

Names of God, Pt 4 - Adonai

Names of God Series

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We are spending our Wednesday evenings this summer studying the names of God and as we explore each name, we discover something of the nature and the character of our great God and we come to know the wonder of his ways and his works as revealed in his very names. And our intent, of course, is not just to know more about God, but, in fact, to truly know God.

Our premise has been this. Our premise is this God has progressively revealed himself to his people by introducing himself with and identifying himself by different names at different times. God's names were given to man by God himself during specific times of man's need so that we might know that our God is all in all.

You might recall the first name that we studied was the name אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem'). I am going to ask for you to speak up and participate with me here this evening, but somebody please help me remember the definition or the description of the name אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem'). Somebody help me, good and loud.

Ok, Creator. There was a little more to it. Eternal Creator. A little more. Triune eternal Creator or, if you will here, eternal triune Creator. And what was the context in which we learned of אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem')?

Creation. Where is that found? Genesis chapter number one. In the beginning we are introduced to the triune eternal Creator of the universe and while the narrative there in Genesis one is about creation, the frequency of the name אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem'), some 32 times in that first chapter of Genesis, really reminds us that Genesis one is about he Creator, not just the creation. Very good.

The second name that we examined was יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw'). And what was our definition of description of this name, יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw')? Somebody help me.

Self existing one, very good. And somebody remind me the context in which we learned of יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw').

Burning bush in Exodus chapter three. God introduced himself to Moses as יהוה (yeh-ho-vaw') at the burning bush and in the face of all of the newly created gods of Egypt, Moses learned that יהוה (yeh-ho-vaw') was not new or created, but that, in fact, יהוה (yeh-ho-vaw') was the self existing one.

Third name. The third name that we examined was אל שרי (ale shad-dah'- ee). What was our definition or description of אל שרי (ale shad-dah'- ee)?

God almighty or almighty God, almighty one. And what was the context in which we learned of אל שרי (ale shad-dah'- ee)?

Oh, this is hard. It was all of seven days ago, I think, when we studied the name אל שרי (ale shad-dah'- ee) or God almighty, almighty God. Anybody remember?

Yes. Abraham and Sarai, Genesis 17. When repeating his covenant promises to Abraham God declared, "I am almighty God. I am אל שרי (ale shad-dah'- ee)," so that the אלהים (el-o-heem') of creation is powerful enough to compel his creation to do that which is contrary to creation, that which is impossible. Abraham and Sarah in their old age would have son, because with God nothing is impossible.

This evening we are going to explore another name of God and that name is... oh, I haven't told you. That name is רענסי (ad-o-noy').

Now, the name רענסי (ad-o-noy') this evening is an exception to our premise, our premise that God revealed himself by introducing himself with a different name and a different time. In this case the name רענסי (ad-o-noy') was... already existed. It was a generic or a common name that was used of other men and it is something a name or a title that acknowledge authority and lordship of one over another. It is translated capital L lowercase o lowercase r lowercase d in your English Bibles and it means master. רענסי (ad-o-noy') or master.

However, while God did not introduce himself by this name, what is still consistent with our premise of this series is that the name רענסי (ad-o-noy') can still assure us that God is the source of all that we need.

You remember our premise. Our premise is that God revealed himself to man by introducing himself with and by different names at different times in different contexts when man had a need.

And so although God didn't introduce himself as רענסי (ad-o-noy')—that is a title that man has ascribed to God, an appropriate title—still this name of God reminds us that God is our all in all.

Let me explain. When we think of a master we think of a slave. When we think of a

slave we think of the slave trade that existed in our own country some two centuries ago and when we think of the slave trade that existed in our country some two centuries ago, we think of the abuse and the hard labor and the beatings and the cruelty that slaves endured at the hands of their masters. Am I right?

But in the ancient world slavery was very different than that. Slavery did include ownership, but it was different than the ownership of a beast or an animal and a purchased slave enjoyed a closer relationship with his master than any other hired help. In fact, in Israel the hired help could not eat the Passover meal or the holy things of the master's house, but the purchased slave could. He was a member of his master's family. He belonged to his master. And the purchased slave had the right to the master's protection. The purchased slave had the right to the master's provision.

In fact, a bit of trivia for here this evening. Before Abraham and Sarah had their son Isaac, was the heir of Abraham's entire household? Does anybody know?

Eliezer. Eliezer was the heir to all that Abraham owned and possessed and Eliezer was Abraham's slave.

