

The Names of God #4
Adonai – The Lord and Master
Gen 15:2

Introduction:

1. Have you ever been tempted to say, "I am captain of my own ship, master of my own destiny"?
 - a. This common misconception goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden and is one of the greatest lies promoted by the devil.
 - b. We have been created by a loving God who has a purpose for our lives.
2. Adonai is usually translated "Lord" in our English Bibles
 - a. Adonai occurs over 300x in the OT in reference to God
 - b. It is used some 215 times in reference to men and it means "sir" as a title of respect or it can mean "master" or "lord" - Gen 24 – Eliezer calls Abraham, "my master Abraham"
 - c. When it is used in reference to men it is always in the singular - adon
 - d. When Adonai is used for God it is always in the plural
 1. The plural may be another implicit reference to the triune nature of God who reveals Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
 2. It may be that the plural is used to enhance or underline and exalt the awesome majesty of God
3. This name offers a challenge to His followers to recognize His Lordship
4. Other names do not make a definite claim on us, but Adonai does make a definite claim on our obedience and service.

I. Adonai Speaks of God's Lordship

A. Lordship Means that God Owns All

1. Lordship means complete possession by God
2. Calling God "Lord" means that we realize God owns all
3. Abraham understood this concept
 - a) *He was the owner of a vast household*
 - b) *He had many possessions – livestock, tools, housing, slaves / servants*
4. In the same way that Abraham possessed his household, God possesses all
5. This is a picture of God's ownership
 - a) *He made all and He keeps it all going*
 - b) *He has absolute right to claim it as His own*
 - c) *He can use His creation as He sees fit*

B. Lordship Means that God Rules All

1. He owns all – He can do what He wants with His own
2. Lord = Master
 - a) *We don't tell Him – He tells us*
 - b) *We don't order Him – He orders us*
3. We serve God – He doesn't serve us
4. He is the Master and we are the servants

c. See This in Psalm 8

1 To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of David. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. **2** Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. **3** When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; **4** What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? **5** For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. **6** Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all *things* under his feet: **7** All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; **8** The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, *and whatsoever* passeth through the paths of the seas. **9** O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

1. "O Jehovah our Master..."
2. The psalmist puts all under God's authority
3. God owns all and He is Master of all

II. Abraham Recognized God as Adonai – Gen 15:2

2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? **3** And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

A. The First Use of Adonai is Found in Gen 15:2

1. Gen 12:1-3 - God called Abram to leave his country and settle a land that He will show him
2. Gen 13 - Abraham /Lot begin their journey together but they have to separate
3. In Gen 15 God again speaks to Abraham in a vision and Abraham is perplexed about the promises of God which are tied up in a son and yet Abraham has no children

B. Abraham was Despondent

1. There was the physical strain of fighting the battle
2. There was the emotional strain of worrying about Lot
3. There was the spiritual strain of depending on God

C. Abraham was Tested by Inaction - "childless"

1. Abraham did have a concern - he had no heir
2. God had before promised a son but nothing had happened and ten yrs had elapsed
3. Abraham's faith was continually being tested
 - a) *He mistook God's delay for God's denial*
 - b) *He figured that God was indifferent or negligent*
4. We can trust the promises of God - He will pay

D. Abraham was Tested by Inequity - "to me"

1. No seed had yet been given to Abraham
2. It is always a trying experience when others who are not living for the Lord receive blessings that we don't
 - a) *Lot had children even though he was not living for the Lord*
 - b) *Abraham was living for the Lord and still no son*
 - c) *The heathen around Abraham worshipped idols and they had children*

- d) *Abraham's servants were having children*
- 3. Abraham had left his family, his country and followed God - still no son
 - a) *As the years passed, Abraham's chances of having a son diminished*
 - b) *Life may seem unfair, but God is not unfair*

E. Abraham was tested by inability - "seeing I go childless"

1. Inability stared Abraham in the face
2. He might be forced to adopt Eliezer as a son and heir
 - a) *This was common when a man did not have a son to be heir*
 - b) *Abraham thought that his situation was helpless and he might have to do this*
3. At times we must stop trusting our ability and trust God's ability
 - a) *Sometimes He places us in a place where we are almost helpless*
 - b) *Then we must trust His ability*
4. Eventually Abraham and Sarah will laugh at the possibility of having a son of their own
 - a) *Their inability will magnify God's ability*
 - b) *God's promises depend on his ability - not ours.*

F. God's Answer to Abraham – vs 4-5

4 And, behold, the word of the LORD *came* unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. **5** And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

1. God then took Abraham outside and instructed him to look toward the heavens and count the stars. God reassures Abraham that his descendants will be as numerous as the stars - vs 6-8
 - a) *Abraham is brought to a point of surrender when he has to acknowledge his own insufficiency and God's sufficiency*
 - b) *"Since I placed those stars in the sky, do you think your childlessness is an insurmountable problem to me?"*
 - c) *Abraham acknowledges that Jehovah is Lord (Adonai) of his life*
2. When God showed Abraham the stars of heaven he was declaring his authority over all creation
 - a) *He reminded Abraham that he brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans*
 - b) *"Do you think that your childlessness presents me with a problem?"*
 - c) *If you really know who I am, you will have no doubts*
 - d) *God who created those stars could bring children to him*

III. Adonai Signals a Call to Service

A. Adonai Called Moses – Ex 4:10-13

10 And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. **11** And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? **12** Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. **13** And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.

