

## **Adonai**

The term 'lord' used in the Old Testament is often used in reference to one who is master over others. Abraham's servant called him 'adon' (Genesis 24:9). Sarah referred to Abraham as 'adon' (Genesis 18:12). Joseph declared that God had made him 'adon' over all of Egypt (Genesis 45:8). It was a position that required others to be in submission. So we see the word was commonly used in the world. Even today there are some cultures in which the head of an estate is referred to as a lord.

When used in reference to God, the word is used in several different ways. As Lord he is in a position to punish the disobedient and reward the obedient (Hosea 12:14). As Master of all His creation He has the sovereign right to demand obedience and the authority to punish disobedience. It was a right well understood in the ancient world. If someone in a household rebelled against the household rules, the master over the household decided their judgement. In the King James translation, as well as many others, Jehovah is also translated LORD, but is usually typed in all capital letters to differentiate it from 'adon'. *O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth* (Psalm 8:1). *The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* (Psalms 110:1) In both of these verses Jehovah is the first LORD and 'adon' the second, so Psalm 8:1 would read, "O Jehovah our Master..." and 110:1 "Jehovah said unto my Master...".

Sometimes it refers to God's relationship to His people Israel. It was required in the law that three times a year all males were required to bring their sacrifices to 'Adon' their Elohim, translated Lord God.

The form 'Adonay' or 'Adonai' (Gen 15:2) refers to the Lord over all, though in a few cases 'Adon' is used in this way also (Deut 10:17) (Josh 3:11). To avoid defiling the name of Jehovah, the Jews would use this word in place of YHWH. Like Elohim (God), it is plural. Scholars refer to this as the plural of majesty, but it is also the wonder of the Triune God. This form is used more than three hundred times, mostly in Psalms, Lamentations, and the Prophets.

The word can be used simply as a polite title, as we use the word 'sir'. We may find ourselves simply referring to the Lord as 'sir' instead of the Master of all things, the Lord of all lords. Though God has brought us into a personal relationship to Himself through the blood of Jesus and made us His children, we should always carry a reverence for His position as the One who has the Divine right of justice and reward. As Sovereign it is His will that is right and good. When we enter into prayer it is good for us to remember that He is not just 'Sir' but 'Master' over all. Then we recognize the need to pray according to His perfect will.

Knowing He is Master can be a comfort to our hearts. No other power will ultimately prevail and all things will work together for good because He is Adonai over all. Thank our Adonai for being such a wonderful, loving Master.