And so, in the same way, we don't cower from our אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy') as one who assaults us or abuses us. But rather we draw near to our master, to our אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy') as one who can meet our needs.

I might propose this Scripture here to make the case, Psalm 123 verses one and two.

Unto You I lift up my eyes, O You who dwell in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, As the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, So our eyes look to the LORD our God, Until He has mercy on us.¹

Now the name capital L capital O capital R capital D, Lord there, is the name יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw') and the name God there is the name אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem'), but I nonetheless use this Scripture to make the point that God is the one who can meet our needs. And just as a child looks to a father for his needs to be met, just as here a servant looks to his master for his needs to be met, just as a maid looks to her mistress, so we look to our אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem'), our יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw') and our אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy'), our master knowing that he is our all in all.

Proposing a new paradigm for the notion of master this evening, not as one for whom we must shrink away in fear under threat of punishment or abuse, but one to whom we draw near knowing that he can meet our needs.

Let's consider some examples this evening where אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy') could meet the need of man.

¹ Psalm 123:1-2.

This is a picture of Moses with the tablets. It is a painting by Rembrandt. When God commissioned Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt Moses addressed God as אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy'), as master, acknowledging God's right to his life and service and acknowledging God's lordship over him and appealing to God as his master. And here in Exodus chapter four Moses said this.

“O my Lord [אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy')], I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”²

Send someone else. Prove that you are my all in all. Meet my need.

And, of course, we know that God assured Moses that God himself would be his sufficiency and that God would be with him.

Moses appealed to his אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy') for help.

Another example would be Gideon in the book of Judges. God called Gideon to deliver the children of Israel from the Midianites, very good. And in Judges six Gideon asked, “O my Lord [אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy')], how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.”³

And here Gideon is appealing to his master, to his Lord for aid.

God's answer in verse 16, “And the LORD said to him, ‘Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.’”⁴

Another example. David. David was of humble origin. He was just a shepherd boy. But now he had become King of Israel and God had intended to establish David's dynasty, his throne forever. And David was overcome by the great promise, that great promise where he understood that it included the coming Messiah and so David addressed God as אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy') multiple times in 2 Samuel seven, but he asked specifically, “Who am I, O Lord [אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy')] GOD [and that is יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw')]?”⁵ Or, “Who am I Lord, Lord, master, self existing one?” If you will, the capital G capital O capital D is literally the Hebrew יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw').

“And what is my house, that You have brought me this far?”⁶

“For You, Lord [אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy')] GOD [יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw')], know Your servant.”⁷

² Exodus 4:10.

³ Judges 6:15.

⁴ Judges 6:16.

⁵ 2 Samuel 7:18.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ 2 Samuel 7:20.

And, in fact, David frequently addressed God as his אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy') all through the psalms.

Psalm 141.

“But my eyes are upon You, O GOD [אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy'), my master]; In You I take refuge.”⁸

Psalm 109. David asked God as his אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy') take up his cause and defend him against his enemies.

And so remember here we are introducing a new paradigm for a master. A master is not a task master or a slave driver. Here אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy') is one to whom we draw close when we have a need, when we need protection in David's case.

For the notion of God as our master is not a point of threat, but a point of resource. We can look to him, depend upon him, trust him to care for us.

The servant in his household.

Another example would be Isaiah. Here Isaiah is depicted on the Sistine chapel ceiling by Michelangelo. In Isaiah six the southern tribes of Judah were in a national crisis for king Uzziah had died and it was then that Isaiah received his vision of God's throne room.

Isaiah 6:1 and you know the Scripture there.

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord [אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy')].”⁹

Now Isaiah's earthly lord and master, King Uzziah, had died. But Isaiah's heavenly Lord and Master still lived and reigned supreme. And the conclusion of Isaiah's vision there was submission to אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy') commission.”

And you recall there God saying, “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?”¹⁰

And Isaiah said, “Here am I! Send me.”¹¹

Now all through the Old Testament those who addressed God as אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy'), acknowledged themselves to be his servants. And they responded to אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy') as their master. But most often—and this would be a fascinating study for you to do on your own. Most often they addressed an appeal to their אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy') for help in an

⁸ Psalm 141:8.

⁹ Isaiah 6:1.

¹⁰ Isaiah 6:8.

¹¹ Ibid.

acknowledgement that he could help. That is how they approached their אָדוֹנוי (ad-onoy'), master.

