

# Adonai-Lord-The Name of God

## THE NAME OF GOD... ADONAI Lord, Master, Owner Proverbs 18:10+

| WHAT DOES ADONAI MEAN?   | ADONAI IN SCRIPTURE  | HOW DO I APPLY ADONAI?   |
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| <p><b>Definition of Adonai</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adonai is more than a name</li> <li>- Adonai speaks of relationship</li> <li>- God's total possession &lt;&gt; my total submission</li> </ul> <p><b>Ge 15:2+</b><br/><b>First Use in Bible</b></p> <p><b>Abraham to Count the Stars</b><br/>(click to enlarge)</p> <p>Abram addressed God as <b>Adonai</b> or Master - the Master has the right of possession and the one possessed is charged with submission to God, his Master (cp Ge 15:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6+).</p> <p><b>Abram's Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Abram had victory over his enemies, understanding El Elyon brought about the victory (Ge 14:22). In Ge 15:2+ he acknowledges God's lordship over him</li> <li>- Abram understood master-servant relationship</li> <li>- He knew duty of master = protect, provide for his slave</li> <li>- He knew that the duty of the master = give directions</li> </ul> <p>Scripture teaches that bondslaves fared better than hired servants (cp Dt 15:12-18 - see <a href="#">note</a>)</p> <p><b>ADON<br/>ADONAI</b></p> <p><b>Adon</b> (singular form). Means <b>master, lord</b>. Adon can refer to men (most uses) or God. Adonai only refers to God.</p> <p>Pious Jews refuse to pronounce the name <b>Jehovah</b> (Yahweh) when reading the OT - when they come to the Name <b>Jehovah</b>,</p> | <p><b>Extent of Adonai's Ownership and Rule</b></p> <p><b>Dt 9:26+</b></p> <p>over Israel &amp; Egypt</p> <p><b>Ps 2:1, 2, 3, 4</b> (commentary)</p> <p>over nations, kings and rulers of the earth<br/>("Adonai gave" Da 1:2)</p> <p><b>Ps 8:1,6, 7, 8</b></p> <p>over the earth, man, all creatures</p> <p><b>Ps 37:12, 13</b></p> <p>over the wicked &amp; righteous</p> <p><b>Ps 97:5</b></p> <p>over the mountains</p> <p><b>Ps 114:7</b></p> <p>over the earth<br/>(cp Josh 3:11, 13+)</p> <p><b>Ps 135:5</b></p> <p>over all gods</p> <p><b>Malachi 1:6+</b></p> <p>'A son honors his father, and a servant his <b>master (adon)</b>. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a <b>master (adon)</b>, where is My respect?' says the <b>LORD of hosts</b> to you, O priests who despise My name (by offering defiled food at His altar Mal 1:7+). But you say, 'How have we despised Thy name?' (Note how chapter ends "I am a great King... " Mal 1:14+)!</p> <p>Even as a son honors his father and a servant his master, <b>Adonai</b> has the right to expect respect &amp; obedience. The priests brought reproach upon His name by failing to acknowledge His ownership of all that</p> | <p><b>Application of "Adonai"</b></p> <p><b>1Co 6:19+, 1Co 6:20+</b><br/><b>Jesus is Lord!</b></p> <p>Believers are not their own!</p> <p>(cp Titus 2:14+)</p> <p><b>Is He your Lord?</b><br/><b>Is He the One to whom you give your highest allegiance?</b><br/><b>Is He the One Who directs your life?</b></p> <p>The Name <b>Adonai</b> challenges the every person who calls God "Lord" to be willing live in a way that demonstrates His Lordship! In other words, the declaration "He is Lord" must be not only with our <b>lips</b> but also with our <b>life</b>! A dangerous deception is to call Him "<b>Lord, Lord</b>" but then to refuse to submit to him in loving obedience.</p> <p><b>Mt 7:21+,<br/>Mt 7:22, 23+</b></p> <p><b>Jesus Frightening Warning</b></p> <p>"Not everyone who says to Me, '<b>Lord, Lord</b>,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who <b>does</b> (present tense = habitually = speaks of direction not perfection. Speaks of obedience as a servant would obey their "master" or adonai) the will of My Father Who is in heaven. <b>Many</b> (not just a few!) will say to Me on that day, '<b>Lord, Lord</b> (second time they appeal to His lordship!), did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' (Notice He does not dispute their claims) And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; <b>DEPART</b> (present imperative) FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE (present tense) LAWLESSNESS.' (cp Mt 25:41, 2Th 1:8, 9, 10+)</p> <p><b>Ps 89:50, 51</b></p> |

they will read it as "**Adonai**".

In the **Septuagint (LXX)** Adonai (and Jehovah) are translated with the same Greek noun **kurios** (**see word study**) which signifies sovereign power, supreme authority, absolute ownership. In the NT, Jesus is referred to <20 times as **Savior** (soter) and over 700 times as **Lord** (kurios)! When the two titles are mentioned together, **Lord** always precedes **Savior**

**Adonai** (plural form composed of **Adon** + "ai" = my) literally = "**my Lords**", usually translated "my Lord" or "Lord" (capital "L" followed by small letters. Contrast Jehovah which is rendered in all caps [LORD] in NAS, ESV, KJV). The plural form Adonai is said to be a plural of majesty like Elohim (although some say the plural form of both of these names of God points to the truth of the Trinity in the OT).

**Adon** (300 uses in OT) - most often refers to men. For ex...

- 1) Lord of his wife (Ge 18:12)
- 2) Of polite address (Ge 23:6)
- 3) Lord of a slave (Ge 24:12)
- 4) Lord of property (Ge 42:30)
- 5) Lord of house (Ge 45:8)
- 6) Title of veneration (Nu 11:28+)
- 7) As a court term (1Sa 26:17)

**R C Sproul** - "Suffix **ai** intensifies the meaning of the word (Adon), so that **Adonai** means the **supreme Lord**, the **Lord of all**. This word stresses the sovereignty of God as All-ruler"

**Adonai** - Depicts Sovereign Master and implies a submissive servant. Servant can depend on Master to be faithful in provision, protection, direction. (even as OT slaves - see Dt 15:12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17-commentary or [see note](#))

**Elohim** speaks of God's might and power

**Adonai** speaks of His right to rule over us. Lordship conveys sense of complete possession of the servant by the master and complete submission of the servant to the master.

exists.

**In Short...**

**ADONAI IS OWNER OF ALL THAT EXISTS!**

And so we pray...

Nu 14:17+

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**ADONAI  
SIGNALS A  
CALL TO SERVICE**

Illustrations...

**Moses, Joshua, Isaiah, Jeremiah**

**Exodus 4:10+**

**Moses called Jehovah  
"Adonai"**

His hesitation to obey the call of God eventually ended when he acknowledged God as **Adonai**, or Lord (Ex4:10, 11-18). When Moses admitted his position as a **slave** (bondservant) and God's position as **Master** there was only one viable option--to obey. When Moses called God Adonai, he acknowledged that it was not his place as the slave to choose his work but to heed his Master's directive! May we follow in his footsteps.

**Joshua 5:14+**

**Joshua Prepared  
for Battle**

"No; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the Lord." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my **lord** (adonai) to say to his **servant**?" (see Josh 5:13, 14,15)

**Isaiah 6:1, 8+**

**Isaiah's Call  
to Ministry**

Is 6:1+ - Isaiah saw **Adonai** sitting on the throne

Is 6:8+ - Isaiah heard **Adonai's** voice - he submitted and responded to His Master's voice declaring "**Here I am. Send me!**" After seeing Him as the exalted, majestic Adonai He was ready and willing to do His bidding! **Am I?**

Bear His reproach = **persecution**

**Ps 141:8, 9, 10**

Take refuge in Him = **protection**

**Ps 119:125**

Ask for understanding to know His testimonies = **direction**

**Jdg 6:14, 15, 16+**

God's **presence** = ensures victory

**Ps 136:3**

Give thanks to the Lord of lords (adonai adonai) (Dt 10:17)

**Jn 13:13, 14, 15**

If we call Him "Lord"...

Let us do as Jesus did!

**Ro 6:16, 17+**

Slaves of the one you obey  
Obey Adonai!

**Phil 1:21+**

To live is Christ, to die is gain

**Adonai is Master** and a master is one who helps order the life of His subject and direct what he should do.

**Is God your Adonai, your Master, or are you the "master" of your life (and then you wonder why you get into such "fixes"!)?**

**Adonai** is a Name of God which speaks of relationship. Jehovah's Lordship means He is in total possession of me and I gladly give my unfettered submission to Him as my Lord and my Master.

