

# ADONAI (LORD)\*

*God is superior to us and is our rightful Master. This fact demands humility, reverence, and obedience.*

SCRIPTURE†	MUSIC‡
(Strong's H136 / 431 occurrences) <b>Genesis 18:22–33</b> <b>Exodus 4:10–13</b> / (10, 13) <b>Exodus 34:1–9</b> (9) <b>Joshua 3:9–13</b> (11, 13) <b>Joshua 5:13–15</b> (14) <b>Psalms 16:1–5</b> / (2) <b>Psalms 39</b> / 39:1–7 (7)  [Scriptures need to be honed.]	Almighty Father Bow the Knee <b>Bow the Knee (Reid) SATB</b> Crown Him with Many Crowns Father, I Adore You <b>Great God Everlasting (Lantz III) SATB</b> His Name Is Wonderful How Great Thou Art I Stand Amazed in the Presence I Surrender All Just as I Am O God Beyond All Praising O Great God O Worship the King <b>O Worship the Lord (Larson) SATB</b> Speak, O Lord Worthy of Worship



\* Theme fits in **Hebrew [Names for God]** series, usually on the off-year from the **Jehovah** series.

† Daily preparatory readings shown in **bold**.

‡ Published choral and vocal music shown in **bold**.

# PRESENTING & PROMOTING THIS THEME

## MILITARY RANK

*When a military serviceman comes into a room with other military personnel, he is thinking about who he needs to salute or if someone else should be saluting him. Members of the military are always aware of their position or where they stand in relation to other people around them. The concept of Adonai means that we need to remember our position before God and show him the respect and reverence that He deserves. When Abraham approached God with his request for God to spare the city of Sodom, he addressed God with the term Adonai, indicating his reverence for God. Through Christ's work on the cross, believers have been given access to God, but even as we enjoy our access to Him, we must remember our position of submission and humility before Him.*

**Promotional Post:** [Social media post]

[Insert preparatory Scripture readings.]

How do you think of your superiors? The term Adonai means “master” and is a recognition of the master’s superiority and the expected reverence and submission from the servant. Anyone who has been in the military understands this concept – your job as a serviceman is to show respect for your commanding officer and to follow his instructions.

However, sometimes in our modern age we tend to forget what it means to submit our own ideas to the superior knowledge of someone else. Since we all have access to the internet and can conduct our own “research” about any conceivable topic, we tend to lose respect for people in authority. This happens because we feel like we know (or at least have the opportunity to know) much more than others who have gone before us. As a result, it’s easy for us to think that we are experts about certain topics even if we really aren’t.

But God is our superior in everything, all the time. He is the expert, and we don’t know better than Him. In response to His superior knowledge, power, wisdom, and more, we must demonstrate submission in different areas of our lives. For example, how do we face trials? Do we remind ourselves that God truly knows best? Do we try to “trust” Him on our own terms or do we offer unconditional surrender to His will? The character of our good Master merits nothing less than our complete submission. (Amy Tilson)

## BIBLICAL ENCOUNTERS

We are often tempted to assume that we have a right to speak to others about any and every topic because it is easy for us to feel like equals on the playing field of social media and the internet. But throughout Scripture, when we see people encountering God, their response is consistently one of silence. Biblical men and women did not speak in God's presence, and we must assume a similar humble attitude. God is our Master, and He knows things that we don't know and need to learn. There is nothing we can tell God that He doesn't already know, no discovery we can make that He didn't plan from eternity past. He is infinitely superior to us.

**Promotional Post:** [Social media post]

[Insert preparatory Scripture readings.]

(Optional two readers, with secondary reader's lines in *Italics*.)

In Genesis 18, Abraham encounters God and they talk of the coming judgment of Sodom. Abraham's words show us an attitude he had in God's presence. "*Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto [Adonai], [who] am but dust and ashes.*" / "*O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet [once more].*"

God appears to Gideon in Judges 6. When Gideon discovers he has been speaking with God Himself, he fears for his life and says: "*Alas, O [Adonai Jehovhah]! For I have seen [the] Angel of the LORD face to face.*"

When David has received from Nathan God's promise of an eternal line, his words reflect this same attitude: "*Who am I, O [Adonai Jehovah]? And what is my house, that Thou hast brought me [here]? ... And what can David say more unto thee? For thou, [Adonai Jehovah], knowest thy servant.*"

God gives Isaiah a vision of His splendor in His heavenly dwelling place. He speaks his famous words: "*Woe is me! For I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips.*"

**Adonai.** It is the Hebrew word for God that assumes submission, humility, reverence. We live in a democratic day of presumed "equal footing." We all have a platform to speak our opinions, advice, and so-called expertise on any topic.