When we think of the authorities in our lives, children, when you think of your parents or perhaps employee when you think of your boss, or law breaker when you think of the law enforcer, do we shrink away from them as threatened by them? Well, let me address the child when considering your mom and dad. Your mom and dad, boys and girls, are the greatest resource that you have. And you can go to them and say, "I need counsel. I need help. I need money." And they will give it to you to some degree.

Consider yourself as an employee. You can approach your boss, I would hope, and you can say, "Boss, we have a need on the floor. We have a need in the corner office or in my little cubical. We have got a situation in the company of law enforcement," and appeal to them.

On occasions I have played in my mind a series of what ifs. What if some tragedy happened. Where would I go for help? And mentally I might identify, "Well, there is a police station here and there is a fire station here and so if I have a crisis I know it is just two miles around the corner," and I can drive to that police station."

A quick story. My dear sister Julie was babysitting late for a family and on her way home somewhere near midnight and there was a car following her. And every turn that she made the car behind her made that same turn and it became apparent to my sister Julie that the car following her was trouble and perhaps she was being stalked. And so he continued to drive as dialed 911 on her cell phone and appealed to the law enforcement to come and help her in that delicate situation in the middle of the night as a single young woman. And she stayed on the line with 911 until sure enough a few minutes later as she was identifying her location, a patrol car pulled up behind her and not only did she pull off to the side of the road, but the car behind her pulled off to the side of the road.

And what had happened is the car behind her thought that she was a drunk driver. And so they called 911 and said, "We are following a drunk driver." And, of course the receptionist there said, "Well, sir, you stay on the line and you apprise us of your location. We will send a patrol car. You keep following that drunk driver."

And then my sister says, "I am being followed."

And so that officer responded to both of those cars. But why did my sister call 911? Law enforcement. They are a threat, right? We should shrink away from them. But, no, it is where you appeal for help.

Let me remind you of this again. Psalm 123.

Unto You I lift up my eyes, O You who dwell in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, As the eyes of a

maid to the hand of her mistress, So our eyes look to the LORD our God,
Until He has mercy on us.¹²

And I would contend that we can look to our אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy'), our אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem'), יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw'), אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy') in the occasions that we have a need.

Now the meaning of אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy') as master is carried over into the New Testament and it is used of Jesus with the Greek word κυριος (koo'-ree-os) about 650 times, very, very common. And I just might put some of this before you on the screen quickly.

In the book of Acts Jesus is referred to as Lord or κυριος (koo'-ree-os), Lord, 92 times in the book of Acts while he is called Savior just twice.

And sometimes we emphasize Jesus as our Savior at the expense of Jesus as our Lord.

When preaching on the day of Pentecost Peter said, "Whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved."¹³

He continued, "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ,"¹⁴ Messiah, anointed one.

Later in the book of Acts to the Philippian jailer Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved."¹⁵

In Romans to the Romans Paul promised, "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."¹⁶

And I think we would do well to remember that Jesus Christ is not just our Savior. He is by faith alone, but also he is our master and our Lord. And what is important for us tonight is to understand that our אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem') or our יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw') or our אֵל שַׁדְדַּי (ale shad-dah'- ee) is our אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy'). He is our Lord and Jesus is repeatedly addressed as Lord. Jesus is Lord.

Now what does this mean for me?

You see, God's name אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy') demands something of us. And so I want you this evening to ask yourself as we close in just the next few moments, I want you to ask yourself: Is Jesus my Lord?

¹² Psalm 123:1-2.

¹³ Acts 2:21.

¹⁴ Acts 2:36.

¹⁵ Acts 16:31.

¹⁶ Romans 10:9.

I didn't ask you if he is your Savior. I will assume that to be the case if you name the name of Jesus Christ in faith believing in his person and work on the cross. He is your Savior. But also is he your Lord?

I would like to put here on screen just a few items and these are simply a sampling of a number of things and how we might respond to our אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem'), our יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw'), our אֵל שַׁדַּי (ale shad-dah'- ee) as our אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy'), how we might respond to Jesus as our Lord: Serve sacrificially.

I think of Jesus washing his disciples' feet in John 13. And Peter says, "Lord, are you washing my feet?"¹⁷

"Master, are you washing my feet?"

And there Jesus modeled for them servitude and service.

If the Lord Jesus Christ is your master, serve sacrificially. How about this? How about watch your words?