**What area of your life are you holding onto and are unwilling to relinquish to your Master? Your job? Your spouse? Your children? Your "pet" sin? Ask God to open the eyes of your heart to really understand practically what His Lordship means for you personally.** He will surely show you.

The truth about Adonai is directly opposed to the modern self centered mindset which in deception and delusion proclaims "I am the master of my own fate, the author of my destiny!" the age old lie pawned off by the

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| <p>In the NT the idea of believers as <b>bondservants</b> (doulos - word study) is a reflection of <b>Jesus as Lord or Master</b>. (cp NT's frequent use of this self designation - Ro 1:1+, Gal 1:10+, Titus 1:1+, 2Ti 2:24+, Jas 1:1+, Jude 1:1+).</p> <p><b>Adonai</b> always has reference to headship, and to God's purpose of blessing. (A W Pink)</p> <p><b>Adonai</b>... "signifies ownership or mastership and indicates "the truth that God is the owner of each member of the human family, and that He consequently claims the unrestricted obedience of all." (Nathan Stone)</p> <p><b>Three characteristics of those who know God as Adonai...</b></p> <p>(1) <b>Acknowledge</b> themselves as His servants, understanding <b>Adonai</b> is Owner of all and they are stewards who have been declared worthy by Him to serve and who count it a privilege to serve.</p> <p>(2) <b>Understand</b> <b>Adonai</b> as Master can supply all their needs (Php 4:19+, cp Ps 68:19), including supernatural empowerment enabling them to serve God.</p> <p>(3) <b>Recognize</b> that they can do whatever <b>Adonai</b> calls them to do (Php 4:13+).</p> | <p><b>Jeremiah 1:5, 6</b></p> <p>When Jeremiah is called to ministry, he acknowledges and submits to God ("Lord God") as Adonai = His Lord and Master</p> <p>&gt;&lt;&gt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;</p> <p><b>ADONAI IS IS JESUS CHRIST</b></p> <p><b>Ps 110:1</b></p> <p>Jehovah speaks to Adonai, the Messiah = Jesus Christ is Lord</p> <p><b>ADONAI HE IS LORD OVER...</b></p> <p><b>Lk 14:25, 26+</b><br/><b>Mt 10:34, 35, 36+</b><br/>Over all human relationships</p> <p><b>Mt 10:38, 39</b></p> <p>Over my life/death</p> <p><b>Jn 13:13, 14, 15, 16</b><br/>Jesus' example</p> <p><b>Lk 6:46+</b></p> <p>It is possible to mouth the name "Lord" and yet fail to live accordingly. Jesus ask "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' (see <b>kurios</b>) and do not do what I say?" (Lk 6:46+).</p> <p>It is not enough to give lip service to Christ as <b>Adonai</b>. Faith without works is dead faith, whereas faith that is genuine results in obedience (albeit imperfect in this life).</p> <p><b>Can you call Him 'Lord', and continually refuse to do what He tells you to do and expect that you will still go to heaven?</b></p> | <p>devil in Ge 3:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8+.</p> <p><b>ALL WILL CONFESS JESUS AS ADONAI</b><br/><b>Php 2:9, 10, 11+</b></p> <p>One day every tongue will acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ regardless of whether they did so during their time on earth.</p> <p><b>If you have not yet done so...</b></p> <p><b>Confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, (and) you shall be saved for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. Ro 10:9, 10-note</b></p> <p>May we be so surrendered to Jesus that we like David cry out...</p> <p><b>I said to Jehovah, "You are my Adonai. I have no good besides You." Ps 16:2</b></p> |
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**Lewis Sperry Chafer** on the importance of a **"Name"** in Scripture...

Bible names of persons have a meaning, which meaning usually conveys some impression as to the intrinsic character of the one who bore the name. This truth is accentuated by the fact that, when a person acquired some new significance, the name was changed accordingly—Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel, Solomon to Jedidiah. God Himself calls Moses and Cyrus by name. The disclosure of character through a name is true of Deity to an absolute degree. God has not only inspired the pages whereon His names appear, but He has announced or revealed His names specifically to men and with special reference to the meaning of these names. In the beginning Adam gave names to all things God had created, but the names of God are self-

revealed. Thus the student enters at this point on no field of idle speculation. Far-reaching revelation is involved, and truth concerning God which is disclosed in no other way and by no other means. A large place, therefore, should be given to this source of truth. ([Chafer, L. S.. Systematic theology. Originally published: Dallas, Tex: Dallas Seminary Press. 1:261. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications](#))

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**Kenneth S Hemphill** in his discussion of the implications of **Adonai as owner of everything** writes that...

many of us struggle with this issue of ownership, don't we? From the very first time we understand what mine means, we want to cling to and claim ownership. Take for example two children who are playing together with a toy someone has given to one of them. The children did nothing to deserve the toy. They did not pay for it. Yet as soon as one of the children attempts to play alone with the toy, what happens? The "owner" of the toy snatches it back with a screeching protest, "Mine!" Somehow, all of us have the mistaken notion that we are owners. We claim that we own a house or a piece of land. We also are aware that ownership brings with it frustrations.

Ownership rarely proves to be all we expect it to be. We buy a home only to find that we desire a bigger home or another home in a different location. We also discover that ownership is fraught with the constant demand of repair and maintenance. The roof leaks the week before the plumbing backs up. We can be so frustrated with ownership that we are tempted to say that we were much happier when we owned nothing. I've got news for you. You can get out of the business of ownership. Truth is, you're not an owner; you're simply a **steward**. The Lord is owner of all that exists.

I have a practical suggestion that will help you acknowledge this. Sit down during your devotional time, take out a piece of paper and make up a deed signing everything over to God, the rightful owner. Say

Lord, this has never been mine. Somehow I just took over what is yours by creation. I am excited to acknowledge that I am a steward and that you are owner of all the possessions represented on this deed

One of my deacons in Norfolk shared with me his personal testimony of the freedom he found when he finally understood that the Lord was the owner of everything. A few weeks after he had signed everything over to the Lord, the Lord's washing machine quit working. He told me that in the past such an event would have created frustration and despair. In this instance, he and his wife simply knelt down in front of the washing machine and said

Lord, Your washing machine has broken down. What do You want to do about it?

After praying and consulting with a repairman, they determined the Lord needed a new washing machine. They could then thank the Lord that He had provided the resources for them to have a washing machine when so many had less. The understanding that the Lord and Master owns everything helps us to keep life in perspective. Folks, this really is good news. It is a joy to be a steward for the sovereign God of the universe, who has revealed Himself to be holy and righteous. We can rest in the assurance that He is trustworthy and able to provide for our every need. Like Abraham, we will discover that He who has brought us from Ur of the Chaldeans can fulfill His promises in our life. In these days of unprecedented anxiety and fear, we need to discover that God is Adonai. ([The Names of God Ken Hemphill- Excellent, Pragmatic Study - Highly Recommended!](#))

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**Servant's Relationship to Master** - When Americans try to illustrate the master/slave relationship, it is tempting to think in terms typified by the book Uncle Tom's Cabin. But because of the abuse of black slaves portrayed in the book, the imagery does not accurately illustrate God's relationship to us as Adonai. The relationship of slave and master in the Bible was more often one of love and allegiance. In the Jewish relationship, a slave had more privileges than the hired help. A slave could participate in the Temple sacrifices and was a member of the household. The hired help was excluded from these privileges. The servant is assured that his Master has the resources and ability to care for him. As a member of the master's household, the master provides for all the servant needs. The servant need not worry about his basic provision. The servant is assured that help and resources are available for him to carry out his duties as a servant. The master provides what is needed, not only for basic needs, but also for the fulfillment of the tasks assigned to the servant. The servant has the privilege of calling upon his relationship with the Master to get the help he needs. Access to the Master is guaranteed, and is only a prayer away.

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**He is Lord** - Many are ready to acknowledge God as Elohim, but have a hard time truly given themselves to Him as Adonai. Remembering that Christ is Adonai, calling Him Adonai requires that we give up our self-sufficiency and personal control and give Him complete reign over our lives. Yet, it is only when we know Christ as Adonai that I experience His full sufficiency and power for

my life. Jesus stated this truth in Jn 8:31, 32. Paul articulated the difference knowing God as Adonai makes in Ro 6:16, 17-note, Ro 6:18-note. Commitment and unconditional submission to the will of God ought to be the norm for every one of His children. Paul was able to say, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Php 1:21-note). Do not write off those who live in this way as the fanatics, the super saints, the ones whose duty it is to live that life because they are called to full-time service of some sort. It is the relationship we all have to God as Adonai! How will you bend your knee – and your will – to Adonai today?

