

“Let All of the People Say, ‘Amen’”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Deut. 27:11-16

B. Where did “Amen” come from?

1. It may be one of the most ancient words in our language to remain in nearly unchanged form from its earliest origins
2. It is one of the most well-known words across nearly all languages.
3. Most of us use it every day, sometimes without realizing its significance.
4. The English word “amen” is a transliteration (untranslated, represented by corresponding letters in another alphabet) from the original Hebrew word “AMHN”
5. It has the same pronunciation, but with an English spelling; it has retained the original meaning.

C. Definition

1. Amen derives from a Hebrew root word “aman” that means “to build up or support; to be firm, steady, trustworthy, faithful.”
 - a. Morally, it means “to be true or certain.”
2. Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies - “Let it be granted, let it be done and unalterably confirmed.”
 - a. Num. 5:22 - Women are to say “Amen, Amen” agreeing with God’s law on adultery and the punishment thereof
 - b. Deut. 27 - Israel said “Amen” to declare their acceptance of the blessings and curses of the Law.
3. Thayer’s - “It came to be used as an adverb by which something is asserted or confirmed:
 - a. At the beginning of a discourse; ‘surely, of a truth, truly, truly; I solemnly declare unto you; assuredly’ - Matt. 5:18; Mark 3:28; John 3:3
 - b. At the close of a declaration; ‘so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled’
 - c. It was a custom, which passed over from the synagogues into the Christian assemblies, that when he who had read or discoursed had offered up a solemn prayer to God, the others in attendance responded “Amen,” and thus made the substance of what was uttered their own.”
4. When used as an adjective, it means “firm or true”
 - a. Deut. 7:9 - “Faithful God” is literally “God the Amen”
 - b. Isa. 49:7 - “The Lord who is faithful” literally “Jehovah the Amen”
5. American Heritage Dictionary - “Used at the end of a prayer or statement to express assent or approval”
 - a. When used after another’s statement or prayer we are saying, “This is true, or may it come to pass, or may it be fulfilled.”
 - b. “Amen” may be appropriately spoken during a sermon, a Bible study, during a prayer, or at any time when you strongly agree with what is being said.

I. BIBLE EXAMPLES

- A. 1Kings 1:34-36 - Shows agreement at the anointing of Solomon as king
- B. 1Chron. 16:35-36; Neh. 5:13 - "Amen" supports "Praise the Lord"
- C. Neh. 8:3-6 - Agreement to the reading of the law and the praise of God.
- D. 1Cor. 16:24; Gal. 6:18 - Paul occasionally concluded his letters with "Amen"
 - 1. One should not say "Amen" unless he understood what was said and agrees with it.
- E. 1Cor. 14:15-16 - An implied command that "Amen" is said at the end of prayer
- F. Psalm 41:11-13, 72:17-20; Rom. 1:25, 9:5, 11:36 - Amen can be said twice for the same matter for emphasis

II. AMEN IS POWERFUL

- A. "Amen" means so much more than the prayer is finished. It means:
 - 1. We apprehend (understand) - 1Cor. 14:15-16, 20
 - 2. We affirm - 1Tim. 1:6-7; Psalm 106:48
 - a. Rev. 22:21 - "Amen" is the last word in the Bible.
 - 3. We agree - When we say "Amen" we agree to take action based on what we have affirmed - Ecc. 5:5; James 5:12
- B. "Amen" is not just a word we say, but a decision we make. When we say it, we show our approval, our endorsement, our commitment to what was stated.
 - 1. Too often Christians let denominations dictate their speech; some sects use "Amen" and "Praise the Lord" so often it has become little more than a chant.
 - 2. Saying Amen liberally doesn't mean we have become liberal.
 - 3. Have you carefully listened to the prayer? Do you agree with it? Then say, "Amen"
 - 4. Do you strongly agree with something in the sermon or class? Then support the Gospel by saying "Amen"
- C. Saying Amen in our assemblies
 - 1. It is not a healthy indicator that we do not hear Amens in our worship.
 - 2. Why are you not saying Amen?
 - a. Too sophisticated? Is saying Amen beneath you? So you are voiding an apostolic instruction over pride?
 - b. Too afraid or embarrassed? So you are more afraid of sounding out of place than you are of disappointing the Lord?
 - c. Too much trouble or too lazy or too bored? So how boring do you think perdition will be?
 - d. Don't think it is important? So understanding, approving, agreeing, supporting, and committing to the Gospel and prayer is not important to you? Good luck with that attitude in Judgment
 - e. You say it quietly to yourself? That entirely misses the point and purpose of saying Amen. If it is inaudible to others, it is as if you didn't say it at all. What if Israel did this at Ebal and Gerazim?
 - 3. You know what I find sad about Tomlinson Run? There are more women here asking me if it is scriptural for them to say Amen than there are men here with the courage to say it out loud.

III. "CAN WOMEN SAY AMEN IN WORSHIP?"

- A. The poor Bible student bases his negative answer on 1Cor. 14:34-35 when says that women must be silent when the church is assembled. But that which proves too much proves nothing. It does not forbid all speaking and teaching by women in the assembly. There are exceptions to this qualified by commands and Divinely approved examples
1. If a woman is literally forbidden to speak at all, how can she sing, teaching and admonishing one another in song? - Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16
 2. How could she confess Christ before the assembly prior to baptism? Rom. 10:9-10
 3. How could a woman confess her public sins? - James 5:16; 1John 1:9
 4. How could a woman instruct her children to behave and be quiet during worship services?
- B. The question becomes -- are there commands or Divinely approved examples of women saying Amen in the assembly?
1. There are multiple commands and examples of women saying Amen in worship assemblies in the Old Testament
 2. History records that women said Amen in synagogue worship in New Testament times
 3. However, to date, I have no found command, Divinely approved example, or Divine implication that women said Amen in assemblies of the Lord's church. Until it can be seen clearly in scripture, the answer remains No.
 4. All the more reason for you men to grow some spiritual courage, open your mouths, and support the Gospel and prayers by saying Amen