

And All God's People Said . . .

Revelation 7:9-12

In these times of political, economic and social turmoil, we desperately need the words of Isaiah 33:5-6 "the stability of your times." That passage exalts our Lord as the stability of our times: He is strong in salvation. With that in mind let us turn to the glorious vision of the One who deserves all of our praise and glory. Turn to Revelation 7:9-12.

"After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts [living creatures], and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, "Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen." (Revelation 7:9-12)

In this text, we see the proclamation of glorious truth, followed by the responsive affirmation, "Amen!" This is part of the worship of our great God. So on this 85th anniversary of our congregation, I'd like to ask you to say, "Amen!" to what God has done across these eight decades. The "Amen" is uttered at the beginning of the response in Revelation 7, and again at the end of their proclamation. Even today, in response to God's glorious truth, God's people will say, "Amen and Amen!"

Today we celebrate the 85th anniversary of Calvary Baptist Church in Findlay, Ohio. During this message, we will remember some of the wonderful prophetic teaching and writing that has come out of our congregation. But as we do so, we are careful to say with Psalm 115:1, **"Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake."**

In today's message, we will see that "Amen" is a characteristic of God and His Word; it is also a believing response to His Word. Every believer should voice an "amen" to the God of Truth and His faithful Word.

The "amen" response is common throughout the Scripture. For instance, in Nehemiah 8:6, **"And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground."**

These people of God were no mere bystanders when God's truth was proclaimed. They were participants; they were fully engaged in the truth of the message they were hearing. They didn't sit idly by as spectators. They took up the task of hearing and responding with joyous commitment. They wanted to affirm the faithful truth they were hearing. In a sense this is an antiphony – a "call and response" – and this faithful feedback served to joyfully confirm the truth of the message. This use of the word, "Amen" reveals the Scriptural tradition of acknowledging and responding to the Truth of God. Think about that as people around you watch you as you listen to God's Word. Are you fully attentive, or do you appear to be distracted? Can those around you pick up from you that you are fully supportive when God's truth is proclaimed? The "amen" is clearly a response that we offer to God and His message to glorify Him. But as we shall see, it is much, much more.

The word “Amen”

What is “Amen?” In the Old Testament, the word is built upon 3 letters – this is the word stem “A-M-N” in Hebrew. Now what this tells you is the “Amen” is not really a translation – it’s a transliteration. In other words, the three letters, “A-M-N” when put together sound like “amen” and that is exactly the way it has been carried into both the Greek New Testament and our English language. The “AMN” receives various prefixes and suffixes in Hebrew, but the root “AMN” makes for an interesting and blessed Bible study.

The “amen” in Scripture can be a noun, a proper noun, a verb or a modifier.

- You can say, “Amen” is commonly used as a noun, especially as an affirmation.
- You can refer to “The Amen” as a proper noun! Revelation 3:14
- You can be “amen-ing” a statement of truth, as a verb. Genesis 15:6, Isaiah 53:1
- You can rejoice and certify the truth “amen-ing-ly” as a modifier (an adjective or an adverb). Job 34:12, 2 Corinthians 1:20

Definition

“Amen” means “certainly, assuredly, verily, or truly.” The word “amen” conveys the idea of faithfulness, stability, remaining in or continuing in fidelity.ⁱ

We can learn much about the definition of the word “amen,” by the way that people used it – especially the way Jesus used it. For instance, 25 times in the Book of John, Jesus Christ was quoted as saying a “double amen.” John 1:51 **“And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”**

Where is “the double amen?” It’s the word “verily” – also translated “truly.” It means “to confirm” or “assuredly.” It is a statement of truthfulness and integrity. It teaches us that something is “steadfast,” or “certain,” or “assuredly true.” This is solid. It is faithful. On this, our 85th anniversary, we say “Amen!” to that Biblical prophecy in John 1:51.

In our American English idiom, we say “you can take that to the bank,” or “you can bank on it.” This is important, because the eternal destiny of our souls hangs on these statements! In John 3:3 **“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except [unless] a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”** Or in John 5:24 **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believes on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”** And in John 6:47, **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”** Jesus’ words of truth and certainty give us help and hope as we face troubles in these last days.ⁱⁱ He is “the stability of our times.” These verses will mean even more to us by the end of this message. But notice that when Jesus gave us the “double amen’s” in the Gospel of John, this was not a response of man to God, but a response of God to man. That insight will add a marvelous new dimension to our study today: God speaks “Amen’s” to mankind, especially His own children.