**Matthew Henry** on Ps 16:2...

He recognizes his solemn dedication of himself to God as his God (Ps 16:2): "O my soul! thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord, and therefore thou mayest venture to trust him." Note,

1. It is the duty and interest of every one of us to acknowledge the **Lord** for our **Lord**, to subject ourselves to Him, and then to stay ourselves upon Him. **Adonai** signifies **My stayer, the strength of my heart**.
2. This must be done with our souls: "O my soul! thou hast said it." Covenanting with God must be heart-work; all that is within us must be employed therein and engaged thereby.
3. Those who have avouched the Lord for their Lord should be often putting themselves in mind of what they have done. "Hast thou said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord? Say it again then, stand to it, abide by it, and never unsay it. Hast thou said it? Take the comfort of it, and live up to it. He is thy Lord, and worship thou him, and let thy eye be ever towards him."

**Samson** after "doing it his way" finally surrendered to his Master, Adonai, after being imprisoned and blinded by the Philistines...

Then Samson called to the LORD and said, "O **Lord (adonai)** GOD, please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes." (Jdg 16:28)

**David** emphasizes the servant-Master aspect of Adonai in 2Sa 7:20 (cp 2Sa 7:29)...

And again what more can David say to Thee? For Thou knowest Thy **servant**, O **Lord (Adonai)** GOD! (cp "Moses Thy **servant**, when Thou didst bring our fathers forth from Egypt, O **Lord** GOD." 1Ki8:53)

## ADON and ADONAI SUMMARY

**TWOT** on **Adon**...

**’ādôn. Lord, Lord, Lord, master, owner.** No doubt exists about the meaning of this word. The Ugaritic *adn* means "lord" or "father" and the Akkadian *adannu* carries a similar meaning, "mighty."

In the simple unsuffixed form or when pointed *ādōnî*, or *ādōna(y)*, for the first common singular suffix or with other pronominal suffixes, *ādôn* usually refers to men. Sarah used it in reference to her husband (Genesis 18:12), Lot used it in addressing the angelic visitors (Genesis 19:2). Abraham's servant repeatedly called his master by it in Genesis 24. The pharaoh of Egypt was called by this title (Genesis 40:1), as well as Joseph his "vizier" (Genesis 42:10). Ruth used it of Boaz before they were married (Ruth 2:13). Hannah addressed Eli the priest by this term (1 Samuel 1:15). Saul's servants called him by the title as well (1 Samuel 16:16). Likewise, officers less than the king, such as Joab, had this appellation (2 Samuel 11:9). In 1 Kings 16:24 there is the unique reading "Shemer, 'owner' of the hill, Samaria." The prophet Elijah bore the title "lord" (1 Kings 18:7).

However, there are numerous passages, particularly in Psalms, where these forms, which are the only ones to apply to men, refer to God. Exodus 34:23 combines "the Lord, YHWH, the God of Israel" (*hā’ādôn yhwh ’ēlōhē yisrāēl*). Deut. 10:17 uses both the singular and plural in the construction "Lord of lords" (*’ādōnē hāādōnīm*; cf. Psalm 136:3). In Psalm 8:1 [H 2] God has the title "YHWH our Lord" (*yhwh ādōnēnū*). The Messiah bears this title in Psalm 110:1. ([Harris, R L, Archer, G L & Waltke, B K Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Moody Press](#) or [Logos](#)) - Recommended Resource for laymen's study of Hebrew vocabulary)

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**Gilbrant - adon** - The basic meaning of *’ādhôn* is "lord," "king," "master," "superintendent" or "owner." Examples of *’ādhôn* in reference to men are Gen. 45:8, 9; Ps. 105:21 ("head" of, or "superintendent" of, a household); 1 Ki. 16:24; Gen. 40:7; Exo. 21:4, 6, 8, 32 ("proprietor," "master"); Neh. 3:5 ("governor"); Gen. 42:10, 30, 33 ("prince"); 1 Ki. 1:27 ("king"). The sense of a governing



authority is the root meaning. 'ādhôn is used in reference to an earthly lord in excess of 300 times. It is also used of a divine lord approximately 30 times.

The idea of an authority or lordship conveyed in 'ādhôn is seen in the role of husbands. Genesis 18:12 uses 'ādhôn in reference to Sarah's husband Abraham. In addition, it is used to indicate authority over lands (Gen. 42:30), houses (45:8), political subdivisions such as districts (1 Ki. 16:24), etc.

The word is found in all other Semitic languages. It is related to the Egyptian idnw, meaning "steward" or "administrator."

It appears as part of several personal names; e.g., Adonibezek (Judg. 1:5), Adonizedek (Josh. 10:1), Adonijah (three individuals: 1 Ki. 1:8; 2 Chr. 17:8; Neh. 10:17), Adonikam (Ezra 2:13) and Adoniram (1 Ki. 4:6).

The word 'ādhôn takes the form 'ādhônai in most of its usages (449) in the OT. The scholarly literature on this form of 'ādhôn is extensive and at times argumentative regarding the precise etymological development involved. Special focus is intended as 'ādhônai always refers to Yahweh. The form 'ādhônai appears more than 300 times in Psalms and the prophetic books. In the form of 'ādhônai, the word is rarely translated as a plural and, when it is, the context makes such translation obvious (cf. Gen. 18:3; Isa. 21:8; Ps. 16:2).

The form 'ādhônai began to be used by devout Jews in an effort to avoid taking the personal name of Yahweh in vain. The initial practice of substituting the word 'ādhônai for Yahweh occurred in speech only. In time, however, even when the proper name Yahweh appeared in manuscripts, it came to be pronounced 'adonai. Ultimately, the reading of proper name was replaced entirely by 'ādhônai. These changes seem to have taken thorough root by 300 B.C. In the Septuagint (ca. 200 B.C.), the word Kurios is used (in excess of 6,700 times) for Yahweh; and in most English translations, the word is rendered "Lord," using all capitals. Exceptions to this are the ASV, which uses "Jehovah," and the Jerusalem Bible which uses Yahweh.

In passages where 'ādhônai and the YHWH are sequentially used, the latter was finally pointed with the vowels from 'ādhônai and is normally rendered "Lord GOD" in English translations. This combination, first used by Galatinus in 1520, eventually resulted in the erroneous pronunciation, Jehovah. ([Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource](#))

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#### Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary...

**Adon**, an early word denoting ownership, hence, absolute control... It is applied to God as the owner and governor of the whole earth (Ps. 114:7). It is sometimes used as a term of respect (like our "sir") but with a pronoun attached ("my lord"). It often occurs in the plural. **Adonai** is, in the emphatic form, "the Lord." Many regard this title as the plural of **Adon**.

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#### New Unger's Bible Dictionary...

Lord (Heb. 'Adôn), an early word denoting ownership; hence, absolute control. It is not properly a divine title, being used of the owner of slaves (Genesis 24:14, 27; Genesis 39:2, 7, rendered "master"), of kings as the lords of their subjects (Isaiah 26:13, "master"), of a husband as lord of the wife (Ge18:12). It is applied to God as the owner and governor of the whole earth (Psalm 114:7). It is sometimes used as a term of respect (like our sir) but with a pronoun attached ("my lord"). It often occurs in the plural.

**Adonai** (Heb. 'adōnay), emphatic, "the Lord"; many regard it as the plural of no. 2. It is used chiefly in the Pentateuch—always where God is submissively and reverently addressed (Exodus 4:10, 13; Joshua 7:8) and also when God is spoken of (1Kings 13:9; 1Kings 22:6; etc.). The Jews, out of a superstitious reverence for the name Jehovah, always pronounce Adonai where Jehovah is written. The similar form, with the suffix, is also used of men, as of Potiphar (Genesis 39:2, "master") and of Joseph (Genesis 42:30, 33).

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#### Adon - 287v in KJV -

**NAS** renders **adon** as - husbands(1), Lord(4), lord(173), lord's(9), lords(2), master(91), master's(24), masters(5), owner(1).