Now I am not intimating that we swear, take the name... the Lord's name in vain, but I am suggesting that we call him our Lord, right? We address him in prayer or identify him in our conversation and yet we serve our own interests and, in fact, Jesus warned us that there will be many in that day that will say, "Lord, Lord... haven't we done many wonders in Your name?"¹⁸

We need to watch our words. If we are going to call him Lord, then let's understand what we are saying.

"You call me light and see me not. You call me way and follow me not. You call me life and desire me not. You call me wise and acknowledge me not. You call me fair and love me not. You call me rich and ask me not. You call me eternal and seek me not. You call me gracious and trust me not. You call me noble and serve me not. You call me mighty and honor me not. You call me just and fear me not. You call me master and obey me not. If I condemn you, blame me not."

"Lord, Lord..."

How about this?

You say, "I knew it, pastor. I knew you were getting there. It is all about money."

No. Give generously if Jesus Christ is your Lord. One of the best ways that we can

¹⁷ John 13:6.

¹⁸ Matthew 7:22.

demonstrate the lordship of Jesus Christ in our lives is to make sure that he is the master of our money.

You know Matthew 6:24.

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [or money].”¹⁹

Give generously. Be grateful for his gifts.

Psalm 16 verse two there describes how that everything we have and everything we are are from God. With gratitude we thank him for his good gifts. Surrender to his sovereignty. There are a whole grocery list of other ways in which we can acknowledge the lordship of Jesus Christ in our lives and...

But here as we conclude, surrender to his sovereignty.

The story begins with a simple question.

“I want this pearl. How much is it?”

“Well,” the seller says, “It is very expensive.”

“But how much?” asks the man.

“Well, a very large amount.”

“Do you think I could buy it?”

“Of course. Everyone can buy it.”

“But didn’t you say it was very expensive?”

“Yes.”

“Well, how much is it?”

“Everything you have,” says the seller.

After some serious thought the buyer makes up his mind. “All right. I will buy it,” he says.

“Well, what do you have?” the seller wants to know. Let’s write it down.

¹⁹ Matthew 6:24.

“Well, I have 10,000 dollars in the bank.”

“Good, 10,000 dollars. What else?”

“Well, that is all. That is all I have.”

“Nothing more?”

“Well, I have a few dollars here in my pocket.”

“How much?”

So the buyer begins to dig around. “Well, let’s see, 30, 40, 60, 80, 100, 120 dollars.”

I don’t know how many people carry 120 dollars around in their pocket. I don’t.

“But that is fine. What else do you have?”

“Well, nothing. That is all.”

“Where do you live?” He is still probing.

“In my house. Yes, I have a house.”

“The house, too, then.” He writes that down.

“You mean I have to live in my camper?”

“Oh, you have a camper? That, too. What else?”

“You mean I have to sleep in my car?”

“You have a car?”

“Well, two of them.”

“Both become mine, both cars. What else?”

“Well, you already have my money, my house, my camper, my cars. What more do you want?”

“Are you alone in the world?”

“No. I have a wife and two children.”

“Oh, yes. Your wife and children, too. What else?”

“I have nothing left. I am alone now.”

Suddenly the seller exclaims, “Oh, I almost forgot. You, yourself. Everything becomes mine. Wife, children, house, money, cars and you, too.”

After the seller pauses for a bit he concludes with this.

“Now listen. I will allow you to use all these things for the time being, but don’t forget that they are all mine just as you are. And whenever I request any of these things you must give them up because now I am the owner.”

I really think that that is the essence of אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy’), our master, our Lord. And it is not that he is taking those things away from us. You see, he is, in fact, in proper ownership of all of those things and the beautiful thing is that we can then go to him and appeal to him when we have need.

The illustration that we put there on the screen, I think Moses and David and Gideon and Isaiah and such, they addressed their אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem’). They addressed their יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw’). They addressed their אֵל שַׁדַּי (ale shad-dah’- ee) as אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy’) and appealed to him in a season of their need.

Let’s pray.

Father God, we humbly bow our heads and hearts before you just now and acknowledge that you are our אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy’), that you are our Lord, our master. And, God, forgive us for the twisted and perverted perspective that we have when we think of the masters who are abusive. But, Lord, we know that you are good and so we draw close to you and we appeal to you in our time of need. Oh, God, we acknowledge that everything we have is yours, but yet you have allowed us the stewardship of those things. May we be mindful of that? And, Lord, may we all have a surrendered heart and Spirit for you as our אֲדֹנָי (ad-o-noy’). I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.