

*Caesar non supra grammaticos.*¹

Bible Words: *Dominus*



Dominus is a second declension noun meaning “Lord.” This is another important Bible word in both the Old and the New Testaments. Look the word “lord” up in a good English dictionary to read all the shades of meaning. One famous text using this word spans both Testaments as it comes from the opening of Psalm 110 and Jesus quotes and explains the text in Matthew 22:44. In Hebrew the name of God, meaning Lord, was YHVH. These letters are consonants. Hebrew writing did not originally show the vowels at all. Later they were just indicated by small dots above the letters. Since the Jews would not pronounce the name of God, considering it too holy to speak, it is not now certain which vowels should go where in relation to the four consonants or what the word sounded like. A common solution to the four letter puzzle is Je(=Y)HoVaH. Another is YaHwe(=V)H. You will come across both forms in your reading.

Dixit Dominus Domino meo sede a dextris meis donec ponam inimicos tuos scabillum pedum tuorum Psalm 110:1 (Vulgate)

*Dicit eis, Quomodo ergo David per spiritum vocat eum **Dominum**, dicens, Dixit **DOMINUS Domino** meo, Sede ad dextram meam, usquedum posuero inimicos tuos scabillum pedum tuorum? Si ergo David vocat eum **Dominum**, quomodo filius eius est?* Matthew 22:43-45 (Beza's Translation)

By now you should be getting quite good at picking out words you know and at guessing other words. Here are some clues: If we say someone is dexterous what do we mean? What about ambidextrous? The words *pedal*, *pedestal* and *pedometer* are related to *pedum*. Change the first letter of *inimicos* to “e” to guess this word. Do you remember *ergo*? *Si* is “if,” you can add it to your list of little words like *et*, *est*, *sed*, that you already know.

When Tremellius translated this Psalm he began it: *Dixit Jehova **Domino** meo*. For a clear and full explanation of these two texts which will help you see why Jerome used the word *Dominus* and Tremellius used *Jehova*, read the article here:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Lord-said-to-my-Lord.html>

Exercise:

1. What are the two Hebrew words for Lord?
2. Give the meanings of these two words.
3. How does Jesus prove that the Messiah is more than just the son of David in the sense of a physical descendant?
4. What does this passage teach us about the nature of the Bible?

¹ (Even) Caesar is not above the grammarians – i.e. Even the king cannot change the rules of speech. Anon.