**KJV** renders **adon** as - lord 197, master(s) 105, Lord 31, owner 1, sir 1; 335

Gen 18:12; 19:2, 18; 23:6, 11, 15; 24:9f, 12, 14, 18, 27, 35ff, 39, 42, 44, 48f, 51, 54, 56, 65; 31:35; 32:4f, 18; 33:8, 13ff; 39:2f, 7f, 16, 19f; 40:1, 7; 42:10, 30, 33; 43:20; 44:5, 7ff, 16, 18ff, 22, 24, 33; 45:8f; 47:18, 25; Exod 21:4ff, 8, 32; 23:17; 32:22; 34:23; Num 11:28; 12:11; 32:25, 27; 36:2; Deut 10:17; 23:15; Josh 3:11, 13; 5:14; Judg 3:25; 4:18; 6:13; 19:11f, 26f; Ruth 2:13; 1 Sam 1:15, 26; 16:16; 20:38; 22:12; 24:6, 8, 10; 25:10, 14, 17, 24ff, 41; 26:15ff; 29:4, 8, 10; 30:13, 15; 2 Sam 1:10; 2:5, 7; 3:21; 4:8; 9:9ff; 10:3; 11:9, 11, 13; 12:8; 13:32f;

14:9, 12, 15, 17ff, 22; 15:15, 21; 16:3f, 9; 18:28, 31f; 19:19f, 26ff, 30, 35, 37; 20:6; 24:3, 21f; 1 Kgs 1:2, 11, 13, 17f, 20f, 24, 27, 31, 33, 36f, 43, 47; 2:38; 3:17, 26; 11:23; 12:27; 16:24; 18:7f, 10f, 13f; 20:4, 9; 22:17; 2 Kgs 2:3, 5, 16, 19; 4:16, 28; 5:1, 3f, 18, 20, 22, 25; 6:5, 12, 15, 22f, 26, 32; 8:5, 12, 14; 9:7, 11, 31; 10:2f, 6, 9; 18:23f, 27; 19:4, 6; 1 Chr 12:19; 21:3, 23; 2 Chr 2:14f; 13:6; 18:16; Neh 3:5; 8:10; 10:29; Job 3:19; Ps 8:1, 9; 12:4; 45:11; 97:5; 105:21; 110:1; 114:7; 123:2; 135:5; 136:3; 147:5; Prov 25:13; 27:18; 30:10; Isa 1:24; 3:1; 10:16, 33; 19:4; 22:18; 24:2; 26:13; 36:8f, 12; 37:4, 6; 51:22; Jer 22:18; 27:4; 34:5; 37:20; 38:9; Dan 1:10; 10:16f, 19; 12:8; Hos 12:14; Amos 4:1; Mic 4:13; Zeph 1:9; Zech 1:9; 4:4f, 13f; 6:4f; Mal 1:6; 3:1

**Adonai** - 459x in 444 verses in OT NAS. Almost 300 times **Adonai** is found in combination with Jehovah and is rendered "**Lord God**" -

**NAS** renders **adonai** as - Lord(456), lord(1), lords(2).

Ge 15:2, 8; 18:27, 30, 31, 32; 19:2, 18; 20:4; Ex 4:10, 13; 5:22; 15:17; 34:9; Num 14:17; Deut 3:24; 9:26; 10:17; Josh 3:11, 13; 5:14; 7:7,8; Jdg 6:15, 22; 13:8; 16:28; 2Sa 7:18, 19, 20, 22, 28, 29; 1Ki 2:26; 3:10, 15; 8:53; 22:6; 2Ki 7:6; 19:23; Ezra 10:3; Neh 1:11; 4:14; 8:10; 10:29; Job 28:28; Ps 2:4; 8:1, 9; 16:2; 22:30; 35:17, 22, 23; 37:13; 38:9, 15, 22; 39:7; 40:17; 44:23; 45:11; 51:15; 54:4; 55:9; 57:9; 59:11; 62:12; 66:18; 68:11, 17, 19, 20, 22, 32; 69:6; 71:5, 16; 73:20, 28; 77:2, 7; 78:65; 79:12; 86:3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 15; 89:49, 50; 90:1, 17; 97:5; 109:21; 110:1, 5; 114:7; 130:2, 3, 6; 135:5; 140:7; 141:8; 147:5; Isa 1:24; 3:1, 15, 17, 18; 4:4; 6:1, 8, 11; 7:7, 14, 20; 8:7; 9:8, 17; 10:12, 16, 23, 24; 11:11; 19:4; 21:6, 8, 16; 22:5, 12, 14, 15; 25:8; 28:2, 16, 22; 29:13; 30:15, 20; 37:24; 38:16; 40:10; 48:16; 49:14, 22; 50:4, 5, 7, 9; 51:22; 52:4; 56:8; 61:1, 11; 65:13, 15; Jer 1:6; 2:19, 22; 4:10; 7:20; 14:13; 32:17, 25; 44:26; 46:10; 49:5; 50:25, 31; Lam 1:14, 15; 2:1, 2, 5, 7, 18, 19, 20; 3:31, 36, 37, 58;

(Note concentration in Ezekiel- usually in the phrase "Lord God") Ezekiel 2:4; 3:11, 27; 4:14; 5:5, 7, 8, 11; 6:3, 11; 7:2, 5; 8:1; 9:8; 11:7, 8, 13, 16, 17, 21; 12:10, 19, 23, 25, 28; 13:3, 8, 9, 13, 16, 18, 20; 14:4, 6, 11, 14, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23; 15:6, 8; 16:3, 8, 14, 19, 23, 30, 36, 43, 48, 59, 63; 17:3, 9, 16, 19, 22; 18:3, 9, 23, 25, 29, 30, 32; 20:3, 5, 27, 30, 31, 33, 36, 39, 40, 44, 47, 49; 21:7, 13, 24, 26, 28; 22:3, 12, 19, 28, 31; 23:22, 28, 32, 34, 35, 46, 49; 24:3, 6, 9, 14, 21, 24; 25:3, 6, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16; 26:3, 5, 7, 14, 15, 19, 21; 27:3; 28:2, 6, 10, 12, 22, 24, 25; 29:3, 8, 13, 16, 19, 20; 30:2, 6, 10, 13, 22; 31:10, 15, 18; 32:3, 8, 11, 14, 16, 31, 32; 33:11, 17, 20, 25, 27; 34:2, 8, 10, 11, 15, 17, 20, 30, 31; 35:3, 6, 11, 14; 36:2, 3, 4, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 32, 33, 37; 37:3, 5, 9, 12, 19, 21; 38:3, 10, 14, 17, 18, 21; 39:1, 5, 8, 10, 13, 17, 20, 25, 29; 43:18, 19, 27; 44:6, 9, 12, 15, 27; 45:9, 15, 18; 46:1, 16; 47:13, 23; 48:29;

Da 1:2; 9:3, 4, 7, 9, 15, 16, 17, 19 (Note concentration in Daniel's great prayer - see Daniel 9 Commentary); Hos 12:14; Amos 1:8; 3:7, 8, 11, 13; 4:2, 5; 5:3, 16; 6:8; 7:1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 8:1, 3, 9, 11; 9:1, 5, 8; Obad 1:1; Mic 1:2; 4:13; Hab 3:19; Zeph 1:7; Zech 4:14; 6:5; 9:4, 14; Mal 1:12, 14.

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## Girdlestone's Synonyms of the OT...

The word usually rendered '**Lord**,' or '**my Lord**,' is **Adonai** ([0136](#)) is a special form of **Adon**, a word which signifies Master, and which exactly answers to the Greek **kurios** (see **word study**). **Adon** is sometimes rendered **Sir** in the A. V., as in Gen. 43:20KJV; **Owner**, as in 1Ki 16:24; but generally **Master**, as in Ge 24:9. The plural form (of Adon) **Adonim** and its plural construct form **Adonei** are used in the same sense; but when the word is applied to God, the form **Adonai** is adopted. The termination of the word (**-ai**), as in the case of Shaddai; may mark an ancient plural form, but this is uncertain. In the A. V., as in other versions, **Adonai** is frequently rendered '**my Lord**.'

**The title indicates the truth that God is the owner of each member of the human family, and that He consequently claims the unrestricted obedience of all.**

It is first used of God in Gen. 15:2, 8, and 18:3, &c. It is rare in the Pentateuch and historical Books, but frequent in the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Amos.

The words which we read in the 110th Psalm and the first verse, if literally translated, would run thus: —'Jehovah said unto my Master sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool;' and our Saviour's comment might be rendered, 'If David call him Master, how is he his Son?' The expression 'the Lord God,' which first occurs in Gen. 15:2, and is frequently found in the O. T., especially in the prophetic Books, is literally 'my Lord Jehovah.' 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.

In the Psalms and elsewhere there is found that significant title which the apostle Thomas gave to the Lord

Jesus when he had optical and sensible demonstration that He was risen from the dead. Thus in Ps. 35:23, the sacred writer uses the double title Elohai and **Adonai**, 'my God and my Lord;' and in Ps. 38:15, we find **Adonai** Elohai, 'my Lord, my God.'

**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 honours his father, and a servant his **master** (or masters); if, then, I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master (**Adonim** ), where is my reverential fear?'

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**J M Boice** commenting on "Jesus Christ is Lord" in Phil 2:11 asks...