But we ought never bring this attitude to God. All who meet **Adonai** in the Scriptures bow. If they speak at all, they speak of their unworthiness to be in His presence. And we *are* unworthy. In Luke 5:8, Peter realizes Jesus has worked a true miracle. He falls at Jesus' knees and responds: "*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord*"—**Adonai**.

We rejoice today that this same Jesus has brought us near to a holy God. For those of us who have received Him by faith, Jesus has changed our relationship with God forever. But that should not change our posture toward Him. We humble ourselves before Him. We bow the knee in reverence. We worship **Adonai**, our Superior.

## SLAVERY

*Begin with an attention-getting question such as “Is slavery really that bad of a thing? Why do we think it is so bad?” God is our Master. Jesus asks why we are willing to call him “Lord” but not to do the things that He says. Our society looks on slavery as degrading, but Christianity is a noble servanthood because of the Master we serve. We will always serve someone. We can choose a noble Master, or by default, we will serve sin and self. We must choose, just like Elijah and Joshua challenged the people of Israel to choose whom they would serve.*

**Promotional Post:** [Social media post]

[Insert preparatory Scripture readings.]

## THE TRUE EXPERT

*The term Adonai means “master” and is a recognition of the master’s superiority and the expected reverence and submission from the servant. In this age of everyone being able to use the internet to conduct his or her own “research” about any conceivable topic, we tend to lose respect for people in authority. This happens because we feel like we know (or at least have the opportunity to know) much more than others who have gone before us. This mentality leads to thinking that everyone is an expert. But God is our superior in everything, all the time. He is the expert, and we don’t know better than Him. We must demonstrate this attitude in different areas of our lives. For example, how do we face trials? Do we remind ourselves that God truly knows best? Do we “trust” Him on our own terms or do we offer Him unconditional surrender?*

## EXPERTISE = INTELLECT, ABILITIES, & TIME

**Isaiah 40:12–14** | Discuss the modern distorted concept of universal personal expertise as enabled by access to information—in social media, internet articles, personal experiences, etc. Introduce the formula for true expertise: *intellect, ability, and time/experience*. Use this formula to demonstrate God’s ultimate expertise in all things. Note the use of the term *Adonai* (Master/Lord) for God in the Old Testament as an admission of His superiority and the need for reverent submission.

**Promotional Post:** Are you an expert? Everyone is an expert at something. None of us is an expert in everything. When Old Testament believers use the Hebrew word *Adonai* (“Lord”) for God, they are acknowledging their inferior position. He is the “Expert” in all things.

Join us to worship *Adonai* and renew our submission to Him this Sunday! These passages can help you and your household prepare for our service: [Preparatory Scriptures.]

Are you an expert? What are you good at? What is something you believe you thoroughly understand? Everyone is an expert at *something*. What did it take to get you to that level of expertise?

- Well, you do have to have some base of **knowledge**. You need intellectual content. (Car mechanics need to know what every single part of the car does, and how it works.)
- Real expertise also requires some particular **skills**—the ability to apply facts dynamically to shifting problems and situations. (A nurse knows how to start an IV.)
- But before you can really be called an expert, you have spend lots of **time** in that field, building experiential wisdom over years.

We live in a society that equates knowledge with expertise. This is not good. We all want equal respect as experts when in fact each of us has a “right”—by knowledge, skill, and experience—to only a small handful of expert opinions. I am not the final word on everything, or everyone. Only God has that.

What of God’s knowledge? It is infinite. What of *His* skill? He has all power to do anything. What of *His* experience? He has always been. In every way, He is our infinite superior. This is the attitude the Hebrew term *Adonai* conveys. It’s the servant’s word for his “master.” It is the lesser’s word for the greater. God is *Adonai*—Lord. He is the true expert in all things. Before His eternal power, majesty, and beauty, all we can do is stop our mouths and bow at His feet.



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