

Oh My God!



We use that term a lot.

We use that term too much.

What do you mean when you say it? Is it a prayer? Or a kind of expression of fury or exasperation?

Maybe instead of “God,” you could use another term to clarify—one that has more depth, more punch, one that really hammers home what you mean...

How about **Adonai** instead?

Abram (Abraham) used that when he first conversed with God in [Genesis 15:2](#). Of course, he was praying; he wasn't upset because someone had just exasperated him. If you're praying (which I'm sure you were), *Adonai* really does pack a better punch. Let me explain.

First, it shows significant reverence toward the One you are speaking to. It implies that the title is so important, so significant, that saying the real name is just too presumptuous—too disrespectful—so you use *Adonai* instead. It acknowledges incredible authority, displays necessary humility, and (for me, anyway) expresses awe and appreciation for the opportunity to communicate at all.

Second—because I'm a nerd and like this kind of stuff—I want you to know something else about the word [Adonai](#). אֲדֹנָי — which is how Abram would have written *Adonai* if he had written things down (although he worked orally) and if he'd had paper (which hadn't exactly been... discovered? invented?... yet).

The word itself is kind of cool, even if you were fluent in ancient Hebrew. You see, *Adonai* is plural. It means more than one. So if you say, “Oh my Adonai,” you're actually saying, in a way, “Oh my Gods...”

Whoa. What?

Let me clarify.

The word “God,” when you're praying today, references *your* God—your higher power, your supreme divine Being at the very top of the Who's-in-Charge pile. There are many understandings of “god” in creation—past, present, and future. My understanding of God might be very different from yours, right?

My understanding of God here (and on this entire website, I might add) is the God of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures—what you might call the Old Testament and the New Testament. This God exists in three Persons who are equal, distinct, and indivisible.

There is the Hebrew Scripture Person who models a Perfect Parent.

There is the Christian Scripture Person who is God walking among humans as a Perfect Human.

There is the whole-Bible Person who is everywhere in creation (even within me) and can only be understood as Spirit.

Whoa! Oh my Adonai!!

(Yes, I know—impossible to really comprehend. I will write more about this, I promise. Just bear with me for now, okay?)

Which brings us back to *Adonai* being plural—and why the word is so cool. Its singular form is [אֲדֹנָי \(Adon\)](#), if you're curious and a complete nerd like me. That ancient Hebrew God, spoken of by Abram thousands of years ago, was already so immense that naming God was already a problem.

I like having a God that massive. Don't you?

So the next time you feel compelled to say, "Oh my God!" as an explosive exclamation (and I hope it's a prayer and not because you just spilled a whole container of spaghetti sauce on your new carpet), think about saying, "Oh my Adonai!" 😊

It's respectful.

It's appropriate.

And it keeps you grounded in who you're really asking for help, love, guidance, peace... all those good things.

Scriptures to consider looking at a bit more:

- [Genesis 15](#) – Abram/Abraham's conversation with Adonai
- [John 17](#) – A personal, divine conversation in which *we* are the topic of concern (yes, you...)
- [Matthew 28:16–20](#) – Often called *The Great Commission* by Bible scholars (really big nerds, by the way...)

P.S. The Scripture links in this post use *The Message*, a contemporary Bible translation written by Eugene H. Peterson (1993, 2002, 2018). I encourage you to look these passages up in whatever Bible version you're most comfortable with—good ol' Bible Gateway has just about all of them!

What are your thoughts about this post? Email me and let me know!

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