**Why is the name "Lord" the name that is above every name?** Why not any one of the other titles? Or why not another name entirely? These questions have several answers, but the most important is that the title identifies the Lord Jesus Christ with God. The truth is easily seen in both the Greek and Hebrew usage of the word. The Greek word for Lord is **kurios**, the word used by citizens of the Roman empire to acknowledge the divinity of **Caesar**. This title was never used of the emperors until they were thought to be deified through a religious ceremony; therefore, it was used as a divine title. Within the empire there was a test phrase used to check the loyalty of the people. It was Kyrios Kaiser, and it meant "**Caesar is Lord.**" Christians who would not say these words were later singled out from pagans and executed. In those days when a Christian insisted that **Jesus is Lord** he meant that Jesus, not Caesar, is divine. The same meaning is present when the word occurs in Hebrew, only more so. The Hebrew word is **Adonai**. It is a title somewhat like our "sir," but it assumed an extraordinary importance in Hebrew speech because in practice it replaced the personal name of God, Jehovah. No Jew pronounced the word "Jehovah," even when reading the Bible. Instead he said, "Adonai." (Boice, J. M.. *Philippians : An Expositional Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books)

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**Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible on Adon/Adonai...**

**a. When the title lord or master was used to address men, at least three things were meant.**

⇒ It was a title of authority: the king held authority over the citizens; the land owner had authority over the slave (Genesis 45:8).

⇒ It was a title of submission: the citizen was subject to the king, and the slave was subject to the land owner (Genesis 24:9-12).

⇒ It was a title of honor: the title showed respect and acknowledged a person's position or achievement (Genesis 18:12; Genesis 32:18).

**b. When the title Lord or Master was used to address God, at least four things were meant:**

⇒ **First, God's sovereign position.** The Lord is the Sovereign Ruler and Supreme Master of the universe. He is the Lord who holds the highest position within the universe: He is before all, above all, and over all. He (Adonay) is "God of gods, and Lord of lords" (Deut. 10:17). He is "the Lord of all the earth" (Joshua 3:11; Psalm 8:1).

⇒ **Second, God's supreme authority.** The Lord is the Supreme Master over the whole universe. He rules as He wills, rules according to His own purposes and pleasure. The Lord does not hold authority just like all other authorities upon earth and throughout the universe. The Lord is the One Supreme Authority who rules, governs, and executes justice as He sees fit, rewarding the obedient and punishing the disobedient (cp. Hosea 12:14).

⇒ **Third, God's right to demand submission or obedience.** The Lord is the Supreme Master over all beings—the Creator and Sovereign Lord over all—both visible and invisible. Therefore, He alone has the right to demand obedience and submission. We owe our lives to the Sovereign Lord and Supreme Master of the universe; consequently, we should give our lives to Him, totally subject ourselves to His control and rule (Isaiah 6:1, 8-11; Joshua 7:8-13).

⇒ **Fourth, God's power to provide.** The Lord is the One who can provide all things for His servant; the One who can meet all the needs of His dear follower, both his spiritual and physical needs (cp. Genesis 15:2; Genesis 44:10, 11, 12). (Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible)



Adam Clarke...

*adon col haarets*, the Director, Stay, and Support of the whole earth. The universal Governor, whose jurisdiction is not confined to any one place; but who, having created all, governs all that he has made.

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

Seiss Comments on Zechariah...

When Jerusalem was conquered and its people carried away captive to Babylon, the Most High took the name of "the God of heaven." (Da 2:18, 28, 37, 44, &c.) When they came back to rebuild the temple, and repossess their land, and re-establish their holy state, God was again called "the Lord of the whole earth." (Zech. 4:14.) But when He is styled Lord of the earth, the word is Adon, Master, and not Jehovah. It would, therefore, seem to be a theocratic title, having relation to a divine nationality and government upon the earth. The Apocalypse: A Series of Special Lectures on the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

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Larry Richards...

There are several different words for "god" used in the psalms. **Adon** (13x in 12v times) and **Adonai** (52 times) indicate Master. **Ei** (69 times) and **Elohim** (342 times) are the Middle Eastern culture's general words for the deity. But the name that occurs most often in the psalms, some 678 times in the 150 poems, is Yahweh, the personal name of God whose meaning was first explained to Moses (Ex. 3). That name, God's covenant name, emphasizes the living presence of God with, and for, His people. It was as Yahweh that God released His people from slavery in Egypt. It was as Yahweh that He parted the Red Sea, provided Israel with manna as their daily bread, and shattered the power of the Canaanites before Joshua's armies. It was as Yahweh that God settled Israel in the Promised Land, gave them a Law to live by, and promised to bless them. It is Yahweh the everpresent, ever-faithful, and ever-caring God that we meet in the Psalms. And it is through the Psalms that we sense God is Yahweh for us. (Bible Reader's Companion)

**Adon** - 13x in 12v in the Psalms - Ps 8:1, Ps 8:9, Ps 12:4 (of man), Ps 45:12 (of men), Ps 97:5, Ps 105:21 (of men), Ps 110:1, Ps 114:7, Ps 123:2 (of men), Ps 135:5, Ps 136:3 (2x)

Ps 110:1 "Jehovah says to my **Adon**" - Here **Adon** refers to the **Messiah** and Poole comments that...

The Hebrew word **Adon** is one of God's titles, signifying His power and authority or lordship over all things, and therefore is most fitly given to the Messias, to whom God hath delegated all his power in the world, Mt 28:18. (Matthew Poole's Commentary on the Holy Bible)

Ps 114:7 Tremble, O earth, before the **Lord (Adon)**, Before the God of Jacob,

Spurgeon

Let the believer feel that God is near, and he will serve the **Lord** with fear and rejoice with trembling. Awe is not cast out by faith, but the rather it becomes deeper and more profound. The **Lord** is most revered where He is most loved.

Ps 135:5 Our **Lord (Adonim)** is above all gods.

Phillips...

He was "**Our Adonim**," our Lord. The word Adonim is seldom used of man. It is the plural of Adon (which signifies the Lord as ruler in His relationship to earth) and because it is **plural** it carries the thought of that rulership to a greater degree. **Adonim** is especially the Lord who rules His own. (The John Phillips Commentary Series – Exploring Psalms, Volume Two)

Holman Bible Dictionary...

The Hebrew word adon, "lord," is used more than 300 times in the Old Testament for a human's rule over another person. This is to be distinguished from baal (also "lord") in that adon represents a personal relationship of the subjection of one person to another, while baal designates the owner of things, including slaves and women. See Baal. At times persons would address someone of equal social status as "lord" out of respect

Matthew Henry...

He is Lord-**Adonai**, the basis and foundation on which the world is founded and fastened, the ruler and governor of all, that one Lord over all (Acts 10:36) that has all power committed to him (Mt 28:18) and is to reign over the house of Jacob for ever, Lk 1:33.

## SUMMARY ON ADONAI

Anchor Bible Dictionary...

One of the various names of God in the Hebrew Bible. The term is derived from Heb **ādōn** ("lord"), which in the biblical text refers both to the deity and to human rulers. **Adonai** is a modified form of the plural of **ādōn**: it bears the first-person suffix "**my**" and has been vocalized in a slightly different manner than "**my lords**," receiving a lengthened final **a**. Although based on a plural, it is usually translated into English as "**my lord**" or simply "**Lord**."

**Adonai** appears in the MT both as a title in its own right and as a substitute for the personal name of God, Yahweh. In order to preserve the sanctity of the Name, the Masoretes placed the vowel letters of Adonai underneath the consonants of Yahweh. This common substitution technique, called qere/kethib ("read/written"), clues readers to pronounce the Name as Adonai. In cases in which Adonai already appears, the hybrid form is read "Elohim." The RSV renders the substitution form as "LORD" (with all letters capitalized) while Adonai itself is translated "Lord" (with only the first letter capitalized). (Freedman, D. N. The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary. 1:74. New York: Doubleday)

Ryrie has this note on **Adonai**...

Like Elohim, Adonai is a plural of majesty. The singular means lord, master, owner (Ge 19:2; 40:1; 1Sa 1:15). It is used, as might be expected, of the relationship between men (like master and slave, Exod. 21:1–6). When used of God's relationship to men, it conveys the idea of His absolute authority. Joshua recognized the authority of the Captain of the Lord's hosts (Josh. 5:14), and Isaiah submitted to the authority of the Lord, his Master (Isa 6:1, 8, 9, 10, 11). The New Testament equivalent is **kurios**, "lord." ([Ryrie, C. C. Basic Theology: A Popular Systemic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth. Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press](#))

C I Scofield on **Adon/Adonai**...

**(1) The primary meaning of Adon, Adonai, is Master**, and it is applied in the Old Testament Scriptures both to Deity and to man. The latter instances are distinguished in the English version by the omission of the capital. As applied to man, the word is used of two relationships: master and husband (Ge 24:9, 10, 12, "master," may illustrate the former; Ge 18:12, "lord," the latter). Both these relationships exist between Christ and the believer (Jn 13:13, "master"; 2Co. 11:2, 3, "husband").

