The Amen

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday January 10th, 2021

Text: Hebrews 12:28

### Intro

1. “Amen and a-woman” *(???)*
	1. Kansas City, Missouri Congressman Emanuel Cleaver II *(Jr.?)* on Monday 01/04/2021 caused an uproar and internet gold in the forms of memes, jokes, and criticism when he ended the prayer of the opening new session of Congress with, “Amen and a-woman.”
	2. Cleaver, a former Methodist pastor of 37 years, explained to the Kansas City Star that he intended the word to be “a lighthearted pun in recognition of the record number of women who will be representing the American people in Congress during this term as well as … the first female chaplain of the House of Representatives.”
	3. <https://thehill.com/homenews/532547-cleaver-concludes-congressional-prayer-amen-and-awoman>
	4. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2021/01/06/amen-awomen-rep-cleaver-religion-gender-column/4142111001/>
	5. <https://www.kctv5.com/news/local_news/congressman-cleaver-explains-ending-prayer-with-amen-a-woman/article_cf0f6724-4eeb-11eb-9335-b776dc374c34.html>
2. Many forms of media outlets were quick to not only mock but to correct Rep. Cleaver that “amen” is not a gendered word, that it is not really an English word! *(The pun or joke fell flat)*
3. With all the media hype, it is appropriate to ask, “What does Amen mean?” and “Is it proper to make puns or jokes in a prayer to Almighty God?”

#### The Meaning of Amen

* 1. Amen in Hebrew *(Strong’s H543)*
		1. Strong’s: *H543 âmên [aw-mane']; from H539:* sure; abstract, faithfulness; truly:—Amen, so be it, may it be so, truth.
			1. It is a spoken word to express agreement with a statement. It means “it is so” or “may it be so.”
		2. Dictionary.com: Amen is derived from the *Hebrew âmên,* which means “certainty,” “truth,” and “verily.” It is found in the Hebrew Bible, and in both the Old and New Testament. In English, the word has two primary pronunciations: [ah-men] or [ey-men]. But, it can be expressed in endless ways, from a soft whisper to a joyous shout. Either way, it has nothing to do with the words man or men—or their origins. (<https://www.dictionary.com/e/amen/>)
		3. Dr. John Bergsma of the Franciscan University of Steubenville explained “amen” to CNA on Monday (01/04/2021):
			1. “The word “amen” is not a gendered word and the term “a-women” is entirely made up.”
			2. “While the word “amen” ends in “men,” like “repairmen” or “handymen,” it is not in reference to a gender.”
			3. “‘Amen’ is a Hebrew word whose root meaning is ‘truth.’ Already in ancient times, the Israelites used the term ‘amen’ in solemn ceremonies to express consent to the truth of what was said, meaning, ‘it is true’ or ‘so be it,’ depending on context.”
			4. “In Hebrew, the word for man is ‘adam’ or ‘ish,’ and is unrelated to the word ‘amen.’”
			5. “In fact, the Hebrew pronunciation is ‘ah-MAIN,’ rhyming with ‘train,’ and doesn’t sound like ‘men.’ It is a verbal form, not a noun.”
			6. *Bergsma has taught four undergraduate courses on Hebrew, as well as a summer intensive on the language.*
			7. (<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/amen-is-not-gendered-and-a-woman-is-nonsense-hebrew-scholar-says-46995>)
	2. Amen in Greek *(Strong’s G281)*
		1. Strong’s: *G281 amén [am-ane']:* truly
		2. Usage: verily, truly, assuredly, amen; at the end of sentences may be paraphrased by: “So let it be.”
		3. Example of usage in NT: **Matthew 5:18**
			1. **KJV:** For ***verily*** I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.
			2. **NKJ:** For ***assuredly,*** I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.
			3. **NAS:** For ***truly*** I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.
	3. Amen in Latin
		1. Latin: *amen [aw-men] (adverb):* *(from Hebrew amen):* “so be it;” true/faithful; truly/verily/; truth/faithfulness
			1. Source: Lewis & Short, “A Latin Dictionary”, 1879 (Lewis & Short)
			2. <https://latin-dictionary.net/definition/2974/amen>
			3. <https://glosbe.com/en/la/amen>
	4. Amen in English
		1. We can express an “amen” (ey-men; aw-men) in various ways today.
		2. We can use the transliterated “amen” from Hebrew, Greek, and Latin at the end of a prayer, during a prayer or sermon for, “May it be so!”
		3. Other ways we can express our agreement *(You may think of others!):*
			1. “Here, Here!”
			2. “Right on!”
			3. “I Agree!”
			4. “Absolutely!”
			5. “Let it be!”
			6. “Truth!”
			7. “Preach it!”
			8. “You know that’s right!” (Accompanied by a slap to the thigh)
		4. Saying “Amen” is a way for the hearers to interact with the speaker, and in a reverent way can offer encouragement to the speaker during and after a prayer, Lord’s Supper Talk, sermon, or even the singing of a hymn.
	5. Amen is rooted in “Truth” and is a way for hearers to express their agreement or consent to what is being taught, said, or prayed!