In today’s message, we will see that “Amen” is a characteristic of God and His Word; it is also a believing response to His Word. Every believer should voice an “amen” to the God of Truth and His faithful Word.

I. AMEN: A Characteristic of God – Who He Is

He is the God of the Amen. Consider Deuteronomy 32:4, **“He is the Rock, his work is perfect: For all His ways are judgment: A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He.”** The word “amen” here is translated as “truth,” a reference to God’s character.ⁱⁱⁱ What we need in these troubled times is “the Rock.” He is “the Rock!” The Rock of Ages! He is “the truth,” the “amen.” So, what is “the Amen?” First

and foremost, it is a characteristic of God. This is who He is. He is steadfast and sure. He is faithful and reliable. He is the Lord of Truth and Integrity. Is it any wonder that He is the stability of our times?

Christ, the Amen

Consider the way the “Amen” is used in Revelation 3:14, **“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.”**

Who is “the Amen” in this verse? This is Jesus Christ – the “Amen” of God. What does it mean to call Him by that title? He is the faithful and true witness and our Creator. A companion verse helps us to explain this. 2 Corinthians 1:20 says of Jesus Christ, **“For all the promises of God in Him are yes, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”** One commentator wrote, “In Christ we not only see all God’s promises coming to fruition but also God’s unqualified yes to humankind. . . . Christ is God’s yes to all meaningful human hopes. Christ is God’s yes to human longing for life, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification (1 Cor 1:30).”^{iv} Glory to God: He is the stability of our times.

On the cornerstone of our first auditorium here on our campus, built in 1967, we see the words, **“Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone”** (Ephesians 2:20). On the inscription at the entrance of the auditorium where we are meeting today, we find these words, **“God hath manifested His Word through preaching”** (Titus 1:3). And, all glory to God, we’ve been preaching the Word about Jesus Christ, the Cornerstone, across these 8 decades.

Our founding pastor, Truman Richard Dunham, was well known in circles where Biblical prophecy was prominent. Classic books on Biblical prophecy such as Dwight Pentecost’s *“Things to Come”* were originally published by Pastor Dunham, right here in Findlay. Nationally prominent Bible preachers such as John Walvoord, William Pettingill, and Charles Woodbridge were well-known to our congregation. And their Bible studies and books on Biblical prophecy are still consulted and referenced by Bible preachers all over the world. To all this, we say, **“AMEN!”** because we want to exalt **“The Amen,”** Jesus Christ, the Chief Cornerstone. We firmly believe that our former pastors, such as Pastor Richard Dunham and Pastor Richard Snavely would be delighted by our current series of studies in the Book of Daniel. They both loved to preach on Biblical prophecies. So today, on our 85th anniversary, we are asking you to lend your voice to the chorus, and say, **“Amen!”** with us.

II. AMEN: A Characteristic of God’s Word – What His Word Is

In Psalm 119 – the longest chapter in the Old Testament, and the preeminent chapter devoted to exalting God’s Word – we find the “amen” used repeatedly^v. For instance, in verse 86 **“All thy commandments are faithful: They persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.”** Where is the “amen” here? It is the word “faithful.” Or in Psalm 19: 7 **“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”** Not only is God “the faithful Amen,” but His Word is also the “faithful amen.” This is what Jesus was demonstrating with His use of “verily, verily” in the Gospel of John. God – the Faithful Amen – gives us His Faithful Word. He tells us “verily” or “truly.” He makes His proclamations in verity and truth.

In this message, we are seeing that “Amen” is a characteristic of God and His Word; it is also a believing response to His Word. Every believer should voice an “amen” to the God of Truth and His faithful Word.

III. AMEN: A Believing Response to God and His Word

But there is another fascinating use of the root word “amen” found in Psalm 119: 66. See if you can find it: **“Teach me good judgment and knowledge: For I have believed thy commandments.”** Which word translates the word “amen” in this verse? It is the word “believed.” Do you see that? The Psalmist was “amen-ing” God’s commandments – responding with faith in God’s faithful Word. He was “amen-ing” God’s “amen.”

Let’s examine that response for the remainder of this message. Please turn with me to Genesis 15:5-6. **“And He brought him [Abraham] forth abroad, and said, Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness.”**

How is the “amen” used in verse 6? Abraham “believed” – He “amen-ed” the Lord. And the Lord counted it to him for righteousness. This is one of the most significant uses of “the amen” in all of Scripture. Why is this so important to us? This was when Abraham became a believer. This is when he passed from death unto life. How can we know that? Turn in your Bible to Romans chapter 4, to see why this is so important to us today. Consider verses 3-8:

For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also described the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” (Romans 4:3-8)

In Romans 4, we find a quote from Genesis 15. This is how we know that when Abraham said “amen” to God and God’s promises, Abraham passed from death unto life. In that very moment, he was justified in God’s sight.