**(2) Two principles inhere in the relation of master and servant**

**(a) the Master's right to implicit obedience** (Jn 13:13; Mt. 23:10; Lk 6:46);

**(b) the servant's right to direction in service** (Isa 6:8, 9, 10, 11). Clear distinction in the use of the divine names is illustrated in Ex. 4:10–12. Moses feels his weakness and incompetency, and "Moses said unto the Lord [Jehovah], O my Lord [Adonai], I am not eloquent," etc. Since service is in question, Moses (appropriately) addresses Jehovah as Lord. But now power is in question, and it is not the Lord (Adonai) but Jehovah (Lord) who answers (referring to creation power)—"and Jehovah said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? ... Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth." The same distinction appears in Josh. 7:8–11. (**Scofield Reference Bible**)

Robert Lightner comments on **Adon/Adonai**...

When used to refer to individuals, the word (**adon**) speaks of an intimate and personal relationship. For instance, the word is used to refer to the **master of a slave** and the **husband of a wife**, thus connoting the **idea of authority, love, and faithfulness**.

Two truths are evident from the use of the word in the master-slave relationship.

**The Master has a right to expect obedience.** In OT times, slaves were the absolute possession of their master and had no rights of their own. Their main objective was to fulfill the wishes of their master. Slaves had a relationship and responsibilities that were different from that of hired servants. For example, hired servants could quit if they did not like the orders of their master. In contrast, slaves had no other option but to obey their master (see Ge 24:1-12).

The call of Moses serves as another illustration. His hesitation to obey the call of God eventually ended when he acknowledged God as **Adonai** or Lord ("Then Moses said to Jehovah, "Please, **Adonai**, I have never been eloquent... " Ex 4:10, 11-18). When Moses admitted his position as a slave and God's position as the **Lord**—the **Master**—there was only one viable option—to obey. When Moses called God **Adonai**, he acknowledged that it was not his place as the slave to choose his work; he had to heed his Master's directives...

When the prophet (Isaiah) heard "the voice of the Lord [Adonai]" (Isa 6:8), he said, "Here am I. Send me!" Isaiah was ready and willing to do the bidding of his Master...

**The slave may expect provision.** Slaves usually did not worry about their daily affairs. This is because it was the master's business to provide food, shelter, and the other necessities of life. Since slaves were the possession of their master, their needs became the responsibility of the master to fulfill. Obedience was the only condition for this provision. This truth is marvelously displayed in the life of Paul, who considered himself a bondsman of Christ. The apostle reflected a true servant's heart when he assured the Philippians that God, their Master, would supply all their needs (Phil. 4:19). Only obedient slaves can expect such provisions from their master.

**The master is also responsible to manage the affairs of his slaves**, for their work is the master's bidding. So it is with God as our Adonai, or Lord. When we are willing to be His obedient servants, He will give us direction in our service for Him. Consider, for example, Moses. At one point in his life he tried to serve God in his own strength and in his own way, and he failed miserably. Forty years later when Moses admitted that he could not serve God in his own power, the Lord saw fit to use him as the leader and liberator of His people. ([Lightner, R. P. The God of the Bible and Other Gods: Is the Christian God Unique among World Religions?. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications](#)) (Bolding added)

Ps 44:23 Arouse Yourself, why do You sleep, O Lord? Awake, do not reject us forever.

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**Wiersbe** comments that "**Lord**" (**Adonai**)

is the name that declares that **He is Owner and Master of all, including the nations of the world** It is sometimes translated "Sovereign Lord" (NIV) (Adonai Jehovah; 2Sa. 7:18, 19, 20). He is "**Lord [Adonai]** of all the earth" (Ps 97:5), and the earth should tremble "at the presence of the **Lord [Adonai]**" (Ps 114:7). ([Wiersbe, W. W. Be Worshipful. Colorado Springs, Colo.: Cook Communications Ministries](#)) (Bolding added)

I said to the Lord, "You are my Lord; I have no good besides You."  
(Ps 16:2).

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**R C Sproul**

In confessing Christ as **Lord**, the Apostles' Creed echoes the primary confession of faith of the apostolic church. The first creed was the simple statement, "**Jesus is Lord**." The title Lord is the most exalted title given to Jesus. In the culture contemporary with the New Testament, the title **kurios** ("lord") had various usages. It was sometimes merely a polite form of address, as in the greeting, "Dear sir." It also designated a slave owner or master. The apostle Paul refers to himself as a "slave" (doulos) of the "Lord" (**kurios**) Jesus Christ. The slave lord purchased, owned, and governed his slaves. This connotation is used in a figurative sense frequently in the New Testament. The title lord was used in a more exalted sense to refer to those of imperial power and authority. The church faced a crisis when it was required to recite the formula **Kyros Kaisar** ("**Caesar is Lord**") in giving a loyalty oath to the emperor. The imperial title was filled with theological and religious connotations. Cullmann points out: "According to the ancient view, **lordship** over the world empire indicates **lordship** over the cosmos." Hence many Christians chose to die rather than utter the loyalty oath. This refusal to call Caesar "**lord**" did not come out of revolutionary civil disobedience, but from reluctance to render to Caesar that which did not properly belong to him. **Absolute authority, dominion, and power**

belonged to Christ, who alone reigns as cosmic **Lord**...

The Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) used the term **kurios** to translate the Hebrew word **Adonai**, which was a title for God Himself. The Hebrew word Yahweh, which was the ineffable "name" of God, was too sacred to be used frivolously, even in worship. When a public reader came to Yahweh in the liturgy, the substitute word pronounced in its place was Adonai. Adonai was the title that indicated God's absolute authority and power...

Psalm 8 begins in the NIV "O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" A strict rendering from the Hebrew would be, "O Yahweh, our Adonai, how excellent..." Yahweh is the "**name**" of God; Adonai is the "**title**" of God. This would be compared somewhat with the expression, President Woodrow Wilson. "Woodrow" was Wilson's name; "President" was his title, which indicated his role or function...

That Jesus is objectively the Lord is a common assertion of the New Testament. He is the imperial authority of the entire creation. His authority has cosmic proportions. But the creed confesses not only that he is **the Lord**, but that he is **our Lord**. At the heart of the Christian faith is the believer's personal submission to the authority of God's exalted King. The confession is, in itself, meaningless. Jesus said, "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" (Matt. 7:22, 23). To say "Lord" and mean all that it implies cannot be done apart from the Holy Spirit. ([Sproul, R.. Renewing Your Mind : Basic Christian Beliefs You Need to Know. Grand Rapids: Baker Books](#)) (Bolding added)

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### James Montgomery Boice

**Adonai** can designate an earthly Lord as well as God. So when the psalmist says, as he does, "I said to the Lord [Jehovah], 'You are my **Lord [Adonai]**,' " he is saying that the **God of Israel is his master**. That is, God is not only the strong, powerful God in whom he can take refuge ("El" in Ps 16:1) but also **the one who is able to—and does—order his life and direct what he should do**. We have an equivalent of this in our common New Testament: way of speaking when we say that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. Savior corresponds to el, since it is as "the Strong One" that Jesus saves us. Lord is the equivalent of Adonai. It means that Jesus is also Master of our lives. **Is Jesus your Lord and Savior, your Master?** If he is, you should be able to say, as David does, "apart from you I have no good thing." ([J M Boice Psalms. Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books](#)). (Bolding added)

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### R C Sproul

Yahweh focuses on God's self-existence and the fact that only God has life in himself. Often in our Bibles this word is written "Lord," or occasionally "God," with all capital letters. When we encounter the word Lord, typeset in upper- and lower-case letters, the Hebrew term behind it is **Adon**, which means "Master." The addition of the suffix **ai** intensifies the meaning of the word, so that **Adonai** means **the supreme Lord**, the **Lord of all**. This word stresses the sovereignty of God as All-ruler... When the Christian stands before Almighty God he or she stands before absolute authority over life. **Adonai** authority empowers faith, hope, and service for a sinful human being. ([Sproul, R. Vol. 3: Before the face of God : A daily guide for living from the Old Testament](#)). (Bolding added)

## ADONAI NATHAN STONE

**THE NAMES OF GOD** we have studied so far have been Elohim, translated "God" in our Bibles; Jehovah, translated "LORD"; and "El-Shaddai," translated "God Almighty" or "Almighty God." These names have related rather to the Person of God--the power and glory of His Being, as in Elohim; the expression of Himself as a God of righteousness, holiness, love and redemption, as in Jehovah; and as a beneficent and bountiful Bestower of powers, gifts, blessings, and fruitfulness for service, as seen in El-Shaddai. While these names do imply or demand a responsibility on the part of man to conform to the Being in whose image he is made, the name under consideration in this chapter makes a definite claim upon man's obedience and service.

