'Amen' - and its implications!
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AMEN is a word commonly used in a variety of religions all over the world. Many peoples from different countries speaking various languages use this word in their regular worship. Some use the word *amen* in earnest and with reverence, while the majority use it callously, understanding little, if any, of its deep significance.

What does the word *amen* mean? How important is it to God? How important should it be to us? Is it necessary for us to close our prayers with the word *amen?* Let us examine the deep significance of this small yet profound word!

Although *amen is* a short word, it is full of meaning. The word "amen" is of Hebrew origin, and means 'to be firm, secure, to be true and faithful'. It also means 'verily, certainly, so be it'.

The Bible indicates that *amen is* used by God's people as a form of praise (1 Chronicles 16:36*;* Nehemiah 5:13*;* Psalms 106:48)*.* God's people more also use it to bind themselves by oath (Deuteronomy 27:15-26*),* or to confirm statements they utter — as in "truly" or "of a truth" (Jeremiah 28:6). It is interesting to note that, for the most part, the authors of the New Testament close their books by using the word *amen.* (In the whole of the New Testament, only the book of Acts, James and 3 John do not end with the word *amen*).

Interestingly, *Amen,* or "God of Truth," is also a title given to Jesus Christ "the *Amen*, the faithful and true witness" (Revelation 3:14). It is understood that Christ is the God of Truth. Christ, the Amen, is faithful and true to cause all His words to be accomplished. He is steady and unchangeable in all His purposes and promises. His promises are 'amen' (2 Corinthians 1:20), which means that His testimonies never fall short of truth. We can count on everything that He says in His Word.

As we study the word 'amen', we must take note of the fact that the ancient Israelites said *'amen'* to both the blessings *and* curses that were pronounced on people. Deuteronomy 27:15 reads: "Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, *Amen.*" The fact that the Israelites uttered *amen* when a curse was pronounced denotes that they had *absolute faith* in the basis of these curses; they understood and acknowledged the validity of God's wrath if His law was broken. Importantly, it strongly obliged them to have nothing to do with the evil practices that would bring curses upon them. By saying *amen,* the people were not only saying "it is *certain* it shall be so," but also, "it is *just* it should be so."

In the Bible, *amen is* sometimes used at the *beginning* of a sentence (e.g. Matthew 26:13*;* Luke 21:32) and is commonly translated as *verily* (e.g. John 14:12*).* In the New Testament, when a quote *begins* with the word *amen* or *verily,* (both words translated from Strong's 281), we see that it is *always* Christ who is speaking! Evidently, Christ sometimes *began* his speech with the word *amen.* We, on the other hand, *close* our prayers with the word *amen.* There is significance in this which we must understand. The reason Christ began His sentences with *amen* was to give emphasis to what He was about to say! In the Gospel according to John we see that Christ even used a double *amen,* or "Verily, verily" to begin His sentences (John 1:51; 3:3). Christ does this to further raise our attention to the importance of what He was about to say. On the other hand, when we conclude our prayers to God by saying *amen,* we are actually confirming what we said in the prayer. The *American Tract Society Dictionary* states that *amen* "asserts our sincerity and invokes the fulfillment of our words: When we say *amen* at the conclusion of our prayers, we are saying, "So it is, so

be it, let it be done:" *Amen is* the stamp of approval with which we seal our prayers — committing ourselves to what was said in the prayer.

Clearly, *amen is* not a word we should use lightly or callously, but one in which we should place great value understanding.

As alluded to, *'Amen'* is a word that we regularly use in our personal prayers; it is a word we use to end opening and closing prayers at Sabbath services, at the end of blessings on meals, at baptisms, funerals, anointings and so on. Although we use this word regularly, we must guard against allowing it to become a repetitive ritual and understand its deep significance and meaning. We must grasp the responsibility placed *on us* each time we use it. When we say the word 'amen', we endorse the words uttered in the preceding prayer *and commit ourselves to what was said*. Because of this, we must be sure that what we pray is true and faithful to God's Word. We must also be sure that we will then do what it takes to fulfill our part in the prayer we endorsed. Similarly, when we are in a group setting, we must be attentive to every word included in the prayer by the person giving it, and say *amen* onlyif we understand and agree with the content of that prayer. This puts a responsibility on the person uttering the prayer, but a greater one on the person saying *amen! Amen is* the seal, the endorsement that we give as individuals, that what has been included in the prayer is true, faithful and good!

The Bible is replete with quotes where God the Father and Christ use the word *amen.* As we have seen, God uses it to confirm, attest and fulfill His statements, and therefore attaches tremendous importance to this word. Likewise, we must place the same high value on this word. We must understand its deep meaning and use it knowing its full implications!