

O Come, Let Us Worship – II

The Corporate Amen

Introduction – As with every aspect of a liturgy (the selection and order of events in a religious service), there is always the temptation to ‘go through the motions’. If you give yourself to the worship of God, however, doing and saying the same things, with understanding, your worship becomes more like a well-learned dance. You know the steps so well that you can give your attention to the one with whom you are dancing, concentrating on the meaning and the beauty of the event.

This little word, “Amen”, understood from the scripture, is a powerful application of this principle. Mumbled thoughtlessly, it appears a useless religious word announcing the end of a prayer. Spoken, sung, even shouted, with understanding and fervor, it seals the words of God and of His people, brings glory to His name, and acts as a battering ram upon the world of unbelief.

The Word “Amen” – From the Hebrew, this word could be translated into Greek, *genoita*, or in English ‘let it be’. But it isn’t in most situations, and apparently was brought into the Gentile churches transliterated rather than translated because its meaning was much deeper than simply ‘Yes, let it be so’.

Amen, the Name of God – The word is used to describe the character of God or even the name of God. He is the God of ‘truth’, that is, the God of ‘Amen’ (Is 65:16). More explicitly, John records these words of Jesus – “*These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God...*” (Rev 3:14). Jesus uses this word often, though in our translations we have changed it to ‘verily’ or ‘assuredly’ (example – Matt 24:34, John 12:24). But the apostles do not pick up this usage in their writings or preaching. Rather, in our Lord’s discourses, this word is used as His covenant oath confirmed in Himself alone (2 Cor 1:20). Paul did not preach the great “maybe”, the potentiality of salvation. Paul preached the promises of Christ as ‘Yes’ and ‘Amen’.

Used in the Church (1 Cor 14:16) – Aside for the correction in bad liturgical practices going on at Corinth, notice that Paul assumes that the people of God should and will say “Amen” at particular times. The Word of God teaches us when and how.

Our Response to the God of Amen – The word comes down to us untranslated, but not because it is a magic word. We see its use by God’s people corporately in their worship of God because in that worship, their covenant with God is being redeclared and renewed (Psalm 106:48).

Covenant Oath-taking – Whether blessings or cursings, the saying of ‘Amen’ affirmed the obligations of God’s people to the covenant (Deut 27). Having read the law of God, reestablishing His covenant with them, Ezra blesses God and all the people answered “Amen, Amen!” (Neh 8:4-6). Amen has the force of an oath, indicating our agreement and submission to what has been said and commanded.

Sealing a Benediction – There are many examples of benedictions in the Bible where God’s name is placed upon His people as a blessing in their commissioning. It is right and proper to ‘seal’ that blessing with an “Amen” (Gal 6:18, Heb 13:20-21, 1 Pet 5:10-11).

Prayers and Blessings to God – Jesus taught us to end our prayer with “Amen” (Matt 6:13). But He was teaching the end of the prayer with a blessing to God, a doxology. We see throughout the Scriptures God being blessed and those blessings being ended with “Amen” (Rom 1:25, Eph 3:20-21, Rev 1:6). As a corporate body, we place our ‘Amen’ on the blessing pronounce towards God, we place our name on the prayer of request made on behalf of the whole body.

“Amen” at the end of a Psalm or Hymn – Almost every book of psalms (there are five) end with a doxology and an “Amen”. Remember, when we sing praise to God, we are also teaching and admonishing one another. When we sing these words of Christ, we place our Amen, the name of Christ, the promise of Christ at the end, and we say “Amen” binding ourselves to the truth and commands we have sung.

AMEN! – The Sound of Faith – The more we understand the nature of this gathering, the more this gathering should grow in solemnity and liveliness. In the use of “Amen”, you should first note that mumbling it out unthinkingly is nothing less than taking His name in vain.

By Whom – As God’s body we should say our Amen together as one body, corporately. It emphasizes the fact that we are not simply being entertained by the religious professionals ‘up there’. “*And all the people shall answer and say, ‘Amen’*” (Deut 27:15). “*And all the people said, ‘Amen!’ and praised the Lord*” (1 Chron 16:36). “*And all the assembly said ‘Amen!’ and praised the Lord*” (Neh 5:13). “*And let all the people say, ‘Amen!’*” (Psalm 106:48).

How – Volume is not required on the one hand. But I don’t know how we won’t find ourselves exclaiming our loud ‘Amens!’ when we know we are responding at Mt. Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly of the church of the firstborn, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant (Heb 12:22-23). We must come with faith. And if we have come with faith, our “Amens” will thunder.

When – The applications are many. When a man leads us in prayer, we should answer with our “amen” – it was our prayer. When the word of the covenant is read to us, we should receive it with our ‘amen’. When we sing our psalms to our King, we should end them with a hearty ‘amen’. When we are sent with His name upon us in benediction, we should acknowledge our corporate unity and receipt in a final ‘amen’.