The name **Adonai** is translated in our Bibles by the word **Lord** in small letters, only the first of which is a capital. Used as a name of God, **Adonai** occurs probably some 300 times in the Old Testament. It is significant that it is almost always in the **plural** and

**possessive**, meaning *my Lords*'. It confirms the idea of a trinity as found also in the name Elohim. This is still further confirmed by the fact that the same word is used of men some 215 times and translated variously "master," "sir," and "lord," but for the most part, "master," as throughout Genesis 24, where Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, speaks of "my master Abraham," and over and over again says, "Blessed be Jehovah God of my master Abraham." It is important to notice, too, that the same word **Adonai** is translated a number of times by the word "owner." But, used of men, it is always in the **singular** form, **adon**. Only of God is it in the **plural**. The suggestion of the Trinity in this name is still more strikingly confirmed by its use in Psalm 110, in these words:

"The Lord said unto my Lord," or **Jehovah** said unto my **Adoni**, Sit thou on, my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool."

The Lord Jesus in Matthew 22:41-45 (as also Peter, Acts 2:34, 35; and Heb 1:13; 10:12, 13) refers this striking passage to Himself. How significant then that David, speaking of but one member of the Trinity, should use here not the plural **Adonai**, but the singular form **Adoni**: "Jehovah said unto my Adoni," that is to Christ, the second Person of the Trinity!

The name **Adonai**, while translated "**Lord**," signifies ownership or mastership and indicates "the truth that God is the owner of each member of the human family, and that He consequently claims the unrestricted obedience of all." The expression, "Lord of lords," in Deuteronomy 10:17, could be rendered "Master of masters." An illustration of this name as a claim upon man's obedience and service is found in Malachi 1:6: "A son honors his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honor? And if I be a master, where is my fear? Saith Jehovah of hosts" And in Job 28:28 it is declared that the fear of Adonai (the Lord, the Master) is wisdom.

## USE OF ADONAI IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The use of this name Adonai in the Old Testament plainly reveals the relationship which God sustains toward His creatures and what He expects of them. A glance at a good concordance will give all the instances in which the name occurs. Let us examine a few of them.

The first occasion of its use, as with the name **EL Shaddai - God Almighty**, is with Abraham in Ge 15:2. In the first verse of this chapter it is written: "After these things"--i.e, after his rescue of Lot and his military achievement of the defeat of the four kings and their armies, where it is revealed that Abraham himself was lord or master (**adon**) of a large establishment--

"After these things the word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision, saying, 'Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.'"

Abram then makes his reply addressing God as **Adonai-Jehovah**--an acknowledgment that Jehovah is also Master. Certainly Abram understood what this relationship meant; perhaps better than we nowadays understand it, for those were days of slavery. Lordship meant **complete possession** on the one hand, and **complete submission** on the other. As already seen, Abraham himself sustained the relationship of master and lord over a very considerable number of souls; therefore in addressing Jehovah as Adonai he acknowledged God's complete possession of and perfect right to all that he was and had.

## MEANING OF MASTER-SERVANT RELATIONSHIP

But even Abraham, thousands of years ago, understood by this **more than mere ownership**, more than the expression and imposition of an arbitrary or capricious will. Even in those days the relationship of master and slave was not altogether or necessarily an unmitigated evil. The purchased slave stood in a much nearer relationship to his lord than the hired servant. who was free to come and go as he might wish: In Israel, the hired servant who was a stranger might not eat of the Passover or the holy things of the master's house, but the purchased slave, as belonging to his master, and so a member of the family, possessed this privilege (Ex 12:43, 44, 45; Lev 22:10, 11). **The slave had the right of the master's protection and help and direction.**

Nor was the relationship devoid of affection. In the absence of seed, a slave, Eliezer, is the heir to Abram's entire household. So the psalmist well puts it all when he says: "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God" (Ps 123:2). "The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou gives them their meat in due season" (Psalm 145:15). As Adonai, or Master or Lord, God says to Abraham: "Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." **He can depend upon the faithfulness of the Master.** For if a human master can sustain relationships even of affection to a slave and be faithful in provision and protection, how much more the Jehovah-God who is Adonai also to His creatures.

There are many examples of the use of this name which well illustrate this truth:

## MOSES

Moses, when commissioned to go to Egypt to deliver Israel, addresses God as Adonai, acknowledging thus God's right to his life and service when he replies: "O my **Lord**" (that is, **Adonai**), "I am not eloquent... I am slow of speech" (Ex 4:10). And again he says after God's reply, "O my Lord [Adonai] send someone else." Then God's anger kindled against him, against a servant who seeks to evade his responsibility of carrying out the will of his rightful Lord. For God, who is never a capricious or unjust Master, does not ask what cannot be performed, and never requires a task for which He does not equip His servants. Thus He assures Moses that He will be his sufficiency for the task (Exodus 4:10).

## JOSHUA

As the eye of a servant looks to the master, so Joshua, in defeat and distress, looks for direction to the Lord God who is his Adonai. When Gideon is called to deliver the children of Israel from the Midianites, he asks: "O my Lord [Adonai], wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house" (Jdg 6:15-note). Then God gives answer: "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

## DAVID

The name **Adonai** is found frequently on the lips of David, and in one especially significant passage in this connection (2Sa 7:18, 19, 20), it appears four times in three verses. To David, of humble origin, a shepherd lad, and now king of Israel, God comes and promises to establish his dynasty, his throne, forever. Overcome by this great promise, for he recognizes in it also the promise of Messiah who shall come from his loins, David, king and lord of God's people, calls God **his Lord**, coupling it with the name Jehovah, He acknowledges his humble origin, his own unworthiness, and the goodness and greatness of God the Adonai who has exalted him, and he says:

"Who am I, O **Adonai** Jehovah? And what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? . . . And what can David say more unto thee? For thou, **Adonai** Jehovah, knows thy servant."

## PSALMISTS

The psalmists, too, make frequent use of the name in its proper significance. It is Jehovah, Adonai, whose name is so excellent in all the earth, who has put all things under His feet (Psalm 8:1). He is the Adonai of the whole earth (Psalm 97:5). The earth is bidden to tremble at the presence of the Adonai, its Lord (Psalm 114:7). **Adonai** is above all **elohim** or gods (Ps135:5). As Master or Lord, Adonai is besought to remember the reproach of His servant (Ps89:50). "My eyes are unto thee, O God, the Adonai" (Ps 141:8) says the psalmist as of a servant to his Lord. And he asks Adonai, his Master, to take up his cause and defend him against his enemies (Ps109:21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28).

## ISAIAH

The use of this name by Isaiah the prophet is especially significant. It is the vision of God as Adonai which started him out on his prophetic career. One of the most stirring portions of Scripture describes this vision. It was a time of national darkness, for Uzziah, Judah's great king, had died. Uzziah was the prophet's king, therefore his lord and master, and perhaps his hero too, in spite of his tragic end. It is then that the young man experiences one of the most solemn and significant visions of Scripture. In the sixth chapter he tells us, "in the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord"-Adonai (Isa 6:1-note). His earthly lord and master had died, but what does that matter when the Lord of lords, the Adonai in the heavens, lives and reigns. This Adonai is seated upon a throne too, but high and lifted up, above all earthly lords and monarchs, for this Adonai is also Jehovah of hosts, whose train fills the Temple and whose glory covers the whole earth. This Adonai is surrounded by the fiery seraphim, who not only cover their eyes before their thrice holy Lord, but with their wings are ready instantly to do His bidding. Then after the prophet's confession and cleansing in preparation for his service, he hears a voice saying: "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" This call for service comes from Adonai, for this is the name used in verse 8.

So prophet after prophet is called and commissioned for service by Adonai, the Lord who claims obedience and service. The shrinking Jeremiah, ordained from before his birth to be a prophet, answers the call to service by saying, somewhat like Moses: "Ah, Adonai Jehovah! Behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child" (Jer 1:6). As with Moses, the Lord of life and service enables His servants to carry out His commands when they yield themselves to Him and obey. He touches the lips of Jeremiah, as of Isaiah, and promises His presence and protection.

## EZEKIEL



In the prophecy of Ezekiel the name **Adonai Jehovah** occurs some 200 times. It has added significance here in that the name occurs in connection with prophecies not only concerning Israel but concerning the nations round about. It reveals that Adonai claims lordship not only over Israel but, whether they will or not, over all the peoples of the earth. It is, "Thus saith Jehovah who is Adonai," and again and again, "Ye shall know," and "They shall know that I am Adonai Jehovah" (Ezekiel 13:9; 23:49; 24:24; 28:24; 29:16). It is Adonai Jehovah who commands the four winds to breathe upon the dry bones and make them live (Ezekiel 37:9).