1. Ex 4 provides us with another use of the name Adonai that enables us to further understand what it means to acknowledge God's lordship of our lives

2. In chapter 3 Moses has met God at the burning bush
3. Here in chapt 4 Moses is still trying to convince God that he is unable to accomplish the task that God gave him
4. Vs 10 - "Lord" - what is contradictory here is that Moses calls Jehovah Adonai and then attempts to excuse himself from obeying his Lord based on his supposed inability
5. See God's answer in vs 11-12
 - a) *God patiently reminds Moses that He is the one who created Moses*
 - b) *If God can give man life, then he can certainly put words in his mouth*
6. Moses still doesn't get it - look at his response in vs 13 - "Lord, (Adonai) send the message by whomsoever Thou wilt." Don't send me, send someone else

B. Adonai Called Gideon – Jud 6:10-16

10 And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

1. In Judges 6 we see that the Midianites were devastating the land of Israel
2. The people cried out to God for a deliverer and God sent a messenger to Gideon while he was beating out grain - vs 12
3. There was responsibility – don't fear or worship other gods
4. There was rebellion – “ye have not obeyed my voice”

11 And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.

5. Gideon was a nobody
6. God came to him to reveal Himself
7. Before Gideon can become the deliverer of Israel he must know God in a real and personal way

12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. 13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

8. Question of God's justice – “Why is all this befallen us?”
9. Question of God's power – “Where are all the miracles?”
10. Question of God's faithfulness – “forsaken us”

14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? 15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. 16 And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

11. Person of the commission – Gideon
12. Particulars of the commission
13. The angel addressed Gideon as a mighty man of valour but Gideon did not agree with the assessment of his ability by the angel

C. King David Loved the Name Adonai – 2 Sam 7:18-21

18 Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O **Lord** GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? 19 And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O **Lord** GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O **Lord** GOD? 20 And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, **Lord** GOD, knowest thy servant. 21 For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them.

1. This name is repeated frequently in the Psalms
2. By looking in 2Sam 7 we can discover why this name is so dear to David
 - a) *David wants to build a Temple for God*
 - b) *Nathan informs David that God will not allow him to build the temple*
 - c) *God promises David that his son will build the Temple*
3. In vs 18-21 we see David's response - "Lord GOD"
4. The repeated use of Adonai Jehovah shows that David acknowledged his role as servant
5. David is moved by the privilege given to him to serve the Lord

D. Isaiah's Use of Adonai is Significant - Isa 6:1-8

1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the **Lord** sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. 4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. 6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. 8 Also I heard the voice of the **Lord**, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

1. It was the vision of God as Adonai that started him out on his prophetic career
2. It was a time of national darkness since King Uzziah had died
3. "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord (Adonai)"
4. Isaiah's call for service in vs 8 came from Adonai

IV. Three Characteristics of Those Who Call God Adonai

- Throughout Scripture, those who know God as Adonai will always exhibit 3 characteristics

A. They Acknowledge Themselves as Servants

1. God is the owner of all and they are merely stewards who have been declared worthy by Him to serve.
 - a) *When we call God "Lord" we recognize God's ownership of our lives*
 - b) *When Abraham called God "Lord" he was recognizing God's sovereign ownership and his own submission*
2. They count it a privilege to serve the living God
3. Lordship requires the complete submission of all who would call Him Lord

4. Many of us struggle with the issue of ownership
 - a) *From the very first time we understand what "mine" means we want to cling to and claim ownership*
 - b) *Notice children playing with toys. Toys are spread out all over the nursery and no one is playing with the ball. One baby crawls over to the ball and the other child drops his toy and goes over and says "mine". He wasn't playing with it. He didn't buy it*
5. Truth is we are not really owners, but stewards
6. The Lord is owner of all that exists
 - a) *During your quiet time, take a sheet of paper and write out a deed signing everything over to God, the rightful owner - "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."*
 - b) *One couple wrote out the deed and then the washing machine broke down. In the past such an event would have caused frustration and despair. He and his wife simply knelt down beside the washer and prayed, "Lord, your washing machine broke down. What do you want to do about it?" After praying and consulting with a repairman, they determined that the Lord needed a new washing machine. They were thankful that the Lord provided the needed finances to purchase a new washer.*
 - c) *The understanding that the Lord and Master owns everything helps us to keep life in perspective.*
 - d) *What a joy to be the steward for the God of the universe*

B. They Trust God to Supply Their Needs

1. They understand that their Master can supply all their needs
2. He is the One who provides the supernatural empowerment that enables them to serve God effectively

C. They Realize that They Can Do Whatever God Calls Them to Do

1. The giving of the tithe and offering is simply a means of acknowledging that He is Adonai and that He alone can supply all our needs according to His riches in glory
2. One of the most wonderful breakthroughs in our Christian experience is when we come to understand that God is Adonai - Lord of all.
3. Calling God Adonai is an acknowledgment of His ownership of all and our submission to willingly and obediently serve Him
4. When we call Him "Adonai" then we must be prepared to serve Him
5. He desires to work through us to accomplish His purpose on earth