#### Examples of Amen in OT & NT (59 times!)

* 1. Old Testament:
		1. Deuteronomy 27:10-14 (15-26): God, through Moses, commanded the Israelites that when they enter Canaan they are to “Amen” the curses.
			1. 6 tribes (the descendants of Rachel & Leah) were to stand on Mt. Gerizim and proclaim the blessings.
			2. 6 tribes (the descendants of the handmaids, except Reuben and Zebulon, Leah’s 1st born who lost the birthright, and youngest, respectively) were to stand on Mt. Ebal and proclaim the curses.
			3. Deuteronomy 27:15-26: As the curses are read “all the people shall say, 'Amen.'” – They acknowledge God’s word as truth and agree with it!
		2. I Kings 1: David, on his death bed, is told Adonijah, his oldest living son, had declared himself King and was throwing a party.
			1. I Kings 1:23-35: David gave instructions to anoint Solomon as King and solidify his throne.
			2. I Kings 1:36-37: Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, Captain of the king’s bodyguards, answered the king and said, “Amen! Thus may the LORD, the God of my lord the king, say.”
				1. Here, Benaiah was agreeing with King David and expressing his desire that God would agree with it too!
		3. Nehemiah 8: Men and women of Israel gathered for the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem and to hear Ezra the Scribe read the Law of Moses.
			1. Nehemiah 8:6: Then Ezra blessed the LORD the great God. And all the people answered, “Amen, Amen!” while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.
			2. Here, the people responded with their agreement with the Law of Moses.
		4. Numerous Psalms praise God and end with an “Amen” – Psalm 89:52; 106:48
	2. New Testament:
		1. Matthew 6:13: Jesus taught His disciples to close their prayers with “Amen” in His model prayer… “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”
		2. Paul used it numerously throughout his epistles, but a couple notable times are:
			1. Romans 1:25: “For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”
			2. I Timothy 1:17: “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”
		3. Peter used “Amen” in both his epistles:
			1. I Peter 5:11: “To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.”
			2. II Peter 3:18: “but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”
		4. Jude closes his short letter with “Amen”
			1. Jude 1:25: “to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”
		5. John, in Revelation, uses “Amen” 8 times, but a few notable times are:
			1. Revelation 1:7: “BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.”
			2. Revelation 3:14: “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:” – A title of Jesus is “The Amen”
				1. Amen is rooted in the word for “truth” (Hebrew)
				2. Jesus is the Word in John 1:1 and the word of God is truth in John 17:17.
				3. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).
				4. Jesus is “The Amen,” the Truth, the final authority on “May it be so!”
			3. Revelation 19:4: “And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!!”” – *Agreement and praise!*
			4. Revelation 22:20: “He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”
				1. Here, John is in agreement with The Amen, Who says He is coming quickly, and says, “Come, Lord Jesus.”
	3. We can see through the OT & NT that “Amen” has been used to agree with the words of God, a speaker, a reader, to close out a praise of God, letters and prayers!

## Conclusion

1. We say “Amen” (or variant) to give hearty approval (consent) to what is said in a prayer, talk, or sermon, or in what we sing in hymns.
2. When we come together to worship and to pray we need to remember what we are there for and Who we are addressing, and to do so with reverence and awe.
	1. **Hebrews 12:28:** “Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe.”
3. “Is it proper to make puns or jokes in a prayer to Almighty God?” **Not if we want to remain reverent!**
4. When we hear the word of God or sing praises to our God, let us shout out, “Amen!” as we agree with truth!
5. If you are not a Christian, you need to be! Believe, repent and be baptized!
6. If a Christian struggling with sin in your life, repent and He will forgive you, as will we.
7. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!