## DANIEL

The use of this name is especially notable in Daniel 9 where it occurs 11 times in 9 verses (Da 9:3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 15,16, 17, 19). Daniel is living in the land of Israel's captivity, whose king is lord or adon over many nations; but only Jehovah is the Adonai of Daniel and his people. **This is a chapter of confession of Israel's faithlessness as God's servant, hence Daniel addresses God as Adonai in his prayer for forgiveness and restoration of the people and Jerusalem.** "O Adonai," he cries, "the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments" (Da 9:4, 5). Since it is God as Lord and Master whose will they have disobeyed, it is He to whom they must address their prayer for forgiveness, for acceptance, for restoration. Thus it is in Da 9:19,

"O Adonai, hear; O Adonai, forgive; O Adonai, hearken and do: defer not, for thine own sake, O my God" (See related resource: **Daniel 9 Commentary notes onsite**)

## SERVANTS OF ADONAI

So throughout the OT those who know God as Adonai acknowledge themselves as servants: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are thus spoken of (Ex 32:13). Over and over again we read, "Moses, my servant," and "Moses, the servant of the Lord." In the same significant passage in which he addresses God as Adonai, a number of times David the king speaks of himself as "thy servant." "I am thy servant; give me understanding," says the psalmist (Ps 119:125). The word translated servant is also slave. Thus prophets, priests, kings, all God's people acknowledged themselves His servants, recognizing His right to command and dispose of them according to His will as the Lord of their lives, it is this which is suggested by the name Lord or Adonai.

## ADONAI IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The meaning of Adonai as Lord and Master is carried over into the New Testament. Between two and three centuries before Christ the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek by a group of Jewish translators at Alexandria in Egypt. It is interesting to note that they translated the word Adonai in Genesis 15:2 as "Master." In the Greek it is "Despot."

In the New Testament, too, it is the word used of men as lord and master in relationship to servants. It is used hundreds of times of the Lord Jesus Himself.

We are said to be not our own; we have been bought with a price. We belong to God who is our Lord and Master. We are therefore bidden to glorify God in body and spirit, which are His (I Corinthians 6:19, 20). Many Scriptures set forth this relationship to God as His servants. We are exhorted to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God, holy, and acceptable, and this as our reasonable service (Romans 12:1). We are to understand what is the will of the Lord--our Adonai (Ephesians 5:17). And Peter calls us children of obedience to Him who has called us (I Peter 1:14, 15); and He is the Master who has bought us (II Peter 2:1).

A striking illustration of this is found in the life of the apostle Paul. He felt himself to be a zealous servant of the Lord God of his fathers even in his first opposition to and persecution of the Church, believing he was doing God great service. The first words that fall from his lips on his conversion are: "Lord [Master], what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). Like a good servant, he tells us that when it pleased God to reveal His Son in him that he might preach Him among the nations, "immediately he conferred not with flesh and blood," but he went away in complete surrender to He alone with his Lord to prepare himself as quickly as possible to do His will (Gal 1:16, 17). He seems to take even a little pride in emphasizing the Lordship of Jesus Christ by calling himself His bondservant or slave. As such he bore in his body the marks of his Lord Jesus (Gal 6:17). "Christ Jesus, my Lord [my Master, my Adonai], counted me faithful, appointing me to his service" (1Ti 1:12). "I count not my life dear to myself so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus" (Acts 20:24). Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's (the Master's)

As in the Old Testament, so in the New, God as Lord is represented as the One who bestows gifts upon and equips His servants for their service. He made some apostles, others prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers--all for the accomplishment of His purpose

and will in the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the Body of Christ (Ep 4:11, 12). Having these gifts from our Lord, Paul exhorts us, let us wait on them and minister them, as faithful servants, with diligence (Ro 12:6, 7, 8). God, as Lord, is said to protect, to provide for and sustain His servants. In the Old Testament, Adonai says to Abram, "I am thy shield." He is a rock, a fortress, a deliverer. Luke says of Paul, in great danger: "The Lord stood by him and said, Be of good cheer" (Acts 23:11). Again: "The Lord stood with me and strengthened me" (2Ti 4:17). The Lord delivers His servants from every evil (2Ti 4:18). The grace of the Lord is continually with His servants. It is the Lord who says to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2Co 12:9). The Lord directs the service of His servants, opening doors (2Co 2:12), and closing them, too (Acts 16:6). We are exhorted to abound in the work of the Lord for such work is never in vain (1Co 15:58).

God's requirements of service and usefulness are clearly set forth in the parables of the Lord Jesus, especially in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), and the parable of the pounds (Lk 19:11-27). As Lord, He rewards the faithfulness of His servants and punishes their lack of it. The reward is far more than commensurate with the service rendered. In the parables, the reward is represented in terms of the material, but the real reward is in the realm of the spiritual, of which the material is only a feeble analogy. Even so, the greatness of our reward for faithfulness as servants lies in our increasing apprehension and possession of our Lord Himself. Adonai said to Abram, "I am thy exceeding great reward." Frequently in the Old Testament the Lord is said to be the inheritance, the portion and possession of His people (Nu 18:20; Ps 73:26; 16:5; Ezek. 44:27, 28). So Christ our Lord gave Himself for us and to us. If we are His, He is ours, and He is ours in proportion as we are His.

Apart from this, however, there is a day of reckoning for His servants. In the Old Testament, Adonai renders to every man according to his work (Ps62:12). Every servant's work is to be made manifest. The test of fire will prove its worth. If it stands the test, it will receive a reward, If not, it will be lost (1Corinthians 3:13, 14, 15). "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more" (Luke 12:48, ASV) 'It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful' (1Co 4:2ASV).

But since God is Lord of all men whether they acknowledge Him or not, there is a day of reckoning: for all men apart from His servants. Jeremiah calls it the day of Adonai, Jehovah of hosts (46:10). It is day of vengeance, for Adonai the Lord will demand a reckoning from all His creatures. But, thank God that the Lord Jesus Christ will be deliverance and sure in that day for all who have believed on and served Him.

It is the Lord Jesus Christ, however, who, though He is our Lord and Master, is the supreme example of the true and faithful servant. He is the ideal servant. It is in Him we realize the full import and blessedness of the relationship that exists between ourselves and God as servant to a Lord. He is revealed in the Old Testament as the Servant. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him" (Isaiah 42:1). "He shall not fail" (v. 4). "I the Lord ... will hold thine hand, and will keep thee (v. 6). So the New Testament tells us He took the form of a servant--the same word Paul uses of himself, a bondservant, a slave. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death (Philippians 2:7, 8). "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7). This is in fulfillment of Psalm 40:6-8 where He is spoken of as the slave whose ear is bored, because he loves his master and elects to serve him forever (Exodus 21:6). He said of Himself, "I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29). "Even Christ pleased not himself," says Paul (Ro 15:3). "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28). "I am among you as he that serveth" (Lk 22:27). As a servant He also suffered, being made perfect through sufferings (Heb 2:10).

In that wonderful thirteenth chapter of John, He sets Himself forth as our Example as a servant. "Ye call me **Master** and **Lord**: and ye say well, for so I am" (Jn 13:13). "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The **servant** is not greater than his **lord** (Jn 13:15, 16). He exhorted to faithful service to the end, and spoke of the blessedness of those servants whom the Lord when He comes will find faithful and watching (Lk 12:36, 37).

**To be servant of the Lord is the greatest liberty and joy of all.**

### **Man needs lordship.**

With faculties and judgments impaired, distorted by sin, original and personal, he needs direction, guidance, authority in this world. Man is born to worship and serve. If he does not serve God, then directly or indirectly he serves the Devil, the usurper of authority. But no man, as our Lord said, can serve two masters--that is, God and the Devil--at the same time. "Know ye not," says Paul, "that to Whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Ro 6:16). To be subject to Satan is to be abject. His lordship makes service servile. He has made service degraded and a badge of inferiority. Christ, our Lord, Himself the ideal servant, has invested service with dignity, nobility, liberty, joy. "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman" (1Co 7:22). To be the servant of God is eternal life (Ro 6:22). And the faithful servant of the Lord will one day hear those joyful words from the lips of the Lord: "Well done, good and faithful servant ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." ([Names Of God Nathan Stone Books. 1944 Moody Publishers](#))

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- [Mark 8:34-36 Who's the Boss? - Ray Pritchard](#) - go to page 31 in this book [The Incredible Journey of Faith](#)