But wait! There’s more. Look at the way that the Apostle Paul applied this truth to all of us today. Look at Romans 4:23-25 **“Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.”** What is the meaning of “Amen”? It is “to confirm” to say “truly, verily, that’s true, that’s right, assuredly so” – to affirm. Have you said “amen” to the Lord – believing on Him for eternal life?

One of the best known passages in the Bible is an “amen:” a believing response: Isaiah 53:1 **“Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?”** (The word “believed” is “amen” in Hebrew).

John the Baptist explained it this way in John 3:31-33, **“He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.”** Don’t miss the words in verse 33. Those who receive the testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ must “set to his seal that God is true.” This brings us to an important question in this message: Have you “AMEN-ed” God and His Word? Have you set to your seal

that God is true and trusted Him for salvation? When Jesus spoke the “double amen’s” in the Gospel of John, have you affirmed those with a believing “amen” of your own?

Let’s return to where we began this message, in Revelation 7:9-12

“After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts [living creatures], and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, “Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.””

Here is what we are seeing. When you came to Christ, believing that He died for your sins, was buried, and rose again, you said “amen” to God. You believed His Word; you affirmed your complete trust in His faithful promises. And now, when you say “amen” in your heart, or verbally, you are reaffirming your original faith and trust in the Lord. Every time you say, “amen” you are giving a brief testimony about the trustworthy God and His faithful Word. And now you are part of the chorus of “amens” that ring through the heavens, even this very moment.

Yes, the verbal response “amen,” has been abused. It has been abused by those who are “working for the ‘amen’.” From time to time, musicians have told me that the Lord has convicted them about performing for the ‘amen-ometer,’” as if the “amen” were acceptable applause to them for a performance. Preachers sometimes do the same thing – knowing that, in their audiences, certain tones or cadences can produce excited “amens.” And, yes, certain hearers in an audience can use the “amen” obnoxiously – in a way that distracts from what is being said – even interrupting the message! But does the abuse of the “amen” mean that we should avoid it? None of these things change the fact that the “amen” has a long tradition among godly people – growing out of specific Scriptural examples. So, though the “amen” is abused, we should pose a question: Should we be an “Amen-ing church?” Shouldn’t we, as individuals, and corporately, be saying, “Amen!”?

Consider Psalm 106:47-48 ***“Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, To give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise. Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: And let all the people say, Amen.”*** How many of God’s people should be saying, “Amen?” All of them.

Years ago, a pastor told me about when he presented the Gospel of Christ to a young couple. He was stunned to hear the man reply, “Well, I certainly don’t disagree with these things.” But there’s a difference isn’t there? There’s a difference between saying, “I don’t disagree” and saying, “Amen” as an affirmation of agreement, embracing the truth. Dear friend, be careful with your soul. Be sure that you are “amen-ing” where God has given His amen – and even double “amen’s.”

In this message, we have seen that “Amen” is a characteristic of God and His Word; it is also a believing response to His Word. Every believer should voice an “amen” to the God of Truth and His faithful Word.

Discussion Questions for Family Fellowship Groups:

1. What did we learn today about the word “Amen” and its usage? Please describe it in your own words.
2. In Psalm 89:2, the word “amen” is translated as “faithfulness.” What does this verse tell us about the way we should communicate with each new generation?
3. When did you “amen” God’s Truth the way that Abraham did – believing His promises, and trusting Him for salvation? Who would be willing to give a testimony about when he or she came to Christ?
4. Based on what we have learned today, why do you think you find the word “amen” in the following verses? Romans 11:36, Jude 24-25, Ephesians 3:17-21, Philippians 4:20, 1 Peter 4:11, Revelation 1:6-7, Revelation 5:13-14, Revelation 22:20-21
5. What does our understanding of “amen” say about the way we pray and the way we use this word at the end of our prayers?

ⁱ William Lee Holladay and Ludwig Köhler, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 20.

ⁱⁱ For instance, see John 16:20, 23. There we find God’s assurance that we our sorrow will be turned into joy and that God most assuredly hears our prayers.

ⁱⁱⁱ See for instance Genesis 24:7, Exodus 34:6, and Psalm 31:5 where “amen” is also translated as “truth.”

^{iv} David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, vol. 29, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 103.

^v See Psalm 119:30, 75, 86, 90, 130, 138 where “amen” is translated as “truth” and “faithful”