's continue our study.

II. Definition of Adonai:.

Adonai means "lord" or "master" and is usually translated "Lord" in English Bibles.

Translated as Lord, lord, master, owner, ruler.

Adonai should probably be **understood** as meaning "Lord of all" or "Lord par excellence" (see Deut. 10:17; Josh. 3:11).

It is also possible to understand Adonai as **a personal address** meaning "my Lord."

Adon is the root word in the name Adonai.

In Hebrew grammar, Adon (noun) is a singular word & Adonai is a plural.

Adon means 'lord', a title of respect used to address a social superior (e.g., king, husband, slave owner).

Adon is frequently used of men. For example, in Genesis and 1 and 2 Samuel the term is used often for men who own slaves or are in positions of authority.

Adon emphasizes the servant-master relationship (Gen. 24:9) and thus suggests God's authority as Master;

One who is sovereign in His rule and has absolute authority (Ps 8:1; Hos. 12:14).

It can refer to a person who is a master, owner or ruler; or it can refer to the Lord God, because He is the Master and Owner of everything:

The title "Lord" indicates the truth that God is the owner of each individual, and that He consequently claims the unrestricted obedience of all.

Adonai occurs 449 times in the Old Testament and 315 times in conjunction with Yahweh.

It is rare in the Pentateuch, (first five books of the Old Testament) and historical Books (Joshua - Esther).

It appears repeatedly in Psalms and in certain of the prophets; 55 times in Psalms; 47 times in Isaiah; 29 times in Jeremiah; over 150 times in Ezekiel and 27 times in Amos

III. Use of Adonai - This name is expressed in the following Scriptures:

It is **first found** in Genesis 15:2, 8, when Abram requests more definite information concerning a son and the Promised Land. This expression 'the Lord GOD,' is frequently found in the O.T., is literally 'my Lord Jehovah.'

Gen 15:1, 2 "After these things the word of the LORD (Jehovah) came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Do not fear, Abram: I am a shield to you; your reward shall be very great." Abram said, "O Lord GOD [Adonai Jehovah], what will You give me, since I am childless....?"

When we meet with the title 'Lord of Lords,' as in Deut. 10:17, the words are literally 'master of masters,' i.e. Divine master of all those who possess or obtain authority.

Dt 10:17-18 "For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. 18 "He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. (Ps 136:3; 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 17:14; 19:16)

The words which we read in Ps 110:1 if literally translated, would read thus: 'Jehovah said unto my Master, You sit on my right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool;' and the comment of Jesus might be rendered, 'If David call him Master, how is he his Son? (Lk 20:42-43)

The title "my Lord and my God" was given to Jesus by the apostle Thomas after Jesus demonstrated that He was risen from the dead (see Jn 20:28). This double title is also found in Ps 35:23 as my God (Eloah) and my Lord (Adonai); and in Ps 38:15 as my Lord (Adonai) and my God (Eloah).

The claim upon man's service which is set forth in the title Adonai is well illustrated by Mal. 1:6, where Jehovah says, "A son honors his father, and a servant his master (or masters). Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master (Adonia), where is My respect?"

Adonai is correctly described as the name of personal communication between the believer and God. In such communication the worshiper acknowledged God's intense majesty and greatness and also the sense of belonging to this God. Adonai, coming from human lips, expressed honor for God and humble submission on the part of the believing person. Adonai, thus, is the name that expresses faith, assurance, security, ready service, and thanksgiving. (Ps 16:2; 57:9-10)

IV. The relationship between Adonai, Jehovah and Baal

Adonai came to replace the word Jehovah in the Old Testament

The covenant name for the God of Israel in the Old Testament is Yahweh. This name was so sacred that by the second century B.C. the Jews refused to pronounce it. (Orthodox Jews will not pronounce this sacred name even today.) When the ancient Jewish scholar came across the name Yahweh he would pronounce it "Adonai," which means "my Lord."

The Hebrew at that time had no vowels. The system of vowel points had not yet been invented, and therefore Yahweh was written YHVH, which is called the Tetragrammaton (the Four Letter Word). No one really knows how it was pronounced. When the Masoretic scholars added to the consonantal word YHVH the vowels from the word Adonai, the name turned out to be "YaHoVaH." However, this is a hybrid word. Therefore, Jehovah has been dropped from many modern translations in favor of "Yahweh."

Yahweh

Translators of the OT have not agreed upon the correct translation of the name Yahweh. Since it is translated into the Greek as kurios, which means "Lord," many have rendered Yahweh as "LORD."

But 'Adonai, which is best rendered "Lord," appears with Yahweh in various instances. The KJV, for example, translates Yahweh as "God," and 'Adonai as "Lord." Some modern translators have chosen to use Yahweh

New Testament equivalent

The word adonai is used in the Old Testament in very much the same way as the word "kurios" is used in the Greek New Testament, and in much the same sense as we use the English word "Lord".

Baal.

Baal is used to express the concept of God as owner and possessor. The term must be understood as carrying both the idea of a position of sovereignty combined with a personal relationship; this explains why the term is often translated as "husband."

The verbal root of Baal means "to marry, take possession of, to rule over."

Baal is used very frequently, either alone or in compounds (e.g., Baal Peor), of the pagan gods of Canaanites and Philistines. It is used of the God of Israel by Isaiah: "Your Maker is your husband" (54:5). In Hosea 2 God is spoken of as husband also, but the Hebrew word used there is 'ish.

Baal (Heb., 'lord') is a title designating a social superior (e.g., leader, owner, husband). In Canaanite religion, Baal is the name of the storm god of fertility who brought rain and military victory. This god rivaled Yahweh for Israel's devotion, as especially noted in prophetic literature (e.g., Hosea). While certain theomorphic names may indicate that some Israelites identified Baal with Yahweh (e.g., Meribbaal, the son of Jonathan), the term was generally avoided because of strong pagan associations (cf. Hos. 2:16-17).

In the early period the name BAAL was applied to God as a synonym for ADONAI in the sense of "owner" (1 Chron. 8:33), but the prophets later opposed this use when that name became generally associated with the pagan Baalim and thus acquired an idolatrous meaning (contrast 2 Sam. 2:8 with Hos. 2:16-17).

Old Testament Names associated with Adonia:

Adoni-Bezek - lord of Bezek
Adonijah - my Lord is Yahweh
Adonikam - my Lord has risen
Adoniram, Adoram - my Lord is exalted
Adoni-Zedek - my Lord is righteous

V. Application The issue of Lordship

Mt 7:21-23 it is more than confession, it has to do with obedience

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'" (Ps 6:8; 119:115; 139:19)

Mt 7:24-27 His Lordship will be tested in our lives through our trials.

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell--and great was its fall." (Lk 6:46-49)

Mt 25:1-13 our need of the Holy Spirit in His Lordship (Parable of Ten Virgins)

They all have lamps and oil
Five are wise and five are foolish.
The wise take extra oil with them and the foolish do not.
They both experience delay and fall asleep.
The bridegroom comes when the foolish are unavailable because they had to buy more oil.
The wise virgins were prepared when the invitation was given to enter in.
The foolish were not able to enter because the door was shut.

Mt 25:11-12 "Later the other virgins also came, saying, ' Lord, lord, open up for us.' But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'

I renounce every lie and temptation of the enemy to live in rebellion. I choose to make Jesus the Lord of my life. I choose to live in faith obedience as I seek to be a doer of God's word.

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